

**Longest Night Services
St. Andrews Hespeler
December 21, 2022, 7:30 pm**

This is a simple and meditative service. We come to share the grief of those who mourn at this time of the year and to share the burdens of those who struggle for any reason. As we begin the service, you are invited to bring forward any pictures of absent loved ones and place them on the round table at the front.

Call to Worship

L: Remember the messengers of faith you have known, rejoice, and give thanks for their witness.

P: We, too, will prepare the way of Christ; we will help to level the hills and valleys of life.

L: Hold one another in your hearts this day; pray that love may rule all your relationships.

P: We will weep with those who weep. We will rejoice with those who rejoice.

L: God will be with you wherever you go.

P: Amen

Carol #145 In the bleak mid-winter

1. In the bleak mid-winter, 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 mid-winter, long ago.
2. Our God, heaven cannot hold him, nor earth sustain;
heaven and earth shall welcome him when he comes to reign:
in the bleak mid-winter a stable place sufficed
the Lord God incarnate, Jesus Christ.
3. Angels and archangels may have gathered there,
cherubim and seraphim thronged the air;
but his mother only, in her maiden bliss,
worshipped the beloved with a kiss
4. 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.

Prayer:

P: God of love and understanding, we gather here this evening to confront our pain in the midst of the world's celebration. Help us know that you are present with us in all of our moods and feelings and seasons. Grant us a taste of the hope, peace, joy, and love that you promise to all of your people through the gift of your son Jesus. Amen.

Scripture: Matthew 5:4

"Blessed are those who mourn, for they will be comforted.

Christ's Promise to Mourners

Interlude: Rockingham by Henry Coleman

During this interlude, people are welcome to come forward in silence and light a candle in honour of an absent loved one.

Prayer:

P: God who brings comfort to the broken hearted, thank you that you always understand where we are on our journey through grief and loss. Thank you that you never try to hurry us on or tell us what we are supposed to feel or not feel. Thank you that you meet us where we are and walk along with us especially when we are feeling most alone. Amen.

Carol: Coventry Carol

1. Lully, lullay, thou little tiny child By-by, lully, lullay
Lullay, thou little tiny child By-by, lully, lullay
Oh, sisters too, how may we do For to preserve this day
This poor youngling for whom we sing By-by, lully, lullay
2. Lully, lullay, thou little tiny child By-by, lully, lullay
Lullay, thou little tiny child By-by, lully, lullay

God Bless you on this, the Longest Night of the Year.

Herod the King, in his raging Charged he hath this day
His men of might, in his own sight All children young to slay

3. Lully, lullay, thou little tiny child By-by, lully, lullay
Lullay, thou little tiny child By-by, lully, lullay
Then woe is me, poor child, for thee And ever morn and say
For thy parting, nor say nor sing By-by, lully, lullay

Scripture: Matthew 2:16-18

¹⁶ When Herod saw that he had been tricked by the magi, 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 magi. ¹⁷ Then what had been spoken through the prophet Jeremiah was fulfilled:

¹⁸ “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.”

Where is God when the World Goes Mad?

Interlude Ave Marie by Bach-Gounod

During this interlude, people are welcome to come forward in silence and light a candle in memory of the oppressed and the victims of this world.

Prayer:

P: God, you are the friend of the friendless and the defender of the oppressed. We lift up before you the oppressed of this world – the families of the missing and the murdered women and girls, the refugees, and those fighting foreign invaders. We pray for those who suffer under ruthless tyrants and yearn for freedom and self determination. Hear our prayer and call us to do our part to support them as well. Amen.

Carol #154 Silent night

1. Silent night! Holy night! All is calm, all is bright
round yon virgin mother and child; holy infant so tender and mild,
sleep in heavenly peace; sleep in heavenly peace.
2. Silent night! Holy night! Shepherds quake at the sight:
glories stream from heaven afar, heavenly hosts sing “Hallelujah,
Christ, the Saviour is born! Christ, the Saviour is born!”
3. Silent night! Holy night! Son of God, love’s pure light
radiant beams from thy holy face; with the dawn of redeeming grace,
Jesus, Lord, at thy birth, Jesus, Lord, at thy birth.

Scripture: 2 Corinthians 12:7b-10

^{7b} Therefore, to keep me from being too elated, a thorn was given me in the flesh, a messenger of Satan to torment me, to keep me from being too elated. ⁸ Three times I appealed to the Lord about this, that it would leave me, ⁹ but he said to me, “My grace is sufficient for you, for power is made perfect in weakness.” So I will boast all the more gladly of my weaknesses, so that the power of Christ may dwell in me. ¹⁰ Therefore I am content with weaknesses, insults, hardships, persecutions, and calamities for the sake of Christ, for whenever I am weak, then I am strong.

The Christmas Disaster of Josef Mohr and Franz Gruber

Interlude: “Dominus Regit Me” by Healey Willan

During this interlude, people are welcome to come forward in silence and light a candle for the celebrations to come.

Prayer:

P: God, we dedicate to you the gatherings and celebrations that are before us during this season. We know that all things will not go according to plan and we thank you for that. We know that we may struggle with emotions or with some relationships in the day to come. Thank you that you are with us no matter what we may struggle with. May your love, your power and your joy ultimately prevail. Amen

Celebration of Communion

Benediction

Postlude: Abide O Dearest Jesus by Max Reger

Minister: Scott McAndless

Organist: Martin Bohl

Tech Team: Laura Einwechter