



the Longest night

a Blue Christmas service

Sunday, December 19, 2021
7:00 p.m.

Grace Covenant Presbyterian Church
11100 College Boulevard
Overland Park, KS

The Longest Night (Blue Christmas) Service

December 19, 2021 7pm

Gathering for the Longest Night

SONG TO GATHER "Different Kind of Christmas" *Mark Schultz* Carrie DeVries

WORDS OF WELCOME Mitch Trigger

CALL TO WORSHIP

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

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

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.

HYMN 121 "O Little Town of Bethlehem" ST. LOUIS

Listening for God

READINGS Ecclesiastes 3:1–11

Psalm 22

(All read the boldface verses together.)

My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?

Why are you so far from helping me, so far from the words of my groaning?

O my God, I cry by day but you do not answer, and by night, but I find no rest.

In you, our ancestors trusted. They trusted and you delivered them.

It was you who brought me from the womb, you who kept me safe on my mother's breast.

Since my mother bore me, you have been my God.

Do not be far from me, for trouble is near and there is no one to help.

God does not despise the affliction of the afflicted. God does not hide from me.

When I cry to God, God hears me. Thanks be to God.

HYMN 88 "O Come, O Come, Emmanuel" VENI EMMANUEL
(verses 1 and 6 only)

READING Isaiah 40

SONG TO REFLECT "Scars in Heaven" *Casting Crowns* Donna Goeckler

MEDITATION

LITANY OF REMEMBRANCE

(The first candle is lighted.)

One: We light this first candle to remember those whom we have loved and lost. We pause to remember clearly, their faces, their voices, their bodies. We embrace and give thanks for the memories that bind them to us in this season of expectation, when all Creation waits for the Light.

All: We remember them with love. May God's eternal love surround them.

A period of silent reflection

The second candle is lighted.

One: We light this second candle to remember the pain of loss: loss of relationships, loss of trust, loss of jobs, loss of health, loss of faith, the loss of joy. We acknowledge and embrace the pain of the past, O God, and we offer it to You, asking that into our wounded hearts and open hands You will place the gift of peace, shalom.

All: We remember that through you all things are possible.

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

A period of silent reflection

The third candle is lighted.

One: We light this third candle to remember ourselves this Christmas time... ..we accept and lay before you the time we have walked alone, in darkness; and in knowledge of our own mortality.

All: We remember that though we have journeyed far, and that, while lost, we may have turned away from the light, the light itself has not failed.

We remember that though winter be upon us and though the night be dark, with the turning of the Wheel the dawn will come, and dawn defeats the darkness.

A period of silent reflection

The fourth candle is lighted.

One: We light this fourth candle to remember faith, the gift of light and hope that God offers to us in the stories of Hanukkah and of Christmas, which both also began in abandonment, insecurity, and humbleness, in a time of war and in a poor stable. We remember that the loving God who kept the light shining in the temple and who came to share this life with us promises us comfort and peace.

All: We remember the One who shares our burdens, who shows us the way to the Light, and who journeys with us into all our tomorrows.

LIGHTING OF CANDLES AND GIVING OUR TROUBLES TO GOD

(Those who wish are invited to light a candle in memory of those who are in your heart. Come to the tables at the center aisle around the cross to light your candles. An usher will assist you if needed.)

THE PRAYERS OF THE PEOPLE

One: Lord, hear our prayer.

ALL: **And in your merciful love, answer.**

SONG OF HOPE

“Somewhere in Your Silent Night” *Casting Crowns*

Praise Team

READING

Luke 2:1–33, 36–38

*HYMN 122

“Silent Night”

STILLE NACHT

*PRAYER AND BLESSING

*DEPART IN GOD’S PEACE

Worshippers are now invited to gather in the Concourse following the service for fellowship.

† † † † † † † † † † † † † **ANNOUNCEMENTS** †

We want to take this opportunity to invite you to worship at Grace Covenant on Christmas Eve. We offer two different services:

5pm– A Family Service — Christmas Story — Exaltation! Youth Choir — Candlelight

8pm – Communion — Scripture — Instrumentalists & Soloists — Candlelight



GRACE COVENANT
PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

11100 College Boulevard ♦ Overland Park, Kansas 66210 ♦ (913) 345-1256 ♦ gcpc.org