

BLESSING THE LONGEST NIGHT

Blessed are we,

**Gathered by candlelight in these dark times.
In the confusion and pain that envelops us.
We receive your comfort.
It reaches to the core of our tired bodies,
our worried minds, and our heavy hearts.
Your light has come to us in the songs sung, the words spoken,
and in the faces all around, our companions along the way.**

Blessed are we,

**Who have poured out our hearts,
and look for your light.
Bless us this Christmas
as we come softly to your cradle, just as we are.**

*HYMN

“In the Bleak Midwinter”

UMH #221

CONCLUDING PRAYERS

Another day will come, O God. I know not what it may bring forth, but make me ready,
God for whatever it may be.
If I am to stand up, help me to stand bravely.
If I am to sit still, help me to sit quietly.
If I am to lie low, help me to do it patiently.
And if I am to do nothing, help me do it gallantly.
Make these words more than words, and give me the Spirit of thy peace. Amen.

O God, support us all the day long in this troubled life, until the shadows lengthen and the evening comes, and the busy world is hushed, and the fever of life is over, and our work is done. Then, Lord, in thy mercy, grant us safe lodging, and a holy rest, and peace at the last. Amen.

THE BLESSING & SENDING FORTH

Christmas Eve Services – December 24, 2025

5:00 pm Contemporary Christmas Eve Service, Bldg 3, Assembly Hall

7:00 pm Traditional Christmas Eve Service, Bldg. 2, Sanctuary



“Worship God, Love One Another, Serve the World”



December 21, 2025

5:00 pm

On this night, the Winter Solstice, we pause to remember loved ones who have died, hardships we have suffered, and brokenness we have endured throughout the year. We acknowledge the grief caused by loss in our lives and world during this season of joy. The Longest Night Service is a time when we share our grief and sense of loss with God and with each other. We come together as a community of faith to give and receive comfort, to pray, and hear the promises of God in scripture. We come to light candles to help drive away our inner cold and darkness. We come to be healed as we receive words of hope and reassurance. The good thing about the longest night is that with its passing, light shines forth more and more.

Longest Night Service

WELCOME

OPENING SENTENCES

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.

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

OPENING HYMN “O Little Town of Bethlehem” UMH #230

OPENING PRAYER

OT LESSON Lamentations 3:1-3, 19-26

SCRIPTURE Matthew 5:3-11

MUSIC

RESPONSE: CANDLE LIGHTING AND LITANY OF REMEMBRANCE

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 name our wish to see them
one more time, to hear their voice, to touch their face. Our heart aches in their absence. 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.

**“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.”**

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. 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.

**“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.”**

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. 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.

**“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.”**

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. 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 a 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.

**“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.”**

REFLECTION

MUSICAL MEDITATION AND CANDLE LIGHTING

*As the music plays, you are invited to spend a few moments in prayer. During this time, you may
write the name of a loved one, a loss, a concern, or a prayer that you’re carrying tonight and
place it in the bowl. You are also invited to come forward and light a candle—whether in memory
of someone you love, in honor of a relationship or season, or as a sign of hope you are holding
onto in the midst of darkness. You may do one or both of these, or simply remain seated in prayer.
The altar is open if you would like to kneel for prayer and be anointed with oil.*