

STAY WITH US

Words by
WALTER FARQUHARSON

Music by
RON KLUSMEIER



1. Stay with us through the night. Stay with us
2. Stay with us through the night. Stay with us
3. Stay with us through the night. Stay with us



through the pain. Stay with us, bless-ed
through the grief. Stay with us, bless-ed
through the dread. Stay with us, bless-ed



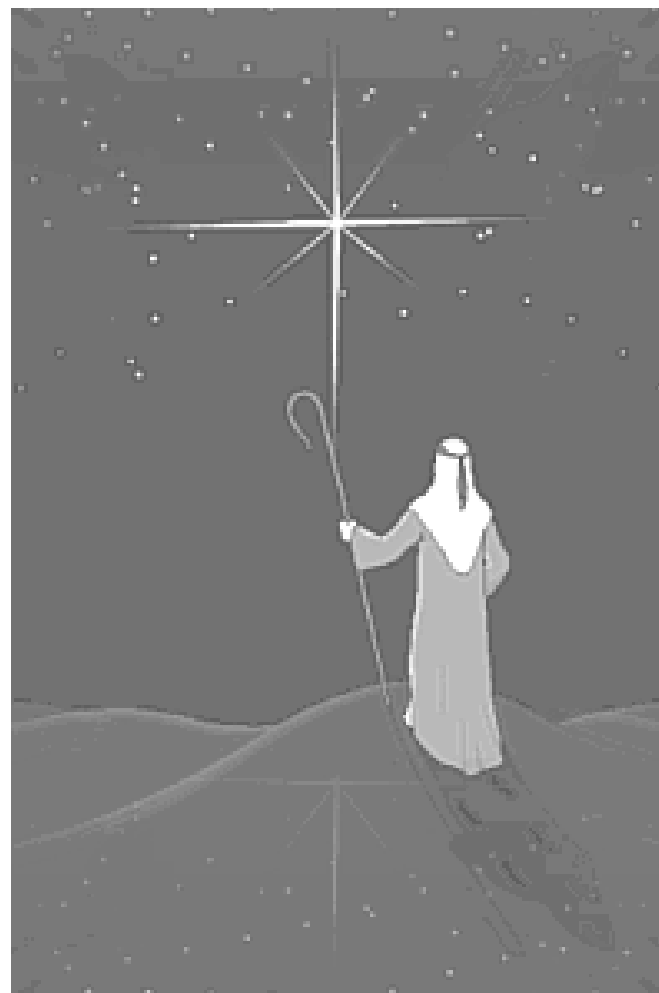
strang-er 'til the morn-ing breaks a-gain.
strang-er 'til the morn-ing brings re-lief.
strang-er 'til the morn-ing breaks new bread.

As a gift from Walter Farquharson and Ron Klusmeier,
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A blessing for the Longest Night: *St. Andrew's: All throughout these months as the shadows have lengthened, this blessing has been gathering itself, making ready, preparing for this day. It has practiced walking in the dark of December, traveling with its eyes closed, feeling its way by memory by touch by the pull of the moon even as it wanes. First Baptist: 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. St. John's: 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. St. David's: This is the moment when you can trust that any direction you go, you will be walking toward the dawn. And I said to the man who stood at the gate: "Give me a light that I may tread safely into the unknown." And he replied: "Go out into the darkness and put your hand into the Hand of God. That shall be to you better than light and safer than a known way." So I went forth, and finding the Hand of God, trod gladly into the night. And He led me towards the hills and the breaking of day in the lone East.* © Jan Richardson. janrichardson.com

Closing Hymn: Silent Night

(We invite you to experience a meditative worship service that takes time for remembering, sharing our hurting places, and preparing ourselves to receive light.)



Prelude

Words of Welcome and silence

Our four churches welcome you to this Longest Night service. Please feel free to stay as long as you care to... and hot chocolate is ready at the close of the service.



Nothing is lost on the breath of God

Nothing is lost on the breath of God, nothing is lost for ever;
God's breath is love, and that love will remain, holding the world for
ever. No feather too light, no hair too fine, no flower too brief in its
glory; no drop in the ocean, no dust in the air, but is counted and
told in God's story.

Nothing is lost to the eyes of God, nothing is lost for ever;
God sees with love and that love will remain, holding the world for
ever. No journey too far, no distance too great, no valley of darkness
too blinding; no creature too humble, no child too small for God to
be seeking, and finding.

Nothing is lost to the heart of God, nothing is lost for ever;
God's heart is love, and that love will remain, holding the world for
ever. No impulse of love, no office of care, no moment of life in its
fulness; no beginning too late, no ending too soon, but is gathered
and known in God's goodness.

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(Silence)

"Some of us walk into Advent tethered to our unresolved
yesterdays... the pain still stabbing; the hurt still throbbing. It's not
that we don't know better; it's just that we can't stand up anymore
by ourselves. On the way to Bethlehem, will **you** give us a hand?"
Anne Weems

O come O come, Emmanuel (1-3, 6,7)

122

The journey in the Darkness

Prayer

Text: Psalm 13

Meditation: Jenny Csinos Grief in the Dark

(Silence)

Comfort, Comfort you my people

113

The journey through the veil of night

Prayer

Text: Psalm 139

Meditation: Kenn Stright Seeing through the gloom

(Silence)

Hymn: Nothing can trouble

617

The Journey to the breaking day

Prayer

Text: John 1: 1-5

Meditation: Martha Martin Light in the Darkness

(Silence)

In the bleak Midwinter

145

The journey toward the light

Prayer

Text: Matthew 2: 1-12

Meditation: Kevin Little Search for the Light

(Silence)

CANDLE LIGHTING: Let all who wish to light a candle to remember a
loved one, to remember a loss, to remember a relationship, come
forward now to do so. Light a candle and set it into one of the
containers on the table. Like our lives, each container is in darkness
until it is filled by the light of Christ. We will sing 'Stay with us' until
all are done.