



Trinity United Methodist Church



1205 Dolley Madison Blvd. | McLean, VA 22101
703-356-3312 | umtrinity.org | info@umtrinity.org

December 21, 2025

5 p.m.

A SERVICE OF WORSHIP FOR THE LONGEST OF NIGHTS

Prelude

Sans Day Carol (Trad. Cornish)
The Holly & the Ivy (Trad. English)

Jody Marshall

Welcome

Prayer of Preparation

O God of compassion and love, we praise and thank you for the opportunity to come together to worship, as we name our sorrow and pain at a time when many seem filled with joy. The holidays are alloyed for us, as we greet the good news of the season while also holding dear the memory of those we have loved who are not present with us. We see that not all is hope and joy in our world. May this time in your presence offer us comfort and a moment of peace, as we acknowledge our struggle, and find shelter in the eternal hope you offer through Jesus Christ, in whose name we pray. Amen.

The Bearing of the Light

Music

In the Bleak Midwinter (Holst)

Jerry Rich, Jody Marshall

Call to Worship

from Isaiah 9, John 1

One: The people who walked in darkness have seen a great light; on those who lived in a land of deep shadow a light has shined.

Many: **For the yoke that was weighing upon them, the burden upon their shoulders, God has broken in pieces.**

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

Many: **And the Word became flesh and lived among us, full of grace and truth, and we have seen his glory.**

One: In him was life, and that life was the light of all.

Many: **The light shines on in the darkness, and the darkness has never been able to extinguish it.**

Hymn of Praise

O Come, O Come Emmanuel

Blue Hymnal 119 (vv1-2)

Prayers of the People

One: In the spirit of this season, let us now confidently ask God for all that we need; as we participate in whatever way we can this Christmas. God hear our prayer;

Many: **and in your mercy, answer.**

One: For our families and friends, that they may continue to care for and support us. God, hear our prayer;

Many: **and in your mercy, answer.**

One: For those whom we loved who have died, we thank you. For all the losses that we carry, that all may be redeemed by your Resurrection promise. God, hear our prayer;

Many: **and in your mercy, answer.**

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

Many: **and in your mercy, answer.**

One: For the peace and goodwill proclaimed by heavenly messengers to reach throughout the whole world. God, hear our prayer;

Many: **and in your mercy, answer.**

One: God of great compassion and love, receive the prayers of these, your people. Grant to all, especially the grieving and the lonely, the blessings of fellowship, courage and hope this holy season. This we ask in the name of the One who has come among us, and comes among us still, Jesus, our Savior. In his name we pray as he taught us ...

All: **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. Amen.

First Reading

from Isaiah 40

"With whom will you compare me? Who is my equal?" asks the Holy One.

Look up to the heavens! Who made the stars, if not the One who leads them out like an army, calling each one by its own name? So mighty is God's power and strength that not one fails to answer. Israel, why then do you complain that our God does not know your troubles or care if you suffer injustice? Our God, the everlasting God, the Creator of the farthest parts of the earth, never grows tired or weary. No one can fathom the depths of God's

understanding. God gives power to the faint and strength to the powerless. Even youths become exhausted and young ones give up, but they that wait upon the Lord shall renew their strength. They shall mount up with wings as eagles; they shall run and not be weary. They shall walk and grow faint."

Musical Response

It Came Upon the Midnight Clear (Willis)

A Litany of Hope

Psalm 121

One: I will lift up my eyes to the hills. From where does my help come?

Many: **Our help comes from God, who made heaven and earth.**

One: God who keeps you will not slumber, nor suffer your foot to be moved.

Many: **Behold, the Holy One who keeps Israel shall not slumber or sleep.**

One: The Almighty is your defender and the shade at your right hand.

Many: **The sun shall not hurt us by day or the moon by night.**

One: The Creator shall preserve you from all evil and care for your soul.

Many: **Thanks be to God, who preserves our going out and our coming in from this time forth, and for evermore.**

Second Reading

John 1: 1-14

In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was with God in the beginning. Through him all things were made; without him nothing was made that has been made. In him was life, and that life was the light of all mankind. The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness has not overcome it. There was a man sent from God whose name was John. He came as a witness to testify concerning that light, so that through him all might believe. He himself was not the light; he came only as a witness to the light.

The true light that gives light to everyone was coming into the world. He was in the world, and though the world was made through him, the world did not recognize him. He came to that which was his own, but his own did not receive him. Yet to all who did receive him, to those who believed in his name, he gave the right to become children of God — children born not of natural descent, nor of human decision or a husband's will, but born of God.

The Word became flesh and made his dwelling among us. We have seen his glory, the glory of the one and only Son, who came from the Father, full of grace and truth.

Meditation

A Litany of Remembering

One: This candle we light to remember those whom we have loved, and are now hid from our sight. We pause to remember them, their faces, their voices, and the memories that binds them to us in this season.

Many: **May God's eternal love surround them forever.**

(The first candle is lit during a moment of silence.)

One: This second candle we light to acknowledge the pain of loss; the loss of relationships, the loss of jobs, of former homes, of health. We pause to reflect on the pain of the past, for the present is not as we would have it be, and offer it to God, asking that the One who made us would redeem our suffering and heal our world.

Many: **Refresh, restore, and renew us, O Lord, and lead us into your future. We grasp your hands, and seek the embrace of your peace.**

(The second candle is lit during a moment of silence.)

One: This third candle we light to seek grace for ourselves this holy season time. We pause and remember our season of grief; the disbelief, the anger, the sense of being lost, the embrace by the family and friends who stood with us; we give thanks for all the support we have discovered, and for what we did not perceive.

Many: **On this darkest of days, we hold to the deep knowledge that dawn will come, and will always come.**

(The third candle is lit during a moment of silence.)

One: This fourth candle is lit to remember our faith, and the gift of hope which the Christmas story offers to us. Here we remember that God, who came to share our lives, our losses and our griefs, has promised us a place and time where pain and suffering will fall away.

Many: **We remember our Savior Jesus Christ, the Morning Star, who shows us the way that leads through pain to triumph and radiant life.**

(The fourth candle is lit during a moment of silence.)

CHRIST'S GRACIOUS LIFE

242 Love Came Down at Christmas

1. Love came down at Christ - mas, Love all love - ly, Love di-vine;
 2. Wor-ship we the God - head, Love in - car- nate, Love di-vine;
 3. Love shall be our to - ken; love be yours and love be mine;

Love was born at Christ - mas; star and an - gels gave the sign.
 wor - ship we our Je - sus, but where-with for sa - cred sign?
 love to God and all men,* love for plea and gift and sign.

*“neighbor” may be substituted for “all men”

WORDS: Christina G. Rossetti, 1885

MUSIC: Trad. Irish melody; harm. by David Evans, 1927; alt.

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GARTAN
67.67

Benediction

Postlude

Dona Nobis Pacem

Worship Leaders:

Dave Rochford

Taehwan Roh

Keyboard:

Diane Pelak

Hammered Dulcimer:

Jody Marshall

*Humble and human, willing to bend You are
 Fashioned of flesh and the fire of life, You are
 Not too proud to wear our skin
 to know this weary world we're in
 Humble, humble Jesus.
 And the Word became flesh, and pitched His tent among us.
 Audrey Assad, "Humble"*