

Scripture Reading

1 Kings 19:1–12

Response

Lighting the Fourth Candle

In quiet dimness,
Heartbeats keep time.
In deepening vigil, we wait for a sign.
Jesus, end our waiting.
Come into our midst.

Confession of Faith

see insert

Prayers of the People

The Lord's Prayer

Lighting the Fifth Candle

Some sigh with impatience.
Others pray in relative peace.
God, you illuminate gently;
you light our way
with a quiet transcendence.

Sending Hymn

Abide With Me (vs. 1–3, 5)

UMH # 700

Lighting the Sixth Candle

A circle of flame grows;
so do our prayers.
We do not rush the dawn, nor do we despair
you light our way
with a quiet transcendence.

Benediction

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Burnt Hills United Methodist Church



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Burnt Hills, NY 12027

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Rev. Amy B. Gregory, Lead Pastor
Ian Carlos Urriola, Associate Pastor

The Longest Night

December 20, 2024

7:00 p.m.



Welcoming Statement

At Burnt Hills UMC, we aspire to be a community of grace and unconditional love, where all people will find hospitality, compassion and mercy. We seek to welcome all on the journey, to grow together in faith and to go out to serve the world. We welcome people of any age, culture, race, nationality, ability, marital status, economic status, sexual orientation and gender identity, as full participants in the life of our congregation. Guided by the Holy Spirit, we seek to be part of Jesus' movement of love and justice for all of God's children. All are welcome to worship, grow and serve with us.

The Longest Night

Burnt Hills United Methodist Church

December 20, 2024

7:00 p.m.

The Congregation Gathers in Silence

Call to Worship

Tonight
the earth tilts and tips,
its axis pulling this half of the world
away from the sun.

This is the longest night.

The shadows lengthen.
The darkness lingers.
Those we love
don't always notice,
but it's true:

This is the longest night.

This gathering darkness
is not a threat
but a shelter,
a time to name what is true:
Sometimes, joy doesn't come easily.

Yet God still meets us.

Sometimes, merriness is not within reach.

Yet God still meets us.

Sometimes, despair doesn't depart at dawn.

Yet God still meets us.

Come, bring your whole selves to God.

God's arms are open wide.

Gathering Hymn

In Deepest Night, In Darkest Days

tune: UMH # 480
Text: Susan Palo Cherwien

Lighting the First Candle

The shadows lengthen.

The evening is here.

This is the darkest night of the year.

**Let our faith flicker
against our incomprehension.**

Thanksgiving for Baptism

...that one thing has to end so that something else can begin?

Yes, we do know:

Death is tied to life.

Sadness rubs shoulders with joy.

Gift is tangled with loss.

...this font delivers us into an in-between time:

**a time when our sin is drowned,
yet still makes ripples;
a time when new life is ours,
but has not yet arrived.**

Lighting the Second Candle

Small stars glow above.

We ponder the signs here today.

We await news of the Savior born far away.

**Stars whisper old light
on a night of new love.**

Psalter

Psalm 4

UMH # 741

Prayer

Lighting the Second Candle

Candlelight leaps upward.

We raise our hearts to God.

The Spirit's wings are open broad.

**Hover over chaos;
speak your holy Word.**

Confession of Faith

Do you believe in God?

**We believe in God our Maker,
lover of all creation,
who crafts the stars of night
and clothes the lilies of the field,
who sets the tilt of the earth
to give days long and short,
yet who rests beyond time
in the presence of every moment.**

Do you believe in Jesus Christ?

**We believe in Jesus Christ,
God's own Child,
who was in the beginning with God
and in whom all things hold together,
who stepped out of eternity and into flesh,
who delighted in the dim closeness of the womb
to be born of the girl named Mary,
who was praised by shepherds at midnight
and sought by stargazing Wise Ones,
whose death on the cross eclipsed joy,
and who rose again three days later
in the darkness before the dawn;
and who will come again.**

Do you believe in the Holy Spirit?

**We believe in the Holy Spirit,
our Advocate,
who twines through every season
and ties together sunset and new dawn,
who comforts us in the night
and calls us through dream and vision,
who brings oil for the sputtering lamp
and eloquence to the sputtering heart,
whose breath brings new life,
and whose body is this Body. Amen.**

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