Tonight we light individual candles to remember those whom we have loved and lost. We pause to remember their name, their face, their voice, the memory that binds them to us in this season.

May God’s eternal love surround them.

Tonight we light individual candles for all those situations that are bigger than we are, that overwhelm us, that leave us saddened at this time of the year.

We turn to you, O God, as the source of our strength. Grant to us in this moment, the confidence that we belong to you and give us your peace.

You are invited to the chancel to light a candle.
A candle in memory of your loss.
A candle of special request to God.
A candle of commitment to God.

(Please come forward to light a candle.)

SPECIAL MUSIC

I Wonder As I Wander
Chris O’Rear, Baritone

HYFRYDOL

Come, Thou Long Expected Jesus
All Stanzas

Come, thou long-expected Jesus, born to set thy people free;
from our fears and sins release us, let us find rest in thee.
Israel’s strength and consolation, hope of all the earth thou art;
dear desire of every nation, joy of every longing heart.

Born thy people to deliver, born a child and yet a King,
from our fears and sins release us, let us find rest in thee.
Israel’s strength and consolation, hope of all the earth thou art;
dear desire of every nation, joy of every longing heart.

O little town of Bethlehem, how still we see thee lie;
for Christ is born of Mary, and gathered all above,
and praises sing to God the King, and peace to all on earth!

O holy Child of Bethlehem, descend to us, we pray;
so God imparts to human hearts the blessings of his heaven.
No ear may hear his coming, but in this world of sin,
and though we all have sinned and fallen short of your glory,

Therefore, with the angels who sang
with your people in all ages
and the whole company of heaven,
we join in the song of unending praise.

In your mercy Lord, hear our prayer.
For our family and friends, that they may know love and peace and happiness in you;
In your mercy Lord, hear our prayer.
For those we do not know, who know pain and loneliness as a constant companion, and for those who live without hope, that they may hear and receive the glad tidings of your love for them;
In your mercy Lord, hear our prayer.
For the peace proclaimed by the Christmas angels, to come throughout the whole world;
In your mercy Lord, hear our prayer.
God of great compassion and love, listen to the prayers of these your people. Grant to all, especially the bereaved and troubled ones this Christmas, the blessing we ask in the name of Christ Jesus, your Son. Amen.

THE GREAT THANKSGIVING

The Lord be with you.
And also with you.
Lift up your hearts.
We lift them up to the Lord.
Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.
It is right to give thanks and praise.

Father, at this blessed Christmas feast we give you thanks and praise.

You created light out of darkness
and brought forth life on the earth.
You made us in your image;
and though we all have sinned and fallen short of your glory,
you loved the world so much
you gave your only Son Jesus Christ to be our Savior.

As Mary and Joseph went from Galilee to Bethlehem
and there found no room,
so Jesus went from Galilee to Jerusalem
and was despised and rejected.

As in the poverty of a stable Jesus was born,
so from suffering and death you raised him to bring us life.
Therefore, with the angels who sang
in the highest and peace to your people on earth,
with your people in all ages
and the whole company of heaven,
we join in the song of unending praise.

Holy, holy, holy Lord!
God of power and might,
heaven and earth are full of your glory.
Hosanna in the highest.
Hail, hosanna, God most high!
Blessed is He who comes in the name of the Lord.
Hosanna in the highest.
Truly holy are you, and blessed is your Son Jesus Christ.

As your Word became flesh, born of woman, on that night long ago, so, on the night in which he gave himself up for us, he took bread, gave thanks to you, broke the bread, gave it to his disciples, and said:

“Take, eat; this is my body which is given for you. Do this in remembrance of me.”

When the supper was over he took the cup, gave thanks to you, gave it to his disciples, and said:

“Drink from this, all of you; this is my blood of the new covenant, poured out for you and for many for the forgiveness of sins. Do this, as often as you drink it, in remembrance of me.”

Therefore, in remembrance of all your mighty acts in Jesus Christ, we ask you to accept this our sacrifice of praise and thanksgiving, which we offer in union with Christ’s sacrifice for us, as a living and holy surrender of ourselves.

Christ has died; Christ is risen; Christ will come again.

Send the power of your Holy Spirit on us and on these gifts, that in the breaking of this bread and the drinking of this wine we may know the presence of the living Christ; be one body in him, cleansed by his blood; faithfully serve him in the world; and look forward to his coming in final victory.

Through him, with him, in him, all honor and glory is yours, Almighty God, now and forever. Amen.

**BREAKING THE BREAD**

**SHARING THE ELEMENTS**

If you need assistance to partake communion, please alert the usher.

*CAROL NO. 239  Silent Night, Holy Night  STILLE NACHT

All Stanazs
Silent night, holy night, all is calm, all is bright round yon virgin mother and child.
Holy infant, so tender and mild,
sleep in heavenly peace,
sleep in heavenly peace.

Silent night, holy night, shepherds quake at the sight;
Glories stream from heaven afar,
heavenly hosts sing Alleluia!
Christ the Savior is born,
Christ the Savior is born!

Silent night, holy night, wondrous star, lend thy light;
with the angels let us sing,
Alleluia to our King;
Christ the Savior is born,
Christ the Savior is born!

*BENEDICTION*  Dr. Ken Dunivant

POSTLUDE  Hark! The Herald Angels Sing  John H. Schaffner

*Congregation Standing. Please silence all pagers and cell phones.

(Hymn texts printed through permission of CCLI: 1108424)

**MUSICIANS**
Chris O’Rear, Soloist
Susan Goode, Organist

**COMMUNION SERVERS**
Dr. Ken Dunivant  Rev. Dan Kilgore

The offering left at the chancel rail will support the ministries of Matthew 25 and the Children’s Home.

**THURSDAY, DECEMBER 24**
12:00*, 4:00*, 6:00* & 8:00 *** PM
Traditions Christmas Eve Worship & Candlelight Communion in the Sanctuary
4:00* & 5:30* PM
The Bridge Christmas Eve Worship & Candlelight Communion in Chitwood Hall

**SUNDAY, DECEMBER 27**
Regular Schedule for Traditions and The Bridge

* Nursery provided for this service
** Nursery provided for 2 years and under only.
*** No nursery for this service

**About The Longest Night Service**
Tonight we celebrate the winter solstice, the longest night of the year. This special service helps to remind us that even on the darkest day, Christ comes to offer light into our world. This service is designed to set aside a quiet time for worship and reflection in the midst of the busy holiday festivities. For those who have experienced the loss of a loved one, a relationship, a job, one’s health or other unspoken concerns and needs, we hope you will find this service meaningful.

December 21, 2015
The Longest Night Service
First United Methodist Church Tuscaloosa
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Tuscaloosa, AL 35401
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