

# Blue Christmas Service

Friday, December 25, 2020 @ 10am

## PRELUDE

## WELCOME AND ANNOUNCEMENTS

## INVOCATION AND CONFESSION

In the name of the Father, + and the Son, and the Holy Spirit. **Amen.**

We praise you, O God, for you are the Father of mercies and the Mother of all consolation. You comfort and care for us.

**We confess the way we feel. Our hearts feel heavy within us; we are weighed down with the loss of loved ones, the loss of opportunities, the shifting of hopes and dreams. As many people eagerly wait for Jesus' birth, it's hard for us to lift up our hearts. As many plan to celebrate and sing with joy, we often find the days seem gray and our tongues cannot rejoice. Help us. Embrace us. Heal us. You who know the grief of the world, meet each of us in our aching hearts. Hold us close until the days dawn a bit brighter and we find we can walk in delight once more.**

God knows the emptiness we sometimes feel. God knows the feelings of abandonment, anger, loneliness, and relief we sometimes feel, too. God knows us from the depths of our hearts, and God sits with each one of us as we learn to be whole people once more. Be assured of God's love and compassion. **Amen.**

## GATHERING HYMN

*Wait for the Lord*

Taize #262

**Wait for the Lord, whose day is near. Wait for the Lord, keep watch, take heart!**

**Wait for the Lord, whose day is near. Wait for the Lord, be strong, take heart!** (repeat)

## PRAYER OF THE DAY

Let us pray together: **God of light and life, in the midst of a busy season when so many around us are joyfully celebrating the birthday of Jesus, we come listening for your voice and hoping for your comforting grace. Draw near us as we draw near to you. We pray in Jesus' name: Amen.**

## OPENING HYMN

*O Come, O Come, Emmanuel*

#257

**O Come, O come, Emmanuel And ransom captive Israel  
That mourns in lonely exile here Until the Son of God appear.  
Rejoice! Rejoice! Emmanuel shall come to you, O Israel.**

**O come, O Key of David, come,  
and open wide our heav'nly home;  
make safe the way that leads on high,  
and close the path to misery.  
Rejoice! Rejoice! Emmanuel shall come to you, O Israel.**

**O Come, O Dayspring, come and cheer;  
O Sun of justice, now draw near.  
Disperse the gloomy clouds of night,  
and death's dark shadow put to flight.  
Rejoice! Rejoice! Emmanuel shall come to you, O Israel.**

## SCRIPTURE READINGS

My God, my God, why have you forsaken me? Why are you so far from helping me, from the words of my groaning? Oh my God, I cry by day, but you do not answer; and by night, but find not rest...I am poured out

like water, and all my bones are out of joint; my heart is like wax; it is melted within my breast... (*Psalm 22:1-2, 14*)

*Pause for reflection*

My joy is gone, grief is upon me, my heart is sick... For the hurt of my poor people I am hurt, I mourn, and dismay has taken hold of me. Is there no balm in Gilead? Is there no physician there? Why then has the health of my poor people not been restored? O, that my head were a spring of water, and my eyes a fountain of tears, so that I might weep day and night for the slain of my poor people! (*Jeremiah 8:18,21-9:1*)

*Pause for reflection*

As (Jesus) came near and saw the city, he wept over it, saying, 'If you, even you, had only recognized on this day the things that make for peace! But now they are hidden from your eyes. Indeed, the days will come upon you, when your enemies will set up ramparts around you and surround you, and hem you in on every side. They will crush you to the ground, you and your children within you, and they will not leave within you one stone upon another; because you did not recognize the time of your visitation from God. (*Luke 19:41-44*)

*Pause for reflection*

## **LITANY OF REMEMBRANCE**

We light this candle to remember those who are captive to darkness. (*The first candle is lit.*) For those lost in the night of addiction, depression, anxiety, or unexpected grief, we pray to God, who guided the Israelites through the darkness with a pillar of fire:

### **Disperse the gloomy clouds of night.**

We light this candle to remember those who have died, and those who mourn the dead. (*The second candle is lit.*) The shadow of death can seem impenetrably dark during these long nights. We pray to God, whose first act in creation was to call light from darkness:

### **Death's dark shadow put to flight.**

We light this candle to remember those who are alone. (*The third candle is lit.*) We remember those who isolated from loved ones; far from home; wandering down the wrong path; or convinced that God is unconcerned with their suffering. We pray to God, who is like the woman who lit a lantern to search all night for one lost coin:

### **Refresh the hearts that long for you.**

We light this candle to remember those who are battling illness. (*The fourth candle is lit.*) We lift up those who suffer the pain, indignity, and bewilderment that accompany a broken body. For all who desire to be returned to wholeness, we pray to God, who lit the night sky with a star to guide three magi to the healing Christ:

### **Restore the broken: make us new.**

We light this candle to remember those who feel that hardship will overwhelm them. (*The fifth candle is lit.*) For the poor, the persecuted, the hungry, and the homeless, we pray to God, who walked with three men through the consuming flames of a fiery furnace:

### **In strength and beauty come and stay.**

We light this candle to remember those affected by war. (*The sixth candle is lit.*) For soldiers; for civilians in war-torn nations; for families who mourn the loss of loved ones to violent conflict. We pray to God, with eyes of blazing fire, who promises a vision of peace:

### **Teach us your will and guide our way.**

## **HYMN**

*Come, Thou Long Expected Jesus*

#254

**Come, thou long expected Jesus, born to set thy people free;  
from our fears and sins release us; let us find our rest in thee.  
Israel's strength and consolation, hope of all the earth thou art,  
dear desire of ev'ry nation, joy of ev'ry longing heart.**

**Born thy people to deliver, born a child, and yet a king;  
born to reign in us forever, now thy gracious kingdom bring.  
By thine own eternal Spirit rule in all our hearts alone;  
by thine all sufficient merit raise us to thy glorious throne.**

## **SCRIPTURE**

Then I saw a new heaven and a new earth; for the first heaven and the first earth had passed away, and the sea was no more. And I saw the holy city, the new Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband. And I heard a loud voice from the throne saying, 'See, the home of God is among mortals. He will dwell with them; they will be his peoples, and God himself will be with them; he will wipe every tear from their eyes. Death will be no more; mourning and crying and pain will be no more, for the first things have passed away.' And the one who was seated on the throne said, 'See, I am making all things new.' (*Revelation 21:1-5*)

## **REFLECTION**

## **HYMN**

### **LITANY by LORICA OF ST. PATRICK**

I arise today

**Through a mighty strength, the invocation of the Trinity**

**Through belief in the threeness Through confession of the Oneness Towards the creator.**

I arise today

**Through God's strength to pilot me:**

**God's might to uphold me, God's wisdom to guide me**

**God's eye to look before me, God's ear to hear me,**

**God's word to speak for me, God's hand to guard me,**

**God's way to lie before me, God's host to secure me.**

I arise today

**Through the strength of Christ with his baptism,**

**Through the strength of his crucifixion with his burial,**

**Through the strength of his resurrection with his ascension**

**Through the strength of his descent for the Judgment of doom.**

Christ with me, Christ before me, Christ behind me,

**Christ in me, Christ beneath me, Christ above me,**

Christ on my right, Christ on my left

**Christ where I lie, Christ where I sit, Christ where I arise.**

Christ in the heart of everyone who thinks of me,

**Christ in the mouth of everyone who speaks of me,**

Christ in every eye that sees me,

**Christ in every ear that hears me.**

Salvation is of the Lord

**Salvation is of the Lord.**

Salvation is through Jesus

**May your salvation, O Lord, be ever with us.**

## **BENEDICTION**

May the Lord bless you and keep you. May the Lord's face shine on you and be gracious to you. May the Lord look upon you with favor and + give you peace.

**SENDING HYMN**

*Silent Night*

#281

**Silent night, holy night! All is calm, all is bright round yon virgin mother and child.  
Holy infant so tender and mild, sleep in heavenly peace, sleep in heavenly peace.**

**Silent night, holy night! Shepherds quake at the sight; glories stream from heaven afar,  
heav'nly hosts sing alleluia! Christ, the Savior, is born! Christ, the Savior, is born!**

**Silent night, holy night! Son of God, love's pure light radiant beams from your holy face,  
with the dawn of redeeming grace, Jesus, Lord, at your birth, Jesus, Lord, at your birth.**

**DISMISSAL**

Go forth in the Consoling name of God who is Creator, Christ + and Comforter.  
**Thanks be to God.**

**POSTLUDE**