

The Longest Night



*a
Blue Christmas
Service ...*

Sunday, December 18, 2022, 7pm

The Longest Night (Blue Christmas) Service

December 18, 2022 7pm

Gathering for the Longest Night

Gathering Music

“I Wonder as I Wander”

“O Come, O Come, Emmanuel”

Cal Sweeten, hammered dulcimer

Call to Worship

John 1:1–5

One: In the beginning was the Word,

All: and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.

One: All things were made by God;

All: without God nothing came to be.

One: What came to be through God was life,

All: and this life was the light of the world.

One: The Light shines in the darkness,

All: and the darkness can never overcome it.

Hymn 88

“O Come, O Come, Emmanuel”

VENI EMMANUEL

Responsive Prayers

One: Gracious God, in this season of Advent, we give thanks
that you came to be among us:

All: Emmanuel, God with us.

One: You came into the darkness of that time:

All: a time of change and stress, uncertainty and doubt.

One: You did not enter this world surrounded by grand things.

All: You were born in a stable, to parents far from home.

One: O God, we pray for your presence here and now,
in the difficulties of our time.

All: We lay before you our offerings of honesty and need, of worry and hope.

One: For all who are grieving, we pray:

All: O Lord, you know what it means to lose someone you dearly love.

One: For all who are lonely, we pray:

All: O Lord, you know how it feels to look around you and feel that there is no one left.

One: For all who are anxious, we pray:

All: O Lord, you know what it is like to be weary and heavy-laden.

One: For all who are vulnerable, we pray:

All: O Lord, you know what it means to be unhoused and unsafe.
One: For all who are beset by challenges, physical or emotional, we pray:
All: O Lord, you know how it feels to be in pain.
One: For all who are longing for light, and for hope, we pray:
All: O Lord, you know what it is like to wait in the darkness.
One: ... Here we offer our personal petitions in silence.
Lord Jesus Christ, we thank you that you came to be among us,
All: full of grace and truth.
One: In you we find our welcome.
All: You are our comfort and our company along the journey of our life.
One: In Jesus' name, we pray.
All: Amen.

Scripture

Psalm 139:1–12

Hymn 123

“It Came Upon a Midnight Clear”
Stephen Wing (guitar & solo - vs. 1)
Congregation & piano join for verses 4 & 5

CAROL

Reflection Recommendation

God's Presence With Us Always

Music

Leonard Cohen's "Hallelujah" with Christmas lyrics

Invitation to Christ's Presence

At this time, all are encouraged to silently name a particular need that you wish to acknowledge to the Lord. Then, please come forward to light a candle. As you do, invite the light of Christ into your heart, trusting that Christ came into the world to be with us, wherever we are.

Music

“Somewhere in Your Silent Night”
(played while candles are lit)

Unison Prayer

Gracious God, as we go from this place, we trust in your company along our way. Wrap your everlasting arms around us; swaddle us in the security of your love; comfort us with the silence of your quiet breath; brighten our path with the light of your presence. Then, send us into the world.

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 debts, as we forgive our debtors. Lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil. For Thine is the kingdom, the power, and the glory, forever. Amen.

Hymn 144

"In the Bleak Midwinter"

CRANHAM

Benediction

"When I Have a Hole of Loss in My Heart"
by Arianne Braithwaite Lehn

from Ash & Starlight

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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