

**Hymn:** *(remain seated)*      Silent Night      122

**Closing Prayer:**

Comforting God, as we leave this place, we pray you continue to wrap us in your presence. Be with us in our struggles, and when we get lost in the darkness, shine your light and help us find our way back to you.  
Amen.

**Benediction**

**Postlude**

**Candles**

After the service and postlude someone will be at the front to extinguish your candles and give them to you to take home.

**Participating in this evening's service:**

**Soloists**

Deborah Kerner & June Graham

**Organ and Piano:**

Daniel Werning

**Worship Leaders:**

Sheila Gault

Rev. Dr. Heather Vais

Refreshments graciously provided by Lorraine McBride  
Thank you to Deborah for preparing the candles.

**Please join us for worship on Christmas Eve**

**11:00 a.m.**

**Advent 4 and Intergenerational Christmas Service**

**11:00 p.m.**

**Christmas Eve Candlelight Service**

A Service of Lessons, Carols, & Candlelight Communion

# *The Longest Night Service of Candle Lighting & Prayer*

*Thornhill Presbyterian Church*

*Wednesday, December 20, 2023*



## Order of Worship

### Time of Gathering and Quiet Reflection

#### The Call to Worship (from Isaiah 9 and John 1)

One: The people walking in darkness have seen a great light; on those living in the land of the shadow of death a light has dawned.

**All: For to us a child is born and to us a son is given.**

One: The light shines in the darkness,

**All: And the darkness has not overcome it.**

One: From the darkness of sorrow  
we reach out for the light.

**Hymn:** Come thou long expected Jesus 110

#### Prayer

L.: Many in this season are ready to sing "Joy to the World." Whether this is the first Christmas without someone we love, or we are still hurting from loss or suffering for a long time, we gather this evening as darkness comes, to worship God in the midst of mourning. We gather to shed tears if they come, to hold hands if they are available, and to join our voices with one another and our predecessors in the faith who still cry out, "How long?" And so, we pray together...

**All: Come, Holy Spirit. Comfort us and all who mourn this night. Give us strength to grieve as we must. Help us receive your healing in the midst of our pain, and find new order after the chaos of loss; through Jesus Christ, our Lord. Amen.**

**Special Music**      *The Peace Carol*      *Deb Kerner*

#### Lighting of the Advent Candles

Leader: We light the Candle of Hope as we await the coming of Jesus, who is our hope. (*The Candle of Hope is lit*)

**People: Thank you, Lord, for the gift of hope, in our times of emptiness.**

Leader: We light the candle of Peace, knowing that Jesus is the Prince of Peace. (*The Candle of Peace is lit*)

**People: Thank you, Lord, for the gift of peace in our times of uncertainty.**

Leader: We light the candle of Joy, knowing that our comfort and help come from God. (*The Candle of Joy is lit*)

**People: Thank you, Lord, for the gift of joy in our times of sadness.**

Leader: We light the candle of Love, knowing that God is love revealed to us in Jesus Christ. (*The Candle of Love is lit*)

**People: Thank you, Lord, for the gift of love in our times of loneliness.**

Leader: In the beginning was the Word and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.

**People: The Word became flesh and lived among us, full of grace and truth.**

Leader: In him was life, and that life was the light of all. We light the Christ Candle, knowing that Jesus is our hope, our peace, our joy and the source of love. (*The Christ candle is lit*)

#### Lighting our own Candles

(*All who wish may come forward to light a candle for personal concerns or in memory of your loved-one(s) as their names are called.*)

Solo after the lighting      *Hope is a Star*      *June Graham*

#### Scripture Reading

Micha 5:2-5a

Psalm 23

Hymn: (*remain seated*)      In the bleak mid-winter      145

**Reflection**      *The light will come*      *Rev. Dr. Heather Vais*

Silence

**Prayer** (L.: Lord in your mercy.      P.: **Hear our Prayer**)

**The Lord's Prayer (debts)**

(over)