

Nurses Christian Fellowship Professional Nurse Group Leader's Meeting
Candle Meditation and Prayer Gathering
The Gift of Light
Spring 2020

Before our Zoom meeting starts: Have a candle with holder (jar candle is fine too) and matches.

Leader: All are welcome to participate in this group faith sharing experience this evening. This is a safe and sacred space to express our thoughts and feelings. This is a confidential forum...in other words, your privacy is respected. We don't share with others what we discuss here tonight. We hope that you have a candle in a holder or jar candle and matches next to you. Let us take a moment now to light our candles together. Let us take a 30 second pause in silence before we begin to quiet our minds and hearts. (30 second pause)

Leader: During this challenging season of the coronavirus pandemic and racial unrest, nights may seem long and lonely. Darkness may seem to be our constant companion in more ways than one. We may grieve the loss of a loved one or the loss of being with our family and friends. We go grocery shopping and people don't make eye contact anymore. Everyone wears masks and in some cases gloves which increases our social distancing. It's like we are living in a fog ... it is difficult to see getting around – and we may not see others and our path clearly.

During this time, we need a bit of **light**. Traditionally, candles are a part of decorations in our homes, at holidays, on birthday cakes, and at worship services in our faith communities. The lighting of a candle symbolizes pushing away the darkness and allowing light to show through. And most of all, our Creator is our light. In Psalm 36:9 (NIV), we are reminded of these words, "For with You is the fountain of life; in Your light we see light." As we begin our prayer gathering this evening, let us be assured that this darkness is not forever.

We come together now, asking our Creator to share our journey through unexpected challenges, isolation, loss & grief – and also our climb toward hope.

All: Lord, be our light.

Leader: We gather this evening to ask for new energy for living out our days.

All: Lord, be our light.

Leader: Our candle representing **FAITH** is burning now.

All: *We receive the gift of faith, given freely by God to all who hear His word and trust Him.*

Leader: In good times and not so good times, we cling to the anchor of **faith**. It is our lifeline to God. Tell God what needs to be anchored in your life right now. (Pause for 10 seconds).

Leader: Our candle representing **PEACE** burns brightly now.

All: *We embrace the gift of peace, which brings light to our hearts and lifts our spirits.*

Leader: Jesus said, "I give you **peace**, my **peace** I leave with you; peace that the world does not give." Ask God for a **peaceful** spirit right now. (Pause for 10 seconds).

Leader: Our candle representing **COURAGE** burns now.

All: *We take on the gift of courage, which gives us strength to carry on through daily tasks and events of life.*

Leader: The root word of **courage** is "**heart**." To act with **courage** is to act with **heart**. Lift up all that is in your **heart** to the Lord. Ask the Lord for **courage**; be strong hearted and wait for the Lord. (Pause for 10 seconds).

Leader: Our candle representing **UNDERSTANDING** burns now.

All: *We seek to gain and share the gift of understanding, recognizing our differences, and fulfilling the other's needs first before our own.*

Leader: Cherish to know that our Creator loves us and understands us more than anyone. Ask Him to give you **understanding** of others and to look with love at their shortcomings. (Pause for 10 seconds).

Leader: Our candles are lit reminding us of **FAITH, PEACE, COURAGE, and UNDERSTANDING**. While holding your burden of cares, look into its face and find traces of the Living God. All suffering is in God and will someday be transformed into a life-giving new reality. God cares for you, me, us. Give your Creator your burden right now.

All: *Lord, be our Light. Accept our cares and grant us, as we move forward, your gifts of faith, peace, courage, and understanding during this most challenging of times. Amen.*

Leader: At this time in our gathering, we ask each individual to share one of the four gifts of light that you are specifically asking God for today... **Faith, Peace, Courage, or Understanding.** Due to a limited amount of time, we ask that each person state your first name and give only 1-2 sentences for your prayer petition. For instance, "I seek God's gift of *understanding* as I support my son who is having a difficult time" or "I seek God's gift of *courage* as I deal with my current illness." Please pause in between each prayer petition.

Individual Prayer Petitions.

Leader and All: *Oh, Lord, we thank you for hearing our prayer this evening. Help us to seek the light of Your presence, and receive the gift of light and encouragement that we so desire. May we learn to be patient during this challenging time. May we extend an encouraging word or helping hand to those in need that cross our paths in the weeks and months ahead. May You be given all the glory. Amen.*

Leader: We close our time together with the Lord's Prayer. After our candle meditation and prayer gathering ends, we hope you will take some time for continued reflection, prayer or spiritual practices that will continue to provide strength, guidance, and a deeper trust in Him.

All: *Our Father, who art in heaven,
hallowed be thy name;
thy kingdom come;
thy will be done;
on earth as it is in heaven.
Give us this day our daily bread.
And forgive us our trespasses,
as we forgive those who trespass against us.
And lead us not into temptation;
but deliver us from evil.
For thine is the kingdom,
the power and the glory,
for ever and ever.
Amen.*

My thanks to the following individuals and groups for adapting and sharing this resource:

- Paula Elliot, Catholic Charities Bereavement Program, 2002.
- The Pittsburgh Mercy Parish Nurse & Health Ministry Program, *Candle Meditation and Prayer Gathering: The Gift of Light*, May 2020.