

*Lights in the Darkness is a program where people who have been touched by mental health can come together in community to create figurative lantern sculptures. The act of creation, for some, can be a way to process the thoughts or insights they have about the journey mental health has taken in their life. By coming together in a community workshop, we hope participants feel supported and understood. The end result of the program, the public exhibit, offers a highly visible and poignant moment to encourage others to talk about mental health and reduce the stigma of asking for help.*

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# Lights in the Darkness



*Presented by the Irish Diaspora Center*

**Dilworth Park at City Hall  
Philadelphia, Pennsylvania  
22 September 2022**

# Lights in the Darkness

## A mental health community art program Lighting Ceremony • Interfaith Service • Public Display

Master of Ceremonies: Kathleen Kenneally  
Board Chair, Irish Diaspora Center

Welcome & Opening Remarks: Emily Norton Ashinhurst  
Executive Director, Irish Diaspora Center

Mayor's Remarks: Philadelphia Mayor James Kenney

Artists Remarks: Tom Meskell

### Interfaith Prayer Service

The Rev. Dr. Hillary Raining  
St. Christopher's Episcopal Church, Gladwyne, PA

Rabbi Beth Kalisch  
Beth David Reform Congregation, Gladwyne, PA

The Rev. Andrew Kellner  
St. James School, Philadelphia, PA

Sister Rose Martin, RSM  
Sisters of Mercy of the Americas, Merion, PA

**Keynote Speaker: Jordan Burnham**  
Minding Your Mind

Representative's Remarks: Congresswoman Mary Gay Scanlon (PA 5)

IDC Incoming Board Chair Remarks: Joseph Kelley, Jr. Esq.  
Kelley Legal Group, LLC

**Keynote Speaker: Dr. Kristen Donnelly, MSW, M.Div., PhD**  
Abbey Research

Closing: Kathleen Kenneally  
Board Chair, Irish Diaspora Center

## Artist Statement

As a socially engaged artist from Ireland, Tom Meskell has been working on the "Lights in the Darkness" series since 2016. With the launch of the Philadelphia program, Tom is delighted to share that he has made the international leap in the community-based, mental health art program and entered a very exciting phase of his work.

From its inception to now, the program has become a way to purposely engage with people in a transformative, creative sense. Using the lantern workshops to focus on mental health and engage people in a way that is equally creative, team building, bonding, and personal development journey, Tom and his colleague Tommy Casby are proud to merge their artistic passion with this important issue.

The "crisis of silence" in mental health can be solved by talking and bringing our anxieties out of the darkness. This project aims to be a catalyst for the conversations that shine light on mental health in a beautiful, uplifting, creative way.

## Tribute List

Workshop participants and community members have shared the following individuals to whom their work was dedicated.

Kyle Ashinhurst	Stephen Gomez	Jack Murtagh
Gerard Bogle	Rosaleen Gorman	John Ohls
Cathal Boyle	Todd Hall	Abigail Jean Pohlar
Craig Brode	Brendan Harkin	Steve PR
Murin Clifford	Theresa L.	Vince PR
Craig Cochran	Cantor Lillia Kazansky	Catherine Price
Sean D.	Rodney McCullough	Lavaina Price
Monika Dene	Matt McGee	John Reardon
Alyson Duks	Kevin McGinley	Ron Reardon
Fergal F.	Brian Michael McMenamin	Thomas Rhodes
Robert Flynn	Katie Meyer	John Ries
Brendan G.	Kwali Minter	Major Van Winkle
J.J. Gallagher	Sean Murtagh	Austin Wyle
Nigel Gallen		

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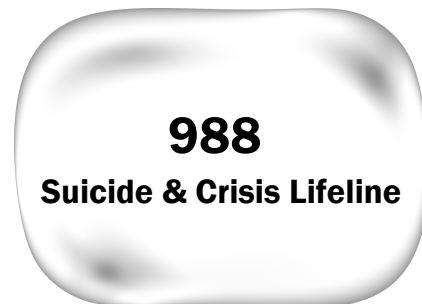
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Gladwyne, PA



We can all help prevent suicide. The Lifeline provides 24/7, free and confidential support for people in distress, prevention and crisis resources for you or your loved ones, and best practices for professionals in the United States.

## Interfaith Prayer Service

Leader: We meet in the presence of God who knows our needs, hears our cries, feels our pain, and heals our hearts.

### The Gathering

Let us come before God, seeking healing for ourselves, our loved ones, and our community.

### A Prayer of Healing for Mental Illness

May the One who blessed our ancestors bless all who live with mental illness, our care-givers, families and friends; May we walk in the footsteps of Jacob, King Saul, Miriam, Hannah and Naomi who struggled with dark moods, hopelessness, isolation and terrors, but survived and led our people. Just as our father, Jacob, spent the night wrestling with an angel and prevailed, may all who live with mental illness be granted the endurance to wrestle with pain and prevail night upon night. Grace us with the faith to know that though, like Jacob, we may be wounded, shaped and renamed by this struggle, still we will live on to continue an ever unfolding, unpredictable path toward healing. May we not be alone on this path but accompanied by our families, friends, care-givers, ancestors and the Divine presence. Surround us with loving-kindness, grace and companionship and spread over us a sukkat shalom, a shelter of peace and wholeness. And let us say: Amen  
© Rabbi Elliot Kukla, 2008

### Prayers of the People

(adapted from Association of Catholic Mental Health Ministers)

Let us pray to the God of Mercies: Holy One, we pray for the unity of all people; that we may welcome and serve those who live with a mental illness.

*God of healing, hear our prayer.*

Guide us, the citizens and leaders of this land, this state and this city, that we may unite to provide for and protect the poor, the homeless, and those who suffer in mind, body and spirit.

*God of justice, hear our prayer.*

Comfort and relieve those who are troubled in mind and spirit. Bring them hope, peace and the consolation of a loving community.

*God of unity, hear our prayer.*

Grant patience and courage to the families and friends of those who are in need. Increase their perseverance as they face challenges to recovery for their loved one.

## Interfaith Prayer Service (continued)

*God of love, hear our prayer.*

Protect and defend those living with mental illness from exploitation, addictions, and abuse.

*God of grace, hear our prayer.*

Walk with the homeless and missing persons, those who are destitute and have no one to support them and offer them care. Forgive us for our indifference. Grant us the capacity and strength to help those who cannot help themselves.

*God of mercy, hear our prayer.*

We commend to your mercy and defense all who are contemplating suicide today, right now.

*God of hope, hear our prayer.*

For the families who have lost a loved one to mental illness, bring them comfort in trusting that your grace welcomes their ill loved one with pure love, regardless of the act that brought them into your loving arms.

*God of wholeness, hear our prayer.*

Empower us to speak up for those who do not have a voice, remind us to stay silent when we need to let those who have a voice speak, and save us from making peace with the injustices in the social systems that have failed us.

*God of strength, hear our prayer.*

Guide those who do research on mental health; uphold them with your compassion and diligence.

*God of inspiration, hear our prayer.*

For those who are in recovery and for treatments that restore them their fullest and most rewarding lives, we give you thanks.

*God of restoration, hear our prayer.*

Giver of life and health, we trust that in your time and way, you will dispel all confusion with your order and all fear with your peace. Through Jesus Christ, who intercedes for us and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.

*Amen.*

## The Lighting of the Lanterns

Leader: As the psalm is read, the lanterns are lit. We will maintain a moment of silence for those in whose honor they shine. Everyone is invited to hold the names of loved ones as well.

If I say, "Surely the darkness will cover me, and the light around me turns to night," darkness is not dark to you, O Lord; the night is as bright as the day; darkness and light to you are both alike. (Psalm 139:10-11)

Let us pray.

Almighty God, we give you thanks for surrounding us, as daylight fades, with the brightness of the vesper light; and we implore you of your great mercy that, as you enfold us with the radiance of this light, so you would shine into our hearts the brightness of your healing love. (Adapted from the BCP)

*Amen.*

### **From Tattered Kaddish, by Adrienne Rich**

Praise to life though it crumbled in like a tunnel  
on ones we knew and loved  
Praise to life though its windows blew shut  
on the breathing-room of ones we knew and loved  
Praise to life though ones we knew and loved  
loved it badly, too well, and not enough  
Praise to life though it tightened like a knot  
on the hearts of ones we thought we knew loved us  
Praise to life-giving room and reason  
to ones we knew and loved who felt unpraisable  
Praise to them, how they loved it, when they could

(Excerpted from a poem by the Jewish poet Adrienne Rich, in memory of her husband, who died by suicide. The refrain is inspired by the most important Jewish mourning prayer, the Mourner's Kaddish.)

*ALL Nothing can separate us from your love.*

Breathe on us, breath of God;

*ALL fill us with your saving power.*

Speak in us, wisdom of God;

*ALL bring strength, healing and peace.*

God is here.

The peace of the Holy One be always with you.

*ALL And also with you.*

Service formed from materials adapted from:

The Church of England; The Book of Common Prayer, Association of Catholic Mental Health Ministers

Jewish poet Adrienne Rich © Rabbi Elliot Kukla, 2008