

*This is the night  
when you can  
trust that any  
direction you go,  
will be walking  
toward the dawn.*

*-Jan Richardson*

**MUSIC IN TODAY'S SERVICE  
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- PRELUDE: Dona Nobis Pacem
- HYMN: Dona Nobis Pacem
- HYMN: In the Bleak Midwinter\*
- POSTLUDE: Dona Nobis Pacem

*\*From The New Century Hymnal,  
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**Pilgrim Congregational Church,  
United Church of Christ  
Longest Night  
December 21, 2022**



**PILGRIM**  
Congregational Church



UNITED CHURCH  
OF CHRIST



**Welcome to Pilgrim Congregational Church,  
United Church of Christ  
A Welcoming, Open and Affirming Congregation**

**Mission Statement**

*A welcoming home to all  
spiritual seekers  
Making a difference in our world,  
By fusing our Christian faith with  
everyday life and  
Serving God by serving others.*

**Statement of Welcome**

*We honor the Biblical call to love one another as God  
first loved us. We welcome into the full life and  
ministry of the church all people of any race,  
nationality, religious background, educational  
background, ethnicity, age, gender, sexual orientation,  
marital status, economic status, and physical, mental,  
and emotional abilities.*

**Children at Pilgrim**

Children are an important part of our worshipping community. We try to make them feel at home! All are welcome. Professional childcare for infants and toddlers is available in Pilgrim Hall from 10:15 to the end of the service.

**Visual and Hearing Aids**

Hearing devices may be picked up from the table in the narthex.  
**Large Print bulletins** and  
Sermons texts are available.

## Pilgrim Congregational Church, UCC | Longest Night | December 21, 2022

PRELUDE

Variations on Dona Nobis Pacem – Sam Boehm

GREETING

Rev. Reebee Girash

The Grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God, and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with us all.

If I say, "Surely the darkness will cover me, and the light around me turn to night," darkness is not dark to you, O Lord; the night is as bright as the day; darkness and light to you are both alike.

*Psalms 139:10-11*

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, our Redeemer.

OPENING PRAYER

God of mercy, hear our prayer in this Advent season for ourselves and for all who live with grief, fear, anxiety, or painful memories. We gather out of darkness to pray together for your gifts of courage, patience, and peace. We ask these things in the name of your Christ, who shares our life in sorrow and joy, death and new birth, despair and promise. Amen.

HYMN

Dona Nobis Pacem

## LIGHTING THE ADVENT CANDLES

### FIRST CANDLE – GRIEF

ONE: This candle represents our grief. We own the pain of losing loved ones, of dreams that go unfulfilled, of hopes that evaporate in despair.

**ALL: May God's love surround all who mourn and struggle with grief.**

### MUSICAL RESPONSE

In the Bleak Midwinter (verse 1) Black Hymnal 128

**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.**

### SECOND CANDLE – COURAGE

ONE: This candle represents our courage. It symbolizes the courage to confront our sorrow, to comfort each other, to share our feelings honestly and openly with each other, and to dare to hope in the midst of pain.

**ALL: Refresh, restore, renew us O God, and lead us into your future with great Courage.**

### MUSICAL RESPONSE

In the Bleak Midwinter (verse 2) Black Hymnal 128

**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.**

### THIRD CANDLE – MEMORIES

ONE: This candle represents our memories. For the times we laughed together, cried together, were angry with each other or overjoyed with each other. We light this candle for the memories of caring and joy we shared together.

**ALL: Holy one, help us to remember the light-filled joyful memories, as we struggle with the dark memories.**

### MUSICAL RESPONSE

In the Bleak Midwinter (verse 3) Black Hymnal 128

**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.**

### FOURTH CANDLE – LOVE

ONE: This candle represents our love. The love we have given, and the love we have received. The love that has gone unacknowledged and unfelt, and the love that has been shared in times of joy and sorrow.

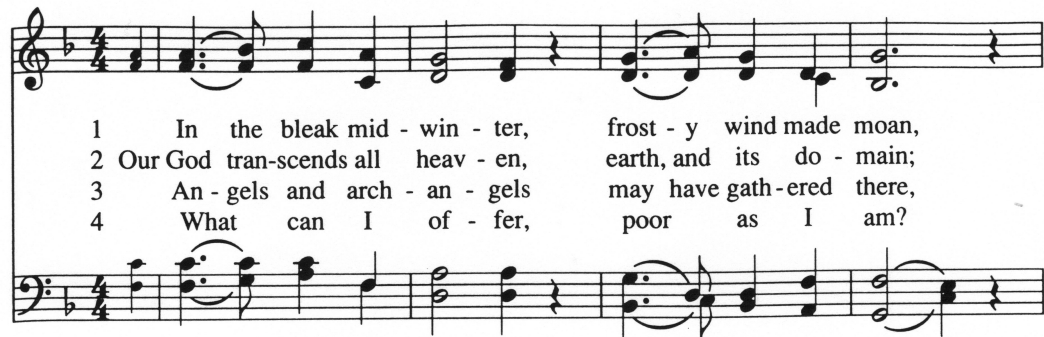
**ALL: Guide us, O God, as we remember all that has been given and received in you whom we know as Love.**

### MUSICAL RESPONSE

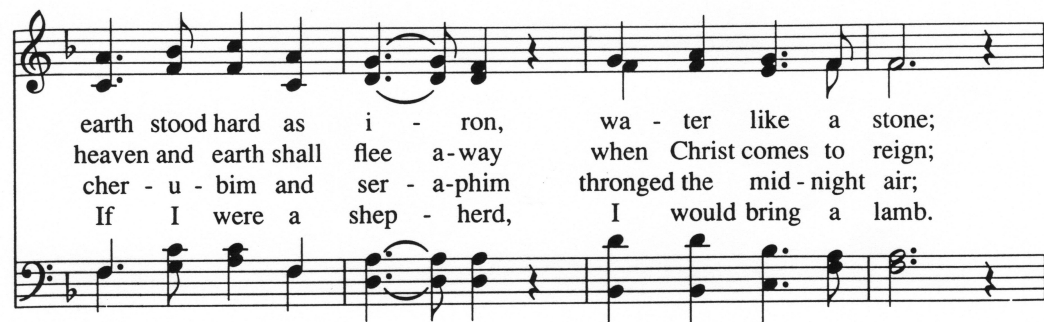
In the Bleak Midwinter (verse 4) Black Hymnal 128

**What can I offer, poor as I am? If I were a shepherd, I would bring a lamb. If I were a Wiseman, I would do my part; but what can I offer – all my heart.**

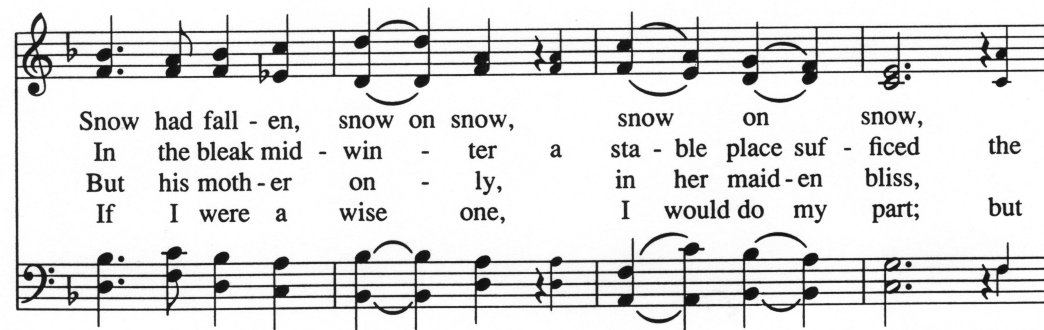




1 In the bleak mid - win - ter, frost - y wind made moan,  
2 Our God tran-scends all heav - en, earth, and its do - main;  
3 An - gels and arch - an - gels may have gath-ered there,  
4 What can I of - fer, poor as I am?



earth stood hard as i - ron, wa - ter like a stone;  
heaven and earth shall flee a-way when Christ comes to reign;  
cher - u - bim and ser - a-phim thronged the mid - night air;  
If I were a shep - herd, I would bring a lamb.



Snow had fall - en, snow on snow, snow on snow,  
In the bleak mid - win - ter a sta - ble place suf - ficed the  
But his moth - er on - ly, in her maid - en bliss,  
If I were a wise one, I would do my part; but



in the bleak mid - win - ter, long a - go.  
sov - ereign God al - might - y, Je - sus Christ.  
wor - shiped the be - lov - ed with a kiss.  
what can I of - fer: all my heart.

Christina Rossetti has portrayed the Christmas story, not in warm Bethlehem, but in the winter of her native England. Rossetti was an accomplished writer of poetry and prose, noted for her deep spirituality.

Tune: CRANHAM Irr.  
Gustav Holst, 1906

## A TIME OF PRAYER

### PRAYERS OF THE PEOPLE

ONE: God of wisdom, we come to you this Christmas Season tired, in turmoil, and in pain. As the nights have grown longer, so has darkness grown and wrapped itself around our hearts. In this season of longest night, we ask your healing blessings upon all that we carry in our hearts -- sorrow we fear may never end, wounds we cannot even put into words. Lord, in your mercy,

**ALL: Hear our prayer.**

ONE: God of healing - as flu, and RSV, and CoVid all impact family and neighbors, we pray for healing. We pray for courage and grace for health care workers. We pray for those who are isolated by disease. As we continue through such uncertainty and loss, we pray for your strength and courage to continue onward. Lord in your mercy,

**ALL: Hear our prayer.**

ONE: God of mercy and compassion, there are those among us who are grieving over what might have been. Death or loss or terrible hurt has changed our experience of Christmas. We remember that once it was a special day for us, too, but someone or something precious has gone away from us in this life. We have lost a beloved, a job, a goal, a cause, a dream. We find ourselves adrift and alone. We are weary from the journey, and we have found no room at the inn. We come to you seeking rest, and peace, and shelter from the storm. Lord, in your mercy,

**ALL: Hear our prayer.**

ONE: God of grace, in the spirit of the season, grant us all that we need to comfort us as we journey through this Christmas season. We ask that you shelter and sustain all those of us, both here and throughout the world, who wander or want or weep or are heavy laden, that we may be lifted up in courage and journey on in Thy peace. Lord, in your mercy,

**ALL: Hear our prayer.**

ONE: God of love, in this Christmas Season we embrace and offer up to you all that used to be which is now lost to us, and cannot be again. With celebration all around us, memories of what was, and fears of what may be, weigh heavy on our hearts. Please hold us close in your embrace, be near to us this night, until the light returns and morning comes. Lord, in your mercy,

**ALL: Hear our prayer.**

ONE: Keep watch, dear Lord, with those who work, or watch, or weep this night, and give thine angels charge over those who sleep. Tend the sick, Lord; give rest to the weary, bless the dying, soothe the suffering, pity the afflicted, shield the joyous; and all for thy love's sake. Amen.

#### PRAYER OF THANKSGIVING

**ALL: We give you thanks, comforting God, for wrapping us in your healing presence in this time of remembrance. We praise you for your guiding light, each day, as we try to live life more fully and wholly. Now, by your sacred, healing power: comfort us, encourage us, empower us. Amen.**



## A CASCADE OF HOPE

### THE PEACE

One: Peace be with you.

**All: And also with you.**

One: Let us share the peace of Christ with one another.

### BENEDICTION

### POSTLUDE

Dona Nobis Pacem

### SOURCE NOTES

Liturgy for Lighting the Advent Candles and Reflections adapted from Ministry Matters:  
Liturgy for the Prayers of the People based on an order of worship used at The Cathedral  
Church of Saint Andrew, Honolulu Hawaii. Cover image: © Jan Richardson.  
[janrichardson.com](http://janrichardson.com).

### ANNOUNCEMENTS

December 24 – Christmas Eve Service 6pm

December 25 – Christmas Hymn Sing 10:30am

January 1 – More Christmas Hymns! Led by Jim Munkres and friends 10:30am

January 8 – Epiphany Service with Communion

## **Pilgrim Congregational Church, UCC**

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Choir Director: [Max.Evrard@pilgrimcongregational.org](mailto:Max.Evrard@pilgrimcongregational.org)

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[www.PilgrimCongregational.org](http://www.PilgrimCongregational.org)

Sunday Worship 10:30am

