

Suggestions for Candle Lighting Service

Set up

At Shepherd of the Valley Lutheran Church (Juneau, Alaska), we use a hula hoop ring and cover it loosely with plastic. Inside the plastic we put kitty litter about 1" thick. We put a Christ Candle in the center and surround it with votive candles. The Christ Candle is lit during the Call to Worship. The rest of the candles are lit during the last part of the Candle Lighting service which follows the Apostles' Creed.

On the altar we put 14--12" candles. These are not lit until later in the service.

Beginning of Service

Use the Call to Worship. Light the Christ Candle as the Call to Worship is being said.

The Candle Lighting Service

Begin by explaining the symbolism of the Iris.

Proceed to the Altar to light the 14 candles. Read the explanation about what each candle represents. As one or two people take turns reading each petition, another person lights a candle as the petition is read.

Proceed to the table with the Christ Candle and votive candles. Invite everyone to come forward to light a candle in "celebration" of the life of someone they know, or for themselves, who has a mental illness, Alzheimer's, FASD, Autism, Traumatic Brain Injury, and any other brain disorder. It is safer if two people light a taper from the Christ Candle and then have people light their votive candles from the tapers. Each votive candle is put back on the table to surround the Christ Candle.

The Prayer of the Church

Add the Prayer of Commitment to the other intercessions.

Other Suggestions

You do not have to do it the way we do it -- our way is only one way. Use your creativity.

The Iris and the 14 candle lighting petitions are not part of the insert for the congregation.

The candle lighting insert consists of:

- Page 1-- Candle Lighting for Mental Illness / Brain Disorders.;
- Page 2 – The Call to Worship and the Prayer of Commitment;
- Page 3 – "As you have done unto the least of these..."; and
- Page 4 – What would Jesus do?

Suggested Texts

Scriptural Mandates:

Isaiah 1:17,
Matthew 25:37-40,
Matthew 7:12,
Luke 10:25-37,
Matthew 5:3-7

Sermon Starters:

Genesis 18:2-3,
I Samuel 16:14-23,
Mark 5:1-20,
John 10:7-10

Suggested Hymns:

Praise to the Lord, the Almighty (verse 2)
Healer of Our Every Ill
Be Thou My Vision
Oh Love That Will Not Let Me Go
Lord, Whose Love Through Humble Service
Now, Thank We All Our God
O God, Our Help in Ages Past
On Eagle's Wings

Pastor Larry and Laura Rorem

CANDLE LIGHTING FOR MENTAL ILLNESS / BRAIN DISORDERS



Sponsored by the Lutheran Network on Mental Illness/Brain Disorders



We ask all Lutheran congregations to
light a candle and pray for people with
mental illnesses/ brain disorders and their families.

The Lutheran Network on Mental Illness/Brain Disorders (LNMI/BD) is a joint ministry of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, and the Lutheran Church Missouri Synod. The mission is to assist faith communities to work effectively with persons with mental illness and other brain disorders (Fetal Alcohol Syndrome, Autism, Traumatic Brain Injury, etc.) and their families, to educate about brain disorders and to combat stigma.

*"This is my commandment that you love
one another as I have loved you."* John 15:12

On this day we open our hearts in affirmation of people with mental illness/brain disorders and their families—these burdened but precious children of God. To the church of Galatia, St. Paul paid this rare tribute: "Even though my illness was a trial to you, you did not treat me with contempt or scorn. Instead you welcomed me as if I were an angel of God, as if I were Christ Jesus Himself," (Galatians 4:14). It is with this hope that people with a brain disorder and their families come to us. Christ expects that we will embrace them! We ask God's guidance for us as we welcome those with brain disorders and their loved ones into the life of our congregation with a compassionate and sustaining response.

THE CALL TO WORSHIP

- P: Jesus said, "I am the light of the world! Follow me, and you won't be in the dark. On this "Candle lighting for Mental Illness/Brain Disorders Sunday" we remember all in our congregation, community and world who suffer from illnesses we do not understand.
- A: Some are homeless, others are unjustly imprisoned, many are lonely, rejected and misunderstood.
- C: HELP US TO REACH OUT TO ALL WHO SUFFER FROM ILLNESSES AND DISABILITIES WE CANNOT UNDERSTAND.**
- P: We ask for peace and healing for their minds and for the strength to carry their heavy burdens each day of their lives.
- C: HELP US TO BE OPEN TO THEIR PARENTS, SIBLINGS, FAMILIES AND FRIENDS IN THEIR DIFFICULT TASKS OF CARE GIVING.**
- A: Supply wisdom, patience and courage in all they do.
- C: HELP US TO BE OPEN TO THE NEEDS AROUND US.**
- P: Help us never to make judgments about people with brain disorders and their families that are not ours to make.
- C: HELP US TEACH CHILDREN TO BE COMPASSIONATE TO OTHER CHILDREN, FOR SOME WITH BRAIN DISORDERS ARE VERY YOUNG.**
- A: Help us to act as Jesus did and make Him our role model.
- C: MAY WE "WALK AS CHILDREN OF LIGHT."**
- P: May we show our light so that one day the darkness of mental illness and all brain disorders will be overcome.

PRAYER OF COMMITMENT

(To be added as a petition in the Prayer of the Church.)

O God, we pray for all those with mental illness and other brain disorders and their families. Your son has told us repeatedly that it is your will to guide and protect. We pray for courage to challenge the old notions about brain disorders which created guilt and shame in so many lives. For all who cannot advocate for themselves, awaken in us a voice that will not be silenced. Your word inspires us to bring hope, healing and acceptance to those with brain disorders and their loved ones. Hear us O God;

C: YOUR MERCY IS GREAT

“As you have done it unto the least of these, you have done it unto me.”

- Matthew 25:40

Mental illnesses are disorders of the brain that disrupt thinking, feeling, moods and ability to relate to others. These disorders are biological.

Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorders (FASD) refer to a group of physical and mental birth defects caused by a woman drinking alcohol during pregnancy. Prenatal exposure to alcohol at any time during pregnancy can damage the baby's brain. This is a lifelong birth defect that challenges behavior, learning, and development from birth to death. It is 100 percent preventable.

Autism is a lifelong disability from birth. It is a neurological disorder that affects how the brain works and interferes with normal brain development.

Traumatic brain injuries (TBI) are most commonly caused by a forceful blow to the head. It can also be caused by infections, brain tumors, overdose of medications, certain diseases, and a near drowning. Physical, emotional, mental and behavioral changes can be temporary or long lasting.

These brain disorders are **NOT** caused by poor parenting, bad companions or lack of willpower.

Just as diabetes is a disorder of the *pancreas*, mental illnesses, FASD, autism, and traumatic brain injuries are *brain* disorders that often result in diminished capacity to cope with the ordinary demands in life. They affect people in all ages, races, religions and income brackets.

Most importantly, these disorders are treatable! Just as many diabetics take insulin, most people with serious brain disorders need medication to control symptoms. They need supportive counseling, housing, vocational rehabilitation and other community services that provide support and stability.

They also need *spiritual support*. Too often when a family member is diagnosed with a brain disorder, the family quietly leaves the church. No one must guess their terrible secret!

Public health statistics reveal that in every congregation of 500 people, there will be 5 with schizophrenia, 5 with bi-polar disorder (manic-depression) and **many** more with major depression, obsessive-compulsive disorder, anxiety disorders, and panic attacks. This does not include people with FASD, autism or TBI. Some are children and teens.

What Would Jesus Do?

What can you do to be helpful and supportive?

- ♥ Listen.
- ♥ Accept.
- ♥ Express sympathy to those experiencing brain disorders just as we do to those experiencing physical disorders.
- ♥ Send cards.
- ♥ Make phone calls.
- ♥ Let families express feelings openly.
- ♥ Be non-judgmental and non-blaming so that family members feel welcome.
- ♥ Don't argue or confront.
- ♥ Don't offer easy solutions when there are none.
- ♥ Logic and common sense do not usually work.
- ♥ It does not work to tell someone to “get their act together” when they can't.
- ♥ Understand the ongoing grief process.
- ♥ Remember mental illness' and other brain disorders cause families to experience bazaar things they thought would never happen.
- ♥ Understand that certain behaviors, at certain moments, cannot be controlled.
- ♥ Educate yourselves on the symptoms and origins of brain disorders.
- ♥ People with brain disorders are quite aware of the disruption they bring into people's lives. During a lucid moment, someone they trust can have a helpful conversation with them on how to handle a future disruptive situation. You may also consult a family member.

Hate the illness -- love the person

- ♥ **Be sensitive to the reality that the grief process for those living with brain disorders and their families is cyclical because the illness is ongoing.**

Our Gathering in Worship

THE GATHERING

THE PRELUDE

WELCOME

*THE CALL TO WORSHIP

*THE OPENING HYMN

*THE KRYIE

*THE HYMN OF PRAISE

*THE PRAYER OF THE DAY

--- ANNOUNCEMENTS ---

Lighting of the Candle

"On Eagle's Wings"

GREETING

See Insert

#779 Blue

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Celebrate Insert

THE WORD OF THE LORD

THE LESSONS AND PSALM

THE ALLELUIA

*THE GOSPEL

A TIME FOR CHILDREN

THE PULPIT HYMN

THE SERMON

THE HYMN OF THE DAY

*THE APOSTLES' CREED

THE CANDLELIGHTING FOR MENTAL ILLNESS/BRAIN DISORDERS

Celebrate Insert

p. 83

Luke 17:11-19

"Amazing Grace"

#448 Green

Pastor Larry Rorem

"Liberated From Loneliness"

#738 Blue

P. 85

See Insert

THE SHARING OF OUR BLESSINGS

THE OFFERING

*THE OFFERTORY RESPONSE

Please sign the Fellowship sheet

P. 96

THE SENDING

*THE PRAYER OF THE CHURCH

*THE LORD'S PRAYER

THE GOING FORTH HYMN

*THE BENEDICTION

THE POSTLUDE

"Praise To You, O God of Mercy"

Celebrate Insert

P. 97

#790 Blue

The Iris

(The altar flowers should include a few irises)

Before we begin the candle lighting, I want to tell you about the iris and the journey of hope. The journey of hope is a national group of family members of people with brain disorders. The iris is the flower of hope and the symbol of hope for people with brain disorders. It is with the HOPE of Galatians 4:13-14 that people with brain disorders and their families come to us—the church. It is the expectation of Christ that we will embrace people with brain disorders and their families with compassion and love.

The Candle Lighting

(As each petition is prayed, a candle is lit)

Each candle represents realities in the life of a person with a brain disorder and their family. We will pray for each category and light a candle. As each candle is lit, please contemplate compassionately—or put yourself in the place of the people who suffer and deal with these realities.

1. We pray for those who have been lost to suicide.
2. We pray for those who contemplate suicide.
3. We pray for those who are missing persons.
4. We pray for those who are living on the street.
5. We pray for those who are in homeless shelters.
6. We pray for those who are hospitalized today.
7. We pray for those who have ended up in prison.
8. We pray for those who struggle daily with rejection and stigma.
9. We pray for the children who have a brain disorder.
10. We pray for those who are in an appropriate, competent treatment program.
11. We pray for those who are stabilized.
12. We pray for those who are holding down jobs.
13. We pray for comfort and support for family members.
14. We pray for inspiration and guidance for medical personnel and providers providing care. AMEN.

Galatians 4: 13-14

You know that it was because of a physical infirmity that I first announced the gospel to you; though my condition put you to the test, you did not scorn or despise me, but welcomed me as an angel of God, as Christ Jesus.