**Longest Night Service**

[For Fourth Week of Advent]

PRELUDE

GREETING

\*CALL TO WORSHIP

Leader:  O Lord, my heart is not lifted up,

     my eyes are not raised too high;
**People:  I do not occupy myself with things**

**too great and too marvelous for me.**Leader:  But I have calmed and quieted my soul,

     like a weaned child with its mother;

**People:  my soul is like the weaned child that is with me.**

OPENING HYMN #189                        *Fairest Lord Jesus*

OPENING PRAYER

OLD TESTAMENT LESSON                               Isaiah 9:2-7

HYMN #221                                         *In the Bleak Midwinter*

NEW TESTAMENT LESSON                              Titus 2:11-14

HYMN #242                                         *Love Came Down at Christmas*

REFLECTION

HYMN                                                 *For God Alone I Wait*
   (<https://www.umcdiscipleship.org/resources/for-god-alone-i-wait>)

LIGHTING THE ADVENT CANDLES

*First Candle*

Leader:  The first candle we light is 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.

**People:  O God, may your eternal love surround them.**

*Second Candle*

Leader:  The second candle we light is to redeem the pain of loss,

                          whether through illness, jobs, divorce, or other events.

                We pause to gather up the grief of the past and offer it to God,

                          asking that from God’s hands we receive the gift of peace.

**People:  O God, accept the gift of our brokenness and lead us into your peace.**

*Third Candle*

Leader:  The third candle we light is to reclaim our faith in Jesus Christ,

                          the Great Physician, the Shepherd of the sheep,

                          the Author and Finisher of our faith.

                We pause to focus on Christ, whose mercy is the mystery that saves us.

**People:  O God, through your faithfulness our faith is renewed.**

*It Came Upon the Midnight Clear*,   verses 1-2

*(You are invited to place your candle on the altar during the hymn. Someone will assist in lighting.*

*You may kneel at the communion railing or return to your seat to pray.)*

*Fourth Candle*

Leader:  The fourth candle we light is to renew our hope in the Coming One

                          by whose stripes we are made whole.

                We await our fulfillment in Christ and we hold fast to the promise of

                          Christmas – Emmanuel, God is with us now and always.

**People:  Come, Lord Jesus, deliver us. Amen.**

PRAYER OF THANKSGIVING

\*HYMN #218                           *It Came Upon the Midnight Clear*                                  verses 3-4

\*BENEDICTION

POSTLUDE