

Wednesday, December 21, 2017

Longest Night – A Blue Christmas

Evening Prayers

INTRODUCTION

While Advent is a season of hope and Christmas is a season of joy, not everyone feels hopeful or like celebrating. Grief, illness, aging, depression, loneliness, unemployment, and loss are magnified. Even those who are not struggling with losses may feel the stress of preparations and expectations around Christmas time. A Longest Night/Blue Christmas service may provide a time and place of solace during the often frenetic days surrounding the celebration of Christmas. We come together seeking healing and room to share grief, sadness, loneliness, or confusion when these emotions often feel out of place during the holidays.

In the Northern Hemisphere, December 21 is the longest night, the winter solstice. It marks the shortest day of the year, the official start of winter. Tradition says that nature and all her creatures stop and hold their breath to see if the sun will turn back from its wanderings, if the days will lengthen and the earth will once again feel the sun's warmth. On this darkest day of the year, we come with our honest yearnings seeking the return of light and hope. All are welcome!

WELCOME

Acknowledgements and notes on this evenings worship

SILENT MEDITATION

GREETING

From the one who was...

And also with you.

HYMN OF LIGHT “Jesus Loves Me”

#595 ELW

PSALM 27 *(Responsively)*

The LORD Is My Light and My Salvation

¹ The Lord is my light and my salvation; whom shall I fear? The Lord is the strength of my life; of whom shall I be afraid?

² **When the wicked, even mine enemies and my foes, came upon me to eat up my flesh, they stumbled and fell.**

³ Though a host should encamp against me, my heart shall not fear: though war should rise against me, in this will I be confident.

⁴ **One thing have I desired of the Lord, that will I seek after; that I may dwell in the house of the Lord all the days of my life, to behold the beauty of the Lord, and to enquire in his temple.**

⁵ For in the time of trouble he shall hide me in his

pavilion: in the secret of his tabernacle shall he hide me; he shall set me up upon a rock.

⁶ And now shall mine head be lifted up above mine enemies round about me: therefore will I offer in his tabernacle sacrifices of joy; I will sing, yea, I will sing praises unto the Lord.

⁷ Hear, O Lord, when I cry with my voice: have mercy also upon me, and answer me.

⁸ When thou saidst, Seek ye my face; my heart said unto thee, Thy face, Lord, will I seek.

⁹ Hide not thy face far from me; put not thy servant away in anger: thou hast been my help; leave me not, neither forsake me, O God of my salvation.

¹⁰ When my father and my mother forsake me, then the Lord will take me up.

¹¹ Teach me thy way, O Lord, and lead me in a plain path, because of mine enemies.

¹² Deliver me not over unto the will of mine enemies: for false witnesses are risen up against me, and such as breathe out cruelty.

¹³ I had fainted, unless I had believed to see the goodness of the Lord in the land of the living.

¹⁴ Wait on the Lord: be of good courage, and he shall strengthen thine heart: wait, I say, on the Lord.

PRAYER

Lord God, our light and our salvation, grant that your servants who seek your face in times of

trouble may see your goodness in the land of the living, and that we may be set safely on the rock of our faith, Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord. Amen.

FIRST READING ISAIAH 9:2-7

² The people that walked in darkness have seen a great light: they that dwell in the land of the shadow of death, upon them hath the light shined. ³ Thou hast multiplied the nation, and not increased the joy: they joy before thee according to the joy in harvest, and as men rejoice when they divide the spoil. ⁴ For thou hast broken the yoke of his burden, and the staff of his shoulder, the rod of his oppressor, as in the day of Midian. ⁵ For every battle of the warrior is with confused noise, and garments rolled in blood; but this shall be with burning and fuel of fire. ⁶ For unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given: and the government shall be upon his shoulder: and his name shall be called Wonderful, Counsellor, The mighty God, The everlasting Father, The Prince of Peace. ⁷ Of the increase of his government and peace there shall be no end, upon the throne of David, and upon his kingdom, to order it, and to establish it with judgment and with justice from henceforth even forever. The zeal of the LORD of hosts will perform this.

**HYMN “O Come, O Come Emmanuel” (vs. 1-3)
#257 ELW**

SECOND READING ISAIAH 40:1-11

¹ “Comfort, comfort my people,” says your God.

² “Speak tenderly to Jerusalem. Tell her that her sad days are gone and her sins are pardoned. Yes, the LORD has punished her twice over for all her sins.”

³ Listen! It’s the voice of someone shouting, “Clear the way through the wilderness for the LORD! Make a straight highway through the wasteland for our God!

⁴ Fill in the valleys, and level the mountains and hills. Straighten the curves, and smooth out the rough places.

⁵ Then the glory of the LORD will be revealed, and all people will see it together. The LORD has spoken!” ⁶ A

voice said, “Shout!” I asked, “What should I shout?”

“Shout that people are like the grass. Their beauty fades as quickly as the flowers in a field. ⁷ The grass withers and the flowers fade beneath the breath of the LORD.

And so it is with people. ⁸ The grass withers and the flowers fade, but the word of our God stands forever.”

⁹ O Zion, messenger of good news, shout from the mountain tops! Shout it louder, O Jerusalem. Shout, and do not be afraid. Tell the towns of Judah, “Your God is coming!” ¹⁰ Yes, the Sovereign LORD is coming in power. He will rule with a powerful arm. See, he brings his reward with him as he comes.

¹¹ He will feed his flock like a shepherd. He will carry the lambs in his arms, holding them close to his heart. He will gently lead the mother sheep with their young.

HYMN “Away In the Manger”

#256 ELW

THIRD READING MATTHEW 11:28-30

²⁸ Then Jesus said, “Come to me, all of you who are weary and carry heavy burdens, and I will give you rest. ²⁹ Take my yoke upon you. Let me teach you, because I am humble and gentle at heart, and you will find rest for your souls. ³⁰ For my yoke is easy to bear, and the burden I give you is light.”

HYMN “O Come, O Come Emmanuel” (vs. 4-5)
#257 ELW

FOURTH READING JOHN 1:1-5, 14

The Eternal Word

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 were made through Him, and without Him nothing was made that was made. ⁴ In Him was life, and the life was the light of men. ⁵ And the light shines in the darkness, and the darkness did not comprehend it. ¹⁴ And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, and we beheld His glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth.

HYMN “Thy Holy Wings”
#613 ELW

REFLECTION Pastor Terry Frovik

PRAYERS AND HEALING

(Meditative hymns are played)

You May:

- Light a candle and place it in a sand filled container.
- You are welcome to write a prayer request on paper provided and place it in a Prayer Basket for the Pastor only to read.
- You are invited to receive prayer with laying on of hands.

CLOSING HYMN

“It Came Upon a Midnight Clear” #282 ELW

BLESSING

FELLOWSHIP *(Refreshments Available in the Fellowship Hall!)*

SERVING THIS NIGHT

Pastor: Rev. Terry Frovik

Lector: Pat Becker

Carolyn Morris

Greeter/Ushers: Jerry & Pat Becker

Parish Nurses: Darlene Christensen

Music: Jim Christensen