



## **WELCOME TO WORSHIP**

### **LITURGY OF GATHERING**

#### **WELCOME**

The Service of the Longest Night is named for these days in December when we experience the shortest day and the longest night of the year. But the name also applies to the feeling that a number of us have about this season. For many, it is the “long dark night of the soul,” in which memories of past experiences and the pain of present experience can become overwhelming.

For some, Christmas Day is the most difficult. For others, it is Christmas Eve, or New Year’s Eve, or the beginning of another lonely new year.

In this service, we gather with many Christians around the world to remember in the midst of pain, grief, and heartbreak that God is here. God is present with us when we are mourning the death of a loved. God surrounds us with God’s embrace when we suffer from illness, addiction, abuse, or estrangement. God is with us when we are lonely, struggling financially, or in conflict with another. God is here in the midst of the pain, brokenness, and violence of our nation and world.

We gather today within our suffering to remember and hold onto the promise of God’s goodness. We gather to remember our loved ones, lay before God our burdens and brokenness. We gather because we have every reason to hold on to hope.

Let us take a moment of silence as we draw close with God...

*a moment of silence is kept for reflection*

#### **CALL TO WORSHIP**

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

**All things came into being 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.**

**HYMN**

O Come O Come Emmanuel ELW 257

**GREETING & PRAYER**

The light of our Lord Jesus Christ, the warmth of God, and the hope of the Holy Spirit be with you all.

**And also with you.**

Let us pray. Merciful God, hear our prayer for ourselves, our families, and our friends who long for your warm embrace within their sufferings and struggles this holiday season. Come to those who suffer in any way and bring about your peace. Grant rest for those who are weary this day, freedom to those burdened by tomorrows worries, and bring hope to those who despair about the past. We ask these things in the name of Christ who shares our life in joy and sorrow, death and new birth, despair and promise. **Amen.**

**LITURGY OF REMEMBRANCE**

Throughout human history, people have used candles as symbols of prayer. Today we light five candles. These candles represent our recollection of our losses of loved ones, of relationships, of our own grief, and of the hope that lies hidden within us.

We light the first candle remembering the fullness of Christ's birth; acknowledging the joyful celebration of Christ coming to earth but also the suffering and anguish that Christ endures on the cross. We see our own lives reflected in these events as we marvel at the babe born in a manger yet are filled with grief with our own losses. We pray for God to be near to us.

**Comfort us, O God, in our joy and in our grief.**

*silence is observed*

We light the second candle to remember those whom we have loved and lost. We pause to remember their names, their faces, their voices, and the memories that bind them to us in this season. We hold them before God, giving thanks for their lives in ours.

**May God's eternal love surround them.**

*silence is observed*

We light the third candle to redeem the pain of loss; the loss of relationships, the loss of companionship, the loss of health in ourselves or in family members, the loss of joy and peace in our lives from the stresses which surround us, the loss and loneliness we experience when our loved ones do not share our faith. 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.

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

*silence is observed*

We light the fourth candle to remember ourselves this Christmas season. We pause and remember these past months and for some of us years of grief; the disbelief, the anger, the down times, the poignancy of reminiscing, the hugs and handshakes of family and friends, all those who have stood with us, and the pain of reflecting our own mortality. We give thanks for all the support we have known.

**Let us remember that dawn defeats darkness.**

*silence is observed*

We light the Christ candle to remember our faith and the gift of hope which God offers us in the Incarnation. We remember that God, who shares our life in Jesus Christ, promises us a place and time of no more pain and suffering.

**Let us remember the One who show the way, who brings the truth and who bears the light.**

*silence is observed*

### **LITURGY OF THE WORD**

#### **READING**

Isaiah 40: 1, 25-31

Word of God, Word of Life.

**Thanks be to God.**

#### **PSALM**

Psalm 121

The Holy Gospel according to... **Glory to You, O Lord.**

The Gospel of the Lord. **Praise to You, O Christ.**

**HYMN**

Comfort Comfort O My People ELW 256

**LIGHTING OF INDIVIDUAL CANDLES & LAYING ON OF HANDS**

Each of us comes here today bearing our own hurts, sorrows, and broken places. I invite each of you to offer your personal wound to the God who loves each of us deeply and wants to carry our pain. God waits patiently, gently calling out, "Give me your pain, come to me... all who labor and are heavy burdened, I will refresh you."

In the space to follow I invite you to come forward to light a candle and to participate in the laying on of hands, as ways of giving God all that weighs heavy upon us. Know that while the invitation is extended, you may choose to do as much or as little as you desire.

As you light a candle, remember that it is God who lights a candle in our darkness and holds us close until we are able to shine our light for others. Be reminded that suffering passes, though memory remains.

As you kneel at the altar railing to receive a sign of healing and wholeness through the laying on of hands, remember that it is God who give comfort and healing.

Come. Let God carry your burdens.

*instrumental music is played*

**LITURGY OF THE MEAL****PRAYERS OF INTERCESSION**

In the spirit of the season, knowing that there is much pain in the world, we confidently ask God for all the things we need, finding our strength in the one who is our Rock and our Redeemer.

For those who feel broken and tired; may they feel energized by your presence and love. God, hear our prayer.

**And in your mercy, answer.**

For those who feel weak and alone, we pray that they might be strengthened by you and know that they are surrounded by those who love them. God, hear our prayer.

**And in your mercy, answer.**

For those who have lost a job and are struggling to make ends meet. And for those who have lost their homes and are unsure of what will happen next. God, hear our prayer.

**And in your mercy, answer.**

For those who have had loved who have died; for the relationships that are no longer; for all the losses that we know; that all may be redeemed by your Easter promise; God, hear our prayer.

**And in your mercy, answer.**

For all our family and friends that they may know love and peace and happiness in you; God, hear our prayer.

**And in your mercy, answer.**

For the peace proclaimed by the Christmas angels, that it might come to the whole world; God, hear our prayer.

**And in your mercy, answer.**

Merciful God, your Holy Spirit intercedes for us even when we do not know how to pray. Send your Spirit now to comfort us in this time of need and loss, that even in the midst of our sorrow, we may know the consolation of your love and the joy of your saving grace; through Jesus Christ our Lord.

**Amen.**

**OFFERING**

**THANKSGIVING AT THE TABLE**

The Lord be with you.

**And also with you.**

Lift up your hearts.

**We lift them to the Lord.**

Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.



**It is right to give our thanks and praise.**

Holy God, the Beginning and the End, our Salvation and our Hope, we praise you for creating a world of order and beauty. When we brought on chaos, cruelty and despair, you sent the prophets to proclaim your justice and mercy. At this end of the ages your Son Jesus came to bring us your love and to heal all the suffering world.

In the night in which he was betrayed, our Lord Jesus took bread, and gave thanks; broke it, and gave it to his disciples, saying: Take and eat; this is my body, given for you. Do this for the remembrance of me.

Again, after supper, he took the cup, gave thanks, and gave it for all to drink, saying: This cup is the new covenant in my blood, shed for you and for all people for the forgiveness of sin. Do this for the remembrance of me.

Remembering, therefore, his life, death, and resurrection, we await his coming again in righteousness and peace. Send your Spirit on us and on this bread and wine we share: strengthen our faith, increase our hope, and bring to birth the justice and joy of your Son.

Through him all glory and honor is yours, Almighty Father, with the Holy Spirit, in your holy Church, both now and forever.

**Amen.**

**LORD'S PRAYER**

Gathering into one by the Holy Spirit, let us pray as Jesus taught us.

**Our Father, who art in heaven, hallowed be thy name, thy kingdom come, they will be done, on earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread; and forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive those who trespass against us; and lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil. For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, forever and ever. Amen.**

**INVITATION TO COMMUNION**

In this meal, righteousness and peace meet together. Come, take your place at the table.

**Amen.**

**COMMUNION**

*All are welcome at God's table.  
Communion instructions to be shared verbally.*

## COMMUNION MUSIC

Special Music Played by Jimin Seo

### BLESSING

May the body and blood of our Lord Jesus Christ strengthen you and keep you in his grace.

**Amen.**

## LITURGY OF SENDING

### PRAYER OF HOPE

O God, our Father, our Living Water, and our Source of Life, in whom we live and move and have our being, who quenches our thirst, who refreshes our weariness, who bathes and washes and cleanses our wounds; be for us always a fountain of life, and for all the world a river of hope springing up in the midst of the deserts of despair.

Honor and blessing, glory and praise to you forever and ever.

**Amen.**

### BLESSING

Go in peace and faith. If you are tired, may you find rest. If you are anxious, may you find peace. If you are lonely, may you find comfort. Know that nothing can separate you from the love of God in Christ Jesus. And the blessing of God our Creator, +

Redeemer, and Sustainer remain with you always

**Amen.**

## HYMN

In the Bleak Mid Winter ELW 294

### PEACE & DISMISSAL

The peace of the Lord be with you always.

**And also with you.**

Together in Faith, we **share Christ's love with all through word and action.**



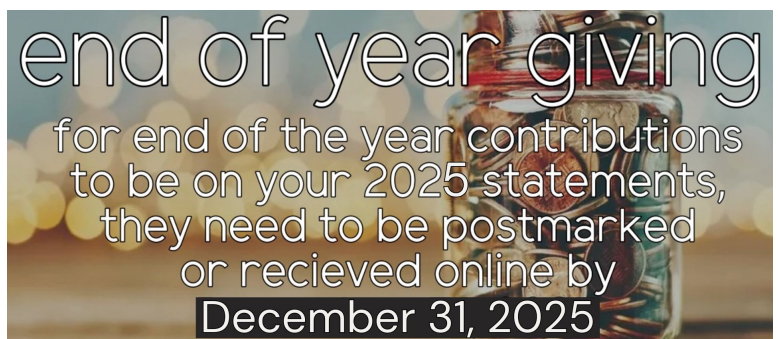
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# CHRISTMAS EVE

Special Music at 6:30pm  
Worship at 7pm

## Soup & Dessert Cook-off

Sunday, January 25  
**SAVE THE DATE**






Sunday, December 28  
**SERVICE OF LESSONS & CAROLS**

## BOOK STUDY:

January 15 - February 5  
Weekly 📅 Thursdays 📅 10-11 am

**SIGN UP DURING WORSHIP!**



*If Faith is ordering your book, \$14 is due by January 15.*

## Open Nests Parent Group

Are your children grown?  
Have they moved out?  
Not sure what to do with your time?

**3<sup>rd</sup> Tuesdays of the month @ 6:15 pm  
@ Second Time Around Bar & Grill**



## Ways to Give to Faith



faithgoshen.com/give



**in person**  
202 S Greene Rd



**text**  
574-212-0404

## Board Game Night!

**JANUARY 16  
5:30-7:30PM**

Bring a game & a snack!  
Open to ALL so bring a friend too!

**OUR WANDERING LUTHERANS**

Sign Up During Worship



## Sundays in December!

**NOISY OFFERING**

**BRING YOUR COINS!**




Now Collecting 1,250 pieces of  
**WRIGLEY'S DOUBLEMINT**

THE GUM IS FOR MODEL ELEMENTARY STUDENTS TO CHEW DURING STATE TESTING!

**DUE FEB 1**  
in the green bin

## HOLIDAY OFFICE CLOSURE

FAITH LUTHERAN CHURCH OFFICE WILL BE  
CLOSED DEC. 24 - JAN. 5

For Pastoral emergencies, email Pastor Jessica at PastorJessica@FaithGoshen.com

**12:25**