

Longest Night of the Year:
A Service of Remembrance



December 21, 2008

O God of all seasons and senses, grant us the sense of your timing to submit gracefully and rejoice quietly in the turn of the seasons.

*In this season of short days and long nights,
of grey and white and cold,
teach us the lessons of endings;
children growing, friends leaving, loved ones dying,
grieving over,
grudges over,
blaming over,
excuses over.*

*O God, grant us a sense of your timing.
In this season of short days and long nights,
of grey and white and cold,
teach us the lessons of beginnings;
that such waitings and endings may be the starting place,
a planting of seeds which bring to birth what is ready to be born—
something right and just and different,
a new song, a deeper relationship, a fuller love—
in the fullness of your time.*

O God, grant us the sense of your timing.

- Ted Loder, Guerillas of Grace

TONIGHT IS OUR "LONGEST NIGHT" SERVICE.

Many of us struggle through the increasing physical darkness that leads to the winter solstice, our longest night. That physical darkness is sometimes reflected in the dark, lost feelings we have as we contemplate Christmas without loved ones, a holiday made uncertain by economic concerns, or the brokenness in our lives that separates us from others. Join us for this worship service of comfort, as we gather to acknowledge this darkness, to share our hurts with God, and to open our hearts to the light God has promised us in Jesus. Stephen Ministers, whose ministry is one of compassionate Christian presence, will participate in the service with the pastoral staff and the Reverend Melissa Anne Rogers, preacher for the evening. We'll share prayers, scripture, music, communion, candlelighting, and fellowship, that we, the people that walked in darkness, may also be the people who have seen a great light.

CHILDCARE IS AVAILABLE for this evening's service in Room 204.

PREACHING today is the Reverend Melissa Anne Rogers.

ASSISTING is the Reverend Aaron Janklow.

THE MUSIC DIRECTOR/PIANIST is Carol Muehlig.

THE INSTRUMENTALISTS are Marolin Bellefleur, cello, and, Debra Gabrion, harp.

THE READERS are Elizabeth Davis, Sara Vander Voort, and Nancy J. Pflasterer.

THE GREETERS are Stephen Ministers, Stephen Leaders, and members of our pastoral staff.

THE COMMUNION SERVERS are Bob Harris and Kathy Wirstrom.

Some of us walk into Advent tethered to our unresolved yesterdays, the pain still stabbing; the hurt still throbbing. It's not that we don't know better; it's just that we can't stand up anymore by ourselves. On the way to Bethlehem, will you give us a hand?

-- Ann Weems

THE GATHERING OF THE PEOPLE

** Please stand if you are able*

GATHERING MUSIC

*CALL TO WORSHIP

Leader: Tonight, we gather here in this place of refuge – the lost, the lonely, the uncertain. We gather with our common humanity in search of the uncommon grace of the Divine. Tonight, we gather daring to wonder if God has indeed come in Jesus.

People: **The world is dark. Rejection still occurs, relationships fail, our hearts are heavy with grief. We hold these heartaches in our hands of tenderness.**

Leader: Tonight, we gather with neighbors and strangers, admitting that our brokenness shows. We come ready to empty our pockets of doubt and fill them with the hope others have embraced.

People: **In Jesus, we gather just as we are, for God has promised to meet us here and to welcome us for who we are.**

OPENING PRAYER

*HYMN 36 In the Bleak Midwinter

Cranham

LIGHTING OF THE ADVENT CANDLES

The candles will be lit by Flip Connell, Suzanne Fleming, Heidi Goodhart, and Nicole Jolliet.

Leader: With our first candle, we remember those whom we have loved and lost. We pause to remember their names, their faces, their voices, the memories that bind them to us in this season.

All: May God's eternal love surround them.

Leader: With our second candle, we remember that loss brings pain only God can redeem. Through our loss of relationships, loss of jobs, loss of health, and loss of hopes and dreams, our expectations and plans have been changed. We have come to an unwelcome place. We pause to gather up the pain of the past, offer it to God, and humbly ask to be at peace.

All: Refresh, restore, renew us, O God, and lead us into your future.

Leader: With our third candle, we remember with gratitude those who reach out to those who experience the darkness of the world and the pain of loss. Family and friends and strangers who abide with the suffering, stay close to the ones who are angry, and listen to those who are depressed. We know God through them.

All: Let us remember that dawn defeats darkness.

Leader: With our fourth candle, we remember the flicker of our faith and the gift of hope which the incarnation offers to us. Here we remember that God who shares our life promises us a place and time where there will be no more suffering.

All: It is our Savior Jesus Christ, the Prince of Peace, who bears the light and shows us the way, unveiling the truth of eternal life.

PRAYER OF CONFESSION

Holy and Gracious God, you know how difficult it is to be whole-hearted in our celebration of your birth. Our losses and our sorrow are what we know well. Where we are holding on to our pain, unwilling or unready to let it go, and where we have turned away from the grace you have offered, show us the way. Where our sadness goes on, where grief still has a claim on us, let us hear your assurance that you are traveling beside us, helping us to carry our burdens, and to let in the light of Jesus Christ.

SILENT CONFESSION

SUNG ASSURANCE Christ Alone

1. In Christ a - lone my hope is found, He is my
2. There in the ground His bo - dy lay, Light of the
3. No guilt in life, no fear in death, this is the

4
light, my strength, my song; this cor - ner - stone, this sol - id
world by dark - ness slain; then, burst - ing forth in glo - rious
pow'r of Christ in me; from life's first cry to fi - nal

7
ground, firm through the fier - est drought and storm. What heights of
day, up from the grave He rose a - gain. And as He
breath, Je - sus com - mands my des - ti - ny. No pow'r of

10
love, what depths of peace, when fears are stilled, when striv - ings
stands in vic - to - ry, sin's curse has lost, its grip on
hell, no scheme of man, can ev - er pluck me from His

13
cease. My com - fort - er, my all in all, here in the
me; for I am His, and He is mine, bought with the
hand; 'til He re - turns or calls me home, here in the

16
love of Christ I stand.
pre - cious blood of Christ.
pow'r of Christ I stand.

*PASSING THE PEACE

THE WORD PROCLAIMED IN SONG AND SCRIPTURE

HYMN Stay With Us, verse 1

Ron Klusmeier

SCRIPTURE READING

Psalm 137:1-6 (O.T., pp. 576-77)

HYMN Stay With Us, verse 2

Ron Klusmeier

SCRIPTURE READING

Job 11:13-19 (O.T., p. 461)

HYMN Stay With Us, verse 3

Ron Klusmeier

SCRIPTURE READING

John 16:20-23 (N.T., pp. 110-11)

MEDITATION

RESPONDING TO THE WORD

OFFERING

OFFERING MUSIC

After the offering has been received, you are invited forward to light a candle to represent the losses and concerns that darken this season of holiness for you, whether it be a loss, a worry, a grief, or a period of pain and uncertainty.

THE SACRAMENT OF COMMUNION

INVITATION TO THE TABLE

PRAYER OF THANKSGIVING AND INTERCESSION

THE LORD'S PRAYER

Our Father who art in heaven, hallowed be thy name. Thy kingdom come, thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread, and forgive us our debts as we forgive our debtors. Lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil. For thine is the kingdom and the power and the glory forever. Amen.

WORDS OF INSTITUTION

Breaking of the Bread, Pouring of the Cup

COMMUNION OF THE PEOPLE

All communion chalices contain only nonalcoholic grape juice. We will partake of the Lord's Supper by intinction.

Gluten-free communion wafers: The communion wafers used at our service are made from wheat flour. For those with wheat allergies, we now have available gluten-free communion wafers. These wafers are available from your communion server. Please indicate when you arrive to be served that you would like a gluten-free wafer.

COMMUNION MEDITATION MUSIC

BEARING THE WORD INTO THE WORLD

***HYMN 7 Lord Christ, When First You Came to Earth** *Mit Freuden Zart*

***LITANY OF SENDING First Coming** *Madeleine L'Engle*

Leader: God did not wait until the world was ready,
until nations were at peace.

**People: God came when the Heavens were unsteady
and prisoners cried out for release.**

Leader: God did not wait for the perfect time.

**People: God came when the need was deep and great.
God dined with sinners in all their grime, turned water into wine.**

Leader: God did not wait till hearts were pure.

**People: In joy God came to a tarnished world of sin and doubt.
To a world like ours, of anguished shame, God came and
God's Light would not go out.**

Leader: God came to a world which did not mesh;
to heal its tangles, shield its scorn.

**People: In the mystery of the Word made Flesh,
the maker of the stars was born.**

Leader: We cannot wait till the world is sane to raise our songs
with joyful voice, or to share our grief, to touch our pain,

All: God came with Love: Rejoice! Rejoice!

*BENEDICTION

VOLUNTARY

The Stephen Ministers and our pastoral staff invite you to stay for a time of fellowship. Cider, coffee, and Christmas cookies will be served in the vestibule of Monteith Hall.

Announcements

A full description of the events listed below can be found in our newsletter, First Press, available in the narthex, at the Welcome Center, outside the Church Office, or online at www.firstpresbyterian.org.

HELP NEEDED FOR HOLIDAY MEALS AT DELONIS CENTER: This year, both Christmas and New Year's Eve fall on Wednesdays, traditionally the weekday that First Pres volunteers help prepare and serve meals at the center. As a result, there is a special urgency for Delonis volunteers from First Pres to work on these dates. The times of the volunteer shifts are different for the next two Wednesdays; the cooking shift is from noon to 2:30 p.m., and the serving shift is from 2:30 to 5:00 p.m. To volunteer, please contact Brady West, our Delonis volunteer coordinator, at 223-9793, or bwest@umich.edu.

PLEDGE STATUS UPDATE: As of December 15, 474 pledges have been received totalling \$1,191,706.

CHRISTMAS EVE CHILDCARE: We offer childcare **by reservation only** on Christmas Eve for the 3:00, 5:00 and 7:30 p.m. services. There is no childcare at the 11:00 p.m. service. We are always in need of volunteers to be childcare providers. Grandparents, aunts and uncles, and entire families with teenage children have helped in the past. If you would like to volunteer, or make a childcare reservation, please contact Deborah MacVey at 662-4466, ext. 15, or dmacvey@firstpresbyterian.org.

HAITI NURSING SCHOOL 2008 CHRISTMAS EVE OFFERING: The Mission Committee has designated the Haiti School of Nursing in Leogane as the recipient of this year's Christmas Eve offering. Members of First Pres were instrumental in starting the school, which is the first four-year baccalaureate nursing school in Haiti. It opened in 2005, has 127 students, and is about to graduate its first class in January.

THE CHILDREN'S PAGEANT will be held at 3:00 p.m. on December 24. If you have signed your child up to participate, please note that **there are two rehearsals** scheduled. **On Monday, December 22**, there will be a 3:45 p.m. dress rehearsal for all participants and adult helpers. Parent volunteers are needed! To volunteer, contact Debbie MacVey at dmacvey@firstpresbyterian.org, or 662-4466, ext. 15.

A CHRISTMAS EVE CHILDREN'S OFFERING of underwear or socks will be accepted at the Christmas Pageant Family Service at 3:00 p.m. on Christmas Eve. The gifts should be simply wrapped in tissue paper. During the pageant, the children in the congregation are invited to bring their gifts to the manger. The underwear and socks are given to the House by the Side of the Road.

CONSIDERATE CHOICES FOR CHRISTMAS EVE PARKING: Christmas Eve is a time when many visitors come to First Pres for worship. We recommend coming to worship services early to ensure that parking and finding a seat is not a problem. We'd like to leave as many parking spaces as possible open near the church for people with small children or those who might have difficulty walking. To make these spaces available, all who are able are asked to use one of the following alternative parking sites:

The Forest Street Structure – a short block from the church, with free parking on Christmas Eve.

Washtenaw and Hill Streets – parking is permitted on these streets for Christmas Eve.

Nearby Fraternity and Sorority Houses:

Chi Phi Fraternity, next door at 1530 Washtenaw

Kappa Alpha Theta Sorority, next door at 1414 Washtenaw

Delta Phi Epsilon Sorority, next door to Chi Phi at 1550 Washtenaw

Sigma Delta Tau Sorority, behind the church at 1405 Hill

Thanks to the house directors and officers of our neighboring fraternities and sororities for this annual gift to our church.

A NEW FORMAT FOR KEYSTONES, our high school youth group, will begin in 2009. On January 4, at 6:00 p.m., in the Youth Room, get together for Club Wreck, and play the best games in town. At 6:45 p.m., we will return to the Youth Room for announcements. From 7:00 to 8:00 p.m., the evening continues with Go Deeper ... Bible studies, great discussions, new topics, and more, also in the Youth Room. Come for both Club Wreck and Go Deeper, or just do the one that works best for you. Parents, please drop off at 6:00 or 6:45 p.m. for Keystones. Questions? Contact Rev. Jim Monnett at jmonnett@firstpresbyterian.org, or 662-4466, ext. 20.

GET READY FOR THE CONFIRMATION RETREAT, January 16-18. Meet at church at 4:00 p.m. to travel to Skyline Camp and Conference Center in Almont, Michigan. Each student needs to prepare by having read the book, *The Case for Christ*. On the retreat, confirmands will struggle with the question "Is Jesus Lord?" and what that means to them. Also, they will enjoy sledding, fun games, and great learning. The group will return to church by noon on Sunday. Cost is \$90 per person. Sign up by January 4.

SNEAKERS ON A MISSION: The Philippines Task Force (PTF) is sponsoring a shoe drive through the month of January. Please donate your sneakers up to size 10, as well as women's and children's regular shoes, up to size 7. Donated shoes will be cleaned, boxed up, and mailed to the Dumagete Community Center in the Philippines. The shoes will then be sold by the center at a very low price as an incentive to families that are up-to-date with their house payments. This is the fifth year PTF has done this project and the shoes are very much sought after.

Interested in helping? Please consider joining PTF the second Sunday of each month at noon in the French Room/Library. For more information, contact Chris Larson, larson.christine@sbcglobal.net, or 769-9587.

INTERESTED IN JOINING FIRST PRES? Just curious about Presbyterian beliefs and worship? Join us on Sundays, January 11, 18, 25, and February 1 for the latest series of new member/inquirer classes. Those who wish to join the church may do so at the 9:30 a.m. worship service on February 8 (we treat you to breakfast before the service). If you are interested in participating, contact Rev. Budge Gere at 662-4466, ext. 53, or bgere@firstpresbyterian.org.

THANK YOU ALPHA HOUSE VOLUNTEERS! Thank you to everyone who volunteered their time during the first week of December to assist with First Presbyterian's host week at Alpha House. Our next assignment is May 4 - 10, 2009, so please make a note of this on your calendars. If you have never volunteered before, spring is a beautiful time of year at Alpha House! New volunteers are always welcome to join in on this local mission opportunity. Contact Lucie Audette (998-0152) or Nancy Vander Kuyl (741-1814) for more information.

PRAYING THE PSALMS, our weekly prayer group, meets Wednesday evenings at 5:00 p.m. Pew cards with prayer requests may be completed and put in the offering plate. For information, contact Rev. Melissa Anne Rogers at 662-4466, ext. 12, or mrogers@firstpresbyterian.org.

CAMPUS MINISTRY MID-WEEK WORSHIP is on hiatus until Tuesday, January 13, due to final exams and winter break. Questions? Contact Rev. Julie Marks at jmarks@firstpresbyterian.org, or 662-4466, ext. 14.

Calendar for December 22- 28

MONDAY:

Body and Soul, 9:00 a.m., Curtis Room
Christmas Pageant Rehearsal, 400 p.m., Sanctuary
Advent Study, 6:00 p.m., Founders Room
Boy Scout Troop 7, 7:30 p.m., Monteith Hall
Sanctus and Gloria Ringers, 7:30 p.m., Room 403

TUESDAY:

Poinsettias delivered
Prayer Group, 7:30 a.m., Founders Room
ESL, 4:00 p.m., 100 Level Classrooms

WEDNESDAY: Christmas Eve

Christmas Pageant, 3:00 p.m., Sanctuary
Wednesday Night Meal, noon-2:30 p.m. (volunteers),
2:30-5:30 p.m.(serving), 5:30 p.m. (meal), Delonis Center
Lessons and Carols Service, 5:00 and 7:30 p.m., Sanctuary
Candlelight Service, 11:00 p.m., Sanctuary

THURSDAY: Christmas Day

Building Closed

FRIDAY:

Building Closed

SATURDAY:

No Events Scheduled

SUNDAY:

FamilyWorship, 10:00 a.m. ONLY, Sanctuary
First Singles, 11:00 a.m., Curtis Room
Taiwanese Fellowship, 2:00 p.m., Monteith Hall

The Poinsettias

that decorate the chancel on December 21, Christmas Eve, and December 28 are given in memory or in honor of a loved one or family member. Following worship, the poinsettias will be delivered by the deacons to our shut-ins, those who are ill, and those who are grieving.

In Memory of:

Barbara Alexander	Reina Collins	Griffith Herold
George Alexander	Lena Cooper	Mary Herold
Lois Alexander	John Dayton	Daniel S. Hoag
Paul Alexander	Gail DeConick	Alan Hobart
Tommy André	Ilene De Haan	Mady Hobart
Elmer Apley	Jean de Koning	Vernon Hobart
John Armezzani	Henry de Koning	Amos Hoff
Marty Austin	Richard W. DeMuth	Fern Hoff
William E. Austin, Sr.	Earl W. Deardorff	Dr. Julian Hoff
Joan C. Banfield	Eleanor (Ellie) Dickinson	Mr. & Mrs. Harvey Hoff
Ralph W. Banfield	George D. Dibble	Paul Horan
Claude Barnard	Angela S. Dobson	Phyllis L. Howard
Lyle Barnard	Peter M. Dobson	Don Howe
Marion Barnard	Russell T. Dobson, Jr.	Eugenia Hughes
Bruce Bartman	William T. Dobson	Rollin Hughes
Merlee Bartman	Anne Donofrio	Delia S. Hunter
Carl Bartscht	Hugh Donofrio	John C. Hunter
Josephine Bartscht	Patrick Dorn	John C. Hunter, Jr.
Shirley Beebe	Thomas Dorn	Laurin R. Hunter
Marie Therese Bookless	Kenneth W. Dunkle	Milton Hunter
Audrey T. Boseman	Martin Edwards	Rev. Bruce G. Ingles
Carolyn Bovenkerk	Rosalie Edwards	Kathryn Inglis
Mr. Doug Bradford	Walter "Skee" Edwards	August Jacobson
Bud Brenkert	Jay Einhaus	Richard Janz
Catherine Brenkert	David H. Emmons	Frances Jelinek
Rev. Charles F. Brewer	Richard "Dick" Emmons	Mary Jilek
George R. Brewer	David G. Endicott	Frances Johnson
John H. Bryant	Cheri Beth De Haan Erben	Johnny Johnson
Bill Burgess	Herb Estes	Ester Katz
Bob Campbell	Stelle Estes	Hazel Kaufman
Louise Campbell	Paul Etter	Gertrude Keegan
Marian Cares	Susan Etter	Robert Keegan
Susan Clark	Elizabeth Dunkle Evans	Betty Keller
Guernsy Collins	Mary Jo Farmer	Donald A. Kerr

June Kerr
Ruth Kerschbaum
Laura Kingery
Richard Kingery
Clyde (Stub) Kloack
Alger Koepfgen
Helen Koepfgen
Christine Kostbade
Howard Kostbade
Alma Kruger
Mrs. Helen Hoff Kuethe
Henry Kuizenga
Pamela LaMoreaux
Douglas Lane
Thomas W. Leabo
Shu-Chung Liao
Kenneth Lindley
Merv Mack
Lt. Commander Michael McCarthy
Harris McClamroch, Jr.
Ruth Mc Cracken
Patrick J. McDevitt
Patrick M. McDevitt
Barbara I. McKinley
George Milroy
Harold J. Montgomery
Constance M. Morley
James Mortensen
Marie Mortensen
Stephen Patton Moss
Robert E. Mueller
Elizabeth Najpaver
Joseph Najpaver
Merle Nash
Vina Nash
Boyd Nixon
Grace Nixon
Arvid Nordin
Julia Nordin
Louise Ostrander

Delia Ouimet
Edward Quimet
Lawrence Ouimet
Magdaline Ouimet
Clare Palmer
Harvey Palmer
William M. Perrett III
Mr. Laurence Peterson
Mrs. Laurence Peterson
Maynard Phelps
Mildred Phelps
Fred Pickard
Roy Pierce
Vernon J. Piers
Jim Pilcher
Margie Pilcher
Richard L. Platte, Sr.
Herman Primas
Margaret Primas
Mr. W. Eugene Rankin, Jr.
Mr. Frank Raphaelion
Mrs. Frank Raphaelion
Vivian Reese
Walter Reese
Willis Reineman
Robert C. Ressler
Henry Rezmierski
Olga Rezmierski
Len Riccinto
F. E. (Bill) Richart
Hillary Dobson Ripmaster
Charlie Roberts
Lee Roberts
George Robinson
Rosetta Robinson
Sally Rogers
Marie Rugen
Allen Saunders
Ruth Saunders
Joseph Savarino

Sarah Savarino
Edna Johanna Scaatz
Dr. Harry Schmidt
Mrs. Harry Schmidt
Philip Servais
Mr. & Mrs. John Shanks
Herb Shephard, Sr.
Mr. Gordon B. Sherard
Mrs. Gordon B. Sherard
Oren G. Sherman, Jr.
Eric Shih
Helene Siegel
James R. Slocum, Sr.
Howard C. Slocum
Mary D. Slocum
Barbara K. Smith
J. E. Keith Smith
Mark Snyder
Mildred Snyder
Mildred Southgate
Robert Southgate
Clarence James Staley
Simon Stein
Jean Stem
Russell Stem
Duel Stephens
Marian Strodman
David Stryker
Harold Stryker
Ruth Stryker
Ruth V. Sutton
James Talbott
David K. Tanner
Glen K. Tanner
Maxwell E. Tanner
Stan Taylor
Barbara Ternes
Eugene H. Towner
Dick Tripp
Dick Trytten

Francis Trytten
Jack Trytten
Charles Urquhart
Thelma VanderVeen
J. M. Walker
Perry Walker
Sallie Walker
Viola Walker
Christine Watrous
Almira White
Hubert White
Williams Family & Grandparents
Carol B. Wood
Elsie M. Wood
William M. Wood
Yancer Family & Grandparents
Agnes Yarmain
Harry Yarmain



In Honor of:

David Arnsdorf
Linda Arnsdorf
Rachel Arnsdorf
William E. Austin Jr.
Erika Boothman
Alexander D. Buchanan
Susan Cares
Thelma H. Duffell
The Glinka-Endicott Family
Blanche S. Erdman
E. M. Farmer
Matthew Glinka
Andrew Henning
George Henning
Sue Henning
William Henning
Downs Herold
Sandy Herold
Mary Hunter
Katie Jozwick
Sean K. Kesterson, M.D.
Katie Miller
Anna Oliva
Roy Oliva
Melissa Anne Rogers
Ashley Smith
Brian Smith
Jen Smith
Stephen Smith
Susanne Smith
Tyler Smith
Robin Snyder
Lynn L. Sutton
Leroy Taylor
Virgene Taylor
Dorothy Zelis
Henry Zelis