

Grace Lutheran Church, Des Moines The Longest Night – December 21, 2022

The service begins at 7pm on Facebook. We will go live at 6:45pm to allow time for you to greet each other, troubleshoot any technical issues, and gather prayer requests. You do not need an account to view the service, simply visit our Facebook page, Grace Lutheran Des Moines or [click here](#).

Bring candles or other form of light for worship, such as glowsticks, battery tea lights, or flashlights. You can light the candles before service or light them during the service.

Bold text is read as together as a community in all the places we gather this Longest Night.

Please invite family and friends to join us this evening by sharing a personal invitation, email, or share from your Facebook page.

WELCOME

L: This is the longest night of the year...

Lighting of the Advent Wreath

L: We light the candle of Hope as we await the coming of Jesus, who is our source of hope.

C: Thank you, Lord, for the gift of hope, in our times of emptiness.

L: We light the candle of Peace, knowing that Jesus is the Prince of Peace.

C: Thank you, Lord, for the gift of peace in our times of uncertainty.

L: We light the candle of Joy, knowing that our comfort and help come from God.

C: Thank you, Lord, for the gift of joy in our times of sadness.

L: We light the candle of Love, knowing that God is love revealed to us in Jesus Christ.

C: Thank you, Lord, for the gift of love in our times of loneliness.

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

C: The Word became flesh and lived among us, full of grace and truth.

L: In him was life, and that life was the light of all. We light the Christ Candle, knowing that Jesus is our hope, our peace, our joy, and the source of love.

Prayer of Confession

L: Let us confess our sin in the presence of God and one another.

C: Generous and gracious God, we look to you for compassion. We know the pain of loss, the confusion of uncertainty, and the fear of the future. Overwhelmed by our burdens, we easily

forget that you never leave us alone and that your steadfast love for us never falters. By coming together, we find assurance and comfort that we do not suffer this longest night alone. Forgive us when we have neglected to reach those whose night is also long. Grant that we may be your healing presence in each other's lives by bringing them your compassion and comfort that will assure us that we are not alone. Amen.

L: By the mercy of God, we are united with Jesus Christ, in whom we are forgiven.
We rest now in the peace of Christ and rise in the morning to serve.
Amen.

WORD

Reading

(You are invited to read silently or out loud as you feel comfortable in your setting.)

Psalm 57

¹Be merciful to me, O God, be merciful, for I have taken refuge in you;
in the shadow of your wings will I take refuge until this time of trouble has gone by.

²**I will call upon the Most High God,
the God who is with me to the end.**

³O God, you will send from heaven and save me, rebuking those who trample upon me,
you will send forth your love and your faithfulness.

⁴**I lie in the midst of lions that devour the people;
their teeth are spears and arrows, their tongue a sharp sword.**

⁵Exalt yourself above the heavens, O God,
and your glory over all the earth.

⁶**They have laid a net for my feet, and I am bowed low;
they have dug a pit before me, but have fallen into it themselves.**

⁷My heart is steadfast, O God, my heart is steadfast;
I will sing and make melody.

⁸**Wake up, my spirit; awake, lute and harp;
I myself will waken the dawn.**

⁹I will give thanks to you among the peoples, O LORD;
I will sing praise to you among the nations.

¹⁰**For your steadfast love is greater than the heavens,
and your faithfulness reaches to the clouds.**

¹¹Exalt yourself above the heavens, O God,
and your glory over all the earth.

Reading

Isaiah 9:2-7

The people walking in darkness have seen a great light;
on those living in the land of deep darkness a light has dawned.
You have enlarged the nation and increased their joy;
they rejoice before you as people rejoice at the harvest,

as warriors rejoice when dividing the plunder.
For as in the day of Midian's defeat,
you have shattered the yoke that burdens them,
the bar across their shoulders, the rod of their oppressor.
Every warrior's boot used in battle and every garment rolled in blood
will be destined for burning, will be fuel for the fire.
For to us a child is born, to us a son is given,
and the government will be on his shoulders.
And he will be called Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God,
Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace.
Of the greatness of his government and peace there will be no end.
He will reign on David's throne and over his kingdom,
establishing and upholding it with justice and righteousness
from that time on and forever.
The zeal of the Lord Almighty will accomplish this.

L: Word of the Lord

C: Thanks be to God

Prayers of the People

(If you have remaining candles or light sources, please light them as you feel called during the prayers of the people.)

Leader: Lord, hear our prayer,

C: And in Your merciful love, answer.

Lord's Prayer

L: Gathered into one by the Holy Spirit, let us pray as Jesus taught us.

C: Our Father in heaven,

hallowed be your name,

your kingdom come,

your will be done,

on earth as in heaven.

Give us today our daily bread.

Forgive us our sins

as we forgive those

who sin against us.

Save us from the time of trial

and deliver us from evil.

For the kingdom, the power,

and the glory are yours,

now and forever.

Amen.

SENDING

C: On this long, dark night, we await the coming of Christ. We long for the light of the Lord's presence, with us and in us. When our souls are deeply troubled, and our hearts break with the weight of sorrow, may our grief be seasoned with love, and our sadness be lifted with hope. In our times of estrangement, may we be reminded that you are with us always. May our suffering empty us of pride and lead us to true joy through the infinite depths of God's grace. Amen.

Silence

Blessing

L: As we move forward with our pain and grief, we are reminded of our faith, the gift of hope that God offers to all of us in the stories of Christmas, Hanukkah, Kwanzaa, Winter Solstice, Yule, and all Your kingdom. Kindle our hearts and awaken hope, moving forward with the knowledge that God is with us. Let the light of your holy spirit shine like candles, lighting the way for all who despair, feel lost, or forgotten, and grant that it may come to dwell deeply in our hearts so that we may shine on, for ourselves and those we meet along the way.

Amen.

Dismissal

L: May the peace of Christ be with you tonight and always.

Go in peace, serve the Lord.

C: Thanks be to God.