

# *Bryn Mawr Presbyterian Church*

Tuesday, December 21, 2021 | 7:00 p.m., Sanctuary  
Longest Night Service



# WELCOME TO BMPC

## **LABYRINTH**

On this Longest Night, we move from darkness to light. Outside the Sanctuary main doors on the Education Building Lawn, our labyrinth has been placed as a way to mark your journey here tonight. A labyrinth offers a sacred, nonjudgmental place to pray, meditate and breathe. Walking a labyrinth engages the entire body in releasing the noise of everyday life and allows the possibility of receiving the Light to refresh the soul. We invite you to walk or to simply take in the light.

## **FOR THOSE SEEKING SUPPORT**

The Middleton Center, a specialized ministry of Bryn Mawr Presbyterian Church, helps people navigate the turning points and challenges in their lives. If you would like more information on the services and support offered by the Middleton Center, please call

610-525-0766 or visit

[www.middletoncenter.org](http://www.middletoncenter.org).

## **COVID-19 GUIDELINES**

Masks are required for both fully-vaccinated and unvaccinated people inside church buildings. Masks are not required for outdoor spaces. Please maintain physical distance inside, and be mindful that we are an intergenerational community and that while COVID vaccines are available for children ages five to 11, some children may not have been vaccinated.

## Christmas Eve

### **CHILDREN'S CHRISTMAS EVE LIVE NATIVITY.** 1:00-3:00 p.m.

Starting outside the Chapel and ending at the Sanctuary doors, you will walk through a Live Nativity and meet actors, animals, and readers who will reenact key moments from the Christmas story. Families are encouraged to sign up for a time slot to help with scheduling participants throughout the afternoon:

<https://signup.com/go/CLoEVnN>.

**PRERECORDED CHILDREN'S CHRISTMAS EVE STORY.** Led by the children of our congregation, this simple worship service tells the story of Christmas through familiar scripture, actors, and carols. This prerecorded service will be available on the BMPC website on Christmas Eve for your family to enjoy.

### **CHRISTMAS EVE SERVICE OF LESSONS & CAROLS.**

7:30 p.m., Sanctuary and livestreamed. Candlelight Service of Lessons & Carols with the Rev. Dr. Agnes W. Norfleet preaching. This service will be livestreamed on the church website, Facebook and YouTube.

[www.bmpc.org/livestream](http://www.bmpc.org/livestream)

[www.facebook.com/brynmawrpres](http://www.facebook.com/brynmawrpres)

[www.youtube.com/brynmawrpres](http://www.youtube.com/brynmawrpres)

# GATHERING OF GOD'S PEOPLE

*“Even when light fades and darkness falls – as it does every single day,  
in every single life – God does not turn the world over to some other deity...*

*Here is the testimony of faith: darkness is not dark to God;  
the night is as bright as the day.”*

*~ Barbara Brown Taylor*

**PRELUDE**

The Nativity

Jean Langlais

**WELCOME**

Agnes W. Norfleet

† **CALL TO WORSHIP**

One: The people who walked in darkness have seen a great light.

**All: On those who lived in a land of deep darkness a light has shone.**

One: For a child has been born for us, a son given to us;

**All: And he is named Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting  
Father, Prince of Peace.**

† **HYMN 88**

O Come, O Come, Emmanuel

VENI EMMANUEL

**CALL TO CONFESSION**

Leigh DeVries

Show us your mercy, O Lord, and grant us your salvation. Hear our prayers  
for forgiveness so that truth shall spring up from the earth, and righteousness  
shall look down from heaven.

**LITANY OF CONFESSION**

One: O come, Emmanuel, come to us for we are lonely for God.

**All: Come, bring the peace of God-with-us.**

One: O come, Wisdom from on high.

**All: Forgive our sins. Lead us in the ways of knowledge, and show us the  
paths of peace.**

One: Glorious Shoot from the Jesse tree,

**All: Come, and bring life, fresh and green and lovely, to our spirits.**

One: O Rose which blooms in the snow of winter,

**All: Come, and grant to us the blessed gift of hope.**

One: O Bright Morning Star of the darkened world,

**All: Come and be for us the Way, the Truth, and the Life.**

**Come, and be known among us,**

**for we want to be your faithful and forgiven people.**

*(A moment of silence for personal reflection and confession.)*

## ASSURANCE OF PARDON

One: By the tender mercy of our God,  
The dawn from on high will break upon us,  
to give light to those who sit in darkness  
and in the shadow of death,  
to guide our feet into the way of peace.

**All: Let us walk in the ways of the Lord.**

## ANTHEM

Lunar Lullaby  
Singing City Chamber Choir

Jacob Narverud

The moon settles in the dusky sky The gentle eyes of the north star rest upon  
Your sleeping face and the heavens gaze upon you In this moment, I know;  
You are not from the ground on which you tread, but of the stars You are my  
radiant, my celestial child. As night is drowned by morning you remain at my  
side, Accompanying the sunrise until night swells again across the sky. Then,  
dreaming, you return to the star.

## PROCLAMATION OF THE WORD

### FIRST READING

Blessing for the Longest Night  
By Jan Richardson

Franklyn C. Pottorff

All throughout these months as the shadows have lengthened, this blessing has  
been gathering itself, making ready, preparing for this night.

It has practiced walking in the dark, traveling with its eyes closed, feeling its  
way by memory, by touch, by the pull of the moon even as it wanes.

So believe me when I tell you this blessing will reach you even if you have not  
light enough to read it; it will find you even though you cannot see it coming.

You will know the moment of its arriving by your release of the breath you have  
held so long; a loosening of the clenching in your hands, of the clutch around  
your heart; a thinning of the darkness that had drawn itself around you.

This blessing does not mean to take the night away but it knows its hidden  
roads, knows the resting spots along the path, knows what it means to travel in  
the company of a friend.

So when this blessing comes, take its hand. Get up. Set out on the road you  
cannot see.

This is the night when you can trust that any direction you go, you will be  
walking toward the dawn.

**PSALTER READING**

Psalm 13

Leigh DeVries

**ANTHEM**

I Will Light Candles This Christmas  
Singing City Chamber Choir

Kim André Arnessen

I will light Candles this Christmas; Candles of joy despite all sadness; Candles of hope where despair keeps watch, Candles of courage for fears ever present, Candles of peace for tempest-tossed days, Candles of grace to ease heavy burdens, Candles of love to inspire all my living, Candles that will burn all year long. When the song of the angels is stilled, When the star in the sky is gone, When the kings and princes are home, When the shepherds are back with their flock, The work of Christmas begins: To find the lost, To heal the broken, To feed the hungry, To release the prisoner, To rebuild the nations, To bring peace among others, To make music in the heart.

**SECOND SCRIPTURE LESSON**

Luke 1:67-79

Brian K. Ballard

One: The Word of the Lord.

**All: Thanks be to God.**

**MEDITATION**

*Trusting the Truth*

† **HYMN 795**

Healer of Our Every Ill

HEALER OF OUR EVERY ILL

## **RESPONSE TO THE WORD**

**LITANY OF REMEMBERING**

Agnes W. Norfleet

One: The image of light describes the power of Jesus Christ to expel the darkness. We light the first candle to remember the people in our lives who have died this past year, whose presence we ache for, whose spirit we are missing, whose absence we grieve.

**All: God, we ache.** (Silence)

One: The second candle we light represents the wide range of losses we and others in our lives are grieving right now – broken relationships, the loss of health, jobs, faith that used to be certain, and dreams that were shattered.

**All: God, we're grieving.** (Silence)

One: The third candle we light for our weary souls, for the burdens we are carrying, for our heavy hearts. We give thanks for family and friends who have stood with us, grateful for the care we have felt and support we have known.

**All: God, we long for light.** (Silence)

One: We light the fourth candle as a symbol of our desire for hope and peace in this season, to remember that despite the darkness, light and love can seep in.

**All: God, we're open.** (Silence)

One: The light shines in the darkness.

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

## INDIVIDUAL PRAYERS OF PETITION

*Those who would like to offer personal prayers of petition or thanksgiving are invited to come forward to the Communion Table and light a votive candle while the congregation sings:*

<b>HYMN 144</b>	In the Bleak Midwinter	CRANHAM
<b>HYMN 145</b>	What Child is This?	GREENSLEEVES
<b>HYMN 133</b>	O Come, All Ye Faithful	ADESTE FIDELES

## PRAYER FOR THE PREPARATION OF CHRISTMAS

Franklyn C. Pottorff

Christmas comes every time we see God in other persons.

The human and the holy meet in Bethlehem

or in Times Square,

For Christmas comes like a golden storm on its way

to Jerusalem –

Determinedly, inevitably...

Even now it comes

In the face of hatred and warring –

No atrocity too terrible to stop it,

No Herod strong enough,

No hurt deep enough,

No curse shocking enough,

No disaster shattering enough –

For someone on earth will see the star,

Someone will hear the angel voices,

Someone will run to Bethlehem,

Someone will know peace and goodwill:

The Christ will be born!

- "Christmas Comes" by Ann Weems

† **HYMN 123**

It Came Upon the Midnight Clear

CAROL

† **BENEDICTION**

Brian K. Ballard

† **RESPONSE 678** Our Darkness is Never Darkness in Your Sight

LA TÈNÈBRE

Our dark - ness is nev - er dark - ness in your sight: the  
deep - est night is clear as the day - light. Our

**POSTLUDE**

Improvisation

Jeffrey Brillhart

## WORSHIP NOTES

Tonight, we welcome members of Singing City Choir and its Associate Conductor, Nate Zullinger, to help lead the service. Singing City Choir was founded as an integrated choir in 1948 in Philadelphia by Dr. Elaine Brown. For over half a century, Singing City has been Philadelphia's premier avocational chorus, committed to bringing people together through music. It grew out of the Fellowship House movement, which believed that differences between races, religions, and cultures could be bridged by ordinary people coming together in shared activities.

In addition to its deep commitment to inclusion and community building, Singing City Choir has consistently achieved the highest levels of performance practice and artistry.

The 80-member chorus led by Jeffrey Brillhart, Artistic and Music Director, continues to fulfill its original mission, which today encompasses educational programs for youth, T-VOCE (Teen Voices of the City Ensemble), and programs for underserved populations.

For more information about Singing City, visit [www.singingcity.org](http://www.singingcity.org).

Singing City's musical leadership tonight is made possible by the Richard W. Ledwith Christmas Music Fund of the Bryn Mawr Presbyterian Church Foundation.

### BULLETIN COVER

Artwork by Stushie Art.

## **Worship Staff**

**Agnes W. Norfleet**, Pastor

**Brian K. Ballard**, Associate Pastor for Pastoral Care & Senior Adults

**Leigh DeVries**, Associate Pastor for Youth & Their Families

**Rebecca Kirkpatrick**, Associate Pastor for Adult Education & Mission

**Rachel Pedersen**, Associate Pastor for Children & Family Ministry

**Franklyn C. Pottorff**, Associate Pastor for Congregational Life & Stewardship

**Jeffrey Brillhart**, Director of Music & Fine Arts

**Edward Landin Senn**, Assistant Director of Music

## **Contact Information**



Bryn Mawr Presbyterian Church  
625 Montgomery Avenue, Bryn Mawr, PA 19010

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[www.youtube.com/user/brynmawrpres](https://www.youtube.com/user/brynmawrpres)

24/7 Answering Service for Pastoral Emergencies: 610-525-2821

The Middleton Center: 610-525-0766 • [info@middletoncenter.org](mailto:info@middletoncenter.org)

The Weekday School (Preschool): 610-525-2821, ext. 8840