



**Lord of Life**  
Lutheran Church



*Loved by God,  
Sent to Serve.*

**Longest Night Service  
December 21, 2022  
7:15 pm**

**Evangelical Lutheran Worship**  
ELW Service of the Word

**Prelude: “*With You (for David)*”**

**Jeanne Cotter**

**GATHERING**

*The Holy Spirit calls us together as the people of God.*

**The Longest Night Service Introduction**

**Greeting**

The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God,  
and the communion of the Holy Spirit be with you all.

**And also with you.**

**Prayer of the Day**

Let us pray.

Gather us in, O God, and enfold us in your embrace. As we approach the day when we celebrate the Word made flesh in the birth of your Son, we grow in our awareness that we need you. We bring our grief, our pains, our disappointments, our fears and the chaos of our world, and we lay all of that before you in this time of worship. We pray that we may be set free and find our rest in the long-expected Jesus who reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.

**Amen.**

**Gathering Song: *Abide with Me***

**ELW 629**

- 1 Abide with me, fast falls the eventide.  
The darkness deepens; Lord, with me abide.  
When other helpers fail and comforts flee,  
help of the helpless, oh, abide with me.
- 2 Swift to its close ebbs out life's little day;  
earth's joys grow dim, its glories pass away;  
change and decay in all around I see;  
O thou who changest not, abide with me.

- 3 I need thy presence ev'ry passing hour;  
what but thy grace can foil the tempter's pow'r?  
Who like thyself my guide and stay can be?  
Through cloud and sunshine, oh, abide with me.
- 4 I fear no foe, with thee at hand to bless;  
ills have no weight, and tears no bitterness.  
Where is death's sting? Where, grave, thy victory?  
I triumph still, if thou abide with me!
- 5 Hold thou thy cross before my closing eyes,  
shine through the gloom, and point me to the skies;  
heav'n's morning breaks, and earth's vain shadows flee;  
in life, in death, O Lord, abide with me.

Text: Henry F. Lyte, 1793-1847

Music: William H. Monk, 1823-1889

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### **WORD**

*God speaks to us in scripture reading, preaching, and song.*

#### **First Reading: Ecclesiastes 3:1-11**

<sup>1</sup>For everything there is a season, and a time for every matter under heaven:

<sup>2</sup>a time to be born, and a time to die;

a time to plant, and a time to pluck up what is planted;

<sup>3</sup>a time to kill, and a time to heal;

a time to break down, and a time to build up;

<sup>4</sup>a time to weep, and a time to laugh;

a time to mourn, and a time to dance;

<sup>5</sup>a time to throw away stones, and a time to gather stones together;

a time to embrace, and a time to refrain from embracing;

<sup>6</sup>a time to seek, and a time to lose;

a time to keep, and a time to throw away;

<sup>7</sup>a time to tear, and a time to sew;

a time to keep silence, and a time to speak;

<sup>8</sup>a time to love, and a time to hate;

a time for war, and a time for peace.

<sup>9</sup>What gain have the workers from their toil? <sup>10</sup>I have seen the business that God has given to everyone to be busy with. <sup>11</sup>He has made everything suitable for its time; moreover he has put a sense of past and future into their minds, yet they cannot find out what God has done from the beginning to the end.

Word of God, word of life. **Thanks be to God.**

## Silence

### PSALM: Psalm 121 (*read responsively*)

<sup>1</sup>I lift up my eyes to the hills; from where is my help to come?

<sup>2</sup>**My help comes from the LORD, the maker of heaven and earth.**

<sup>3</sup>The LORD will not let your foot be moved nor will the one who watches over you fall asleep.

<sup>4</sup>**Behold, the keeper of Israel will neither slumber nor sleep;**

<sup>5</sup>the LORD watches over you; the LORD is your shade at your right hand;

<sup>6</sup>**the sun will not strike you by day, nor the moon by night.**

<sup>7</sup>The LORD will preserve you from all evil and will keep your life.

<sup>8</sup>**The LORD will watch over your going out and your coming in, from this time forth forevermore.**

## Silence

### SECOND READING: Isaiah 40:1-8, 28-31

<sup>1</sup>Comfort, O comfort my people, says your God. <sup>2</sup>Speak tenderly to Jerusalem, and cry to her that she has served her term, that her penalty is paid, that she has received from the LORD's hand double for all her sins. <sup>3</sup>A voice cries out: "In the wilderness prepare the way of the LORD, make straight in the desert a highway for our God.

<sup>4</sup>Every valley shall be lifted up, and every mountain and hill be made low; the uneven ground shall become level, and the rough places a plain. <sup>5</sup>Then the glory of the LORD shall be revealed, and all people shall see it together, for the mouth of the LORD has spoken." <sup>6</sup>A voice says, "Cry out!" And I said, "What shall I cry?" All people are grass, their constancy is like the flower of the field. <sup>7</sup>The grass withers, the flower fades, when the breath of the LORD blows upon it; surely the people are grass. <sup>8</sup>The grass withers, the flower fades; but the word of our God will stand forever.

<sup>28</sup>Have you not known? Have you not heard? The LORD is the everlasting God, the Creator of the ends of the earth. He does not faint or grow weary; his understanding is unsearchable. <sup>29</sup>He gives power to the faint, and strengthens the powerless.

<sup>30</sup>Even youths will faint and be weary, and the young will fall exhausted; <sup>31</sup>but those who wait for the LORD shall renew their strength, they shall mount up with wings like eagles, they shall run and not be weary, they shall walk and not faint.

Word of God, word of life. **Thanks be to God.**

## Silence

### GOSPEL: John 1:1-14

The holy gospel according to John.

**Glory to you, O Lord.**

<sup>1</sup>In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. <sup>2</sup>He was in the beginning with God. <sup>3</sup>All things came into being through him, and without him not one thing came into being. What has come into being <sup>4</sup>in him was life, and the life was the light of all people. <sup>5</sup>The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness did not overcome it.

<sup>6</sup>There was a man sent from God, whose name was John. <sup>7</sup>He came as a witness to testify to the light, so that all might believe through him. <sup>8</sup>He himself was not the light, but he came to testify to the light. <sup>9</sup>The true light, which enlightens everyone, was coming into the world.

<sup>10</sup>He was in the world, and the world came into being through him; yet the world did not know him. <sup>11</sup>He came to what was his own, and his own people did not accept him. <sup>12</sup>But to all who received him, who believed in his name, he gave power to become children of God, <sup>13</sup>who were born, not of blood or of the will of the flesh or of the will of man, but of God.

<sup>14</sup>And the Word became flesh and lived among us, and we have seen his glory, the glory as of a father's only son, full of grace and truth.

The gospel of the Lord.

**Praise to you, O Christ.**

## Silence

### Hymn of the Day: *In the Bleak Midwinter*

ELW 294

1 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.

2 Heaven cannot hold him,  
nor earth sustain;  
heav'n and earth shall flee away  
when he comes to reign;  
in the bleak midwinter  
a stable place sufficed  
the Lord God almighty,  
Jesus Christ.

3 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 give him—  
give my heart.

Text: Christina Georgina Rossetti, 1831-1894

Music: Gustav Holst, 1874-1934

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## **Litany of Remembrance**

*The first candle is lighted*

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.**

## **Hymn *O Come, O Come Emmanuel***

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 you, O Israel.

*Silent reflection*

*The second candle is lighted.*

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.**

**Hymn *O Come, O Come Emmanuel***

O come, O Wisdom from on high,  
embracing all things far and nigh:  
in strength and beauty come and stay;  
teach us your will and guide our way.  
Rejoice! Rejoice! Emmanuel  
shall come to you, O Israel.

*Silent reflection*

*The third candle is lighted.*

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, the dawn will come, and dawn defeats the darkness.**

**Hymn *O Come, O Come Emmanuel***

O come, O Dayspring, come and cheer;  
O Sun of justice, now draw near.  
Disperse the gloomy clouds of night,  
and death's dark shadow put to flight.  
Rejoice! Rejoice! Emmanuel  
shall come to you, O Israel.

*Silent reflection*

*The fourth candle is lighted.*

We light this fourth candle to remember faith, the gift of light and hope that God offers to us in the stories of Christmas, which also began in abandonment, insecurity, and humbleness, in a poor stable. We remember that the loving God, who kept the light shining 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.**

**Hymn**    *O Come, O Come Emmanuel*

O come, O King of nations, come,  
O Cornerstone that binds in one:  
refresh the hearts that long for you;  
restore the broken, make us new.  
Rejoice! Rejoice! Emmanuel  
shall come to you, O Israel.

**Silence**

**Prayers of the Church for the Longest Night**

God of compassion, you have given us your own Son, Jesus Christ, to be for us the great physician, making the broken whole and overcoming even the darkness of death and despair with new life and hope. We thank you for the one who touched the untouchable, reached out to the dying, and brought healing and wholeness to those who had despaired of mending.

Touch our wounds, relieve our hurts, and restore us to wholeness of life, through this same Lord Jesus Christ. Set our troubled souls free, O Lord, from restlessness and anxiety. Uphold us by your strength. Anchor us upon the rock of your faithfulness. Give us your peace and power and so keep us that in all times of trouble and distress, we may know you hold us close.

Indeed, you are faithful, O God. You not only give us your word that can be trusted but you also lend us your ear for our comfort. Hear us now as we offer silently our prayers and needs that are hidden deep within us. *[Silence]*

Grant us, O God, the fullness of your promises. Where we have been weak, grant us your strength; where we have been confused, grant us your guidance; where we have been distraught, grant us your comfort; and in all times and circumstances grant us your peace.

God of great compassion and love, listen to the prayers of your people. Grant to all, especially the bereaved and troubled this Christmas the healing blessing of Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord. Amen.



## **Lord's Prayer**

*Gathered 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, thy 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.

## **SENDING**

*God blesses us and sends us in mission to the world.*

## **Thanksgiving for the Light ELW pp. 310-311**

### **SENDING WORD**

God, let us find some peaceful forgetting and peaceful remembering, a good friend to listen to our stories again, and, at last, a still place within ourselves where we can discover that there is more in us than tears and sadness.

And we pray:

**Watch now, dear Lord, with those who wake or watch or weep tonight,  
and give your angels charge over those who sleep.**

**Tend your sick ones, O Lord Christ, rest your weary ones,  
bless your dying ones, soothe your suffering ones,  
pity your afflicted ones, shield your joyous ones,  
and all for your love's sake. Amen.**

### **Blessing**

The Lord bless you and keep you.

The Lord's face shine on you with grace and mercy.

The Lord look upon you with favor and ☩ give you peace.

**Amen.**

**Musical Reflection: *Night of Silence/Silent Night* Diane Frambach & Bri Ensign**  
(Congregation hums “*Silent Night*” during verses)

- 1 Cold are the people, winter of life;  
we tremble in shadows this cold endless night.  
Frozen in the snow lie roses sleeping,  
flowers that will echo the sunrise;  
fire of hope is our only warmth:  
weary, its flame will be dying soon.
- 2 Voice in the distance, call in the night;  
on wind you enfold us, you speak of the light.  
Gentle on the ear you whisper softly  
rumors of a dawn so embracing;  
breathless love awaits darkened souls:  
soon will we know of the morning.
- 3 Spirit among us, shine like the star;  
your light that guides shepherds and kings from afar  
shimmer in the sky so empty, lonely,  
rising in the warmth of the Son's love;  
star unknowing of night and day:  
Spirit, we wait for the loving Son.

Text & Music: Daniel Kantor      © 1984 GIA Publications, Inc. Used by permission One License #A-718383

**Dismissal**

Go in peace. Christ is with you  
**Thanks be to God.**

**Postlude: “*The Love of the Lord*”**

**Michael Joncas**  
**Piano arr. by Jeanne Cotter**

## Announcements

### **Worship Online**

#### **Zoom:**

<https://bit.ly/2PvSCQJ>  
Meeting ID: 563 582 7371  
Passcode: Luther

#### **Phone in at:**

(312) 626-6799  
Meeting ID: 563 582 7371  
Passcode: 456037

### **This Week at Lord of Life**

Saturday, December 24	4:00 PM	Christmas Eve Service in-person or online
	6:00 PM	Christmas Eve Service in-person or online
Sunday, December 25	10:00 AM	Christmas Day Service in-person or online
Sunday, January 1	10:00 AM	Lessons & Carols in-person or online

### **Acknowledgments**

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**Administrative Office Hours**

Monday - Thursday  
9:00 AM - 3:00 PM

