

December 21st, 2021
Longest Night/Blue Christmas
GATHERING FOR WORSHIP

PRELUDE: Within our Darkest Night

WELCOME

SILENT PRAYER

***HYMN: O Little Town of Bethlehem** #230 (vs. 1 and 4)

***CALL TO WORSHIP**

Leader: The Grace of Jesus Christ, the love of God, and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with you all.

People: **And also, with you.**

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

People: **God of mercy, hear our prayer in this Advent season for ourselves and for our families who live with painful thoughts and memories. We ask for strength for today, courage for tomorrow and peace for the past. We ask these things in the name of Jesus Christ, who shares our life in joy and sorrow, death and new birth, despair and promise. Amen.**

OPENING PRAYER

PSALM 22

(All read the boldface verses together.)

My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?
Why are you so far from helping me, so far from the words of my groaning?

**O my God, I cry by day but you do not answer,
and by night, but I find no rest.**

In you, our ancestors trusted. They trusted, and you delivered them.

**It was you who brought me from the womb,
you who kept me safe on my mother's breast.**

Since my mother bore me, you have been my God.

Do not be far from me, for trouble is near and there is no one to help.

God does not despise the affliction of the afflicted.

God does not hide from me.

When I cry to God, God hears me.

Thanks be to God.

SCRIPTURE LESSON

Isaiah 9:2-7

THE WORD OF GOD EXPLORED

Pastor Joel Holcomb

O Come, O Come Emmanuel #211

1 verse after each candle

***HYMN: Silent Night, Holy Night** #239

***BENEDICTION**

POSTLUDE: With You, O Lord