

A Blue Christmas Service

Saturday, December 21, 2024 at 7:00 p.m.

GATHERING MUSIC

WORDS OF WELCOME

*CONGREGATIONAL CENTERING

L: In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. All things were made by God, and without God nothing came into being. What came to be through God was life, and this life was the light of the world.

P: The Light shines in the darkness, and the darkness has not overcome it.

*HYMN

O Little Town of Bethlehem (v. 1, 4)

UMH: 230

SCRIPTURE READING

Ecclesiastes 3:1-11

READING OF PSALMS

Psalm 22

L: My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?

Why are you so far from helping me, so far from the words of my groaning?

**P: O my God, I cry by day but you do not answer,
and by night, but I find no rest.**

L: In you, our ancestors trusted. They trusted and you delivered them.

**P: It was you who brought me from the womb,
you who kept me safe on my mother's breast.**

Since my mother bore me, you have been my God.

L: Do not be far from me, for trouble is near and there is no one to help.

P: God does not despise the affliction of the afflicted.

God does not hide from me.

A: When I cry to God, God hears me. Thanks be to God.

BLUE CHRISTMAS SOLO *In the Bleak Midwinter*

Psalm 23

The LORD is my shepherd; I shall not want.

He maketh me to lie down in green pastures;

he leadeth me beside the still waters.

He restoreth my soul;

he leadeth me in the paths of righteousness for his Name's sake.

**Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death,
I will fear no evil; for thou art with me;
thy rod and thy staff, they comfort me.
Thou preparest a table before me in the presence of mine enemies;
thou annointest my head with oil;
my cup runneth over.
Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life,
and I will dwell in the house of the LORD forever.**

HYMN

My Faith Looks Up to Thee (v. 1, 3-4)

UMH: 452

LITANY OF REMEMBRANCE

L: We light this first candle to remember those whom we have loved and lost.
(The first candle is lit.) We pause to remember clearly, their faces, their voices, their bodies. We embrace and give thanks for the memories that bind them to us in this season of expectation, when all Creation waits for the Light.

P: We remember them with love. May God's eternal love surround them.

HYMN

O Come, O Come, Emmanuel (v. 1)

UMH: 211

**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 thee, O Israel.**

L: We light this second candle to remember the pain of loss:
(The second candle is lit.) loss of relationships, loss of trust, loss of jobs, loss of health, loss of faith, the loss of joy. We acknowledge and embrace the pain of the past, O God, and we offer it to You, asking that into our wounded hearts and open hands You will place the gift of peace, shalom.

**P: We remember that through You all things are possible.
Refresh, restore, renew us, O God, and lead us into Your future.**

HYMN

O Come, O Come, Emmanuel (v. 2)

UMH: 211

**O come, thou Wisdom from on high, and order all things far and nigh;
to us the path of knowledge show and cause us in her ways to go.
Rejoice, rejoice, Emmanuel shall come to thee, O Israel.**

L. We light this third candle to remember ourselves this Christmas time.

(The third candle is lit)

We pause and remember the past weeks, months, and for some of us years, which have been heavy with our burdens. We accept and lay before You, God, the sharpness

of memory, the sadness and grief, the hurt and fear, the anger and pain. We accept and lay before You the ways we feel we have fallen short, and the times we have spent blaming ourselves, and You, for all that we have suffered. We accept and lay before You the time we have walked alone, in darkness, and in knowledge of our own mortality.

P: We remember that though winter be upon us and though the night be dark, with the turning of the Wheel, the dawn will come, and dawn defeats the darkness.

HYMN *O Come, O Come, Emmanuel* (v. 6) UMH: 211

**O come thou Dayspring, come and cheer our spirits by thy justice here;
disperse the gloomy clouds of night, and death's dark shadows put to flight.
Rejoice, rejoice Emmanuel shall come to thee, O Israel.**

(The fourth candle is lit.)

L: We light this fourth candle to remember faith, the gift of light and hope that God offers to us in the stories of Hanukkah and of Christmas, which both also began in abandonment, insecurity, and humbleness, in a time of war and in a poor stable. We remember that the loving God who kept the light shining in the temple and who came to share this life with us promises us comfort and peace.

P: We remember the One who shares our burdens, who shows us the way to the Light, and who journeys with us into all our tomorrows.

HYMN *It Came upon the Midnight Clear* (v. 4) UMH: 218

And now we light a fifth candle.
Just as we will do later this week on Christmas Eve,
We light this as a sign of our belief...
We believe in the Light that has come and is coming.
(Light the fifth candle in the center)

This light casts its glow on all the surrounding prayers we have prayed.
This light resides within us, perhaps dim for a time,
but always lit—an ember of the Holy inside us.
This light reminds us that we are not alone.

MEDITATION

VIDEO REFLECTION *O Come, O Come, Emmanuel* Enya

ORNAMENTS OF REMEMBRANCE

(You are invited to come forward and create an ornament as invited by Mother Lilo. As we spend this time in creation and remembrance, our special musical accompaniment will touch our souls.)

MUSICAL ACCOMPANIMENT *Lo, How a Rose E'er Blooming*

CALL TO PRAYER

L: God, this is the season for miracles, and we pray for one this night.

L: Where there is sorrow,

P: We pray for Your grace to light the darkness.

L: Where there is despair,

P: We pray for Your hope to light the darkness.

L: Where there is hatred,

P: We pray for Your forgiveness to light the darkness.

L: Where there is war,

P: We pray for Your love to light the darkness.

L: Where there is confusion,

P: We pray for Your peace to light the darkness.

L: Where there is injustice,

P: We pray for Your courage to light the darkness.

L: Where there is fear,

P: We pray for Your joy to light the darkness.

L: It is the season for miracles, and we pray for one today.

Come, Lord Jesus, may Your light come into our world.

THE LORD'S PRAYER

Our Father who art in heaven, hallowed be thy name. Thy kingdom come, thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread. And forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive those who trespass against us. And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil. For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, forever. Amen.

***BENEDICTION**

***CLOSING SONG**

Joy to the World

UMH: 246