



**Service of the Longest Night**  
**(Adapted with permission from Rev. Nicolette Siragusa)**  
**December 20, 2020**  
**7:00 p.m. Facebook Live Service**

*Following Jesus, our mission is to serve God  
by building an inclusive community where uplifting worship  
and relevant messages deepen spirituality  
and inspire acts of justice, service, and compassion.*

***Our Church's Mission Statement***

Rev. Dr. Laura Miller-Purrenhage, Pastor  
Angela Spialek, Office Administrator  
Nicole Finney, Child Care  
Sue Sackett, Custodian  
Rev. John Baumgartner, Pastor Emeritus

Judy Nielsen, Organist  
Darlene Banks, Bell Choir Director  
Brandon Frost, Choir Director  
Chuck Byam, Choir Accompanist

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## SERVICE OF THE LONGEST NIGHT

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### WELCOME

Welcome to this evening's Longest Night service, as we worship God and acknowledge that our feelings around the holidays are often complex. Together, we will light candles for ourselves, and for those we know who need more light in their lives.

### \*CALL TO WORSHIP

Leader: Blessed are the poor in spirit,

**People: For theirs is the kingdom of heaven.**

Leader: Blessed are those who mourn,

**People: For they will be comforted.**

Leader: Blessed are the meek,

**People: For they will inherit the earth.**

Leader: Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness,

**People: For they will be filled.**

Leader: Blessed are the merciful,

**People: For they will receive mercy.**

Leader: Blessed are the pure in heart,

**People: For they will see God.**

### LITANY OF DARKNESS AND LIGHT

Voice 1: We wait in the darkness, expectantly, longingly, thoughtfully.

Voice 2: In the darkness of the womb, the Christ-child was nurtured and made ready for the journey into light.

**All: You are with us, O God, in darkness and in light.**

Voice 1: It is only in the darkness that we can see the splendor of the universe – blankets of stars, the glowing of distant planets.

Voice 2: The darkness of the night sky allowed the Magi to follow a star to the Christ-child.

**All: You are with us, O God, in darkness and in light.**

Voice 1: In the darkness of night, desert peoples find relief from the cruel, relentless heat of the sun.

Voice 2: In the blessed desert darkness, Mary and Joseph escaped with the infant Jesus to safety in Egypt.

**All: You are with us, O God, in darkness and in light.**

Voice 1: In the darkness of sleep, we are restored and renewed. We allow our fears and concerns, our hopes and visions rise to the surface, and listen in the quiet for a still, small voice.

Voice 2: God spoke to Jacob and Joseph through dreams in the darkness of sleep. God is speaking still.

**All: You are with us, O God, in darkness and in light. For darkness is not dark to you, and night is as bright as day.**

### **Connecting With Scripture**

*After each passage is read, you are invited to type into the comments the number of candles you would like the pastor to light for yourself, or for someone you care about. If you wish, you may list names of people you are praying for (by first name only). You are also invited to light a prayer candle at home. Once the pastor has finished lighting the candles, we will pray aloud together.*

FIRST STORY                      “Loss”    Job1:13-21

**Prayer: Great Provider, sustain your people who mourn the loss of health and youth, of strength and independence, of dreams and opportunities, of family and friends, of material blessings and financial security. Amen.**

SECOND STORY                      “Death of a Child”    Matthew 2:16-18

**Prayer: Holy Mother, as you grieved for your beloved child on the cross, comfort those who grieve for children lost during pregnancy, in childhood, and in adulthood. Amen.**

THIRD STORY                      “Depression”    Psalm 13:1-3

**Prayer: Good Shepherd, walk with all those in shadowed valleys, restoring their souls and granting them a light in the darkness. Amen.**

FOURTH STORY                      “Family Strife”    Genesis 37:23-34 (adapted)

**Prayer: Father of the fatherless, Mother of the motherless, Brother, Sister, Spouse: Bring your healing to broken homes and wounded families through the gifts of confession, repentance, and forgiveness. Bless those who find no comfort in families of blood with chosen families and families of faith. Amen.**

FIFTH STORY                      “Sickness”    Psalm 6:2-7

**Prayer: Holy Spirit, Breath of Life, we ask that you grant life, hope, and healing to the sick. Breathe peace and acceptance into those with chronic and progressive conditions, and ease their pain, that they may find contentment in this life. Amen.**

SIXTH STORY

“Uncertainty & Anxiety”

Daniel 6:14-20

**Prayer:** **Prince of Peace, fill the anxious with serenity. Remind us all that, regardless of what the future or the present holds, like lilies of the field, we all are always clothed in the love and comfort of your presence. Amen.**

SEVENTH STORY

“Injustice”

Job 24: 2-8 and 9:22-24

**Prayer:** **God of justice, move among the hearts and minds of all of the people of this world, guiding us toward actions that will heal these broken systems and bring a just peace to all. Help us to see the progress that has been made that we may find hope and encouragement in doing this life-long work. Amen.**

EIGHTH STORY

“Loneliness & Abandonment”

Psalms 22:1-7

**Prayer:** **Holy Spirit, open the eyes of those who feel alone to your abiding presence, and bring them into loving community. Let them believe in their hearts that they are your beloved children. Amen.**

NINTH STORY

“Addiction”

Proverbs 23:29-35

**Prayer:** **Light of the World, rescue all who dwell in the midst of addiction, freeing them from the false promises that this escapism provides, as well as all that binds them. Amen.**

TENTH STORY

“Fury and Outrage”

Psalms 109: 8-20

**Prayer:** **Lamb of God, free your people from the burden of furious anger, softening our hearts, and teach us how to turn our swords into plowshares. Let us be filled with the same grace that you grant to us, so that we may act with love and forgiveness, even towards our enemies. Amen.**

COMFORT FROM THE STORY

THE LORD’S PRAYER

BENEDICTION

## **Job1:13-21**

<sup>13</sup> One day when his sons and daughters were eating and drinking wine in the eldest brother's house, <sup>14</sup> a messenger came to Job and said, "The oxen were plowing and the donkeys were feeding beside them, <sup>15</sup> and the Sabeans fell on them and carried them off, and killed the servants with the edge of the sword; I alone have escaped to tell you." <sup>16</sup> While he was still speaking, another came and said, "The fire of God fell from heaven and burned up the sheep and the servants, and consumed them; I alone have escaped to tell you." <sup>17</sup> While he was still speaking, another came and said, "The Chaldeans formed three columns, made a raid on the camels and carried them off, and killed the servants with the edge of the sword; I alone have escaped to tell you." <sup>18</sup> While he was still speaking, another came and said, "Your sons and daughters were eating and drinking wine in their eldest brother's house, <sup>19</sup> and suddenly a great wind came across the desert, struck the four corners of the house, and it fell on the young people, and they are dead; I alone have escaped to tell you."

<sup>20</sup> Then Job arose, tore his robe, shaved his head, and fell on the ground and worshiped. <sup>21</sup> He said, "Naked I came from my mother's womb, and naked shall I return there; the LORD gave, and the LORD has taken away; blessed be the name of the LORD."

## **Matthew 2:16-18**

<sup>16</sup> When Herod saw that he had been tricked by the wise men, he was infuriated, and he sent and killed all the children in and around Bethlehem who were two years old or under, according to the time that he had learned from the wise men. <sup>17</sup> Then was fulfilled what had been spoken through the prophet Jeremiah:

<sup>18</sup> "A voice was heard in Ramah,  
wailing and loud lamentation,  
Rachel weeping for her children;  
she refused to be consoled, because they are no more."

## **Psalm 13:1-3**

- <sup>1</sup> How long, O LORD? Will you forget me forever?  
How long will you hide your face from me?
- <sup>2</sup> How long must I bear pain in my soul,  
and have sorrow in my heart all day long?  
How long shall my enemy be exalted over me?
- <sup>3</sup> Consider and answer me, O LORD my God!  
Give light to my eyes, or I will sleep the sleep of death,

## **Genesis 37:23-34 (adapted)**

<sup>23</sup> So when Joseph came to his brothers, they stripped him of his robe, the long robe with sleeves that he wore; <sup>24</sup> and they took him and threw him into a pit. The pit was empty; there was no water in it.

<sup>25</sup> Then they sat down to eat; and looking up they saw a caravan of Ishmaelites coming from Gilead, with their camels carrying gum, balm, and resin, on their way to carry it down to Egypt. <sup>26</sup> Then Judah said to his brothers, "What profit is it if we kill our brother and conceal his blood? <sup>27</sup> Come, let us sell him to the Ishmaelites, and not lay our hands on him, for he is our brother, our own flesh." And his brothers agreed. <sup>28</sup> When some Midianite traders passed by, they drew Joseph up, lifting him out of the pit, and sold him to the Ishmaelites for twenty pieces of silver. And they took Joseph to Egypt.

<sup>29</sup> When Reuben returned to the pit and saw that Joseph was not in the pit, he tore his clothes. <sup>30</sup> He returned to his brothers, and said, "The boy is gone; and I, where can I turn?" <sup>31</sup> Then they took Joseph's robe, slaughtered a goat, and dipped the robe in the blood. <sup>32</sup> They had the long robe with sleeves taken to their father, and they said, "This we have found; see now whether it is your son's robe or not." <sup>33</sup> He recognized it, and said, "It is my son's robe! A wild animal has devoured him; Joseph is without doubt torn to pieces." <sup>34</sup> Then Jacob tore his garments, and put sackcloth on his loins, and mourned for his son many days.

## **Psalm 6:2-7**

- <sup>2</sup> Be gracious to me, O LORD, for I am languishing;  
O LORD, heal me, for my bones are shaking with terror.
- <sup>3</sup> My soul also is struck with terror,  
while you, O LORD—how long?
- <sup>4</sup> Turn, O LORD, save my life;  
deliver me for the sake of your steadfast love.
- <sup>5</sup> For in death there is no remembrance of you;  
in Sheol who can give you praise?
- <sup>6</sup> I am weary with my moaning;  
every night I flood my bed with tears;  
I drench my couch with my weeping.
- <sup>7</sup> My eyes waste away because of grief;  
they grow weak because of all my foes.

## **Daniel 6:14-20**

<sup>14</sup> When the king heard the charge, he was very much distressed. He was determined to save Daniel, and until the sun went down he made every effort to rescue him. <sup>15</sup> Then the conspirators came to the king and said to him, “Know, O king, that it is a law of the Medes and Persians that no interdict or ordinance that the king establishes can be changed.”

<sup>16</sup> Then the king gave the command, and Daniel was brought and thrown into the den of lions. The king said to Daniel, “May your God, whom you faithfully serve, deliver you!” <sup>17</sup> A stone was brought and laid on the mouth of the den, and the king sealed it with his own signet and with the signet of his lords, so that nothing might be changed concerning Daniel. <sup>18</sup> Then the king went to his palace and spent the night fasting; no food was brought to him, and sleep fled from him.

<sup>19</sup> Then, at break of day, the king got up and hurried to the den of lions. <sup>20</sup> When he came near the den where Daniel was, he cried out anxiously to Daniel, “O Daniel, servant of the living God, has your God whom you faithfully serve been able to deliver you from the lions?”

## **Job 24: 2-8**

- <sup>2</sup> The wicked remove landmarks;  
they seize flocks and pasture them.
- <sup>3</sup> They drive away the donkey of the orphan;  
they take the widow's ox for a pledge.
- <sup>4</sup> They thrust the needy off the road;  
the poor of the earth all hide themselves.
- <sup>5</sup> Like wild asses in the desert  
they go out to their toil,  
scavenging in the wasteland  
food for their young.
- <sup>6</sup> They reap in a field not their own  
and they glean in the vineyard of the wicked.
- <sup>7</sup> They lie all night naked, without clothing,  
and have no covering in the cold.
- <sup>8</sup> They are wet with the rain of the mountains,  
and cling to the rock for want of shelter.

## **Job 9:22-24**

- <sup>22</sup> It is all one; therefore I say,  
he destroys both the blameless and the wicked.
- <sup>23</sup> When disaster brings sudden death,  
he mocks at the calamity of the innocent.
- <sup>24</sup> The earth is given into the hand of the wicked;  
he covers the eyes of its judges—  
if it is not he, who then is it?



## **Psalm 22:1-7**

<sup>1</sup> My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?

Why are you so far from helping me, from the words of my groaning?

<sup>2</sup> O my God, I cry by day, but you do not answer;  
and by night, but find no rest.

<sup>3</sup> Yet you are holy,  
enthroned on the praises of Israel.

<sup>4</sup> In you our ancestors trusted;  
they trusted, and you delivered them.

<sup>5</sup> To you they cried, and were saved;  
in you they trusted, and were not put to shame.

<sup>6</sup> But I am a worm, and not human;  
scorned by others, and despised by the people.

<sup>7</sup> All who see me mock at me;  
they make mouths at me, they shake their heads;

## **Proverbs 23:29-35**

<sup>29</sup> Who has woe? Who has sorrow?

Who has strife? Who has complaining?

Who has wounds without cause?

Who has redness of eyes?

<sup>30</sup> Those who linger late over wine,  
those who keep trying mixed wines.

<sup>31</sup> Do not look at wine when it is red,  
when it sparkles in the cup  
and goes down smoothly.

<sup>32</sup> At the last it bites like a serpent,  
and stings like an adder.

<sup>33</sup> Your eyes will see strange things,  
and your mind utter perverse things.

<sup>34</sup> You will be like one who lies down in the midst of the sea,  
like one who lies on the top of a mast.

<sup>35</sup> "They struck me," you will say, "but I was not hurt;  
they beat me, but I did not feel it.

When shall I awake?

I will seek another drink."

## Psalm 109: 8-20

- <sup>8</sup> May his days be few;  
may another seize his position.
- <sup>9</sup> May his children be orphans,  
and his wife a widow.
- <sup>10</sup> May his children wander about and beg;  
may they be driven out of<sup>[a]</sup> the ruins they inhabit.
- <sup>11</sup> May the creditor seize all that he has;  
may strangers plunder the fruits of his toil.
- <sup>12</sup> May there be no one to do him a kindness,  
nor anyone to pity his orphaned children.
- <sup>13</sup> May his posterity be cut off;  
may his name be blotted out in the second generation.
- <sup>14</sup> May the iniquity of his father<sup>[b]</sup> be remembered before the LORD,  
and do not let the sin of his mother be blotted out.
- <sup>15</sup> Let them be before the LORD continually,  
and may his<sup>[c]</sup> memory be cut off from the earth.
- <sup>16</sup> For he did not remember to show kindness,  
but pursued the poor and needy  
and the brokenhearted to their death.
- <sup>17</sup> He loved to curse; let curses come on him.  
He did not like blessing; may it be far from him.
- <sup>18</sup> He clothed himself with cursing as his coat,  
may it soak into his body like water,  
like oil into his bones.
- <sup>19</sup> May it be like a garment that he wraps around himself,  
like a belt that he wears every day.”
- <sup>20</sup> May that be the reward of my accusers from the LORD,  
of those who speak evil against my life.