

# SERVICE OF LONGEST NIGHT

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A SERVICE FOR HOPE AND HEALING

Tuesday, December 13, 2022

12 PM

## ENTRANCE RITE

Prelude

The Gathering of the Community

The grace of our Creator, the author of Life and source of Hope, be with you all.

**And also with you.**

The people who walked in darkness have seen a great light; on those who live in a land of deep shadow, a light has shown. For the yoke that was weighing upon them, and the burden upon their shoulders, you have broken in pieces, O God, our Strength.

Let us pray:

God of mercy, hear our prayer in this Advent season, for ourselves and for our families, for those who hurt and those who care, for those who have no peace and those who know no justice, for all who live with painful thoughts and memories.

We ask for strength for today, courage for tomorrow, and peace for the past and the future. We ask these things in the name of our Source, who shares our life in joy and sorrow, death and new birth, despair and promise.

**Amen.**

Lighting Of The Advent Candles *Please be seated.*

*We light this candle to remember those whom we have lost through death.*

We remember their names aloud or in the silence of our hearts.

We treasure the memories that bind them to us.

**Let us remember that God's eternal love surrounds them.**

*We light this second candle to ask for deliverance from the pain of loss:*

the loss of relationships—of jobs—of health—of security.

We ask God to place the gift of peace in our waiting hearts.

**Refresh, restore, renew us, O God, and lead us into your future.**

*We light this third candle for each of us. We offer to God our pasts:*

the times of regret and sorrow, the times of mourning, the difficult memories,

the times of grief and sadness and of loneliness and pain.

**Let us remember that God's dawn defeats despair.**

*We light this fourth candle as a symbol of hope and promise.*

We invite the coming of the One who brings us into new being.

**Let us remember the one who shows the way and who goes with us into our tomorrows.**

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# THE READINGS

First Reading 'Blessing When the World is Ending', by Jan Richardson, *Circle of Grace*

Look, the world  
is always ending  
somewhere.

Somewhere  
the sun has come  
crashing down.

Somewhere  
it has gone  
completely dark.

Somewhere  
it has ended  
with the gun,  
the knife,  
the fist.

Somewhere  
it has ended  
with the slammed door,  
the shattered hope.

Somewhere  
it has ended  
with the utter quiet  
that follows the news  
from the phone,  
the television,  
the hospital room.

Somewhere  
it has ended  
with a tenderness  
that will break  
your heart.

But, listen,  
this blessing means  
to be anything  
but morose.

It has not come  
to cause despair.

It is simply here  
because there is nothing  
a blessing  
is better suited for  
than an ending,  
nothing that cries out more  
for a blessing  
than when a world  
is falling apart.

This blessing  
will not fix you,  
will not mend you,  
will not give you  
false comfort;  
it will not talk to you  
about one door opening  
when another one closes.

It will simply  
sit itself beside you  
among the shards  
and gently turn your face  
toward the direction  
from which the light  
will come,  
gathering itself  
about you  
as the world begins  
again.

Psalm 46 We will pray the Psalm responsively, by whole verse.

God is our refuge and strength, \*  
a very present help in trouble.

**Therefore we will not fear, though the earth be moved, \*  
and though the mountains be toppled into the depths of the sea;**

Though its waters rage and foam, \*  
and though the mountains tremble at its tumult.

**The LORD of hosts is with us; \*  
the God of Jacob is our stronghold.**

There is a river whose streams make glad the city of God, \*  
the holy habitation of the Most High.

**God is in the midst of her; she shall not be overthrown; \*  
God shall help her at the break of day.**

Gospel John 14: 1, 27

The Holy Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ according to John.

**Glory to you, Lord Christ.**

“Do not let your hearts be troubled. Believe in God, believe also in me. Peace I leave with you; my peace I give to you. I do not give to you as the world gives. Do not let your hearts be troubled, and do not let them be afraid.”

The Gospel of the Lord.

**Praise to you, Lord Christ.**

Homily The Rev. Kit Lonergan

Silence/Musical Reflection

Prayers of Intercession

In the spirit of this season, let us ask our God for what we need for ourselves.

As people coping with loss, pain, suffering, loneliness, grief and sadness, we seek the comfort of God's presence.

**Gracious God, we come to you as Christmas approaches. As the nights have been growing longer, the darkness around us has deepened. In this season of our longest nights, we offer to you all that we hold in our hearts. Loving God, hear our prayer.**

**And answer with your love.**

Compassionate God, we grieve for what might have been. The joy of Christmas is often blanketed by the loss that has changed everything. We find ourselves adrift, alone and lost. We need your help to find our way.

Loving God, hear our prayer.

**And answer with your love.**

Caring God, the Christmas season reminds us of all that once was and is no longer. The sounds of celebration around us add to the ache in our hearts. Please be near us this day. Loving God, hear our prayer.

**And answer with your love.**

God of all, we are not alone in our loss and sadness. Be with all those whose lives are touched with sadness during the Christmas season. Let your peace fill the world this day and always. Loving God, hear our prayer.

**And answer with your love.**

Concluding Collect

The Peace

Not an easy peace, not an insignificant peace, not a halfhearted peace,  
but the peace of God in Jesus Christ be with you all.

**And also with you.**

Eucharist—Communion Liturgy from the Iona Community

The Lord be with you.

**And also with you.**

Lift up your hearts.

**We lift them to the Lord.**

Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.

**It is right to give God thanks and praise.**

We offer you praise, dear God, and hearts lifted high, for in the communion of your love Christ comes close to us and we come close to Christ.

Therefore with the whole realm of nature around us, with earth, sea, and sky, we sing to you.

With the angels of light who envelop us, with all the saints before and beside us, with brothers and sisters, east and west, we sing to you.

And with our loved ones, separate from us now, who yet in this mystery are close to us, we join in the song of your unending greatness:

**Holy, holy, holy Lord, God of power and might,  
heaven and earth are full of your glory.  
Blessed is the one who comes in the name of the Lord!  
Hosanna in the highest!**

Blessed is Jesus, who walks with us the road of our world's suffering, and who is known to us in the breaking of bread. On the night of his arrest Jesus took bread and having blessed it he broke the bread and gave it to his disciples, saying, This is my body, given to you.

In the same way he took wine and having given thanks for it, he poured it out and gave the cup to his disciples, saying, This cup is the new relationship with God, sealed with my blood. Take this and share it.

Hear us, O Christ, and breathe your Spirit upon us, and upon this bread and wine.

May they become for us your body, vibrant with your life, healing, renewing, and make us whole.

And as the bread and wine which we now eat and drink are changed into us, may we be changed again into you, bone of your bone, flesh of your flesh, loving and caring in the world. Amen.

**Amen.**

#### The Lord's Prayer

As Christ taught us we now pray:

**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, for ever and ever. Amen.**

#### Invitation

The One whose table was open to all is now present in this bread.

The One whose word welcomed friend and stranger offers friendship through this cup.

**With people everywhere we affirm God's goodness at the heart of humanity, planted more deeply than all that is wrong.**

The Gifts of God for the People of God.

**Thanks be to God.**

#### Communion

#### Postcommunion Prayer

Let us pray.

**Almighty and eternal God, so draw our hearts to you, so guide our minds, so fill our imaginations, so control our wills, that we may be wholly yours, utterly dedicated to you; and then use us, we pray, as you will, and always to your glory and the welfare of your people; through our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. Amen.**

#### Blessing

May the God of infinite grace scatter the weight of despair and strengthen our hearts with holiness; and may God's blessing be with us, Christ's peace be with us, and the Spirit's outpouring be with us, now and always.

**Amen.**

#### Dismissal

All are invited for a simple lunch in the Ferris Library following the service.