

Bryn Mawr Presbyterian Church

Wednesday, December 20, 2023 | 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.

Christmas Worship

CHRISTMAS EVE FAMILY

SERVICE. 4:30 p.m., Sanctuary and Livestreamed. Family Service with Nativity Tableau and musical leadership by BMPC's Children's Choir, Youth Chorale and the Bryn Mawr Festival Brass. Prelude begins at 4:15 p.m. Infant and toddler childcare available without reservations from 3:45-5:45 p.m. in the Education Building, Room 101.

CHRISTMAS EVE WORSHIP SERVICE WITH COMMUNION.

8:30 p.m., Sanctuary and Livestreamed. The Rev. Dr. Agnes W. Norfleet will preach. Assorted congregational and choir carols will be sung, including two World Premieres of works by Kim André Arnesen, commissioned in celebration of BMPC's 150 anniversary year as well as festive arrangements for two trumpets by Richard Webster. Prelude begins at 8:10 p.m.

www.bmpc.org/livestream

www.facebook.com/brynmawrpres

www.youtube.com/brynmawrpres

GATHERING OF GOD'S PEOPLE

“Courage is fear that has said its prayers.”

- Karle Wilson Baker

PRELUDE

Lo, How a Rose E'er Blooming

Johannes Brahms

WELCOME

Kirby Lawrence Hill

† CALL TO WORSHIP

One: The people who walked in darkness have seen a great light; those who lived in a land of deep darkness, on them a light has shined.

All: For the yoke of their burden, the weight across their shoulders, you have broken into pieces, O God, our Redeemer.

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

All: The One God sends is named Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace.

† HYMN 88

O Come, O Come, Emmanuel

VENI EMMANUEL

Verses 1-2, 6-7

CALL TO CONFESSION

Agnes W. Norfleet

We have all sinned, not one of us is clean; but there is mercy for those who call on the name of the Lord. Trusting in God's grace, let us confess our sin.

PRAYER OF CONFESSION (in unison)

God of Mercy, we gather in this Advent Season to pray for ourselves, those whom we love, and the people of the world who live with pain and loss. We admit we are overly cautious and self-centered, shaped by the fears that live within us: the threat of illness, violence, turmoil, and uncertainty. We have been less than bold in reflecting your loving hope in our lives. Forgive our callousness to the pain of others for whom we could show compassion. We turn to you for a new start, with strength for today, courage for tomorrow, and peace for the journey, in the name of Jesus, who shares our life in joy and sorrow, in death and resurrection.

A moment of silence for personal reflection and confession.

HYMN 97

Watchman, Tell Us of the Night

ABERYSTWYTH

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. There is good news this night:

All: We are beloved, forgiven children of God! Alleluia! Amen!

SOLO

I Will Come to You
Nicholas Provenzale, baritone

David Haas

Text may be found in the hymnal, number 177.

PROCLAMATION OF THE WORD

FIRST LESSON

Isaiah 35:1-10

Agnes W. Norfleet

SECOND LESSON

Luke 3:1-6

Kirby Lawrence Hill

One: The Word of the Lord.

All: Thanks be to God.

MEDITATION

Every Valley, All Flesh

Kirby Lawrence Hill

† **HYMN 121**

O Little Town of Bethlehem

ST. LOUIS

RESPONSE TO THE WORD

LITANY OF REMEMBERING

Agnes W. Norfleet

One: This first candle we light to remember those whom we have loved and lost. We pause to remember their names, their faces, their voices, the memory that binds us to them in life and in death, especially in this season of Advent and Christmas.

All: O God, may your eternal love and peace surround them. (Silence)

One: The second candle we light represents the wide range of losses we experience and grieve – broken relationships, the loss of health, jobs, faith that used to be certain, and dreams that have shattered.

All: Heal, reconcile and renew us, as you lead us into a future of hope.
(Silence)

One: The third candle we light to remember the sadness we share with one another. We pause to remember the moments of disbelief, emptiness, anger and anxiety. We acknowledge our own misplaced priorities and our failures to work for the common good.

All: May the dawn defeat the night, and light defeat darkness. (Silence)

One: The fourth candle we light to remember God's promises and the gift of peace which the Christmas story offers the world. We remember those suffering the ravages of war, the forced migrations, the plight of hunger and homelessness. May the Christ, who shares human pain and suffering, lead us to new life and provide abundant life for all.

All: Show us the way, and increase our faith, that the darkness of this world will not overcome your light. (Silence)

One: Jesus said, "I am the light of the World.

All: Whoever follows me will never walk in darkness but have the light of life." Amen.

SOLO

Lux Aeterna
Kara Goodrich, soprano

C. M. Bearer

Eternal light, let it shine, shine on them, O Lord, with your Holy Saints forever in your mercy. Grant them rest forever O Lord, let your light, your everlasting light, shine upon them.

INDIVIDUAL PRAYERS OF PETITION

Agnes W. Norfleet

Those who desire to add to the light shining in darkness, while offering personal prayers of petition or thanksgiving, are invited to come forward to the Communion Table and light a votive candle while the congregation remains seated and sings.

HYMN 92 While We Are Waiting, Come WAITING (CASON)

While we are waiting, come; while we are waiting, come. Jesus our Lord, Emmanuel, while we are waiting, come.

With power and glory, come; with power and glory, come. Jesus our Lord, Emmanuel, while we are waiting, come.

Come, Savior, quickly come; come, Savior, quickly come. Jesus our Lord, Emmanuel, while we are waiting, come.

HYMN 87 Comfort, Comfort Now My People GENEVAN 42

“Comfort, comfort now my people; tell of peace!”, So says our God.
“Comfort those who sit in darkness mourning under sorrow’s load.
To my people now proclaim that my pardon waits for them!
Tell them that their sins I cover, and their warfare now is over.”

For the herald’s voice is crying in the desert far and near,
calling us to true repentance, since the reign of God is here.
O, that warning cry obey! Now prepare for God a way.
Let the valleys rise in meeting and the hills bow down in greeting.

Straight shall be what long was crooked, and the rougher places plain.
Let your hearts be true and humble, as befits God’s holy reign.
For the glory of the Lord now on earth is shed abroad,
and all flesh shall see the token that God’s word is never broken.

HYMN 79 Light Dawns on a Weary World TEMPLE OF PEACE

Light dawns on a weary world when eyes begin to see all people’s dignity.
Light dawn on a weary world: the promised day of justice comes.

The trees shall clap their hands; the dry lands, gush with springs;
the hills and mountains shall break forth with singing!

We shall go out in joy, and be led forth in peace,
as all the world in wonder echoes shalom.

Worship Staff

Agnes W. Norfleet, Pastor

Leigh DeVries, Associate Pastor for Youth & Their Families

Rebecca Kirkpatrick, Associate Pastor for Adult Education & Mission

Kirby Lawrence Hill, Interim Associate Pastor for Pastoral Care & Senior Adults

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



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