



Longest Night Service

DECEMBER 21 - 7:00 pm
FACEBOOK LIVE

SCRANTON AREA MINISTERIUM

An interfaith service of hope, peace, and comfort

Broadcast Link:

https://www.facebook.com/ScrantonAreaMinisterium/?view_public_for=155222197968432

Welcome

The Reverend Rebecca A. Barnes

Address from Mayor

The Honorable Paige Gebhardt Cognetti

Longest Night Service

Opening Chant and Prayer

Chant: Yours! - Psalm 74:16 *Music by Rabbi Shefa Gold*

Rabbi Daniel Swartz

L'cha yom af-l'cha laila
Yours is the day; even the night is Yours

Opening Prayer:

Mother Barnes

Let us pray.

Almighty and most merciful One, Your compassion for us overflows and to you we lift up our hearts. We are facing our longest night. We come burdened with sorrow, loneliness, and sadness. We come seeking a place to set them down; a place where our words will be heard and our feelings honored. We need a place where we can drop our masks, our physical masks, and our masks of good cheer so our tears can flow freely and our faces can wear the cares of all that we are carrying. Be among us this night, gracious and eternal One. Let your compassion heal us in this moment. Comfort us. Strengthen us. Care for us. Be our Light. *Amen.*

Weeping Waterwheel - Yunus Emre (d. 1328) *Turkish Sufi Muslim*

Dr. Melinda Krokus

Waterwheel, why do you weep so?
In sorrow do I weep.
I fell in love with the Lord,
In sorrow do I weep.*

Dolap niçin inilersin
Derdim vardır inilerim
Ben Mevla'ya âşık oldum
Derdim vardır inilerim

My name is the Weeping Waterwheel
My waters/life flow endlessly away
Thus has the Lord wished it;
For this I weep and moan.

Benim adım dertli dolap
Suyum akar yalap yalap
Böyle emreylemiş Çalap
Onun için inilerim

I am a tree of the mountains
Neither sweet, nor bitter,
I call upon the Lord (am a petitioner of God)
In sorrow do I weep

Ben bir dağın ağacıyım
Ne tatlıyım ne acıyım
Ben Mevla'ya duacıyım
Derdim vardır inilerim

On the mountain they cut me down;
All my plans were destroyed.
Yet, I am an unwearied poet
In sorrow do I moan

Dağdan kestiler hezenim
Bozuldu türlü düzenim
Ben bir usanmaz ozanım
Derdim vardır inilerim

I lift the waters up from deep below
Then turn and lift them high
See how these worldly sorrows turn
for which I weep and moan.

Suyum alçaktan çekerim
Dönüp yükseğe dökerim
Görün ben neler çekerim
Onun için inilerim

Yunus does not laugh at this
No one gets their way
No one lives forever in this passing world
In sorrow do I moan

Yunus bunda gelen gülmez
Kişi muradına ermez
Bu fanide kimse kalmaz
Derdim vardır inilerim

**alternate translation: "I know troubles, my brothers!"*

Psalm 130 *De Profundis*

Reverend James D. Redington, S.J.

Out of the depths I have cried to You, LORD.
Lord, hear my voice!
Let Your ears be attentive
To the sound of my pleadings.
If You, LORD, were to keep account of guilty deeds,
Lord, who could stand?
But there is forgiveness with You,
So that You may be revered.
I wait for the LORD, my soul waits,
And I wait for His word.
My soul waits in hope for the Lord
More than the watchmen for the morning;
Yes, more than the watchmen for the morning.
Israel, wait for the LORD;
For with the LORD there is mercy,
And with Him is abundant redemption.
And He will redeem Israel
From all his guilty deeds.

Prayers from the Hindu tradition

Jayashree Shamanna

Aum
Bhur Bhuvah Svah
Tat Savitur Varenyam
Bhargo Devasya Dheemahi
Dhiyo Yo nah Prachodayat

O Divine mother, our hearts are filled with darkness. Please make this darkness distant from us and promote illumination within us.

Yo mān paśhyati sarvatra sarvaṁ cha mayi paśhyati
tasyāhaṁ na praṇaśhyāmi sa cha me na praṇaśhyati

For those who see me everywhere and see all things in me, I am never lost, nor are they ever lost to me.

Reflection

Pastor Valerie Black

On this Solstice of 2020, the longest period of darkness of this dark COVID-19 year, I think about how darkness affects the people of this world. Darkness can be physical, emotional and spiritual. Physical darkness is easily explained as a lack of light and easily rectified by the presence of light. Emotional and spiritual darkness are not so easily defined or rectified and can be caused by a number of people, places and/or things.

From the beginning of time, people have experienced darkness due to the voluntary presence of sin in their lives, mental health issues, slavery, abuse, sexism, racism, various injustices, etc. The sad part about it is the unlike the Solstice, where people know and understand that they are experiencing a day when light is at a minimum and darkness is at a premium, people may not be aware that they are experiencing emotional and/or spiritual darkness and are in desperate need of light, of freedom, of escape.

It is my prayer that on this Solstice that we are all more aware of the darkness around us and that we all actively seek the light.

The Beatitudes -Matthew 5:3-12 *chanted from the Byzantine tradition*

Philip Yevics

Remember us O Lord, when you come in your kingdom.

Blessed are the poor in Spirit

For theirs is the kingdom of heaven.

Blessed are they who mourn

For they will be comforted.

Blessed are the meek

For they will inherit the land.

Blessed are they who hunger and thirst for righteousness

For they will be satisfied.

Blessed are the merciful

For they will be shown mercy.

Blessed are the peacemakers

For they will be called children of God.

Blessed are they who are persecuted for the sake of righteousness

For theirs is the kingdom of heaven.

Blessed are you when they insult you and persecute you

and utter every kind of evil against you falsely because of me

Rejoice and be glad for your reward is great in heaven.

Poem: Yesh Kochavim — There are stars by Hannah Senesh

Rabbi Swartz

כוכבים יש
ואינם אבדו עצמם הם כאשר רק ארצה מגיע שאורם
אנשים יש
בתוכנו יותר אינם עצמם הם כאשר מאיר זכרם שזיו
אלה אורות
הדרך אורות את לאדם שמראים הם – הלילה בתשכת המבטיקים

There are stars

Whose light reaches the earth only after they themselves have been extinguished and are no more.

And there are people

Whose scintillating memory lights the world after they themselves are no longer among us.

These lights

–which shine in the darkest night –

They show people the lights of the path.

Advent Wreath Candle Lighting and Litany of Remembrance

Leader: We light this Advent candle to remember those persons who have been loved and lost. We pause to remember their names, their faces, their voices. We give thanks for the memory that binds them to us this season which anticipates Christmas.

People: May God's eternal love surround them.

Leader: We light the second candle to redeem the pain of loss: the loss of relationships, the loss of jobs, the loss of health. As we gather up the pain of the past, we offer it to you, O God, asking that into our open hands, you will place the gift of peace.

People: Refresh, restore, renew us, O God, and lead us into your future.

Leader: 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 of difficult times. We remember the poignancy of memories, the grief, the sadness, the hurts, the pain of reflecting on our mortality.

People: Let us remember that dawn defeats darkness.

Leader: This fourth candle is lit to remember our faith and the gift of hope which God offers to us in the Christmas story. We remember that God, who shares our life, promises us a place and time of no more pain and suffering.

People: Let us remember the one who shows the way and who goes with us into our tomorrows.

Poem: Porque necesitábamos esperanza/ Because we needed hope Alejandra Marroquín

¡GRACIAS, ¡ADVIENTO, POR SER FUENTE DE ESPERANZA!

Cuando la perdemos, tú nos devuelves el doble

Cuando nos elevamos demasiado,

nos haces valorar la pequeñez de cada persona

Cuando se cierran los caminos,

tú nos abres otros senderos

¡GRACIAS, ¡ADVIENTO, POR SER OASIS DE ESPERANZA!

Porque, cuando levantamos montañas entre las personas,

tú nos invitas a la fraternidad

Porque, cuando los corazones se endurecen,

oportunamente pones tú la mano de la dulzura

Porque, cuando surgen obstáculos y odios,

Tu invitas a mirar lo que en Dios nos une

¡GRACIAS, ¡ADVIENTO, POR SER SURTIDOR DE ESPERANZA!

Si andamos perdidos, el Señor sale a nuestro encuentro

Si nos sentimos solos, Dios reconocerá nuestros nombres

Si nos encontramos sin horizontes, el Señor nos empuja hacia el futuro

Si no encontramos sentido a las cosas, el Espíritu nos ilumina con sabiduría

¡GRACIAS, ADVIENTO! ¡TE ESPERÁBAMOS!

Andamos escasos de esperanza y llenos de problemas

Ayúdanos a ser un camino por el que venga Jesús

Ayúdanos a vigilar el gran castillo de nuestro corazón

Ayúdanos a enderezar y preparar caminos torcidos

Ayúdanos para que, con María, recibamos al Grande que será pequeño

¡GRACIAS, ADVIENTO!

THANK YOU, ADVENT, FOR BEING A SOURCE OF HOPE!

When we lose it, you give it back to us twice as much,

When we rise too high,

you make us appreciate the smallness of each person.

When the roads close,

you open so many other paths for us.

THANK YOU, ADVENT, FOR BEING OASIS OF HOPE!

Because, when we raise peaks among people,

you invite us to fraternity

Because, when hearts harden,

Opportunely you put the hand of sweetness

Because, when obstacles and hatred arise, you

invite us to look at what unites us in God

THANK YOU, ADVENT, FOR BEING A GIVER OF HOPE!

If we are lost, the Lord comes to meet us

If we feel alone, God will recognize our names

If we find ourselves without horizons, the Lord pushes us into the future

If we do not find meaning in things, the Spirit illuminates us with wisdom

THANK YOU, ADVENT! WE ARE WAITING FOR YOU!

We are short of hope and full of problems

Help us to be the path through which Jesus comes

Help us to watch over the great castle of our hearts

Help us to smooth and prepare crooked paths

Help us so that, with Mary, we receive the Great who will be small

THANK YOU, ADVENT!

Reading from the Bahá'í tradition

Vera Walline

The darkness of this gloomy night shall pass away. Again the Sun of Reality will dawn from the horizon of the hearts. Have patience, wait but do not sit idle; work while you are waiting; smile when you are wearied with monotony; be firm while everything around you is being shaken; be joyous while the ugly face of despair grins at you; speak aloud while the malevolent forces of the nether world try to crush your mind; be valiant and courageous while men all around you are cringing with fear and cowardice....Continue your journey to the end. The bright day is coming. The nucleus of the new race is forming. The harbinger of the new ideals of international justice is appearing. The trees of hope will become verdant; the copper of scorn and derision will be transmuted into the gold of honour and praise; the arid desert of ignorance will be transformed into the luxuriant garden of knowledge, the threatening clouds shall be dispelled, and the stars of faith and charity will again twinkle in the clear heaven of human consciousness.

'Abdu'l-Bahá, Star of the West, Volume 5, p. 141

Prayers

Jayashree Shamanah

Om Asato Maa Sad-Gamaya

Tamaso Maa Jyotir-Gamaya

Mrtyor-Maa Amrtam Gamaya

Om Shaantih Shaantih Shaantih

Lead us from the unreal to the real
Lead us from darkness to light
Lead us from death to immortality
Aum! Let there be peace in me!
Let there be peace in my environment!
Let there be peace in the forces that act on me!

Om Saha Nau-Bhvatu
Saha Nau Bhunaktu
Saha Viiryam Karavaavahai
Tejasvi Nau-Adhiitam-Astu Maa Vidvissaavahai
Om Shaantih Shaantih Shaantih

Aum! May He protect us both together; may He nourish us both together;
May we work conjointly with great energy,
May our study be vigorous and effective;
May we not mutually dispute (or may we not hate any).
Aum! Let there be peace in me!
Let there be peace in my environment!
Let there be peace in the forces that act on me

Om Sarve Bhavantu Sukhinah
Sarve Santu Nir-Aamayaah
Sarve Bhadraanni Pashyantu, Pashyantu

May all be blessed with boundless joy
May all be free from needless fear
May all see auspiciousness everywhere

Closing Prayer

Mother Barnes

Generous and gracious God, we look to you for compassion and thank you for your presence this night. Overwhelmed by our burdens we easily forget that you never leave us alone and that your steadfast love for us never falters. By coming together we find assurance and comfort that we do not suffer this longest night alone. You have given us strength to live through this night. Turn us to reach out to those whose night is also long. Grant that we may be your healing presence in their lives by bringing them your compassion and comfort that will assure them that they do not suffer alone. **Amen.**

Participants

The Honorable Paige Gebhardt Cognetti, Mayor of Scranton

The Reverend Rebecca Barnes, Scranton Area Ministerium, President, St. Luke's, Scranton

Pastor Valerie Black, Baptist Tabernacle Church, Wilkes-Barre, PA

Dr. Melinda Krokus, Marywood University

Alejandra Marroquín, IHM Associate

Fr. James Redington, S.J, Jesuit Center, The University of Scranton

Jayashree Shamanna, Hindu Community

Rabbi Daniel Swartz, Temple Hesed, Scranton,

Vera Walline, Scranton Area Ministerium, Vice-president

Philip Yevics, Scranton Area Ministerium, Secretary



A Blessing for the Longest Night

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.

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