

Blue Christmas

A Service for Hope and Healing

The Episcopal Church of the Good Shepherd
Granbury, Texas
Sunday, December 19, 7 p.m.

Tonight's liturgy unites us with Christ through ritual, language, silence, song, candlelight, oil, bread, and wine. All Christians are invited to the Table of our Lord.

If praying is difficult tonight, we invite you to keep this program and return to this prayer, as you are able:

Gracious God, only source of life and health: Help, comfort, and relieve me, and give your power of healing to those who minister to my needs; that my weakness may be turned to strength and confidence in your loving care; for the sake of Jesus Christ. Amen.

Please note: The people read the bold, italicized portions of the text.

Hymn # 66..... "Come, thou long expected Jesus"

Celebrant Grace and peace be with you, from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.

People *And also with you.*

Celebrant Let us pray.

O God of peace, you have taught us that in returning and rest we shall be saved, in quietness and confidence shall be our strength: By the might of your Spirit lift us, we pray, to your presence, where we may be still and know that you are God; through Jesus Christ our Lord, who with you and the Holy Spirit lives and reigns, one God, for ever and ever. *Amen.*

Lighting of the Advent Candles

Priest

On the first Sunday of Advent, we lit the first candle in our Advent Wreath, the candle of hope. We light it again 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.

On the second Sunday of Advent, we lit the second candle in our Advent Wreath, the candle of peace. We light it again to remember the peace Christ brings to our world. We remember his promise: Peace I leave with you; my peace I give to you. We receive the peace of Christ.

On the third Sunday of Advent, we lit the third candle in our Advent Wreath, the candle of joy. We light it again to remember the joy that we have known as we wait for the joy we will know. We remember our tears of joy.

Hymn # 111..... "Silent Night"

Priest Today we light the fourth candle in our Advent Wreath, the candle of love. The candle's light reminds us of God's love for us. We remember those we love: those who have gone before us and those we will leave behind. We remember our connection with one another and God. We are loved.

People Let us remember that God's eternal love surrounds us.

Collect of the Day

Celebrant The Lord be with you.

People And also with you.

Celebrant Let us pray.

Purify our conscience, Almighty God, by your daily visitation, that your Son Jesus Christ, at his coming, may find in us a mansion prepared for himself; who lives and reigns with you, in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. ***Amen.***

The Lessons

A Reading from the Book of Exodus

In the evening quails came up and covered the camp; and in the morning there was a layer of dew around the camp. When the layer of dew lifted, there on the surface of the wilderness was a fine flaky substance, as fine as frost on the ground. When the Israelites saw it, they said to one another, "What is it?" For they did not know what it was. Moses said to them, "It is the bread that the Lord has given you to eat." (Exodus 16:13-15)

Reader The Word of the Lord.

People Thanks be to God.

Psalm 23 King James Version

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 for ever.

A Reading from Paul's Letter to the Romans

What then are we to say about these things? If God is for us, who is against us? He who did not withhold his own Son, but gave him up for all of us, will he not with him also give us everything else? Who will bring any charge against God's elect? It is God who justifies. Who is to condemn? It is Christ Jesus, who died, yes, who was raised, who is at the right hand of God, who indeed intercedes for

us. Who will separate us from the love of Christ? Will hardship, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword? As it is written,
'For your sake we are being killed all day long;
we are accounted as sheep to be slaughtered.'

No, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him who loved us. For I am convinced that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor rulers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor powers, nor height, nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord. (Romans 8:31-39)

Reader The Word of the Lord.
People Thanks be to God.

The Holy Gospel

Priest The Holy Gospel of our Savior Jesus Christ according to John.
People Glory to you, O Christ.

"Very truly, I tell you, whoever believes has eternal life. I am the bread of life. Your ancestors ate the manna in the wilderness, and they died. This is the bread that comes down from heaven, so that one may eat of it and not die. I am the living bread that came down from heaven. Whoever eats of this bread will live forever; and the bread that I will give for the life of the world is my flesh." (John 6:47-51)

Priest The Gospel of Christ.
People Praise to you, O Christ.

Sermon..... The Very Rev. Douglas Travis

Litany of Healing

All stand. The Celebrant introduces the Litany with this bidding:

Let us name before God those for whom we offer our prayers.

The People audibly name those for whom they are interceding

Celebrant 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.

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

People And answer with your love.

Celebrant Compassionate God, grant your healing grace to all who are sick, injured, or disabled, that they may be made whole;

People Hear us, O God of life.

Celebrant Grant to all who seek your guidance, and to all who are lonely, anxious, or despondent, a knowledge of your will and an awareness of your presence;

People Hear us, O God of life.

Celebrant Mend broken relationships, and restore those in emotional distress to soundness of mind and serenity of spirit;

People ***Hear us, O God of life.***

Celebrant Bless physicians, nurses, and all others who minister to the suffering, granting them wisdom and skill, sympathy and patience;

People ***Hear us, O God of life.***

Celebrant Grant to the dying peace and a holy death, and uphold by the grace and consolation of your Holy Spirit those who are bereaved;

People ***Hear us, O God of life.***

Celebrant You are the Lord who does wonders;

People ***You have declared your power among the peoples.***

Celebrant With you, O Lord, is the well of life;

People ***And in your light, we see light.***

Celebrant Hear us, O Lord of life:

People ***Heal us, and make us whole.***

Let us pray.

Celebrant O Lord our God, accept the fervent prayers of your people; in the multitude of your mercies look with compassion upon us and all who turn to you for help; for you are gracious, O lover of souls, and to you we give glory, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, now and forever. ***Amen***

Confession of Need

Let us kneel and confess our need for God's healing grace.

Compassionate God, we confess our weaknesses and our need for your strengthening touch. We confess that some illnesses stem from our own fault, while others are beyond our control. We turn to you, source of life, and ask in the name of our Savior Jesus Christ for the gifts of true healing and life in you. Amen.

The Celebrant stands and says

May the God of love visit you in your times of trial and weakness, and raise you to newness of life, through Jesus Christ, in the power of the Holy Spirit. ***Amen***

Laying on of Hands and Anointing

The ministry of Jesus invites us to new life in God and with each other. In the laying on of hands and anointing we proclaim the Good News that God desires us to be healthy and one in the body of Christ. You are invited to come forward to offer intercession for others or yourself, whatever your sickness of spirit, mind, or body, and ask for healing and wholeness in the Name of the holy and undivided Trinity.

The Peace

Celebrant The peace of the Lord be always with you.

People ***And also with you.***

Hymn # 115..... *“What child is this?”*

As the gifts are brought forward, please rise and sing

Doxology..... Hymnal #380, verse 3

The Great Thanksgiving..... BCP p. 367

Sanctus..... Hymnal #S124

The Prayer of Consecration..... BCP p. 368

The Lord’s Prayer..... BCP p. 364

The Breaking of the Bread..... BCP p. 364

Hymn # 67..... *“Surely it is God who saves me”*

Post Communion Prayer..... BCP p. 365

The Blessing

Hymn # 89..... *“It came upon a midnight clear”*

The Dismissal

