

WORSHIP ON THE LONGEST NIGHT

A Service of Grief and Hope



December 10, 2023

“Later Life: A Double Sonnet of Sonnets (XIX)”

Here now is Winter; Winter, after all,
Is not so drear as was my boding dream
While Autumn gleamed its last watery gleam
On sapless leafage too inert to fall.
Still leaves and berries clothe my garden wall
Where ivy thrives on scantiest sunny beam;
Still here a bud and there a blossom seem
Hopeful, and robin still is musical.
Leaves, flowers and fruit and one delightful song
Remain: these days are short, but now the nights
Intense and long, hang out their utmost lights;
Such starry nights are long, yet not too long;
Frost nips the weak, while strengthening still the strong
Against that day when Spring sets all to rights.

— Christina Rossetti (1830-1894)

PRELUDE

“Abide With Me”

Abide with me, fast falls the eventide;
The darkness deepens: Lord with me abide!
When other helpers, fail and comforts flee,
Help of the helpless, abide with me.

Thou on my head, in early youth didst smile;
And, though rebellious, and perverse meanwhile,
Thou hast not left me, though I oft left Thee,
On to the close Lord, abide with me.

Swift to its close ebbs out life's little day;
earth's joys grow dim, its glories pass away;
Change and decay in all around I see:
O thou who changest not, abide with me.

I need Thy presence, every passing hour;
What but Thy grace can foil the tempter's power?
Who, like Thyself, my guide and stay can be?
Through cloud and sunshine, abide with me.

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CALL TO WORSHIP

Becky Gould

CANDLE LIGHTING

After the Call to Worship, you are invited to come to the front and light a candle as a sign of your prayer for yourself or someone else, or as a symbol of hope. You may also come forward during any song before communion.

SONG

“Come to Me”

You are weighed down, you are worried.
Child, I see you; child, I know you.
Bring your burdens, bring your labor.
Come to me.

*Come to me, come to me,
come to me if you are weary.
I will give you, I will give you my rest.*

I am gentle, I am humble.
Let me teach you, let me show you.
Trade your burden, mine is easy.
Come to me.

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SCRIPTURE READING

Susie Meghdadpour

Psalm 77

I cried out to God for help;
I cried out to God to hear me.
When I was in distress, I sought the Lord;
at night I stretched out untiring hands,
and I would not be comforted.
I remembered you, God, and I groaned;
I meditated, and my spirit grew faint.
You kept my eyes from closing;
I was too troubled to speak.
I thought about the former days,
the years of long ago;
I remembered my songs in the night.
My heart meditated and my spirit asked:
“Will the Lord reject forever?
Will he never show his favor again?
Has his unfailing love vanished forever?
Has his promise failed for all time?
Has God forgotten to be merciful?
Has he in anger withheld his compassion?”
Then I thought, “To this I will appeal:
the years when the Most High stretched out his right hand.
I will remember the deeds of the LORD;
yes, I will remember your miracles of long ago.
I will consider all your works

and meditate on all your mighty deeds.”
Your ways, God, are holy.
What god is as great as our God?
You are the God who performs miracles;
you display your power among the peoples.
With your mighty arm you redeemed your people,
the descendants of Jacob and Joseph.
The waters saw you, God,
the waters saw you and writhed;
the very depths were convulsed.
The clouds poured down water,
the heavens resounded with thunder;
your arrows flashed back and forth.
Your thunder was heard in the whirlwind,
your lightning lit up the world;
the earth trembled and quaked.
Your path led through the sea,
your way through the mighty waters,
though your footprints were not seen.
You led your people like a flock
by the hand of Moses and Aaron.

SONG

“How Long?”

How long? Will You turn Your face away?
How long? Do You hear us when we pray?
On and on, still we walk this pilgrim way — How long?

How long ‘til Your children find their rest?
How long ‘til You draw them to Your breast?
We go on holding to Your promises — How long?

*‘Til You wipe away the tears from ev’ry eye
‘Til we see our home descending from the sky
Do we wait in vain?
Jesus, give us hope again!*

How long 'til Your word will still the storm?
How long 'til You bare Your mighty arm?
How we groan 'til You snatch us from the thorns — How long?
How long? Sweet the dawn that ends the race.
How long? Weak our hearts but strong our legs.
Looking on — great that cloud of witnesses! How long?

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SCRIPTURE READING

Lucy Cate

Psalm 46

God is our refuge and strength,
an ever-present help in trouble.
Therefore we will not fear, though the earth give way
and the mountains fall into the heart of the sea,
though its waters roar and foam
and the mountains quake with their surging.
There is a river whose streams make glad the city of God,
the holy place where the Most High dwells.
God is within her, she will not fall;
God will help her at break of day.
Nations are in uproar, kingdoms fall;
he lifts his voice, the earth melts.
The Lord Almighty is with us;
the God of Jacob is our fortress.
Come and see what the Lord has done,
the desolations he has brought on the earth.
He makes wars cease
to the ends of the earth.
He breaks the bow and shatters the spear;
he burns the shields with fire.
He says, "Be still, and know that I am God;
I will be exalted among the nations,
I will be exalted in the earth."
The Lord Almighty is with us;
the God of Jacob is our fortress.

SONG

“Be Still (Psalm 46)”

God is our refuge our strength and our shield,
an ever-present help.

We will not fear though the earth gives way,
and the mountains crash into the sea.

There is a river whose streams will make glad
the city of our most High King.

God is within her, and she will not fail,
He helps her at break of the day.

“Be still and know that I am God.”

Nations in uproar, men’s kingdoms, they fall,
He speaks and the earth melts away.

The worst we imagine, the strongest of storms,
our fortress, it will still remain.

There is a river whose streams will make glad
the city of our most High King.

God is within her, and she will not fail,
Listen and hear the Lord say:

“Be still and know that I am God.”

Come let us see what the Lord, He has done,
the ruins He brings to the earth.

He makes wars to cease to the ends of the earth,
He shatters the bow and the spear.

There is a river whose streams will make glad
the city of our most High King.

God is within her, and she will not fail,
Listen and hear the Lord say:

“Be still and know that I am God.”

SCRIPTURE READING

John Rogers

Psalm 40

I waited patiently for the LORD;
 he turned to me and heard my cry.
He lifted me out of the slimy pit,
 out of the mud and mire;
he set my feet on a rock
 and gave me a firm place to stand.
He put a new song in my mouth,
 a hymn of praise to our God.
Many will see and fear the LORD
 and put their trust in him.
Blessed is the one
 who trusts in the LORD,
who does not look to the proud,
 to those who turn aside to false gods.
Many, LORD my God,
 are the wonders you have done,
 the things you planned for us.
None can compare with you;
 were I to speak and tell of your deeds,
 they would be too many to declare.
Sacrifice and offering you did not desire—
 but my ears you have opened—
 burnt offerings and sin offerings you did not require.
Then I said, “Here I am, I have come—
 it is written about me in the scroll.
I desire to do your will, my God;
 your law is within my heart.”
I proclaim your saving acts in the great assembly;
 I do not seal my lips, LORD,
 as you know.
I do not hide your righteousness in my heart;
 I speak of your faithfulness and your saving help.
I do not conceal your love and your faithfulness

from the great assembly.
Do not withhold your mercy from me, LORD;
 may your love and faithfulness always protect me.
For troubles without number surround me;
 my sins have overtaken me, and I cannot see.
They are more than the hairs of my head,
 and my heart fails within me.
Be pleased to save me, LORD;
 come quickly, LORD, to help me.
May all who want to take my life
 be put to shame and confusion;
may all who desire my ruin
 be turned back in disgrace.
May those who say to me, “Aha! Aha!”
 be appalled at their own shame.
But may all who seek you
 rejoice and be glad in you;
may those who long for your saving help always say,
 “The LORD is great!”
But as for me, I am poor and needy;
 may the Lord think of me.
You are my help and my deliverer;
 you are my God, do not delay.

SONG

“Great is Thy Faithfulness”

Great is Thy faithfulness, O God my Father;
there is no shadow of turning with Thee;
Thou changest not, Thy compassions, they fail not;
as Thou hast been, Thou forever wilt be.

Great is Thy faithfulness!

Great is Thy faithfulness!

*Morning by morning new mercies I see;
all I have needed Thy hand hath provided –
great is Thy faithfulness, Lord, unto me!*

Summer and winter, and springtime and harvest,
sun, moon, and stars in their courses above
join with all nature in manifold witness
to Thy great faithfulness, mercy, and love.

Pardon for sin and a peace that endureth,
Thine own dear presence to cheer and to guide;
strength for today and bright hope for tomorrow,
blessings all mine, with ten thousand beside!

By Thomas Obediah Chisholm and William Marion Runyan [Public Domain]

CONFESSION

David Dunderdale

SONG OF ASSURANCE

“Jesus! What a Friend for Sinners”

Jesus! What a Friend for sinners!
Jesus! Lover of my soul;
Friends may fail me, foes assail me,
He, my Savior, makes me whole.

Hallelujah! What a Saviour!
Hallelujah! What a Friend!
Saving, helping, keeping, loving,
He is with me to the end.

Jesus! What a Strength in weakness!
Let me hide myself in Him;
Tempted, tried, and sometimes failing,
He my Strength, my vict'ry wins.

By John Wilbur Chapman and Rowland Hugh Prichard [Public Domain]

COMMUNION

“Sanctus”

Holy, holy, holy Lord,
God of power and might,
Heaven and earth are full of Your glory.

Hosanna in the highest,
Hosanna in the highest.

Blessed is He who Comes in the Name of the Lord.

Hosanna in the highest,
Hosanna in the highest.

Setting by Patrick Schlab © 2013 Patrick Schlabs

“Come to Me”

You are weighed down, you are worried.
Child, I see you; child, I know you.
Bring your burdens, bring your labor.
Come to me.

*Come to me, come to me,
come to me if you are weary.
I will give you, I will give you my rest.*

I am gentle, I am humble.
Let me teach you, let me show you.
Trade your burden, mine is easy.
Come to me.

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“Yet Not I but Through Christ in Me”

What gift of grace is Jesus my redeemer
There is no more for heaven now to give
He is my joy, my righteousness, and freedom
My steadfast love, my deep and boundless peace

To this I hold, my hope is only Jesus
For my life is wholly bound to his
Oh how strange and divine, I can sing: all is mine!
Yet not I, but through Christ in me

The night is dark but I am not forsaken
For by my side, the Savior He will stay
I labor on in weakness and rejoicing

For in my need, His power is displayed
To this I hold, my Shepherd will defend me
Through the deepest valley He will lead
Oh the night has been won, and I shall overcome!
Yet not I, but through Christ in me

No fate I dread, I know I am forgiven
The future sure, the price it has been paid
For Jesus bled and suffered for my pardon
And He was raised to overthrow the grave

To this I hold, my sin has been defeated
Jesus now and ever is my plea
Oh the chains are released, I can sing: I am free!
Yet not I, but through Christ in me

With every breath I long to follow Jesus
For He has said that He will bring me home
And day by day I know He will renew me
Until I stand with joy before the throne

To this I hold, my hope is only Jesus
All the glory evermore to Him
When the race is complete, still my lips shall repeat:
Yet not I, but through Christ in me!

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THE SENDING

Wen Reagan

“Jesus! What a Friend for Sinners”

Hallelujah! What a Saviour!

Hallelujah! What a Friend!

Saving, helping, keeping, loving,

He is with me to the end.

By John Wilbur Chapman and Rowland Hugh Prichard [Public Domain]

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*Worship Band: Wen Reagan (guitar & vocals), Ava Kinghorn (piano),
Dana McCarty and Karen Struble (vocals)*



BLACKNALL

MEMORIAL PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

1902 Perry Street, Durham, NC 27705