

The Longest Night Service

December 21, 2022



St. John's Lutheran Church of Parkville

www.stjohnsparkville.org

(410) 665-1234

office@stjohnsparkville.org

Text SJPARKVILLE to 22828 to join our email list.

Welcome to St. John's—we are glad you're here! Whether you have worshiped with us many times, or this is your first time, there is a place for you here. Your presence among us is a gift.

BLUE CHRISTMAS: A SERVICE OF NIGHT PRAYER FOR THE WINTER SOLSTICE

*(Please take a moment to silence all electronics. Thank you!)
(Hymns are taken from Evangelical Lutheran Worship, the red book in the pew rack.)*

INTRODUCTION

Advent and Christmas are seasons of joy and hope. And yet, not everyone feels hopeful or like celebrating at this time of year. Amid the cheerful music on the radio and advertisements with enormous red bows, our losses can be magnified—grief, illness, aging, depression, loneliness, or unemployment...become even harder to bear.

Even those who are not struggling with losses may feel stress at Christmas time. The shadow of depression grows when sunlight is scarce. We get stressed out when our calendars fill with extra social obligations. We fear interactions with family members that have been difficult in the past.

At first glance it may seem like there's no room for grief at Christmas, but Advent and Christmas are also the season of Emmanuel—God with us.

God is with us, in our joys *and* in our sorrows. This “Blue Christmas” Service is an opportunity to come together in worship, to seek healing, make room for grief, and find hope in Jesus Christ who knows our pain, and comes to bring love, joy and deep peace to an aching world.

Whatever you may be feeling this holiday season, know that God is with you.

PRELUDE *Pastoral Symphony* G.F Handel/ arr. William Barnett
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GREETING

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.

GATHERING HYMN *Joyous Light of Heavenly Glory* **ELW 561**
(Text: Greek hymn, 3rd cent., para. Mary Haugen, b. 1950; Music: Marty Haugen; Text and music © 1987 GIA Publications, Inc.)

PRAYER

Creator of the stars of night, bless the long hours of this night with the warmth of your presence. Come to all who suffer in any way. Grant rest to the weary, freedom to those who are burdened, and bright hope to those who despair. Strengthen us as we await your coming once again, through Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord. **Amen.**

STAFF

Rev. Mathew Berger, Pastor mathew.berger@stjohnsparkville.org 913-634-7131	Rev. Amy Berger, Pastor amy.berger@stjohnsparkville.org 443-286-5511
M. Claire Miller, OSSD Deacon	Carol Erpenstein, Office Administrator
Martha Requard, Director of Music	Scott Becker, Sexton

For emergencies call 443-844-9314

*****The Pastors are off on Fridays****



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St. John's Lutheran Church Parkville



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Celebration of the Birth of Christ – December 24th

11 am Traditional Christmas Eve Worship*
4 pm Family Christmas Eve Worship with
Children Participation*
8:30 pm Candlelight Christmas Eve Worship*

December 25th Christmas Day Service at 10 am*

January 1st 1st Sunday after Christmas
Worship at 10 am Service of Lessons & Carols

*Services include Holy Communion



READING

Comfort, O comfort my people,
says your God.
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.
A voice cries out:
"In the wilderness prepare the way of the LORD,
make straight in the desert a highway for our God.
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.
Then the glory of the LORD shall be revealed,
and all people shall see it together,
for the mouth of the LORD has spoken."
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.
The grass withers, the flower fades,
when the breath of the LORD blows upon it;
surely the people are grass.
The grass withers, the flower fades;
but the word of our God will stand forever.
Get you up to a high mountain,
O Zion, herald of good tidings;
lift up your voice with strength,
O Jerusalem, herald of good tidings,
lift it up, do not fear;
say to the cities of Judah,
"Here is your God!"
See, the Lord GOD comes with might,
and his arm rules for him;
his reward is with him,
and his recompense before him.
He will feed his flock like a shepherd;
he will gather the lambs in his arms,
and carry them in his bosom,
and gently lead the mother sheep.

SUNG RESPONSE *Comfort, Comfort Now My People* **ELW 256**

(Text: Johann G. Olearius, 1635-1711; tr. Catherine Winkworth, 1827-1878, alt.; Music: Trente quatre psaumes de David, Geneva, 1551)

READING

Ruth 1: 1-5

In the days when the judges ruled, there was a famine in the land, and a certain man of Bethlehem in Judah went to live in the country of Moab, he and his wife and two sons. The name of the man was Elimelech and the name of his wife Naomi, and the names of his two sons were Mahlon and Chilion; they were Ephrathites from Bethlehem in Judah. They went into the country of Moab and remained there. But Elimelech, the husband of Naomi, died, and she was left with her two sons. These took Moabite wives; the name of one was Orpah and the name of the other Ruth. When they had lived there for about ten years, both Mahlon and Chilion also died, so that the woman was left without her two sons or her husband.

SUNG RESPONSE *O Come, O Come, Emmanuel* **ELW 257 (vv. 1 & 2)**

(Text: Psalterium Cantionum Catholicarum, Koln, 1710; tr. composite; Music: French processional, 15th cent.; Text st. 2 © 1997 Augsburg Fortress)

READING

John 1:1-5

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

REFLECTION

PRAYER

During this time of prayer, you are invited to come forward and receive a sign of healing and wholeness in the name of Christ. You are also invited to take time for silent prayer as music is played.

LORD 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 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,**

BLESSING

*The Lord now bless and keep you; God's love in you increase
By God's own face, with shining grace, grant you eternal peace
To Father, Son, and Spirit, eternal One-in-Three
Be thanks and praise through all our days, into eternity. Amen.*

SENDING HYMN *It Came Upon the Midnight Clear* **ELW 282**

(Text: Edmund H. Sears, 1810-1876; Music: Richard S. Willis, 1819-1900)

DISMISSAL

The peace of Christ be with you all.
And also with you.

Greetings of peace may be shared as the assembly departs.

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