



# Blue Christmas Service

Thursday, December 17, 2020 5:00 PM

## Service Participants:

The Reverend Matt Holcombe, Rector  
The Reverend Judi Sato, Associate Rector  
The Reverend Gary Darress, Deacon  
Amalia Dobbins, Soloist



## A Time of Silence

*Welcome to this Blue Christmas service, a time when we can, as a community, acknowledge the sadness we feel at Christmas time. This time of the year is marked with longer nights and shorter days when memories of past experiences and the pain of present reality can become overwhelming. Recognizing that this is not a season of joy for everyone, in this service we will be invited to reflect on the darkness, pain, loneliness, and the sorrow we may feel and offer it all to our great sign of hope, the Holy Child of Bethlehem. We pray that all of us will find hope and comfort in knowing that we are not alone.*

## Lighting of the Candles

## Ringling of the Bell

## Opening Song

## “I Wonder as I Wander”

1. I wonder as I wander out under the sky,  
How Jesus the Savior did come for to die.  
For poor on'ry people like you and like I...  
I wonder as I wander out under the sky.
2. When Mary birthed Jesus 'twas in a cow's stall,  
With wise men and farmers and shepherds and all.  
But high from God's heaven a star's light did fall,  
And the promise of ages it then did recall.
3. If Jesus had wanted for any wee thing,  
A star in the sky, or a bird on the wing,  
Or all of God's angels in heav'n for to sing,  
He surely could have it, 'cause he was the King.

## The Gathering of the People

*Celebrant:* Light and peace, in Jesus Christ, our Lord.

*People:* **Thanks be to God.**

*Celebrant:* If I say, “Surely the darkness will cover me, and the light around me turn to night,” darkness is not dark to you, O Lord; the night is as bright as the day; darkness and light to you are both alike. Psalm 139:10-11

## Collect for Advent

*Celebrant:* Let us pray.  
Almighty God, give us grace to cast away the works of darkness, and put on the armor of light, now in the time of this mortal life in which your Son Jesus Christ came to visit us in great humility; that in the last day, when he shall come again in his glorious majesty to judge both the living and the dead, we may rise to the life immortal; through him who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and for ever. **Amen.**

## The Readings

A Reading from the Prophet **Isaiah 9:2-7**

The people who walked in darkness have seen a great light;  
those who lived in a land of deep darkness—on them light has shined.  
You have multiplied the nation, you have increased its joy; they rejoice before you as with  
joy at the harvest, as people exult when dividing plunder.  
For the yoke of their burden, and the bar across their shoulders,  
the rod of their oppressor, you have broken as on the day of Midian.  
For all the boots of the tramping warriors and all the garments rolled in blood  
shall be burned as fuel for the fire.  
For a child has been born for us, a son given to us; authority rests upon his shoulders;  
and he is named Wonderful, Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace.  
His authority shall grow continually, and there shall be endless peace for the throne of David  
and his kingdom. He will establish and uphold it with justice and with righteousness from  
this time onwards and for evermore.  
The zeal of the Lord of hosts will do this.

## Psalm 121

I lift up my eyes to the hills; \*  
from where is my help to come?  
My help comes from the Lord, \*  
the maker of heaven and earth.  
He will not let your foot be moved \*  
and he who watches over you will not fall asleep.  
Behold, he who keeps watch over Israel \*  
shall neither slumber nor sleep;

The Lord himself watches over you; \*  
the Lord is your shade at your right hand,  
So that the sun shall not strike you by day, \*  
nor the moon by night.  
The Lord shall preserve you from all evil; \*  
it is he who shall keep you safe.  
The Lord shall watch over your going out and your coming in, \*  
from this time forth for evermore.

Glory to the Father and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit.  
As it was in the beginning will now be for ever and every. **Amen.**

### **Anthem**

### **“Coventry Carol”**

Lully, lullay, thou little tiny child,  
Bye bye, lully, lullay.  
Lully, lullay, thou little tiny child,  
Bye bye, lully, lullay.

O sisters too, how may we do  
For to preserve this day  
This poor youngling for whom we sing,  
"Bye bye, lully, lullay"?

Herod the king, in his raging,  
Charged he hath this day  
His men of might in his own sight  
All young children to slay.

That woe is me, poor child, for thee  
And ever mourn and may  
For thy parting neither say nor sing,  
"Bye bye, lully, lullay."

### **The Gospel**

A Reading from the Gospel of **Luke 2:8-20**

In that region there were shepherds living in the fields, keeping watch over their flock by night. Then an angel of the Lord stood before them, and the glory of the Lord shone around them, and they were terrified. But the angel said to them, ‘Do not be afraid; for see—I am bringing you good news of great joy for all the people: to you is born this day in the city of David a Savior, who is the Messiah, the Lord. This will be a sign for you: you will find a child wrapped in bands of cloth and lying in a manger.’ And suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host, praising God and saying, ‘Glory to God in the highest heaven, and on earth peace among those whom he favors!’ When the angels had left them and gone into heaven, the shepherds said to one another, ‘Let us go now to Bethlehem and see this thing that has taken place, which the Lord has made known to us.’ So they went with haste and found Mary and

Joseph, and the child lying in the manger. When they saw this, they made known what had been told them about this child; and all who heard it were amazed at what the shepherds told them. But Mary treasured all these words and pondered them in her heart. The shepherds returned, glorifying and praising God for all they had heard and seen, as it had been told them.

### Reflection & Litany of Loss

What one area of your life is full of darkness and needs the light of Christ?

God, our loving creator,

***Be with us.***

God, the Son who came to save us from the brokenness of death,

***Be with us.***

God, the Holy Spirit who is present in our midst,

***Be with us.***

When grief surrounds us,

***Be with us.***

When sorrow overwhelms,

***Be with us.***

When we are weary and in need of strength,

***Be with us.***

When we feel lost and sick at heart,

***Be with us.***

When we don't know what to say or how to pray,

***Be with us.***

When we do not have any answers,

***Be with us.***

When we are in need of comfort and consolation,

***Be with us.***

Silence

Ringing of the Bell

Reflection Music

“Winter Snow”

Could've come like a mighty storm  
With all the strength of a hurricane  
You could've come like a forest fire  
With the power of Heaven in Your flame

(But) You came like a winter snow  
Quiet and soft and slow  
Falling from the sky in the night  
To the earth below

Oh You could've swept in like a tidal wave

Or an ocean to ravish our hearts  
You could have come through like a roaring flood  
To wipe away the things that we've scarred

(But) You came like a winter snow  
Quiet and soft and slow  
Falling from the sky in the night  
To the earth below

Ooh no, Your voice wasn't in a bush burning  
No, Your voice wasn't in a rushing wind  
It was still, it was small, it was hidden

(But) You came like a winter snow  
Quiet and soft and slow  
Falling from the sky in the night  
To the earth below

Falling, oh yeah, to the earth below  
You came falling from the sky in the night  
To the earth below

**Advent Wreath Candle Lighting Litany of Remembrance      Hymn 111: Silent night, Holy night**

*Celebrant:* We light this Advent candle to remember those persons who have been loved and lost. We pause to remember their names, their faces, their voices. We give thanks for the memory that binds them to us this season which anticipates Christmas.

*People:* **May God's eternal love surround them.**

(v1) 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.

*Celebrant:* We light the second candle to redeem the pain of loss: the loss of relationships, the loss of jobs, the loss of health. As we gather up the pain of the past, we offer it to You, O God, asking that into our open hands You will place the gift of peace.

*People:* **Refresh, restore, renew us, O God, and lead us into your future.**

(v2) 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.

*Celebrant:* We light this third candle to remember ourselves this Christmas time. We pause and remember the past weeks, months and for some of us, years of difficult times. We remember the poignancy of memories, the grief, the sadness, the hurts, the pain of reflecting on our own mortality.

***People:* Let us remember that dawn defeats darkness.**

(v3) 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!

*Celebrant:* This fourth candle is lit to remember our faith and the gift of hope which God offers to us in the Christmas story. We remember that God, who shares our life, promises us a place and time of no more pain and suffering.

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

(v4) 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 thy birth.

## Intercessions

*Celebrant:* In the spirit of this season, let us now ask our God for what we need for ourselves as we participate in the Christmas season as people coping with loss, pain, suffering, loneliness, grief, sadness. In response to the words, "Loving God, hear our prayer", you are invited to respond with "And in your merciful love, answer."

God, we come to you as Christmas dawns with pain growing inside us. As the nights have been growing longer, so has the darkness wrapped itself around our hearts. In this season of our longest nights, we offer to you the pain in our hearts, the traumas that some of us cannot put into words.

Loving God, hear our prayer,

***People:* And in your merciful love, answer.**

*Celebrant:* Compassionate God, there are those among us who are grieving over what might have been. A death or loss has changed our experience of Christmas. Once it was a special day for us too, but someone has died or moved away. Or we have lost a job, or a cause. We find ourselves adrift, alone, lost. Lord help us find our way.

Loving God, hear our prayer,

***People:* And in your merciful love, answer.**

*Celebrant:* The Christmas season reminds us of all that used to be and cannot be anymore. The memories of what was, the fears of what may be, stifle us. All around us we hear the sounds of celebration. But all we experience is a sense of feeling blue. Please be near us this night. Loving God, hear our prayer,

***People:* And in your merciful love, answer.**

*Celebrant:* I invite you to now offer your own prayers and thanksgivings.

*Celebrant concludes with a prayer.*

### Hymn 115 “What Child is This”

What child is this, who, laid to rest, on Mary’s lap is sleeping?  
Whom angels greet with anthems sweet, while shepherds watch are keeping?  
This, this is Christ the King, whom shepherds guard and angels sing; haste, haste  
to bring him laud, the babe, the son of Mary.

Why lies he in such mean estate where ox and ass are feeding:  
Good Christian, fear: for sinners here, the silent Word is pleading.  
This, this is Christ the King, whom shepherds guard and angels sing; haste, haste  
to bring him laud, the babe, the son of Mary.

So bring him incense, gold, and myrrh, come, peasant, king, to own him:  
The King of kings salvation brings, let loving hearts enthrone him.  
This, this is Christ the King, whom shepherds guard and angels sing; haste, haste  
to bring him laud, the babe, the son of Mary.

### Prayer for the Night

*Celebrant:* Let us pray.  
Lord,  
it is night.  
The night is for stillness.  
Let us be still in the presence of God.  
It is night after a long day.  
What has been done has been done;  
what has not been done has not been done; let it be.  
The night is dark.  
Let our fears of the darkness of the world and of our own lives rest in you.  
The night is quiet.  
Let the quietness of your peace enfold us, all dear to us,  
and all who have no peace.  
The night heralds the dawn.  
Let us look expectantly to a new day, new joys,  
new possibilities.  
In your name we pray. **Amen.** (A New Zealand Prayer Book, 184)

## Hymn 96: “Angels we have heard on high”

1. Angels we have heard on high,  
singing sweetly through the night,  
and the mountains in reply  
echoing their brave delight.  
  
Refrain: Gloria in excelsis Deo,  
gloria in excelsis Deo.
2. Shepherds, why this jubilee?  
Why these songs of happy cheer?  
What great brightness did you see?  
What glad tidings did you hear? [Refrain]
3. Come to Bethlehem and see  
him whose birth the angels sing.  
Come, adore on bended knee  
Christ the Lord, the newborn King. [Refrain]
4. See him in a manger laid  
whom the angels praise above.  
Mary, Joseph, lend your aid,  
while we raise our hearts in love. [Refrain]

## Sending Prayer

## Final Blessing

May the babe of Bethlehem bring you peace.  
May the child of Nazareth bring you joy.  
May the man of Galilee bring you strength.  
May the Christ of Calvary bring you courage.  
May the risen Jesus bring you hope.  
May the ascended Christ a foretaste of his heavenly glory.  
And may the Blessing of + God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit  
be with you and live in you, forever and ever. **Amen +**

*Permission to reprint and podcast/stream the music in this service has been obtained from ONE LICENSE #A-731882 and CCLI #2856794.*