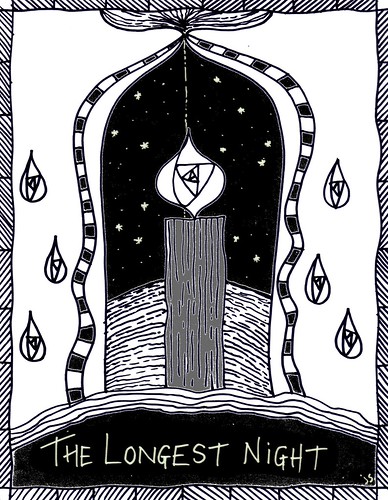
Saturday, December 21, 2024

Longest Night Worship



*Christ Lutheran Church*

**“A Place Where You are Always Welcome”**

**Services: Saturday 5:30 pm and Sunday 10:00 am**

**Sunday School: 9:00 am (September- May)**

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Ministers: **ALL members of the congregation**

***Pastor: Rev. Chrissy Salser*** [***chrissytherev@att.net***](mailto:chrissytherev@att.net) ***815-988-9450***

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***WELCOME:*** *Thank you for joining us for worship today. We are glad you are with us. Communion will be served in the aisle or in your pew. All are welcome to share at this meal. Jesus is our host and invites everyone. Those who would like to come forward, bread and wine will also be available in the front. When directed by the usher, come forward down the center aisle, Pr Chrissy will give you bread (she will be masked and wearing cloves) and then you will take a cup of wine (grape juice) from the tray. After taking communion you will return to your seat by the side aisle.* *For those who are unable to come forward, communion elements can be found as you entered worship. At that part of the service, you are invited to take the bread and wine (or grape juice) when Pr. Chrissy leads. On Saturdays offering is collected as you enter or leave worship. Online giving is available. Please see QR code on back of bulletin or visit our website.*

### Introduction: On a long winter evening we gather to proclaim the coming of the light. Amid our broken world we proclaim that the prince of peace is born among us. God comes to us in human flesh—in Christ’s body and blood—so that we may be bearers of divine light to all the world.

### *Gathering*: *The Holy Spirit calls us together as the people of God.*

**PRELUDE**

**WELCOME AND ANNOUNCEMENTS**

As the days grow shorter and the nights longer, we gather in darkness to await the dawn of God’s mercy. Our prayer is woven of silence, scripture, and song. Tonight’s worship is intentionally long enough for you to breathe deeply, wide enough to wrap around the whole assembly, and deep enough to become our prayer.

🕇 **CALL TO WORSHIP**

P: The Lord be with you. **C: And also with you.**

P: Into all darkness, doubt and despair,

**C: Come, Christ Jesus, be our light.**

P: Into all sorrow, sickness, and grief,

**C: Come, Christ Jesus, be our comfort.**

P: Into each conflict, division, and war,

**C: Come, Christ Jesus, be our peace.**

P: To a wounded creation and among us,

**C: Come, Christ Jesus, be our hope, now and always. Amen.**

🕇**gathering hymn: In the Bleak Midwinter ELW 294**



🕇**Greeting:**

P.  The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God, and the communion of the Holy Spirit be with you all. **C. And also with you.**

🕇**PRAYER OF THE DAY**

P: Let us pray. Creator of the stars of night, **bless the long hours of this night with the warmth of your presence. Come to all who suffer in any way. Grant rest to the weary, freedom to those who are burdened, and bright hope to those who despair. Strengthen us as we await your coming once again, through Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord.** **Amen.**

🕇**ADVENT LITANY OF REMEMBERING**

P: This first candle we light to remember those whom we have loved and lost.  We pause to remember their names, their faces, their voices, the memories that bind them to us in this season.

**C: May God’s eternal love surround them.**

*Silence (and play one verse of ‘**Christ Be Our Light” with no singing).*

P: This second candle we light to claim the pain of brokenness: the brokenness of relationships, the loss of jobs, the loss of health.  We pause to gather up the pain of the past and present and offer it to God, asking that from God’s hands we receive the gift of wholeness.

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

*Silence (and play one verse of “Christ Be Our Light” with no singing).*

P: This third candle we light to remember the groaning of creation. We pause to acknowledge that we have fallen short in our calling to care for the earth, and honor our connection with all creation.

**C: May the wonders of God be known in sea, earth, and sky.**

*Silence (and play one verse of “Christ Be Our Light” with no singing).*

P: The fourth candle we light to remember ourselves this Christmas time. We pause and remember these past weeks, months, and years: the sadness, the joys, the disbelief, the anger, the down times, the busy times. We honor our courage: courage to confront our sorrow, to comfort each other, to share our feelings honestly and openly with each other, and to dare to hope in the midst of pain.

**C: Let us remember how God’s light shines in the darkness, and the darkness did not overcome it.**

*Silence (and play one verse of “Christ Be Our Light” with no singing).*

P: We move the Christ Candle into the Advent Wreath to remember that Jesus was born into a world of brokenness and pain, and later was broken and in pain, but did not stay that way.

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

P: At this time, if you would like to light a candle in prayer for yourself or someone, please come forward and do so.

*Silence (and play one verse of “Christ Be Our Light” with no singing).*

*Word****:*** *God speaks to us in scripture reading, preaching, and song.*

*257 O Come, O Come, Emmanuel v. 1*

1 O come, O come, Emmanuel, and ransom captive Israel,

that mourns in lonely exile here until the Son of God appear.

Rejoice! Rejoice! Emmanuel shall come to you, O Israel.

A reading from the prophet Isaiah.

Do not fear, for I am with you, do not be afraid, for I am your God;

I will strengthen you, I will help you, I will uphold you with my right hand.

*Silence for reflection.*

*257 O Come, O Come, Emmanuel v. 4*

4 O come, O Branch of Jesse, free your own from Satan's tyranny;

from depths of hell your people save, and give them vict'ry o'er the grave.

Rejoice! Rejoice! Emmanuel shall come to you, O Israel.

A reading from the prophet Isaiah.

Do not fear, for I have redeemed you; I have called you by name, you are mine.

When you pass through the waters, I will be with you; and through the rivers, they shall not overwhelm you;

when you walk through fire you shall not be burned, and the flame shall not consume you.

*Silence for reflection.*

*257 O Come, O Come, Emmanuel v. 6*

6 O come, O Dayspring, come and cheer; O Sun of justice, now draw near.

Disperse the gloomy clouds of night, and death's dark shadow put to flight.

Rejoice! Rejoice! Emmanuel shall come to you, O Israel.

A reading from the prophet Isaiah.

Do not fear, for I am with you; I will bring your offspring from the east,

and from the west I will gather you: I will say to the north, “Give them up,”

and to the south, “Do not withhold; bring my sons from far away

and my daughters from the end of the earth - everyone who is called by my name,

whom I created for my glory, whom I formed and made.

*Silence for reflection.*

*257 O Come, O Come, Emmanuel v. 8*

8 O come, O come, Emmanuel, and ransom captive Israel,

that mourns in lonely exile here until the Son of God appear.

Rejoice! Rejoice! Emmanuel shall come to you, O Israel.

A reading from the prophet Isaiah.

You are my servant, I have chosen you and not cast you off.

Do not fear, for I am with you; do not be afraid, for I am your God;

I will strengthen you, I will help you, I will uphold you with my right hand.

The word of the Lord.

**Thanks be to God.**

Gospel Lesson: John 1:1-5, 10-14

P: The holy gospel according to John. C: **Glory to you, O Lord.**

**1**In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. **2**He was in the beginning with God. **3**All things came into being through him, and without him not one thing came into being. What has come into being**4**in him was life, and the life was the light of all people. **5**The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness did not overcome it.

**10**He was in the world, and the world came into being through him; yet the world did not know him. **11**He came to what was his own, and his own people did not accept him. **12**But to all who received him, who believed in his name, he gave power to become children of God, **13**who were born, not of blood or of the will of the flesh or of the will of man, but of God.

**14**And the Word became flesh and lived among us, and we have seen his glory, the glory as of a father’s only son, full of grace and truth.

P: The gospel of the Lord. C: **Praise to you, O Christ.**

**REFLECTION**

**HYMN OF THE DAY: Borning Cry ELW #732**

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🕇**PRAYERS OF INTERCESSION:**

Each petition will conclude with the words, “We praise you, O God.”

Your response is “**For the darkness and the light are both alike to you.”**

**Meal: *God feeds us with the presence of Jesus Christ.***

**OFFERING:** *Our offering is a significant act of worship; we worship God through our giving. The ministry of this congregation is completely dependent upon your partnership and generosity. Offering is collected as you enter worship on Saturday. Online giving is available.*

**OFFERING HYMN**: God, Be the Love to Search and Know Me ACS 1084



**OFFERING PRAYER:**

P: Let us pray: **God of our waiting and watching, we offer the gifts of our hearts and our lives to the service of all your people. Prepare the way before us as we meet you in this simple meal, through Christ Jesus, our pathway and our peace. Amen.**

**COMMUNION DIALOGUE**

P: The Lord be with you. C: **And also with you.**

P: Lift up your hearts. C: **We lift them to the Lord.**

P: Let us give thanks to the Lord our God. C: **It is right to give our thanks and praise.**

**THANKSGIVING AT THE TABLE**

In the night in which he was betrayed, our Lord Jesus took bread, and gave thanks;

broke it, and gave it to his disciples, saying: Take and eat; this is my body, given for you.

Do this for the remembrance of me.

Again, after supper, he took the cup, gave thanks, and gave it for all to drink, saying:

This cup is the new covenant in my blood, shed for you and for all people for the forgiveness of sin. Do this for the remembrance of me. **Amen.**

**THE LORD’S PRAYER:**

**Our Father, who art in heaven, hallowed be thy name, thy kingdom come, thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread; and forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive those who trespass against us; and lead us not into temptation but deliver us from evil. For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, forever and ever. Amen**

**INVITATION TO COMMUNION:**

Come to Christ’s banquet. Feast on God’s gift of grace.

*Please come down the center aisle, take the bread, then receive a cup (wine is dark, juice is light, return to your seats via side aisle.) Those who prefer to take communion in your pews, we will take all together after all is served.*

**DISTRIBUTION OF COMMUNION**

P: This is the body of Christ given for you. *(All take bread).*

P: This is the blood of Christ shed for you. *(All take the wine).*

**COMMUNION HYMN Beautiful Savior ELW #838**

A sheet music with text and notes

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🕇**TABLE BLESSING:**

P. May the body and blood of our Lord Jesus Christ strengthen you and keep you in his grace. **C. Amen.**

🕇**PRAYER AFTER COMMUNION:**

P: Let us pray: Most High God, **you have come among us at this table. By the Spirit’s power, form us to be bearers of your word, sharing gifts of mercy and grace with all, through Christ Jesus, our host and our guest.** **Amen.**

**SENDING:** *God blesses us and sends us in mission to the world.*

🕇**BLESSING:**

P: May God bless you and keep you.

May God’s holy darkness enfold you and grant you rest.

May God nourish a seed of hope among us. **Amen.**

🕇**SENDING HYMN Comfort, Comfort, Now My People ELW #256**

A sheet of music with text

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**Blessing for the Longest Night –**

Katie will read “Blessing for the Longest Night” by Jan Richardson, 

All throughout these months

as the shadows

have lengthened,

this blessing has been

gathering itself,

making ready,

preparing for

this night.

It has practiced

walking in the dark,

traveling with

its eyes closed,

feeling its way

by memory

by touch

by the pull of the moon

even as it wanes.

So believe me

when I tell you

this blessing will

reach you

even if you

have not light enough

to read it;

it will find you

even though you cannot

see it coming.

You will know

the moment of its

arriving

by your release

of the breath

you have held

so long;

a loosening

of the clenching

in your hands,

of the clutch

around your heart;

a thinning

of the darkness

that had drawn itself

around you.

This blessing

does not mean

to take the night away

but it knows

its hidden roads,

knows the resting spots

along the path,

knows what it means

to travel

in the company

of a friend.

So when

this blessing comes,

take its hand.

Get up.

Set out on the road

you cannot see.

This is the night

when you can trust

that any direction

you go,

you will be walking

toward the dawn.

**PEACE**

The peace of Christ be with you always. **And also with you**

**IN OUR PRAYERS TODAY**: Darlene and Walt Steffes, Bob Schreck, Delores Wampfler, Marge Arnold, Verla Rhyner, Elaine Schlichting, Aleta Lawfer, Steve Wulff, Karli Weltzin, James Dieter, Christine Happ, Kay Hesselbacher, Mary Lou Bunker, Russ and Kathy Snyder, David Stott, Judy Wilson, Mike (Spike) Magee, Emilee Wolf Schiling ***To add someone to the prayer list please contact Pastor Chrissy***

**CELEBRATING BIRTHDAYS / ANNIVERSARIES:**  Gary Mezmer, John Curtiss, Jeff Schuldt, Austin VenHuizen, Ashley Cassens, Brody Gardner, Elijah Leverton, Teresa Wulff, Larry Randecker, Weston Haas, Tina Keech Schuster, Ashley VenHuizen, and Deanna Bonnet

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| Thanks be to God for your gifts for the ministry of  Christ Lutheran Church \***these numbers do not reflect online giving- only offering in worship** | | | | Offering/ Attendance  **Report December** | |
| Current Expense | $687.00 | Building Fund | $10.00 | Dec 14 | **None weather** |
| Benevolence | $35.00 | Sunday School | $65.00 | Dec 15 | **42** |
|  |  | **Total** | $797.00 | Sunday School | **25** |

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| --- | --- | --- |
| **2024** | | |
|  | **November** | **Year to date** |
| Offerings: | ***$7,265*** | **$88,797** |
| Expenses: | ***$8,986*** | **$100,484** |
| ***Overall  Gain / Loss*** | ***($1,721)*** | ***($11,687)*** |

**Join us Sunday at 10 am for the Children’s Christmas Program. All our welcome to join us as the children tell us the Christmas Story and lead us in worship. A time of fellowship will follow.**