

# LONGEST NIGHT SERVICE

A Liturgy of Light and Hope





## 7:00 PM Longest Night Service • Monday, December 22, 2025

### Seeking God's Comfort

Prelude

Welcome

Rev. Jim Porter

Opening Sentences (John 1:1-5)

Leader: In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.

**People: All things were made by God, and without God nothing came to be.**

Leader: What came to be through God was life, and this life was the light of the world.

**All: The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness has not overcome it.**

Opening Prayer

Rev. Jim Porter

Opening Hymn 82 – ***“Come, Thou Long-Expected Jesus”***

Thanksgiving for light in the darkness

Sandi Gray & Rev. Jim Porter

Leader: The Bible tells us that “God’s light shines in the darkness.

**People: And the darkness cannot overcome it.”**

Leader: Gracious and loving God,  
At the beginning of time, you called forth the light.  
(*The Christ candle is lit.*)

**People: You brought the morning on the first day and every morning after that.**

Leader: You filled the night with millions of stars.

**People: Each tiny sparkle is a promise that we are counted among your people.**

Leader: You appeared in the flames of a bush that burned without being consumed.

**People: And lifted your people out of the shadows of death and into the light of life.**

Leader: You sent Jesus, your son, to be the light of the world.

**People: He is hope for the hopeless and light for the lost.**

Leader: Shine in our hearts this night as we hear the good news of your coming.

**All: Illumine us that we look to the coming your kingdom and be at peace.**

Scripture Readings – Isaiah 60:1-3, 19-22

Luke 2:1-20

Meditation

“God Holds Us Still”

Rev. Jim Porter

Silent Time of Reflection

Hymn of Response #88 – *“O Come, O Come, Emmanuel”* and Litany of Remembrance

Sing: ***“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 thee, O Israel.”***

Leader: We light this first candle to remember those whom we have loved and lost.

God of Love, we grieve because we have known the gift of love. We remember those who we have loved and lost. We name our wish to see them one more time, to hear their voice, to touch their face. Our heart aches in their absence.

**All: God of Love, embrace us. Fill our hearts with your love and our minds with joyful memories. Bind our broken hearts with the threads of memories of the life and love we shared. Remind us that love is stronger than death and remains with us forever. Amen.**

**Sing: *"O come thou wisdom from on high, who orderest all things mightily  
To us the path of knowledge show, and teach us in her ways to go  
Rejoice, rejoice, Emmanuel shall come to thee, O Israel."***

Leader: We light this second candle to remember the pain of loss.

God of Wonder, we thought we knew what would happen. We didn't anticipate the bridge burned, the relationship torn, the unexpected diagnosis, the job lost, the future thrown into question. We mourn the future that will never be, the dream we are forced to set aside.

**All: God of Wonder, calm our nerves and help us see the future you see for us. Inspire us. Breathe your spirited imagination upon us that we might not only know your peace, but dream new dreams, knowing you are always by our side.**

**Sing: *"O come thou day-spring, come and cheer our spirits by thy advent here  
Disperse the gloomy clouds of night, and death's dark shadows put to flight  
Rejoice, rejoice Emmanuel shall come to thee, O Israel."***

Leader: We light this third candle to remember ourselves this Christmas time.

God of Hope, we are carrying heavy burdens. We hold anxiety about our world in our bones. We carry guilt for where we have fallen short. We bend under the weight of loneliness and despair.

**All: God of Hope, hold our hand. Teach us to trust your strong and steady love, giving courage to name what weighs us down and handing it to you. Shine your light into the shadows of our despair and remind us that while the night may be dark, the dawn will come.**

**Sing: *"O come desire of nations, bind all peoples in one heart and mind.  
Bid envy, strife, and discord cease. Fill the world with heaven's peace.  
Rejoice, rejoice, Emmanuel shall come to thee, O Israel."***

Leader: We light this fourth candle to remember the pain of the world.

God of Light, sometimes the world seems so doubly dark. We see our neighbors abandoned, unhoused, hungry, and in pain — and our hearts ache.

**All: God of Light, remind us that you came into a world shrouded in darkness, a spark of light born in a humble stable, in the shadow of war, into a family of meager means. You do not hide from the hard things but come among them to bring light. Show us the way to be a beacon of light in the darkness. Inspire our imaginations to envision the world as you want it to be. Kindle in us a passion to make it so.**

**Sing: *"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 thee, O Israel."***

## Holding and Remembering

Leader: We've come with prayers on our hearts this night — a loved one lost, a painful situation, a concern for the world, an illness in need of healing. As we offer our prayers to God, I invite you to make a space for light in the darkness. Name your prayer, if only silently to yourself, and know that God hears you. Come light a candle, laying your prayers in the arms of Jesus, who is the light of the world.

(You are invited to come forward at this time to light a candle in memory of a loved one, or to acknowledge another kind of loss or struggle that you may be having at this time.)

## Closing Prayer & The Lord's Prayer

Leader: Gentle God, be with us in the waiting. Wrap your arms around us in love and teach us to trust that a new day is coming. Be a lamplight in the darkness of our night and protect us from danger until the new day dawns. All this we pray in the name of your son, the light of the world, who taught us to pray, saying,

**"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 debts, as we forgive our debtors; and lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil. For thine is the kingdom and the power and the glory, forever." Amen.**

## Closing Hymn 109 – *"Song of Zechariah"*

## Concluding Prayer and Benediction

Leader: As we come to the end of this time together, we remember that the light of Christ shines in the darkness and the darkness cannot overcome it. We remember that the light never goes away, only changes, spreading out into the world. We carry the light with us to be the light for others, and we look for the light of Christ shining through others for us. Friends, go in peace. Amen.

## Postlude

## **Worship Concludes – Service Begins!**

Thank you. Special thanks to our ushers and all those who participated in the service this evening.

## **Please Join Us for our Christmas Eve Services at 5:00 & 7:00 PM**

You are invited to join us on Christmas Eve, December 24 at 5:00 p.m. for a Contemporary Service, and 7:00 p.m. for a Traditional Service in person or online. Candle lighting will be included in both services and nursery will be available. Invite your friends and family and celebrate Christmas Eve with us!

Go in God's Grace and Peace this evening,  
knowing that our thoughts and prayers go with you.



