



**EVANGELICAL REFORMED CHURCH  
UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST  
An Open and Affirming Congregation  
15 West Church Street, Frederick, MD 21701**

**LONGEST NIGHT SERVICE**

**December 17, 2020**

**7:30 p.m.**

## Prelude

## Welcome

## Call to Worship

The night seems dark and it is hard to see the guiding star above us. Invitations to joy sparkle around the sky, but their cheerful light is so bright they sometimes make the shadows deeper. If we turn our faces away, what will we see? Something that we want to see? If we dare to look, will we find a glimpse of loving kindness breaking through?

**Let us hold each other now, we who stand on the margins of this moment.**

Peace be with you.

**And also with you.**

## \*Opening Carol *In the Bleak Midwinter*

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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.

Our God transcends all heaven, earth, and its domain;  
heaven and earth shall flee away when Christ comes to reign;  
In the bleak midwinter a stable place sufficed the  
sovereign God almighty, Jesus Christ.

Angels and archangels may have gathered there,  
cherubim and seraphim thronged the midnight air;  
But his mother only, in her maiden bliss,  
worshipped the beloved with a kiss.

What can I offer, poor as I am?  
If I were a shepherd, I would bring a lamb.  
If I were a wise one, I would do my part;  
but what can I offer: all my heart.

**\*Opening prayer**

**God of love and understanding,  
we gather here this evening  
to confront our pain in the midst  
of the world's celebration.**

**Help us to know that you are present with us  
in all of our moods and feelings and seasons.**

**Grant us a taste of the hope, peace, joy, and love  
that you promise to all of your people  
through the gift of your child, Jesus. Amen.**

**Reading of Scripture        Isaiah 40  
   Luke 1: 26-38**

**Lighting of the Advent Candles**

**Extinguishing of the Light**

**Reflection**

**Lighting our Own Candles**

*(As quiet music plays, if you wish, you may come forward and light a candle as you pray.)*

**Carol                        *Silent Night***

**Silent night, holy night  
All is calm, all is bright  
'Round yon virgin Mother and Child  
Holy infant so tender and mild  
Sleep in heavenly peace  
Sleep in heavenly peace**

**Silent night, holy night!  
Shepherds quake at the sight!  
Glories stream from heaven afar;  
Heavenly hosts sing Al-le-lu-ia!  
Christ the Savior is born!  
Christ the Savior is born!**

**Silent night, holy night  
Son of God, love's pure light  
Radiant beams from Thy holy face  
With the dawn of redeeming grace  
Jesus, Lord at Thy birth  
Jesus, Lord at Thy birth**

**Benediction** (adapted from Amy Zucker Morgenstern)

Blessed is the dark, in which our dreams stir and are revealed.

Blessed is the dark of earth, where seeds come to life.

Blessed are the depths of the ocean where no light shimmers: the womb of all earthly life.

Blessed is the light into which we awake,  
the light that sparkles on the waters:  
that calls the tree forth from the seed,  
and calls the shadow forth from the tree.

May you be blessed by the light

May you be blessed by the darkness

**Postlude**

*(You are invited to remain in quiet reflection and meditation for as long as you wish.)*

Extinguishing of the Advent Candles was adapted by a liturgy written by Rev.  
David Miller Kohlmeier

*Is this the darkness of the tomb, or of the womb? I don't know. All I know is that  
the only way we will endure is if each of us shows up to the labor. —Valarie Kaur*