

+Kwanzaa Celebration - December 30th, 2024 7:00 p.m.
The Seventh Annual Kwanzaa Celebration at
Ray Of Hope Church Of Our Lord Jesus Christ, Inc.
380 W. 1st St. Elmira, NY 14901
The church made by YOU, made for YOU, because we are YOU.

Pastor: We begin in the Name of the One God, Eternal Love, Creator of all, and of The Only Begotten Son Christ Jesus, and of the Holy Spirit.

ALL: AMEN

Leader 1: Good evening. My name is _____ and I am speaking to you from the City of _____ in the State of _____. Everyone is welcome to participate in some or all of this ceremony as you feel comfortable. We recommend you bring a bowl to your table. Also, bring a tall cup of water with a small amount of cooking or anointing oil mixed in. We will be pouring the mixed oil and water into the bowl as part of our closing prayers. You may want to bring a small towel too. Gather these items and we will start shortly.

Leader 1: I will be giving the opening prayer. Please pray this prayer silently as I say it aloud.

Bless us, O God, as we come together to give you thanks and praise. We are pleased and grateful to celebrate Kwanzaa for the 7th year with our congregation, family and friends. We will reflect on and celebrate all seven principles of Kwanzaa tonight.

The seven principles are Umoja (oo-MO-jah) - Unity, Kujichagulia (koo-jee-chah-goh-LEE-ah) - Self Determination, Ujima (oo-JEE-mah) - Collective Work and Responsibility, Ujamaa (oo-JAH-mah) - Cooperative Economics, Nia (NEE-ah) - Purpose, Kuumba (koo-OOM-bah) - Creativity and Imani (ee-MAN-nee) - Faith.

We dedicate this short worship service to you as we explore and embrace the seven principles of Kwanzaa. We give you thanks and praise.

ALL: Amen

Veronica Floyd: Good evening. My name is Veronica Floyd, and I am speaking to you from the City of Johns Creek in the State of Georgia. I will be sharing with you some words of introduction regarding the history of Kwanzaa. The seven principles are pronounced in Swahili, an East-African Language known from about the First Century A.D.

First Song: G&P 656 Christ Be Our Light. Words and Music by Bernadette Farrell.

1. Longing for light, we wait in darkness.
Longing for truth, we turn to you.
Make us your own, your holy people,
light for the world to see.

Refrain

Christ, be our light! Shine in our hearts.
Shine through the darkness.
Christ, be our light!
Shine in your church gathered today.

2. Longing for peace, our world is troubled.
Longing for hope, many despair.
Your word alone has pow'r to save us.
Make us your living voice.

Refrain

Christ, be our light! Shine in our hearts.
Shine through the darkness.
Christ, be our light!
Shine in your church gathered today.

3. Longing for food, many are hungry.
Longing for water, many still thirst.
Make us your bread, broken for others,
shared until all are fed.

Refrain

Christ, be our light! Shine in our hearts.
Shine through the darkness.
Christ, be our light!
Shine in your church gathered today.

4. Longing for shelter, many are homeless.
Longing for warmth, many are cold.
Make us your building, sheltering others,
walls made of living stone.

Refrain

Christ, be our light! Shine in our hearts.
Shine through the darkness.
Christ, be our light!
Shine in your church gathered today.

5. Many the gifts, many the people,
many the hearts that yearn to belong.
Let us be servants to one another,
making your kingdom come.

Refrain

Christ, be our light! Shine in our hearts.
Shine through the darkness.
Christ, be our light!
Shine in your church gathered today.

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Christ Be Our Light. Words and Music by Bernadette Farrell. First Line: Longing for light, we wait in darkness Language: English © 1993, Bernadette Farrell. Published by OCP. All rights reserved. Contributors: Bernadette Farrell. Onelicense Song# 80229 All rights reserved. Used with Print Permission and Streaming License A-74127.

Leader 1: We will look into Scriptures for some guidance on how to apply the principles to our lives. The reading is Colossians 3:12-17 (NRSVUE)

¹² Therefore, as God's chosen ones, holy and beloved, clothe yourselves with compassion, kindness, humility, meekness, and patience. ¹³ Bear with one another and, if anyone has a complaint against another, forgive each other; just as the Lord^[a] has forgiven you, so you also must forgive. ¹⁴ Above all, clothe yourselves with love, which binds everything together in perfect harmony. ¹⁵ And let the peace of Christ^[b] rule in your hearts, to which indeed you were called in one body. And be thankful. ¹⁶ Let the word of Christ^[c] dwell in you richly; teach and admonish one another in all wisdom; and with gratitude in your hearts sing psalms, hymns, and spiritual songs to God.^[d] ¹⁷ And whatever you do, in word or deed, do everything in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through him.

Reader: This is the Word of the Lord.

ALL: Thanks be to God.

[Read full chapter](#)

Footnotes

- a. [3.13](#) Other ancient authorities read *just as Christ*
- b. [3.15](#) Other ancient authorities read *of God*

- c. 3.16 Other ancient authorities read *of God or of the Lord*
- d. 3.16 Other ancient authorities read *to the Lord*

(Source: <https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Colossians+3%3A12-17&version=NRSVUE> Scripture quotations are taken from the New Revised Standard Version Updated Edition. Copyright © 2021 National Council of Churches of Christ in the United States of America. Used by permission. See notice above announcements in this bulletin.)

Veronica Floyd and Tami Whatley: Discussion of Kwanzaa Principles

Leader 2: Good evening. My name is _____ and I am speaking to you from the City of _____ in the State of _____. We will now light the candles on the kinara.

(Please light the center black candle.) O, Loving and Life-giving Good and Gracious God, as we call and relay the **first principle of Kwanzaa: UMOJA**, (oo-MO-jah) the principle of unity. Help us to be a unified people while interacting with various communities, family, neighbors, friends, believers, nations, and ethnicities, as unity is a blessing from God.

ALL: UMOJA!(oo-MO-jah) **May we employ the gift of unity as we continue to acknowledge your love, Oh God. May we strive to maintain the true spirit of unity as we walk as your people around the world. Umoja!**

Leader 3: **(Please light the outside red candle.)** O, Loving and Life-giving Good and Gracious God, as we call and relay the **second principle Kujichagulia** (koo-jee-chah-goh-LEE-ah) Self Determination, teach us how to be self-determining believers as you created us. Help us to know your will for our lives so that we may help others.

ALL: KUJICHAGULIA! (koo-jee-chah-goh-LEE-ah) **We will learn to live self-determined lives knowing that our actions must help others and ourselves. Kujichagulia!**

(Please light the outside green candle.**)** For the **third principle of Kwanzaa: UJIMA**, (oo-JEE-mah) collective work and responsibility, grant us wisdom to develop and maintain each person's talents and potential and our collective interests. Teach us how to think collectively and build collectively the family unit and our neighborhoods and to truly be our brother's and sister's keeper as You are the Keeper of our souls.

ALL: UJIMA!(oo-JEE-mah) **We will strive to embody a spirit of collective work and responsibility, building and maintaining our communities as did our ancestors. Ujima!**

Leader 4: **(**Please light the second red candle.**)** O, Loving and Life-giving Good and Gracious God, we praise you and thank you as we call and relay the **fourth principle of Kwanzaa: UJAMAA**, (oo-JAH-mah) the principle of cooperative economics, grant us the wisdom to have the tenacity to build and maintain businesses within our communities.

Teach us how to think and build cost-effective businesses that will be profitable for both the owner and consumer. Teach us to be mainly savers not reckless consumers.

ALL: UJAMAA! (oo-JAH-mah) **God has provided for us. We will be good and faithful stewards over all that God has provided. Together we will build and profit with God's blessing. Ujamaa!**

Leader 5: (Please light the second green candle.**)** O, Loving and Life-giving Good and Gracious God, we praise you and thank you as we call and relay the **fifth principle of Kwanzaa: Nia**, Purpose,

Help us to embrace the fifth principle of Kwanzaa: NIA, purpose, your design for our lives. We acknowledge that we exist for the **purposes** of worship, ministry, evangelism, fellowship, and discipleship.

We hear the words of Ecclesiastes 12:13b (KJV), Respect, Love, Honor God, and keep God's commandments: for this is the whole duty of humanity.

ALL: NIA! We will keep God's commandments! This is our purpose. We will love God, our families, born into or chosen, and our neighbor as ourselves; this is our purpose. We will live as a beacon to the world; we will live as those who give light to the world; and as salt that gives flavor to the world. This is our purpose. Nia!

(Please light the third red candle.**)** and the sixth principle of Kwanzaa: **Kuumba** (koo-OOM-bah): **Creativity**.

Further, Help us to continue to share our **creativity** with the world through music, painting, food, dance, worship, architecture, scientific research, all the healing gifts, all the medical sciences, every study of all the gifts you give us in this Universe, and all endeavors in which we engage. We honor the creativity of all your people of every ethnicity, every culture, every ethnic story from every time and every place. Inspire us to reach out to every story of all of your people.

ALL: KUUMBA! (koo-OOM-bah) **We acknowledge the creative genius of God that is provided for all creation to enjoy. Allow us to keep our minds and hearts open so that You, our loving and life-giving God can create what the world needs through us. Kuumba!**

Leader 6: (Please light the third green candle.**)** O, Loving and Life-giving Good and Gracious God, your Word tells us "Now faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen." (Hebrews 11:1) As we call and relay the **seventh principle of Kwanzaa: IMANI**, the principle of faith, help us to be greater people of faith "for without faith it is impossible to please you." (Hebrews 11:6b)

ALL: IMANI! We have come this far by faith. We affirm the values and customs of our ancestors and give thanks for their sojourn as we seek to emulate the best of

what they have left to us. We have faith in God, faith in others, faith in our ancestry, faith in our selves, and faith in humanity. Imani!

Pastor: Libations, the Prayer Offerings of the People.

During this time of year, we have memories of those who have gone before us. Birth and Death are equal parts of our human experience. As Christians, we do not attempt to deny death by our "practice of a religion" or by our emphasis on resurrection. In fact, the church has always remembered "those who have fallen asleep" (1 Thessalonians 4:13, 14) and even celebrated the day of their "transition" or "entrance into Paradise" on a yearly basis, a "saint's day."

At Ray Of Hope Church we remember the dead on our founding day, The Feast of All Saints, and in that, we remember those from our past, we include ourselves, and even include those who will come after us. Paul eloquently calls this "the cloud of Heavenly witnesses." In Hebrews 12:1,2 we read:

"Therefore we also, since we are surrounded by so great a cloud of witnesses, let us lay aside every weight, and the sin which so easily ensnares us, and let us run with endurance the race that is set before us, ² looking unto Jesus, the author and finisher of our faith, who for the joy that was set before Him endured the cross, despising the shame, and has sat down at the right hand of the throne of God."

Now we observe a moment of silence out of respect for our ancestors (living and dead) and our heritage (past, present, and future). (**silent meditation**)

Leader 1: Now we will pour out physical water and oil mixed together in libation, which may be rendered in tribute, in honor, in reverence. Action plus prayer equals sacrament as we understand it. So, even though Dr. Karenga based this on a ritual in the Egyptian Book of the Dead, we may use it with our own understanding of dedication.

Pastor: • Next: Ministers or other designated persons (a total of four) will come to the front of the church or room and into a large bowl, pour libations (water and oil), after reciting each of the following lines we will say" We pour libations":

Pastor: For our ancestors, **ALL: We pour libations.**

Pastor: For the dying, **ALL: We pour libations.**

Pastor: For the glorious cloud of witnesses, **ALL: We pour libations.**

Pastor: For life, health, and strength, **ALL: We pour libations, Amen.**

Closing Prayer:

Leader -2: Gracious God, you have allowed us to come this far by faith. We feel gratitude for the values, customs, and rituals our families, friends, founders and

foundresses have passed down to us. These principles of Kwanzaa remind us of our potential and the possibilities before us in the New Year.

ALL: They also provide us the opportunity to reach across the divides of religion, and touch the humanity we find everywhere on this Earth. We have faith in God, faith in others, faith in our ancestry, faith in our selves, and faith in humanity. We are a grateful people in You. Amen.

Pastor: May Almighty God Bless us in the Name of the Creator, the Christ, and the Holy Spirit.

ALL: AMEN

Pastor: We go forth in peace, glorifying the Lord by our lives.

ALL: Thanks be to God.

Second Song: Peace Prayer G&P 652

Words and Music by John Foley, S. J.

1. Lord, make me a means of your peace.
Where there's hatred grown, let me sow your love.
Where there's injury, Lord, let forgiveness be my sword.
Lord, make me a means of your peace.

5. Lord, grant me to seek and to share:
to receive love less than to give love free,
just to give in thee, just receiving from your tree.
Lord, make me a means of your peace.

6. Lord, grant me to seek and to share:
to forgive in thee, you've forgiven me;
for to die in thee is eternal life to me.
Lord, make me a means of your peace.

Peace Prayer Words and Music by John Foley. Based on a prayer of St. Francis of Assisi. Text and music © 1976, John B. Foley, S.J. Published by OCP. All rights reserved. Onelicense Song #81396. with Print Permission and Streaming License A-74127. Glory and Praise Second Edition 652.

(** The closing prayers and responses for each Kwanzaa event are based on information found on this web

site: http://www.theafricanamericanlectionary.org/PDF/Kwanzaa_WR_Dec2808.pdf **)

=====Further Reading and Information=====

There are many symbols of Kwanzaa. The Kwanzaa candelabra is called a Kinara. The straw mat that the kinara is placed on is a mkeka. Ears of corn are also placed on the

mat, one to represent each child in the household. (If no children, then one ear of corn for the children of the community) They are called the vibunzi (or muhindi). A fruit basket is placed on the mkeka, and is called the mazao. The unity cup is also placed on the mkeka, and is called the kikombe cha umoja (Kee-com-bay chah-oo-moe-jah). The seven candles that are placed in the kinara are called the Mishumaa Saba. Finally, all the gifts are called the zawadi and are traditionally given on the last day of Kwanzaa.