First Presbyterian Church of Bethlehem

The Longest Night Service

December 21, 2022



PRELUDE I Wonder As I Wander setting Nance Raabe

CALL TO WORSHIP AND PASSING THE PEACE

GATHERING HYMN #36
In the Bleak Midwinter CRANHAM

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 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.

3 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.

4 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.

ADVENT WREATH LIGHTING

PRAYER FOR ILLUMINATION

RESPONSIVE PSALM AND PRAYER (from 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?

O 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.

OLD TESTAMENT LESSON Isaiah 40 (selected verses) Betsy Simpson

NEW TESTAMENT LESSON Luke 2:1-7

REFLECTION

SILENCE FOR CONTEMPLATION

SPECIAL MUSIC Christmas Night Medley Arr. David Ritter
Guest soloist, Rachel Hart - Violin

PRAYERS OF THE PEOPLE The Rev. Lindsey Altvater Clifton

CANDLELIGHTING RITUAL AND SACRAMENT OF COMMUNION

INVITATION TO THE LORD'S TABLE

The Great Thanksgiving

The Lord's Prayer

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 debts, as we forgive our debtors; and lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil. For Thine is the kingdom and the power and the glory, forever. Amen.

Words of Institution

Sharing the Bread and the Cup

MUSIC DURING DISTRIBUTION: “December” from The Seasons (Op. 39, No. 12) Tchaikovsky

SENDING HYMN #309

Of the Father’s Love Begotten DIVINIUM MYSTERIUM

1 Of the Father’s love begotten,
Ere the worlds began to be,
He is Alpha and Omega,
He the source, the ending He,
Of the things that are, that have been,
And that future years shall see,
Evermore and evermore!

2 O ye heights of heaven adore Him;
Angel hosts, His praises sing;
Powers, dominions, bow before Him,
And extol our God and King;
Let no tongue on earth be silent,
Every voice in concert ring,
Evermore and evermore!

3 Christ, to Thee with God the Father,
And, O Holy Ghost, to Thee,
Hymn and chant with high thanksgiving,
And unwearied praises be:
Honor, glory, and dominion,
And eternal victory,
Evermore and evermore!

BENEDICTION

SILENCE FOR CONTEMPLATION

DEPART IN SILENCE