

Longest Night Service

December 21, 2024
6:30pm

Shining a light in the midst of darkness

“Do Not Be Afraid: #morelight”

Prelude

Greeting

Lighting of the Advent Wreath

Song Long Ago (In the Bleak Midwinter)

Reading 1 Matthew 22:2-10

This story offers hope for those who have no one to invite them in. It reminds us that in God's divine order, no one is excluded; all are invited.

Candle Lighting Lord our God, may your fellowship be available to all, including those who feel excluded. Amen.

Reading 2

Luke 2:1-7

*Jesus himself was no stranger to being a stranger,
an outsider, a refugee*

Candle Lighting

Lord Jesus, let those who are far from home, those who are strangers, feel that they genuinely belong in your company. Amen.

Reading 3

Luke 6:17-23

This familiar passage, the Beatitudes, reveals that Jesus was well aware of people's sorrows, yearnings, and suffering--and offered a promise of something different.

Candle Lighting

Lord Jesus, like this candle, bring some warmth and light to those who mourn, who hunger and thirst, and who weep.

Reading 4

Matthew 2:9-18

Anniversaries and special events are not always happy times. For the people in Bethlehem, the birth of Jesus would always remind them of the army that massacred their children.

Candle Lighting

Dear God, you suffered when your child died. In your compassion, ease our suffering. Amen.

Reading 5

Revelation 21:1-7

Our present world is not how God wants things to be. Those who weep now will not weep later. In this new heaven and new earth, there will be no more need for tears.

Candle Lighting

Lord God, your vision seems a long way in the future. Bring your promise closer to us, we pray.

It came upon the midnight clear, that glorious song of old,
from angels bending near the earth to touch their harps of gold:

"Peace on the earth, good will to men,
from heaven's all-gracious King."

The world in solemn stillness lay, to hear the angels sing.

Still through the cloven skies they come with peaceful wings unfurled,
and still their heavenly music floats o'er all the weary world;
above its sad and lowly plains,
they bend on hovering wing,
and ever o'er its Babel sounds the blessed angels sing.

And ye, beneath life's crushing load, whose forms are bending low,
who toil along the climbing way with painful steps and slow,
look now! for glad and golden hours
come swiftly on the wing.

O rest beside the weary road, and hear the angels sing!

For lo! the days are hastening on, by prophet seen of old,
when with the ever-circling years shall come the time foretold
when peace shall over all the earth
its ancient splendors fling,
and the whole world send back the song which now the angels sing.

Benediction

Do not be afraid

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