

“The Longest Night”

A Worship Service of Strength, Hope, and Community

Monday, December 21, 7:00 pm

Chiming of the Hour

Preparing for Worship.....Dan Koger

Welcoming Music

Invitation to Worship.....Dan Koger

Opening Words.....Dan Koger and Kim Miller

We are raw nerves, exposed and tender. We are weary bones, hunched and fragile.

We are silent prayers, lips saying your name.

We are wedding rings we can't take off, even though time has passed. We are the same pew, but it feels different now.

We are a brave face when we have to be strong.

We are tears in the shower when grief roars its head. We are setting the table, but there are empty seats.

We are stuck in the swell, caught in the storm.

We are moving on, caught in our guilt.

We are okay some days, but some days we're not. We are familiar with the night, we know it by name.

We are night-walkers, dream-makers, star-chasers. We are close to home, but home has changed.

We are close to the surface, but the waters are rising. We are all of this, plus everything else, and we are here. We are here.

Grief is here.

God is here.

The night is here.

And all of this is true, and we are not alone. Take my hand.

Take these words.

Let them be your life raft.

Let this be the longest night, and let it be whatever you need it to be. We are here.

Grief is here.

God is here.

Take what you need.

Amen.

Hymn.....In the Bleak Mid-Winter

**In the bleak midwinter, frosty wind made moan,
Earth stood hard as iron, water like a stone;
Snow had fallen, snow on snow, snow on snow,
In the bleak midwinter long, long ago.**

**What can I give him, poor as I am?
If I were a shepherd, I would bring a lamb;
If I were a wise man, I would do my part;
Yet what I can I give him: give my heart.**

Prayers of Remembrance

We Remember those Persons Who Have Been Loved and Lost

**O come, O come, Emmanuel, And ransom captive Israel,
That mourns in lonely exile here, Until the Son of God appear.
Rejoice! Rejoice! Emmanuel shall come to thee, O Israel.**

We Remember those Persons Dealing with Other Occasions of Loss

**O come, Thou Day-spring, come and cheer, Our spirits by Thine advent here;
Disperse the gloomy clouds of night, And death's dark shadows put to flight.
Rejoice! Rejoice! Emmanuel shall come to thee, O Israel.**

We Remember those who are Struggling to Acknowledge the Pain of Loss

**O come, Thou Wisdom from on high, And order all things, far and nigh;
To us the path of knowledge show, And cause us in her ways to go.
Rejoice! Rejoice! Emmanuel shall come to thee, O Israel.**

We Remember with Gratitude Those Who Have Journeyed with Us

**O come, Desire of nations, bind, All peoples in one heart and mind;
Bid envy, strife and quarrels cease, Fill the whole world with heaven's peace.
Rejoice! Rejoice! Emmanuel shall come to thee, O Israel.**

We Respond in Hope

Musical Reflection.....Some Things Never Change.....Heather Sorensen
Kyle Cook, Soloist

A Prayer for the Longest Night.....Dan Koger

Lighting Candles of Remembrance and Naming our Memory Stars

We invite you now to light a candle of remembrance using whatever candle you have at hand. Light the candle. And say, "Today, I light this candle to remember (first name of your loved one). You are also invited to write the name of your loved one on your hand or whatever you have available, or simply repeat their name as you reflect and remember.

**Silent night, holy night! Son of God love's pure light.
Radiant beams from Thy holy face, With dawn of redeeming grace,
Jesus Lord, at Thy birth, Jesus Lord, at Thy birth**

Sending Forth.....Dan Koger

Worship Leaders

Dan Koger, Pastor

Kim Miller, Minister for Families and Social Media

Timothy Price, Pianist