

# Downtown United

December 21<sup>st</sup>, 2020  
Longest Night

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Portions of the service printed in **bold** are spoken by the whole congregation.

*Mission Statement: To glorify God through Worship, proclaiming the Gospel of Christ and serving others in Christ's name.*

## Call to Worship (Responsive):

In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. All things were made by God, and without God nothing came to be. What came to be through God was life, and this life was the light of the world.

**The Light shines in the darkness, and the darkness has not overcome it.**

*-adapted from John 1:1-5*

## Words of Welcome & Lighting of the Christ Candle

**Hymn:** O Little Town of Bethlehem

**Responsive Reading:** Psalm 22

My God, my God, why have you forsaken me? Why are you so far from helping me, so far from the words of my groaning?

**O my God, I cry by day but you do not answer, and by night, but I find no rest.**

In you, our ancestors trusted. They trusted and you delivered them.

**It was you who brought me from the womb, you who kept me safe on my mother's breast. Since my mother bore me, you have been my God.**

Do not be far from me, for trouble is near and there is no one to help.

**God does not despise the affliction of the afflicted. God does not hide from me. When I cry to God, God hears me. Thanks be to God.**

**Scripture:** Isaiah 40 (selected verses)

## Words of Reflection

## Musical Reflection

### Litany of Remembrance

*The first candle is lit*

We light this first candle to remember those whom we have loved and lost. We pause to remember clearly, their faces, their voices, their bodies. We embrace and give thanks for the memories that bind them to us in this season of expectation, when all Creation waits for the Light.

**We remember them with love. May God's eternal love surround them.**

*Silent reflection*

*The second candle is lit*

We light this second candle to remember the pain of loss: loss of relationships, loss of trust, loss of jobs, loss of health, loss of faith, the loss of joy. We acknowledge and embrace the pain of the past, O God, and we offer it to You, asking that into our wounded hearts and open hands You will place the gift of peace, shalom.

**We remember that through You all things are possible. Refresh, restore, renew us, O God, and lead us into Your future.**

*Silent reflection*

*The third candle is lit.*

We light this third candle to remember ourselves this Christmas time. We pause and remember the past weeks, months, and for some of us years, that have been heavy with our burdens. We accept and lay before you, God, the sharpness of memory, the sadness and grief, the hurt and fear, the anger and pain. We accept and lay before you the ways we feel we have fallen short, and the times we have spent blaming ourselves, and you, for all that we have suffered. We accept and lay before you the time we have walked alone, in darkness; and in knowledge of our own mortality.

**We remember that though we have journeyed far, and that, while lost, we may have turned away from the light, the light itself has not failed. We remember that though winter be upon us and though the night be dark, with the turning of the Wheel the dawn will come, and dawn defeats the darkness.**

*Silent reflection*

*The fourth candle is lit.*

We light this fourth candle to remember faith, the gift of light and hope that God offers to us in the story of Christmas, a story of anxiety and hope, of fear and joy, of seeking and finding. We remember that in the deepest brokenness of the world, God broke in and joined us in our joys and our sorrows as one of us. Living, breathing, loving, mourning.

**We remember the One who shares our burdens, who shows us the way to the Light, and who journeys with us into all our tomorrows.**

*Silent reflection*

## Prayers of the People & Lord's Prayer

### Hymn:

Silent Night  
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 Hallelujah,  
Christ the Saviour is born,  
Christ the Saviour is born.  
Silent night! Holy night!  
Son of God, love's pure light  
radiant beams from thy holy face,  
with the dawn of redeeming grace,  
Jesus, Lord, at thy birth,  
Jesus, Lord, at thy birth.

### Sending Forth (Responsive):

We lift up our eyes to the hills. From where will we look for help?

**Our help comes from God, who has made heaven and earth.**

God will not let our foot stumble, the One who protects Israel will not slumber

**The One who protects us will neither slumber nor sleep.**

It is God who protects us, our defence at our right hand.

**The sun shall not strike us by day, nor the moon by night.**

God will protect us from all evil, God will protect our life

**God will protect our going and coming, now and forever.**

*-adapted from Psalm 121*

### Benediction

### Postlude

## St. Paul's United Contact Information

Church Office phone number is 458-1183

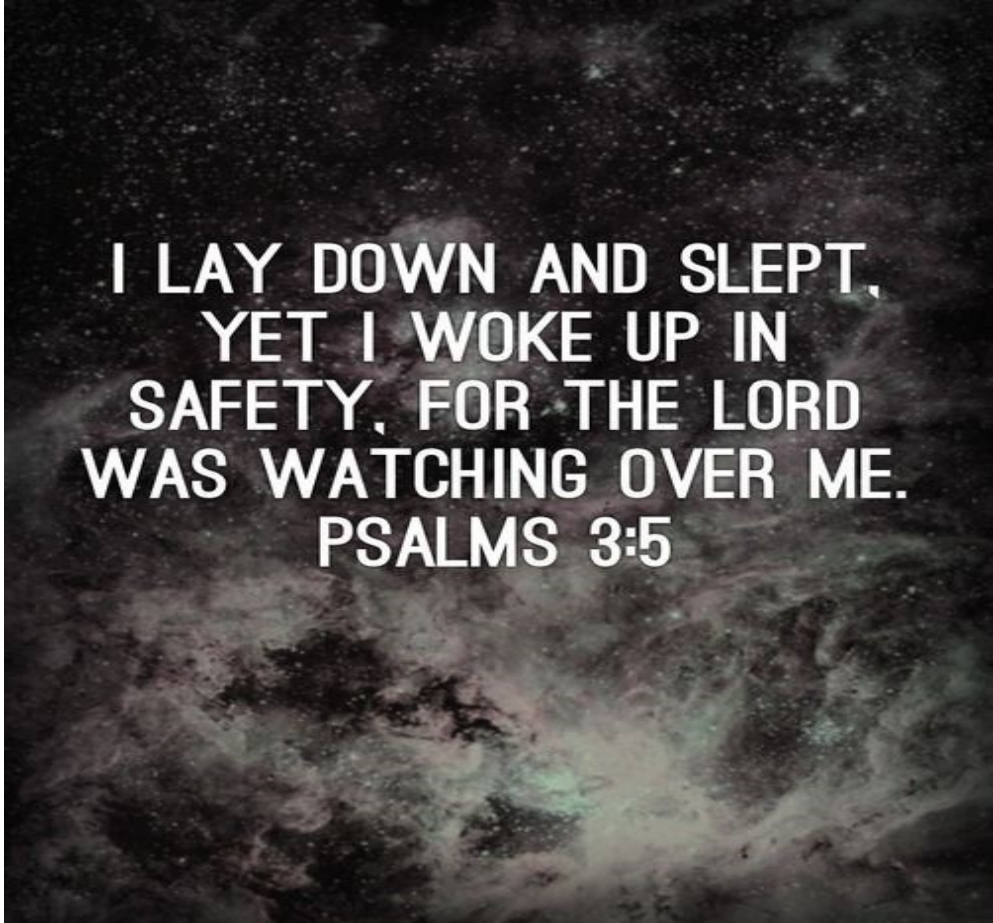
**Eric Hotte Church Manager** is in the church Sunday through Thursday. The office would love to hear from you!

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**I LAY DOWN AND SLEPT,  
YET I WOKE UP IN  
SAFETY, FOR THE LORD  
WAS WATCHING OVER ME.  
PSALMS 3:5**