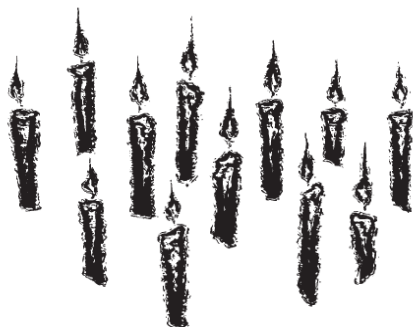


Longest Night of the Year:
A Service of Remembrance



THE LONGEST NIGHT SERVICE
DECEMBER 21, 2010
Church of St. David

Prelude: Quiet reflective music for contemplation and prayer

A Thought to Gather us in Worship:

Tonight, we gather here in this place of refuge – the lost, the lonely, the uncertain. We gather with our common humanity in search of the uncommon grace of the Divine. Tonight, we gather daring to wonder if God has indeed come in Jesus.

The world is dark. Rejection still occurs, relationships fail, our hearts are heavy with grief. We hold these heartaches in our hands of tenderness.

Tonight, we gather with neighbors and strangers, admitting that our brokenness shows. We come ready to empty our pockets of doubt and fill them with the hope others have embraced.

In Jesus, we gather just as we are, for God has promised to meet us here and to welcome us for who we are.

A **Psalm** to remind us of God Presence:

Be Still and Know

64

A **prayer** to take us to the place of hurting:

Holy and Gracious God, you know how difficult it is to be whole-hearted in our celebration of your birth. Our losses and our sorrow are what we know well. Where we are holding on to our pain, unwilling or unready to let it go, and where we have turned away from the grace you have offered, show us the way. Where our sadness goes on, where grief still has a claim on us, let us hear your assurance that you are traveling beside us, helping us to carry our burdens, and to let in the light of Jesus Christ.

A **Word** to hold us:

Psalm 139: Where can I go from your spirit? Or where can I flee from your presence? If I ascend to heaven, you are there; if I make my bed in Sheol, you are there. If I take the wings of the morning and settle at the farthest limits of the sea, even there your hand shall lead me, and your right hand shall hold me fast. If I say, "Surely the darkness shall cover me, and the light around me become night," even the darkness is not dark to you; the night is as bright as the day, for darkness is as light to you.

John 14 (selected verses)

A **Hymn** to help us: *People in Darkness* **124**

A **Message** to challenge us: What are we looking for?

A **Carol** to comfort us: *O Little Town* **165**

A **Litany** to lead us ~ A Litany of Remembrance

Stay with us through the Night (all three verses)

This **first** candle we light encourages us to remember those whom we have loved and lost. We remember their names, their faces, their voices that bind them to us in this season.

May God's eternal love surround them

Stay with us through the Night (verse 2)

This **second** candle we light encourages us to redeem the pain of loss; the loss of relationships, the loss of jobs, pets and promises, the loss of health, the loss of hopes and dreams. We pause to gather up the pain of the past. Tonight we take one more step as we offer it to God. **Refresh, restore, renew us, O God, and lead us into your future.**

Stay with us through the Night (verse 1)

This **third** candle we light encourages us to look after ourselves this Christmastime. We pause and remember all our hopes and fears; the dread, the disbelief, the anger, the down times, the poignancy of reminiscing, the hugs, kisses and handshakes of family and friends, all those who stood with us. We give thanks for all the support we have known. **Let us remember that dawn defeats darkness.**

Stay with us through the Night (Verse 3)

This **fourth** candle is lit to encourage us in our faith and the gift of hope which the Christmas story offers to us. Here we remember the God who shares our life in Christ and promises us a place and time where there will be no more pain and suffering. **Let us remember Jesus who prepared his friends and followers for the pain of parting and the sorrow of separation.**

Stay with us through the Night
(all three verses repeated as necessary)

CANDLE LIGHTING: Let all who wish to light a candle to remember a loved one, to remember a loss, to remember a relationship, come forward now to do so. Light a candle and set it into one of the containers on the table. Like our lives, each container is in darkness until it is filled by the light of Christ.

STAY WITH US

Words by WALTER FARQUHARSON
 quarter note = 72 *gravelly*

PIANO ACCOMPANIMENT VERSION
 with Keyboard Chord & Bass Instrument Progression

Music by RON KLUG-MEIER

1. Stay with us through the night. Stay with us
 2. Stay with us through the night. Stay with us
 3. Stay with us through the night. Stay with us

through the pain. Stay with us. bless-ed
 through the grief. Stay with us. bless-ed

strang-er 'til the morn-ing breaks a-gain. *Optional Bridge Between Verses*
 strang-er 'til the morn-ing breaks new bread.

Chords: G, Am, C, Bm7, Em7, C6+9, C, Em7, Am7, D7, D7, G, F#m, C

A Sending into the night

It's time to return to the hustle and bustle.

Show us the way O God for we your people walk in darkness.

It's time to place into your hands our hopes and fears

Show us the way O God for we your people walk in darkness.

It time to embrace the future you have for us.

Show us the way O God for we your people walk in darkness.

Hymn *What a Friend* (to the tune of *Scarlet Ribbon*) **746**

A Sending into the night

Postlude: Quiet, reflective music will continue until most have left. Please feel free to stay and pray and quietly talk with minister and members of the congregation