

# Through the Night

## John 3:1-17

### Choral Reading

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### A Night Visitor

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### Today's Bible Reading

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### Additional Bible Readings

Genesis 12:1-4a

Psalms 121

Romans 4:1-5, 13-17

**Spirit, you lead us into the night. Sometimes the darkness is scary; sometimes it brings peace. In the stillness of the night, help us come to you. Let us experience you in ways we have not before. As we wrestle with the questions of our lives, help us know what really matters. Amen.**

In John 3:1-17, we meet Nicodemus. The introduction to this story of Nicodemus begins at John 2:23-25, with the crowd's reaction to Jesus' miracles and signs. Jesus distrusts them. Compared to the depths and meaningfulness of Jesus' teachings, their interest is shallow. Then Nicodemus comes to find out more about Jesus.

Nicodemus is a Pharisee, a pious Jew, a teacher and probably a member of the Sanhedrin. An important man with disciples of his own, he would represent the authority of both the temple and the governing council. Nicodemus comes at night, which is a good time for scholars to debate, and possibly with his disciples as Jesus addresses him using the plural form of "you." However, Nicodemus was also still "in the dark" about life in the Spirit. The conversation between Jesus and Nicodemus is about what matters and what is at the heart of Jesus' ministry. While the night was an acceptable time for scholars to debate, the imagery also raises questions for modern-day readers. What questions do we think about most in the middle of the night? Jesus draws some concrete lines between saved and unsaved, heaven and earth, those born of the Spirit and those who have not. It is a very binary view and one we may struggle with today. How do we know what we know? How did we come to believe what we believe? In the modern day, we can ask how the Holy Spirit may be calling us to reconsider binaries. The Spirit can be seen to call us to question assumptions and move to different understandings.