**Southminster Presbyterian Church**

**A Service for the Longest Night**

**December 21, 2023**

**7:30 p.m.**

This service will not be live streamed but will be recorded.

View the video posted on our web site:
<https://www.southminsterpc.org/worship-videos>
or by going to our YouTube channel:
<https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCPgWICngOvkmR1OXgCG_wiA/videos>

***A Light in the Darkness***

Gathering Music:  *No Wind at the Window* the Iona Community

  Words of Welcome

  Prelude: *In the Bleak Midwinter* Gustav Holst

  Call to Worship  John 1

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

 **People: The Word became flesh and lived among us, full of grace and truth,
 and we have seen his glory.**

 Leader: In him was life, and that life was the light of all.

 **People: The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness has never**

**been able to extinguish it.**

  Special Music: *The Gift* Jack Murphy and Frank Wildhorn

  Community Prayer of Hope  (unison)

**Eternal and Loving God, we pause on these long, dark nights to thank you for our loved ones, to honor God’s presence in the midst of life’s challenges, and to remember with thankfulness the resurrection of Christ Jesus. In this way we are witnesses to the light of Christ’s hope and in the power of his resurrection, which triumphed over sin and death. Amen.**

  Special Music: *Lord, Remind Me* Jon Guerra and Valerie Guerra

  Let us declare our faith:   (from the Heidelberg Catechism)

 Leader: “What is your only comfort in life and in death?”

 **People: “That I am not my own, but belong body and soul, in life and in death,
 to my faithful Savior, Jesus Christ.”**

 A Light Shines in the Darkness

 Leader: We light the candle of God our Creator. We light the candle of Jesus,
 whose resurrection ensured eternal life for those who are named for him—
 Christians. We light the candle of the Holy Spirit who brings us to and

  sustains us in our faith.

 **People: O Trinity of love and grace, we thank you for the consolation
 you give us as we mourn and honor loved ones, and as we mourn
 our life’s challenges.**

 Hymn 90: *Wait for the Lord*

**Wait for the Lord, whose day is near.**

**Wait for the Lord; be strong; take heart!**

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 An Invitation to Hope: Lighting a Candle in the Dark

 Hymn 88: *O Come, O Come, Emmanuel*

**O come, O come, Emmanuel
And ransom captive Israel,**

**That mourns in lonely exile here.**

**Until the Son of God appear.
Rejoice! Rejoice! Emmanuel
Shall come to thee, O Israel!**

**O come, Thou Dayspring, come and cheer
Our spirits by Thine advent here;
disperse the gloomy clouds of night
And death’s dark shadows put to flight.
Rejoice! Rejoice! Emmanuel
Shall come to thee, O Israel!**

**O come, Desire of nations, bind
All peoples in one heart and mind;
Bid envy, strife, and discord cease;
Fill the whole world with heaven’s peace.
Rejoice! Rejoice! Emmanuel
Shall come to thee, O Israel!**

**O come, thou Root of Jesse, free
Thine own from Satan’s tyranny;
From depths of hell thy people save
And give them victory o’er the grave.
Rejoice! Rejoice! Emmanuel
Shall come to thee, O Israel!**

Public domain

 Prayer

  Leader: Lord our God, may your fellowship be available to all,

  including those who feel excluded and isolated.

 Special Music: *One Small Child*   David Meece

 Leader: Lord Jesus, let those who are far from home, those who are strangers,

  feel that they genuinely belong in your company.

 Special Music: *Love Has Come*  text by Ken Bible

 Leader: Spirit of God, calm the turmoil in our souls so that we can hear
 your still small voice.

 Special Music: *Love Came Down*  Evelyn R. Laster

 Leader: Spirit of God, shine like these candles in the darkness, lighting the way

  for all who feel abandoned, forsaken, and forgotten.

**All: Blessed are those who mourn, for they shall be comforted.**

 Benediction

 Postlude: *Of the Father’s Love Begotten*

**Participants and Technical Crew**

Rev. Wendy Boden

Liturgist: Blair Nelson

Musicians: Tom Anderson; David Kozich, trumpet; Southminster Choir; Ron Birchall, Derek Buckley,
 Lynn Ferino, Elise Henkels, Linda Wolf Jeziorski, Paul Jeziorski

Worship Associate: David Kozich

Tech support: Blair Nelson

*“When you remember me, it means you have carried something of who I am with you, that I have left some mark of who I am on who you are. It means that you can summon me back to your mind even though countless years and miles may stand between us. It means that if we meet again, you will know me. It means that even after I die, you can still see my face and hear my voice and speak to me in your heart.”*

  -Frederick Buechner

**Worship with us!**

**Christmas Eve morning – service at 9:30 a.m.**

This Sunday morning is the fourth Sunday of Advent. It is the shift from anticipation to astonishment and joy in receiving God’s promised future. In the morning we will sing both Advent and Christmas songs. We will hear both Mary’s and Zechariah’s songs found in the gospel of Luke.

**Christmas Eve Lessons and Carols Service – 4:30 p.m.**

Christmas Eve is the beginning of Christmas and will last twelve days. This service will be our traditional candlelight service, with the familiar Scripture readings, carols, and the choir.

**New Year’s Eve morning – service at 9:30 a.m.**

The Sunday services on the 24th and on December 31st will have different Christmas songs. So, ***“Come let us adore him!”***

You are invited to join us on Facebook
(<https://www.facebook.com/SouthminsterGlenEllyn/>), where we have a live sharing of “**Heart to Heart**” most Tuesdays-Fridays at 4:16 p.m. (but only Wednesday-Friday in the week following Christmas).

We’re also live on **Sunday morning for worship** at 9:30 a.m.
Find us at <https://www.facebook.com/SouthminsterGlenEllyn/>You can also find links to recordings of the weekday sessions and Sunday services posted on our web site: <https://www.southminsterpc.org/worship-videos> or by going to our YouTube channel:
<https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCPgWICngOvkmR1OXgCG_wiA/videos>

Grace and peace to you!