

The round bud of the heart  
opens, itself a circle,  
the radius expanding.

When I begin to say  
that I am you and you are I  
then the pain that you wear  
must wound me too.

This is the work,  
to widen that horizon that lies within  
to hold the world, if we must.

This is the burden  
we choose  
to carry:

To be watchers,  
weight-bearers,  
to inwardly transmute  
these stones we are given to bear  
into gems of great value.

To keep soft,  
to let the ego  
slip down  
into a weightless place.  
Speak your story.  
Let it fall like a stone  
into the quiet pool of my heart.  
The circles expand out and outward,  
not matter but pure energy,  
more doors opening.

I see you. I feel you. I know you. I recognize myself in you.  
These are the doors we step into.  
These are the circles we enter.

Namaste

Sing — “Within Our Darkest Night”

VT 632

Go ... in the peace of the dark, the hope of the light, your path lit by love.

# SOLSTICE

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## Day of Longest Darkness

*at 7:00, we will make the sanctuary dark*

“To Know the Dark” Wendell Berry

To go in the dark with a light is to know the light.  
To know the dark, go dark. Go without sight,  
and find that the dark, too, blooms and sings,  
and is traveled by dark feet and dark wings.

“Winter: Largo” Antonin Vivaldi

Welcome, excerpt from “The Sound of Silence” Paul Simon

“Hello, darkness, my old friend ...”

excerpt from *Winter* Mark Gopnik

“The romance of winter is possible only when we have a  
warm, secure indoors to retreat to, and winter becomes a  
season to look at as much as one to live through.”

Sing — “Within Our Darkest Night” VT 632

## The Titling Planet Turns

This is the solstice, the still point Margaret Atwood  
of the sun, its cusp and midnight,  
the year’s threshold  
and unlocking, where the past  
lets go of and becomes the future....

The Shortest Day Susan Cooper

## The Days Lengthen & The Light Grows

Community  
Mennonite  
Church of  
Lancaster

Jul, jul, strålande jul”

performed by Gunnar Eriksson & Rilke Ensemble

English translation

Yule, Yule, radiant Yule,  
Gleam over white forests.  
The crowns of heaven aglow with light,  
Shimmering arches in all of God's houses.  
Hymns that are sung through of all our times,  
Ceaseless the longing for brightness and peace!  
Yule, Yule, radiant Yule,  
Gleam over white forests.

Come, come, blessed Yule!  
Lower your white wings.  
Over the battles' blood and noise,  
Over the sorrowful sighs of human hearts.  
Over the kin who have gone to their rest (over the families that passed away),  
Over the young ones' budding nests.  
Come, come, blessed Yule!  
Lower your white wings.

“The Light Is Reborn”

Jeremiah Wolfe

... The light is reborn

In the greatest darkness  
Out of winter's cold  
From our deepest fears  
When we most despair  
When all seems lost  
When the earth lies waste  
When animals hide  
When the leaves are gone  
When the river is frozen  
When the ground is hard  
Shadows are fleeing  
Light is returning  
Warmth will come again  
Summer will be here once more  
Plants will grow again  
Animals will be seen once more  
Green will come again ... Life will continue ... The light is reborn

Sing — “Within Our Darkest Night”

VT 632

“Song for a Change of Heart”

Beth Weaver-Kreider

*“If these words can do anything  
I say bless this house  
with stars.  
Transfix us with love.” --Joy Harjo, “The Creation Story”*

Circles of Light — Prayer

And the Third Circle is the Heart

Beth Weaver-Kreider

*“The eye is the first circle, the horizon which it forms is the second: and throughout nature this primary figure is repeated without end.” Ralph Waldo Emerson*

The heart, too, is a circle,  
the horizon expanding to infinity  
or contracting into a small hole.  
  
The work, you say, is to keep opening,  
casting that radius wider  
at every turn of the wheel,  
to hold everything within its protective arc,  
the bright flowers and the white-hot stones.

photo: lights at Lancaster General Hospital

