



**Grand Canyon Synod**  
**Evangelical Lutheran Church in America**  
God's work. Our hands.

# Service of the Longest Night

In this difficult year, please join us in a Service of the Longest Night, Monday, December 21, 2020. View on our [Facebook](#) and [Vimeo](#) pages, and [gcsynod.org/longest-night](https://gcsynod.org/longest-night).

Worship will be enhanced if you have four candles that you can light along the way as you will be invited.

## **WELCOME**

*The Rev. Deborah K. Hutterer, Bishop of the Grand Canyon Synod of the ELCA*

**T**HE SERVICE OF THE LONGEST NIGHT is named for these days in December when we experience the shortest day and the longest night of the year. But the name also applies to the feeling that a number of us have about this season. For many, it is the “long dark night of the soul,” in which memories of past experiences and the pain of present experience can become overwhelming.

For some, Christmas Day is the most difficult. For others, it is Christmas Eve, or New Year’s Eve, or the beginning of another lonely New Year.

In this service, we recognize that this is not necessarily a season of joy. We will invite you to meditate on the whole experience of life – even the pain and the anguish. We encourage you to offer your pain to the Christ child. None of us are alone in the darkest parts of our life. In fact, Jesus, the Light of Life, has himself been to the greatest depths and the darkest places. In this service, may you find hope and comfort in knowing that you are not alone.

Lord our God, may your seeking presence, find us all – especially those feeling alone in dark places.

**C: O Lord, lighten our darkness. Amen.**

## **CALL TO WORSHIP**

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

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

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

**C: The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness has not overcome it.**

L: Lord Jesus, like this candle, bring warmth and light to those who mourn, who hunger and thirst, and who weep.

**C: O Lord, lighten our darkness.**

**MUSIC: O COME, O COME, EMMANUEL**

*Arranged by Rev. David Drach-Meinel, Vocals by Kylee Bestenlehner  
Christ the Servant Lutheran Church, Henderson*

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 you, O Israel.

O come, O Key of David, come  
And open wide our heav'nly home;  
Make safe the way that leads on high,  
And close the path to misery.

Rejoice! Rejoice! Emmanuel  
Shall come to you, O Israel.

O come, O Day-Spring, Come and cheer  
O Sun of justice, now draw near  
Disperse the gloomy clouds of night  
And death's dark shadow put to flight

Rejoice! Rejoice! Emmanuel  
Shall come to you, O Israel.

**OLD TESTAMENT READING: ISAIAH 40:28-31**

*Rev. David Pavesic, Beautiful Savior Lutheran, Tucson*

Have you not known? Have you not heard?  
The Lord is the everlasting God,  
the Creator of the ends of the earth.  
He does not faint or grow weary;  
his understanding is unsearchable.  
He gives power to the faint,  
and strengthens the powerless.  
Even youths will faint and be weary,  
and the young will fall exhausted;  
but those who wait for the Lord shall renew their strength,  
they shall mount up with wings like eagles,  
they shall run and not be weary,  
they shall walk and not faint.

**PRAYER OF THE DAY**

*Rev. Christine Stoxen, Holy Trinity Lutheran Church, Chandler*

L: Merciful God, in the stillness of our souls, we listen for your voice to know again that you are God. Quiet our restless hearts with the knowledge that you stand with us in the shadows, keeping watch over your own. Rekindle our faith and light the lamp of hope within our hearts. Then, deal with us as seems best to you, for where you lead we can confidently go with Jesus Christ our Lord.

**C: Amen.**

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

**C: O Lord, lighten our darkness. Amen.**

**GOSPEL READING: JOHN 1: 1-5, 10-14**

*Rev. Steve Crittenden, Epiphany of Christ Lutheran Church, Apache Junction*

In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was in the beginning with God. All things came into being through him, and without him not one thing came into being. What has come into being in him was life, and the life was the light of all people. The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness did not overcome it.

He was in the world, and the world came into being through him; yet the world did not know him. He came to what was his own, and his own people did not accept him. But to all who received him, who believed in his name, he gave power to become children of God, who were born, not of blood or of the will of the flesh or of the will of man, but of God.

And the Word became flesh and lived among us, and we have seen his glory, the glory as of a father's only son, full of grace and truth.

L: Lord Jesus, let those who are far from home, those who are strangers, feel that they genuinely belong in our company.

**C: O Lord, lighten our darkness. Amen.**

## **HOMILY**

*Rev. Mark Holman, Bishop's Associate for Mobility and Leadership*

## **MUSIC: IN THE BLEAK MIDWINTER**

*Charles Zoll, Music Director, Holy Trinity Lutheran Church, Chandler*

## **CONFESSION AND FORGIVENESS**

*Rev. Adele Resmer, New Journey Lutheran Church, Fountain Hills*

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

God of glory, God of peace,

**C: we confess that we have shunned the light that reveals the truth about us. We cling to worldly things rather than sharing the gifts of this earth. We trust ourselves above all. Save your people, O God; sustain the rivers and trees that sing your praise; and free us to live boldly in the light and truth of Jesus, our Savior. Amen.**

L: The grace of God shines upon us, bringing salvation to the whole world, We are saved, our sins are washed away, not because of anything we have done, but according to God's mercy in Jesus Christ. Renewed by the Holy Spirit, let us live in hope and joy.

**C: Amen.**

L: Spirit of God, shine like this candle in the darkness, lighting the way for all who feel abandoned, forsaken, unloved, and forgotten.

**C: O Lord, lighten our darkness. Amen.**

## **PRAYERS OF THE PEOPLE**

*Rev. Miguel Gomez-Acosta, Director for Evangelical Mission and Bishop's Associate for Congregational Vitality*

*Rev. Jacqueline Pagel, Bishop's Associate for Candidacy and Faith Formation*

## **PRAYER**

*Rev. Peter Perry, St. John's Lutheran Church, Glendale*

L: As you pointed the way to Bethlehem with a star, so shine your light upon our paths always; so that we may proclaim all we have heard and seen, praising you in word and loving deed for the gift of Jesus, the Light of Life.

**C: O Lord, lighten our darkness. Amen**

## **THE SENDING OUT**

*Rev. Sharon Brown, Spirit of Joy, Clarkdale*

L: Jesus Christ is the Light of the world,

**C: the light no darkness can overcome.**

L: Stay with us, Lord, for it is evening,

**C: and the day is almost over.**

L: Let your light scatter the darkness and illumine your people.

**C: Amen.**

## **MUSIC: SILENT NIGHT**

*Dr. Brandon Burns, Organist and Director Grace Lutheran Church, Phoenix*