

# The Longest Night

## Worship Service

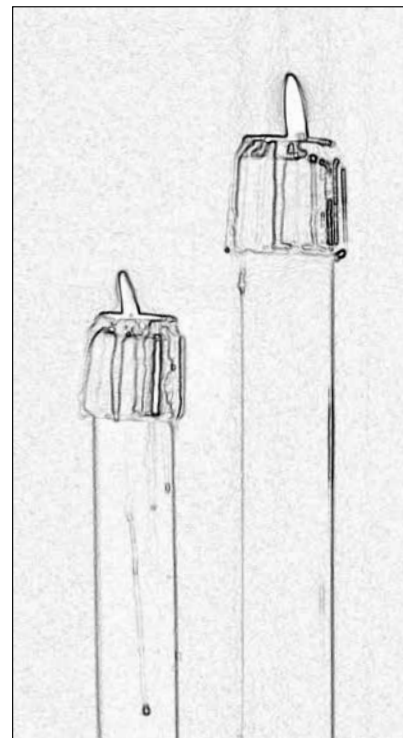
Thursday, December 18, 2014 • 6:30 p.m. • Buchanan Chapel

*Led by Stephen Ministry*

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I will light candles this Christmas:  
Candles of joy despite all sadness,  
Candles of hope where despair keeps watch,  
Candles of courage for fears ever present,  
  
Candles of peace for tempest-tossed days,  
Candles of grace to ease heavy burdens,  
Candles of love to inspire all my living,  
Candles that will burn all the year long.

Howard Thurman



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### Gathering

#### Call to Worship . . . . . (Psalm 13:3–6)

One: Consider and answer me, O Lord my God; lighten my eyes, lest I sleep the sleep of death;  
lest my enemy say, “I have prevailed over him”; lest my foes rejoice because I am shaken.


All: **We come to you, O Lord, seeking answers to our questions.**  
**We come to you, O God, because you are the Creator.**

One: I have trusted your steadfast love; my heart shall rejoice in your salvation.  
I will sing to the Lord, because he has dealt bountifully with me.

All: **We come looking for a song to sing;**  
**we wait for your voice to call us from beyond our fear.**

### Opening Prayer

**\*Song** ..... "O Come, O Come, Emmanuel"



1. O come, O come, Em - man - u - el, And ran - som  
 2. O come, Thou Day-spring, come and cheer Our spir - its  
 3. O come, De - sire of na - tions, bind All peo - ples

cap-tive Is - ra - el, That mourns in lone - ly ex - ile  
 by Thine ad - vent here; Dis - perse the gloom-y clouds of  
 in one heart and mind; Bid en - vy, strife, and dis - cord

here Un - til the Son of God ap - pear.  
 night, And death's dark shad - ows put to flight. Re-joice! Re-joice!  
 cease; Fill the whole world with heav - en's peace.

Em - man - u - el Shall come to thee, O Is - ra - el!

**Words of Welcome**

**Psalter** ..... Psalm 22:1–5, 9–10  
 (congregation sings the refrain and reads responsively)

**Refrain**



My God, my God, why have you a-ban-doned me?

- Leader: My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?  
 Why are you so far from my help and from my cry of distress?
- People: **O my God, I cry out in the daytime, but you do not answer.  
 At night also, but I get no relief. (sung refrain)**
- Leader: But you are the Holy One, enthroned on the praises of your people.  
 Our ancestors trust in you: they trusted and you delivered them.
- People: **They called to you and were rescued: they put their trust in you  
 and were not disappointed. (sung refrain)**
- Leader: But you are the one who took me out of the womb:  
 you kept me safe upon my mother's breast.
- People: **On you have I been cast ever since I was born:  
 and you are my God even from my mother's womb. (sung refrain)**

## Poem

## Scripture Readings

Psalm 77 . . . . . (Old Testament, page 508)

Romans 8:31–35, 37–39. . . . . (New Testament, page 148)

Matthew 11:28–30 . . . . . (New Testament, page 11)

**Meditation** . . . . . by Judith L. Watt

**Song** . . . . . “There Is a Balm in Gilead”

The musical score is written for a single melodic line in 4/4 time, featuring a key signature of one flat (B-flat). It begins with a treble clef and a key signature of one flat. The first line of music is marked with a repeat sign and contains the lyrics: "There is a balm in Gil-e-ad to make the wound-ed whole." The second line of music is marked with a repeat sign and contains the lyrics: "There is a balm in Gil-e-ad to heal the sin - sick soul." The third line of music is marked with a repeat sign and contains the lyrics: "1. Some - times I feel dis - cour-aged, And think my work's in vain, But 2. Don't ev - er feel dis - cour-aged, For Je - sus is your friend, And 3. If you can-not preach like Pe - ter, If you can - not pray like Paul, You can". The fourth line of music is marked with a repeat sign and contains the lyrics: "then the Ho - ly Spir - it Re - vives my soul a - gain. There is a if you lack for knowl-edge He'll not re - fuse to lend. There is a tell the love of Je - sus And say, 'He died for all.'" There is a D.S. (Da Segno) marking at the end of the fourth line.

There is a balm in Gil-e-ad to make the wound-ed whole.

There is a balm in Gil-e-ad to heal the sin - sick soul.

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2. Don't ev - er feel dis - cour-aged, For Je - sus is your friend, And  
3. If you can-not preach like Pe - ter, If you can - not pray like Paul, You can

then the Ho - ly Spir - it Re - vives my soul a - gain. There is a  
if you lack for knowl-edge He'll not re - fuse to lend. There is a  
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## A Liturgy of Remembering

Leader: We light this candle to remember those persons  
who have been loved and lost. We pause to remember their name,  
their face, their voice. We give thanks for the memory  
that binds them to us this season that anticipates Christ.

*(Pause while the first candle is lit)*

People: **May God's eternal love surround them.**

Leader: We light this second candle to redeem the pain and loss:  
the loss of relationships, the loss of jobs, and the loss of health.  
As we gather up the pain of the past, we offer it to you, O God,  
asking that into our welcome hearts and open hands  
you place the gift of peace.

*(Pause while the second candle is lit)*

People: **Refresh, restore, renew us, O God, and lead us into your future.**

Leader: We light this third candle to remember ourselves this Christmastime.  
We pause and remember the past weeks, months, and, for some of us,  
years of down times. We remember the poignancy of memories,  
the grief, the sadness, the hurt, and the pain of reflecting on our own mortality.

*(Pause while the third candle is lit)*

People: **Let us remember that dawn defeats darkness.**

Leader: The fourth candle is lit to remember the children and adults lost in Ferguson, Missouri.  
We remember their names, their loved ones, their innocence.  
We struggle to hold onto your promises, O God, in the face of such tragedy.

*(Pause while the fourth candle is lit)*

People: **Let us remember that the darkness of evil  
cannot overcome your light of love and redemption.**

Leader: This fifth candle is lit to remember our faith  
and the gift of hope that the Christmas story offers us.  
We remember that God, who shares our life,  
promises us a place and time when suffering and pain will be no more.

*(Pause while the fifth candle is lit)*

People: **Let us remember the One who shows the way,  
who brings the truth, and who bears the light.**

*(We leave the Christ candle unlit as a sign of waiting for a future  
that is yet unknown to us, from which God beckons us.)*

**Solo** . . . . . "In the Bleak Midwinter" by Gustav Holst

In the bleak midwinter, frosty wind made moan; earth stood hard as iron, water like a stone;  
snow had fallen, snow on snow, in the bleak midwinter, long ago.  
Our God, heaven cannot hold him, nor earth sustain;  
heaven and earth shall flee away when he comes to reign:  
in the bleak midwinter a stable place sufficed the Lord God incarnate, Jesus Christ.  
Angels and archangels may have gathered there: cherubim and seraphim thronged the air;  
but his mother only, in her maiden bliss, worshiped the beloved with a kiss.  
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.

**Moment of Silent Reflection and Prayer**

**Pastoral Prayer**

**Song** . . . . . "Silent Night, Holy Night"

1 Si - lent night, ho - ly night! All is calm, all is bright  
2 Si - lent night, ho - ly night! Shep - herds quake at the sight;  
3 Si - lent night, ho - ly night! Son of God, love's pure light  
4 Si - lent night, ho - ly night! Won - drous star, lend thy light;

'round yon vir - gin moth - er and child! Ho - ly In - fant, so ten - der and  
glo - ries stream from heav - en a - far, heav - en - ly hosts sing "Al - le - lu -  
ra - diant beams from thy ho - ly face, with the dawn of re - deem - ing  
with the an - gels let us sing Al - le - lu - ia to our

mild, sleep in heav - en - ly peace, sleep in heav - en - ly peace.  
ia: Christ the Sav - ior is born; Christ the Sav - ior is born!"  
grace, Je - sus, Lord, at thy birth, Je - sus, Lord, at thy birth.  
King: Christ the Sav - ior is born; Christ the Sav - ior is born.

## **Closing Prayer** (*unison*)

**O God of all seasons and senses,  
grant us the sense of your timing  
to submit gracefully and rejoice quietly  
in the turn of the seasons.  
In this season of short days and long nights,  
of grey and white and cold,  
teach us the lessons of endings:  
children growing,  
friends leaving,  
loved ones dying,  
grieving over, grudges over,  
blaming over, excuses over.**

**O God, grant us a sense of your timing.  
In this season of short days and long nights,  
of grey and white and cold,  
teach us the lessons of beginnings,  
that such waitings and endings  
may be the starting place,  
a planting of seeds  
which bring to birth what is ready to be born—  
something right and just and different,  
a new song, a deeper relationship, a fuller love—  
in the fullness of your time.**

**O God, grant us the sense of your timing. Amen.**

*(A prayer from Guerrillas of Grace by Ted Loder)*

*Please stay in the chapel as long as you would like. When you leave, please leave in silence.*

*If you would like to talk to one of our Stephen Ministers, they will be outside of the chapel  
and would be glad to talk with you there.*

## **Stephen Ministers**

The Stephen Ministers commissioned on Sunday, February 23, 2014,  
and committed to serving for two years are

Martha Brown  
Rebecca Dixon  
Sam Evans  
Judy Knight  
Cheri Lundin  
Melanie Pierce  
Mark Schimmelpfennig  
Joan Sessions  
Blondie Thompson  
Leslie Wainwright  
Natalie Williams

The Stephen Minister leaders are

Paula Addington  
Jeannie Forrest  
Ellen Schaller  
Barbara Timberlake  
Roger Wilson  
Judith L. Watt, Associate Pastor for Pastoral Care

**Feelings of grief over losses** can be heightened at this time of year. Expectations for the holidays can be different from the realities. Such experiences need not be dealt with alone. Fourth Church's Replogle Center for Counseling and Well-Being offers various resources and a supportive environment for reflecting on, exploring, and coping with such experiences. To learn how the Replogle Center can help, call the Center at 312.787.8425.

**Stephen Ministers** are trained to listen and care during the challenge of life transitions. If you would like to explore the option of having a Stephen Minister, please call the confidential voicemail number at 312.573.3365.

**Grief support groups** are offered throughout the year by the Replogle Center and are designed to enable those undergoing significant loss and leave-taking experiences to help one another deal with grief. Replogle Center staff lead the groups, for which there is no fee.

**Intercessory prayer** provides opportunity to pray with a Deacon following the 9:30 and 11:00 a.m. Sunday services. This time of prayer takes place in Stone Chapel. Prayer concerns can also be written on prayer cards available outside Stone Chapel, in the Narthex, and in Anderson Hall and left for a Deacon to pray.

**A New Year's Eve Service in the style of Taizé** will be held on Wednesday, December 31 at 7:30 p.m. in Buchanan Chapel. This service of meditative song, prayer, and a period of silence offers time for reflection as one year draws to a close and a new year begins.

## **Worship Leaders**

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**Judith L. Watt** Associate Pastor for Pastoral Care

**Cole Seaton** Soloist

**Thomas E. Gouwens** Pianist

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