

# St. John's United Church of Christ

3 P.M. Worship

Dec 21, 2025

*Longest Night*

WE PREPARE OUR HEARTS FOR THE WORD OF GOD

## Ringling of the Chimes

Prelude	<i>"Let all Mortal Flesh"</i>	arr Hayes
---------	-------------------------------	-----------

## Opening Words

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.**

## Welcome

*(Members and Visitors please make note of your attendance by signing in on the pew pads.)*

Song	<i>"In the Bleak Midwinter"</i>	
<p>In the bleak midwinter, frosty wind made moan; earth stood hard as iron, water like a stone; snow had fallen, snow on snow, snow on snow, in the bleak midwinter, long ago.</p> <p>Our God, heaven cannot hold him, nor earth sustain; heaven and earth shall flee away when he comes to reign: in the bleak midwinter a stable place sufficed the Lord God incarnate, Jesus Christ.</p>		<p>Angels and archangels may have gathered there; cherubim and seraphim thronged the air; but his mother only, in her maiden bliss, worshiped the beloved with a kiss.</p> <p>What can I give him, poor as I am? If I were a shepherd, I would bring a lamb; if I were a wise man, I would do my part; yet what I can I give him: give my heart.</p>

## Psalm 22

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? 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.**

## Psalm 23

I am a child of God  
I have everything I need.  
This beautiful earth feeds my body.  
You feed my soul.  
You guide me in the ways of Life,  
for You are Life.  
And though I will walk through dark places, and eventually to death,  
I need never be afraid.  
For You are with me always,  
In You I can find comfort.  
With Your help, I can face whatever comes.  
My joy overflows.  
Your goodness and blessing will be with me  
Every day of my life -- and forever.

## Litany of Remembrance

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

Song	<i>"O Come, O Come, Emmanuel"</i>	Vs 1
<b>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.</b>		

## Silent Reflection

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.  
**We remember that through you all things are possible. Refresh, restore, renew us, O God, and lead us into your future.**

Song	<i>"O Come, O Come, Emmanuel"</i>	vs2
<b>O come thou Dayspring 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.</b>		

## Silent Reflection

We light this third candle to remember ourselves this Christmas time. We pause and remember the past weeks, months, and for some of us years, that have been heavy with our burdens. We accept and lay before you, God, the sharpness of memory, the sadness and grief, the hurt and fear, the anger and pain.  
**We accept and lay before you the ways we feel we have fallen short, and the times we have spent blaming ourselves, and you, for all that we have suffered. We accept and lay before you the time we have walked alone, in darkness; and in knowledge of our own mortality.**  
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.

**Song***"O Come, O Come, Emmanuel"***vs3**

**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.**

**Silent Reflection**

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 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.**

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.

**Song***"O Come, O Come, Emmanuel"***vs4**

**O come desire of nations, bind all peoples in one heart and mind  
bid then our sad divisions cease, and be thyself our King of Peace  
Rejoice. Rejoice. Emmanuel, shall come to thee O Israel.**

**Silent Reflection****Song and Offering of Light***"Where are You Christmas?"***Horner Jennings Carey****Concluding Prayer**

**Another day will come, Our 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.**

Loving 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 your mercy, grant us safe lodging, and a holy rest, and peace at the last. The peace of the Lord be always with you.

COPYRIGHT NOTICE - © Music used with permission of Christian Copyright Licensing, Inc. #696970

---

**Pastor: Rev. Katie Jo Bielke****Director of Music: Ruth Notch**

---