



Longest Night

Wednesday, December 18, 2024

7:00 p.m., Sanctuary



Gathering of God's People

Please note that online worshipers join the livestream at 6:50 p.m.

PRELUDE Zion Hears the Watchmen Singing J.S. Bach
Kara Goodrich, soprano; Nicholas Provenzale, baritone; Alexandra Cutler-Fetkewicz, violin

WELCOME Kirby Lawrence Hill

Please stand, if able.

CALL TO WORSHIP

One The people who walked in darkness have seen a great light;
on those who lived in a land of deep shadow a light has shone.

**All For the yoke that was weighing on them, and the burden upon
their shoulders, you have broken into pieces, O God, our
Redeemer.**

One Let us pray:
God of Mercy, hear our prayer in this Advent Season for ourselves and
those we love, who live with the painful memories of loss. We ask for
strength today, courage for tomorrow and peace for the journey. In
the name of Jesus Christ who shares our life in joy and sorrow, death
and new birth, despair and promise. Amen.

HYMN 84 Creator of the Stars of Night CONDITOR ALME SIDERUM

CALL TO CONFESSION Kirby Lawrence Hill

One Show us your mercy, O Lord, and grant us your salvation. Hear
our prayers for forgiveness so that truth shall spring up from the
earth, and righteousness shall look down from heaven.

LITANY OF CONFESSION

One O come, Emmanuel, come to us for we are lonely for God.

All Come, bring the peace of God-with-us.

One O Come, Wisdom from on high,

**All Forgive our sins. Lead us in the ways of knowledge,
and show us the paths of peace.**

One Glorious Shoot from the Jesse tree,

All Come, and bring life, fresh and green and lovely, to our spirits.

One O Rose which blooms in the snow of winter,

All Come, and grant to us the blessed gift of hope.

One O Bright Morning Star of the darkened world,

**All Come and be for us the Way, the Truth, and the Life. Jesus our
Christ, we welcome you. Come and be known among us, for we
want to be your people. Amen.**

A moment of silence for personal reflection and confession.

SILENT PRAYERS OF CONFESSION

ASSURANCE OF PARDON

One A new shoot shall spring from the root of Jesse and
all the earth will be filled with the glory of God.

All In Jesus Christ we are forgiven. Thanks be to God!

SOLO "The Call" from Five Mystical Songs

Nicholas Provenzale, baritone

Come, my way, my truth, my life: Such a way as gives us breath: Such a truth
as ends all strife; Such a life as killeth death. Come, my light, my feast, my
strength: Such a light as shows a feast; Such a feast as mends in length; Such
a strength as makes his guest. Come, my joy, my love, my heart: Such a joy as
none can move; Such a love as none can part; Such a heart as joys in love.

Proclamation of the Word

FIRST LESSON Psalm 27
(pg. 503 in pew Bible)

Kirby Lawrence Hill

One The Word of the Lord.

All **Thanks be to God.**

MEDITATION *Into the Way of Peace*

Agnes W. Norfleet

Response to the Word

LITANY OF REMEMBERING

Kirby Lawrence Hill

One 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 memory that binds us to them in life and in death, and even in this season of Advent.

All **May God's eternal love surround them. (Silence)**

One This second candle we light to redeem the pain of loss; the loss of relationships, the loss of jobs, the loss of health. We pause to gather up the pain of the past and offer it to God, asking that from God's hands we receive the gift of peace.

All **Refresh, restore, renew us, O God, and lead us into the future. (Silence)**

One The third candle we light to remember ourselves this Christmastime. We pause to remember these past weeks and months: the disbelief, the emptiness, the anger, the down times, the poignancy of reminiscing, the sadness, the hugs and handshakes of family and friends, all those who stood with us. We acknowledge the care we have felt, and dare to give thanks for the support we have known.

All **Let us remember that dawn defeats night, and light defeats darkness. (Silence)**

One The fourth candle we light to remember God's promises and the gift of peace and hope which the Christmas story offers the world. The world is torn apart by war, and yet we know that in Christ, God share our life, knows pain and suffering, and leads us to new life. We remember God, promises us a time of no more pain and suffering, who bends the instruments of war into farming tools, and desires abundant life for all.

All Jesus Christ shows us the way, and the darkness of this world will not overcome his light. (Silence)

One The light shines in the darkness.

All And the darkness will not overcome it.

SOLO Gesù Bambino

PIETRO YON

Kara Goodrich, soprano; Alexandra Cutler-Fetkewicz, violin

When blossoms flowered 'mid the snows upon a winter night was born the Child, the Christmas Rose the King of Love and Light. The angels sang, the shepherds sang the grateful earth rejoiced and at His blessed birth the stars their exultation voiced. Again the heart with rapture glows to greet the holy night that gave the world its Christmas Rose its King of Love and Light. Let ev'ry voice acclaim His name the grateful chorus swell from paradise to earth He came that we with Him might dwell. O come let us adore Him, O come let us adore Him, O come let us adore Him Christ the Lord.

BLESSINGS FOR HEALING AND WHOLENESS

Individuals who desire are invited forward to light a candle on the Communion Table as an act of prayer while the congregation sings the following hymns.

HYMN 145 What Child is This?

GREENSLEEVES

What child is this, who, laid to rest, on Mary's lap is sleeping? Whom angels greet with anthems sweet while shepherds watch are keeping? This, this is Christ the King, whom shepherds guard and angels sing; haste, haste to bring him laud, the babe, the son of Mary!

**Why lies he in such mean estate where ox and ass are feeding?
Good Christian, fear; for sinners here the silent Word is pleading.
Nails, spear, shall pierce him through; the cross be borne for me, for you.
Hail, hail, the Word made flesh, the babe, the son of Mary!**

**So bring him incense, gold, and myrrh; come, one and all, to own him.
The King of kings salvation brings; let loving hearts enthrone him.
Raise, raise the song on high. The virgin sings her lullaby.
Joy, joy, for Christ is born, the babe, the son of Mary!**

HYMN 133 O Come All Ye Faithful

ADESTE FIDELES

**O come, all ye faithful, joyful and triumphant; O come ye; O come ye to
Bethlehem! Come, and behold him, born the King of angels! O come, let
us adore him; O come, let us adore him; O come, let us adore him, Christ,
the Lord!**

**Sing, choirs of angels; sing in exultation; sing, all ye citizens of heaven
above! Glory to God, all glory in the highest! O come, let us adore him;
O come, let us adore him; O come, let us adore him, Christ, the Lord!**

**Yea, Lord, we greet thee, born this happy morning; Jesus, to thee be all
glory given; Word of the Father, now in flesh appearing! O come, let us
adore him; O come, let us adore him; O come, let us adore him, Christ,
the Lord!**

HYMN 121 O Little Town of Bethlehem

ST. LOUIS

**O little town of Bethlehem, how still we see thee lie! Above thy deep and
dreamless sleep the silent stars go by. Yet in thy dark streets shineth
the everlasting light; the hopes and fears of all the years are met in thee
tonight.**

**For Christ is born of Mary and, gathered all above, while mortals sleep,
the angels keep their watch of wondering love. O morning stars, together
proclaim the holy birth, and praises sing to God the king, and peace to
all on earth.**

**How silently, how silently, the wondrous gift is given! So God imparts to
human hearts the blessings of his heaven. No ear may hear his coming,
but in this world of sin, where meek souls will receive him, still the dear
Christ enters in.**

**O holy child of Bethlehem, descend to us, we pray; cast out our sin and
enter in; be born in us today. We hear the Christmas angels
the great glad tidings tell; O come to us; abide with us, our Lord
Emmanuel!**

PRAYER OF PREPARATION FOR CHRISTMAS

Kirby Lawrence Hill

**We open the stable door, and kneel before the infant.
We worship with the shepherds, and adore the Christ child.
We give our love with Mary and Joseph,
and wonder at the “Word made flesh”.
We are aware of the love of God, and sing glory with the angels.
We offer our gifts with the wise men, and receive the living Lord.
We hold Him in our arms, and then go our way rejoicing,
glorifying and praising God.**

Please stand, if able.

HYMN 144 In the Bleak Midwinter

CRANHAM

BENEDICTION AND CHORAL RESPONSE

Agnes W. Norfleet

POSTLUDE Improvisation

Jeffrey Brillhart

CHRISTMAS EVE SERVICES

Christmas Eve Family Service. 4:30 p.m., Sanctuary and Livestreamed. Family Service with Nativity Tableau and musical leadership by BMPC's Children's Choir, Youth Chorale and the Bryn Mawr Festival Brass. Prelude and Carol Sing begins at 4:15 p.m. Infant and toddler childcare available without reservations from 3:45-5:45 p.m. in the Education Building, Room 101. For those who prefer a quieter setting, Congregational Hall will be available as a remote viewing space for our 4:30 p.m. Christmas Eve Service.

Christmas Eve Worship With Communion. 8:30 p.m., Sanctuary and Livestreamed. Carols and anthems led by BMPC's Sanctuary Choir with the Bryn Mawr Festival String Quartet. The Rev. Dr. Agnes W. Norfleet will preach. Prelude begins at 8:10 p.m.

Giving

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Rebecca Kirkpatrick, Associate Pastor for Adult Education & Mission

Kirby Lawrence Hill, Interim Associate Pastor for Pastoral Care & Senior Adults

Rachel Pedersen, Associate Pastor for Children & Family Ministry

Jeffrey Brillhart, Director of Music & Fine Arts

Edward Landin Senn, Assistant Director of Music