

Welcome to the Community Church of Richmond
United Church of Christ
A Worship for the “Longest Night”

This is a quiet and reflective service that acknowledges the holidays can be a painful time that stir up grief and sadness. We hope it will provide a space of calm, quiet, and healing.

As you come to worship, please have with you: some paper and something to write with; a candle (or a few candles) and something to light them with; your cell phone or a copy of the church directory. (No, you won't need to call anyone during worship.)

GATHERING

GATHERING MUSIC “Drawing Nearer” Kim May & Penny Kraft

Even in the midst of all of this,
Trouble on the news, no peace within,
Still there is a light in the distance
Drawing nearer, drawing nearer.

So open up our eyes to see your light,
Open up our arms, they're clenched so tightly,
Come in like a thief and steal our hearts
Like a baby, like a baby.
Even in the midst of all of this.

Words and music by Christopher Grundy, CCLI License No. 1908882

OPENING WORDS Rev. Hope Molozaiy

OPENING HYMN “In the Bleak Midwinter” Kim May
As you listen to the hymn, you might light one candle and reflect on its light and let this time be set apart for you.

Verse 1 In the bleak midwinter, frosty wind made moan,
earth stood hard as iron, water like a stone;
snow had fallen, snow on snow, snow on snow,
in the bleak midwinter, long ago.

Verse 2 Our God transcends all heaven, earth, and its domain;
heaven and earth shall flee away when Christ comes to reign.
In the bleak midwinter a stable place sufficed
the Sovereign God Almighty, Jesus Christ.

Verse 3 Angels and archangels may have gathered there,
cherubim and seraphim thronged the midnight air;
but his mother only, in her maiden bliss,
worshiped the beloved with a kiss.

Verse 4 What can I give him, poor as I am?

If I were a shepherd, I would bring a lamb;
if I were a Wise Man, I would do my part;
yet what I can I offer: all my heart.

Words, Christina Rossetti, Tune: CRANHAM, 1872, Public domain

READING THE WORD

PRAYER FOR ILLUMINATION

SCRIPTURE READINGS

Lamentations 3:21-24

Psalm 121

John 14:27-28

RESPONDING TO THE WORD

PRAYER OF THE PEOPLE

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 trespasses, as we forgive those who trespass against us. And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil. For Thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, forever. Amen.

TIME OF INDIVIDUAL PRAYER – Music will play for several minutes as you reflect on these prompts. Write your thoughts on the paper you have at hand. After you've written those thoughts, reflect on them and light another candle(s).

- Write five words that describe how you're feeling in this moment.
- Write down the names of people you caring in your heart today.
- Write down one area of your own life where you could use God's help, comfort, or guidance.
- Write down a prayer for your faith journey.
- Write any other prayers you have for our world.

SENDING

As we get ready to close this service, take out your phone and scroll the last 10-15 people you've called or texted. Pause over each name, remembering what they might be carrying today and how they connect to your life. If you don't have a cell phone, you can do the same thing with the church directory. As you reflect on those people who are connected to you, hear the words of sending.

BENEDICTION

SENDING SONG "Drawing Nearer"

Liturgy for this evening's service by Rev. Sarah Speed, A Sanctified Art LLC, sanctifiedart.org.