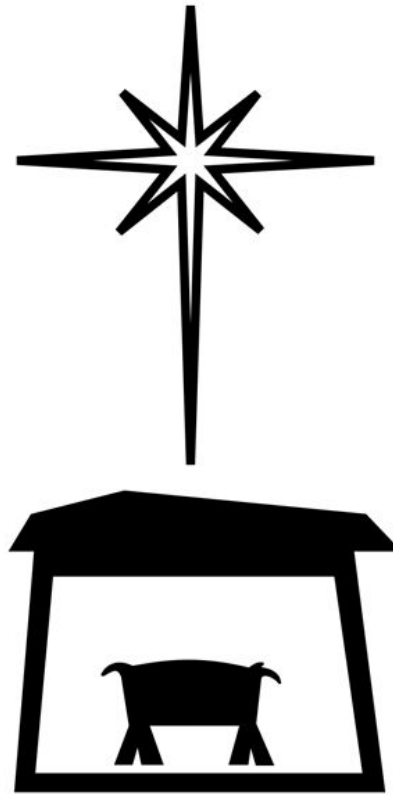


BLUE CHRISTMAS
A Service for Hope and Healing

7:00 p.m. December 17, 2020



O Come, O Come Emmanuel

*Holy Spirit, Mystery of Presence,
You penetrate the depths of our being and discern our longing.
Amid much confusion and signs leading away from You, we seek Your truth.
Open our hearts to the wonders of Your work and the wisdom of Your word. Amen.*

The Episcopal Diocese of Fort Worth
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Fort Worth, TX 76103
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*Faith includes noticing
the mess,
the emptiness and discomfort,
and letting it be there
until some light returns.*
—Anne Lamott

All the darkness in the world
cannot extinguish the
light of a single candle.
—St. Francis of Assisi

God of our life, there are days when the burdens we carry chafe our shoulders and weigh us down; when the road seems dreary and endless, the skies gray and threatening. Flood the path with light, run our eyes to where the skies are full of promise; tune our hearts to brave music; give us the sense of comradeship with heroes and saints of every age; and so quicken our spirits that we may be able to encourage the souls of all who journey with us on the road of life, to your honor and glory. Amen.
—Augustine of Hippo

Some of us walk into Christmas 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?
—Into this Silent Night by Ann Weems

Dear One,

Wherever you are on your spiritual journey, whatever is causing your pain or distress, you have come to a place of hope. We will hold you in prayer until the light dawns. If you would like to speak with a priest, we would be honored to listen. May you know the Peace of Christ and the Light of Hope.

Pax et Bonum

Karen+ and Allison+

*If you would like to talk with a priest, please email blue.christmas@edfw.org
and you will be contacted.*

Blue Christmas

A Service for Hope and Healing
7:00 p.m. December 17, 2020

The people's responses are in bold.

Celebrant We cry out to Christ who counts and collects our tears. (Ps. 56:8)
People **Be with us now, O Christ.**
Celebrant In our grief and our pain, our bodies and spirits cry out.
People **Hear us, O Christ. Amen.**

PRAYER

The days are short. The nights are long. Almighty God, your universe mirrors the reality of our hearts, revealing your gracious spirit that mourns with us in grief, cries with us in sorrow, sits with us in despair. You are not a distant God, removed from human pain, but a faithful companion closer to us than our own breath. Help us to feel your presence now as we remember and reflect, seeking your healing touch and the hope that was promised and delivered in Jesus Christ your Son. **Amen.**

LIGHTING OF THE ADVENT CANDLES

Officiant We light this candle to remember those whom we have lost through death.
We remember their names aloud or in the silence of our hearts.
We treasure the memories that bind them to us.
All **Let us remember that God's eternal love surrounds them.**

Hymn 111 **Silent Night** – with adapted verses

*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.*

Officiant We light this second candle to ask for deliverance from the pain of loss:
the loss of relationships—of jobs—of health—of financial security.
We ask God to place the gift of peace in our waiting hearts.
All **Refresh, restore, renew us, O God, and lead us into your future.**

Hymn *Silent night, holy night
griefs abound, ever in sight,
Christ now comes in manger bare,
holds our loved ones in his holy care.*

Joy, at last to be ours.

Joy, at last to be ours.

Officiant We light this third candle for each of us. We offer to God our pasts:
the times of regret and sorrow, the times of mourning, the difficult memories,
the times of grief and sadness and of loneliness and pain.

All **Let us remember that God's dawn defeats despair.**

Hymn *Silent night, holy night,
shepherds quake at the sight,
glories stream from heaven afar,
heavenly hosts sing alleluia,
Christ, the Savior, is born,
Christ, the Savior, is born.*

Officiant We light this fourth candle as a symbol of hope and promise.
We invite the coming of the One who brings us into new being.

All **Let us remember the one who shows the way and who goes with us
into our tomorrows.**

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

SCRIPTURE READINGS

PSALM 13

How long, O Lord? Will you forget me forever?

How long will you hide your face from me?

How long must I bear pain in my soul,

and have sorrow in my heart all day long?

How long shall my enemy be exalted over me?

Consider and answer me, O Lord my God!

Give light to my eyes, or I will sleep the sleep of death,

and my enemy will say, 'I have prevailed';

my foes will rejoice because I am shaken.

But I trusted in your steadfast love;

my heart shall rejoice in your salvation.

I will sing to the Lord,

because he has dealt bountifully with me.

(Silence for Contemplation)

PSALM 61:1-4; 62:1-2

Hear my cry, O God; listen to my prayer.

From the end of the earth I call to you, when my heart is faint.

Lead me to the rock that is higher than I;

for you are my refuge, a strong tower against the enemy.

Let me abide in your tent forever, find refuge under the shelter of your wings.

For God alone my soul waits in silence; from God comes my salvation.

God alone is my rock and my salvation, my fortress; I shall never be shaken.

HYMN

O Come, O Come Emmanuel (vss. 1-2)

Hymnal 56

PSALM 139:7-12

Where can I go from your spirit?

Or where can I flee from your presence?

If I ascend to heaven, you are there;

if I make my bed in Sheol, you are there.

If I take the wings of the morning

and settle at the farthest limits of the sea,

even there your hand shall lead me,

and your right hand shall hold me fast.

If I say, 'Surely the darkness shall cover me,

and the light around me become night',

even the darkness is not dark to you;

the night is as bright as the day,

for darkness is as light to you.

(Silence for Contemplation)

PSALM 121

I lift up my eyes to the hills— from where will my help come?

My help comes from the Lord, who made heaven and earth.

He will not let your foot be moved; he who keeps you will not slumber.

He who keeps Israel will neither slumber nor sleep.

The Lord is your keeper; the Lord is your shade at your right hand.

The sun shall not strike you by day, nor the moon by night.

The Lord will keep you from all evil; he will keep your life.

The Lord will keep your going out and your coming in

from this time on and forevermore.

(Silence for Contemplation)

PSALM 23 (*prayed in unison when prompted by the Leader*)

The Lord is my shepherd, I shall not want.

He makes me lie down in green pastures;

he leads me beside still waters;

he restores my soul.

He leads me in right paths for his name's sake.

Even though I walk through the darkest valley,

I fear no evil; for you are with me;

your rod and your staff—they comfort me.

You prepare a table before me

in the presence of my enemies;

you anoint my head with oil; my cup overflows.

Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life,

and I shall dwell in the house of the Lord forever.

(Silence for Contemplation)

WORDS OF HOPE

The Rev. Allison Sandlin Liles

PRAYERS OF INTERCESSION

Officiant In the spirit of this season, let us ask our God for what we need for ourselves. As people coping with loss, pain, suffering, loneliness, grief and sadness, we seek the comfort of God's presence.

Gracious God, we come to you as Christmas approaches. As the nights have been growing longer, the darkness around us has deepened. In this season of our longest nights, we offer to you all that we hold in our hearts. Loving God, hear our prayer.

People ***And answer with your love.***

Officiant Compassionate God, we grieve for what might have been. The joy of Christmas is blanketed by the loss that has changed everything. We find ourselves adrift, alone and lost. We need your help to find our way. Loving God, hear our prayer.

People ***And answer with your love.***

Officiant Caring God, the Christmas season reminds us of all that once was and is no longer. The

sounds of celebration around us add to the ache in our hearts. Please be near us this night. Loving God, hear our prayer.

People ***And answer with your love.***

Officiant God of all, we are not alone in our loss and sadness. Be with all those whose lives are touched with sadness during the Christmas season. Let your peace fill the world tonight. Loving God, hear our prayer.

People *And answer with your love.*

THE LORD'S PRAYER

Celebrant As Christ taught us we now pray:

**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, for ever and ever. Amen.**

BLESSING

May the God of infinite grace scatter the weight of despair and strengthen our hearts with holiness; and may God's blessing be with us, Christ's peace be with us, and the Spirit's outpouring be with us, now and always. **Amen.**

HYMN

'Twas in the moon of wintertime

Hymnal 114

*If you would like to talk with a priest, please email blue.christmas@edfw.org
and you will be contacted.*

Bidden
or not Bidden
God is
Present.

“You are a child of God,
and always will be,
even when you don’t believe it.”
—Richard Rohr

All shall be well,
and all shall be well
and all manner of thing
shall be well.
—Julian of Norwich

I wish I could show you,
when you are lonely or in darkness,
The Astonishing Light
of your own Being!
—Hafiz

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