



Shandon Presbyterian Church

607 Woodrow Street • Columbia, South Carolina • 29205

Service of the Longest Night
December 21, 2021 • 7:30 pm



A Service of the Longest Night

Prelude

Matthew McCall

Still, Still, Still

ARR. JOSEPH MARTIN

Call to Worship

Rev. Jenny McDevitt

Lighting of the Advent Candles

* Hymn 544

Day Is Done

AR HYD Y NOS

An Evening Prayer

Rev. John Cook

Gentle God,

Your Christmas angels are singing,

but we struggle to hear their song.

We long to hear from all of them:

the ones who sing of your glory in the highest heaven;

the ones who whisper, 'Do not be afraid;'

the ones who cradle us and enfold us in their wings;

the ones who understand if our hearts are too heavy

for melodies that soar and dance.

This is our truth tonight, but we trust that your truth is stronger.

So if we are here tonight with anger,

calm us with your patience.

If we are here tonight with fear,

companion us with your light.

If we are here tonight in pain,

soothe us with your gentleness.

And if we are here tonight in shock,

steady us with your hand.

For all of us here tonight, O God, hold us and give us hope.

(Silent prayer)

Assurance of God's Grace

Response

Yasmin Bradshaw

It Came Upon a Midnight Clear

CAROL

Still through the cloven skies they come, with peaceful wings unfurled,
And still their heavenly music floats o'er all the weary world:
Above its sad and lowly plains they bend on hovering wing,
And ever o'er its Babel sounds the blessed angels sing.

And ye, beneath life's crushing load, whose forms are bending low,
Who toil along the climbing way with painful steps and slow.
Look now! for glad and golden hours come swiftly on the wing:
O rest beside the weary road, and hear the angels sing.

Scripture Lesson

Luke 1:46-55

And Mary said, "My soul magnifies the Lord,
and my spirit rejoices in God my Savior,
for he has looked with favor on the lowliness of his servant.
Surely, from now on all generations will call me blessed;
for the Mighty One has done great things for me, and holy is his name.
His mercy is for those who fear him from generation to generation.
He has shown strength with his arm;
he has scattered the proud in the thoughts of their hearts.
He has brought down the powerful from their thrones,
and lifted up the lowly;
he has filled the hungry with good things,
and sent the rich away empty.
He has helped his servant Israel, in remembrance of his mercy,
according to the promise he made to our ancestors,
to Abraham and to his descendants for ever."

This is the Word of God for the people of God. **Thanks be to God.**

Meditation

Rev. Jenny McDevitt

Fall On Your Knees

Time for Silence and Reflection

Ritual of Candle Lighting

Anthem

O Holy Night

ADOLPHE ADAM

Pastoral Prayer

Rev. Molly Spangler

* Hymn 121

O Little Town of Bethlehem

ST. LOUIS

* Benediction

Please depart in silence.

Rev. Jenny McDevitt will greet outside the Woodrow Street doors.

*Those who wish for a time of individual prayer with either Rev. John Cook or Rev. Molly Spangler
are invited to remain in the Sanctuary,
joining them in the transepts for prayer and/or anointing one at a time.
In addition, counselors from the Live Oak Counseling Center are available in the Parlor
for anyone who desiring extra support this evening.*

Join us Sundays at 10:30 am. Christmas Eve services are at 4, 8, and 11 pm.

Blessing for the Longest Night

All throughout these months
as the shadows have lengthened,
this blessing has been gathering itself,
making ready,
preparing for this night.

It has practiced walking in the dark,
traveling with its eyes closed,
feeling its way
by memory
by touch
by the pull of the moon
even as it wanes.

So believe me when I tell you
this blessing will reach you
even if you have not light enough
to read it;
it will find you
even though you cannot see it coming.

You will know the moment of its arriving
by your release of the breath
you have held so long;
a loosening
of the clenching in your hands,
of the clutch around your heart;
a thinning
of the darkness that had drawn itself around you.

This blessing does not mean to take the night away
but it knows its hidden roads,
knows the resting spots along the path,
knows what it means
to travel in the company of a friend.

So when this blessing comes, take its hand.
Get up.
Set out on the road you cannot see.

This is the night when you can trust
that any direction you go,
you will be walking toward the dawn.

—Jan Richardson