



St. Michael's
Episcopal Church
COLORADO SPRINGS



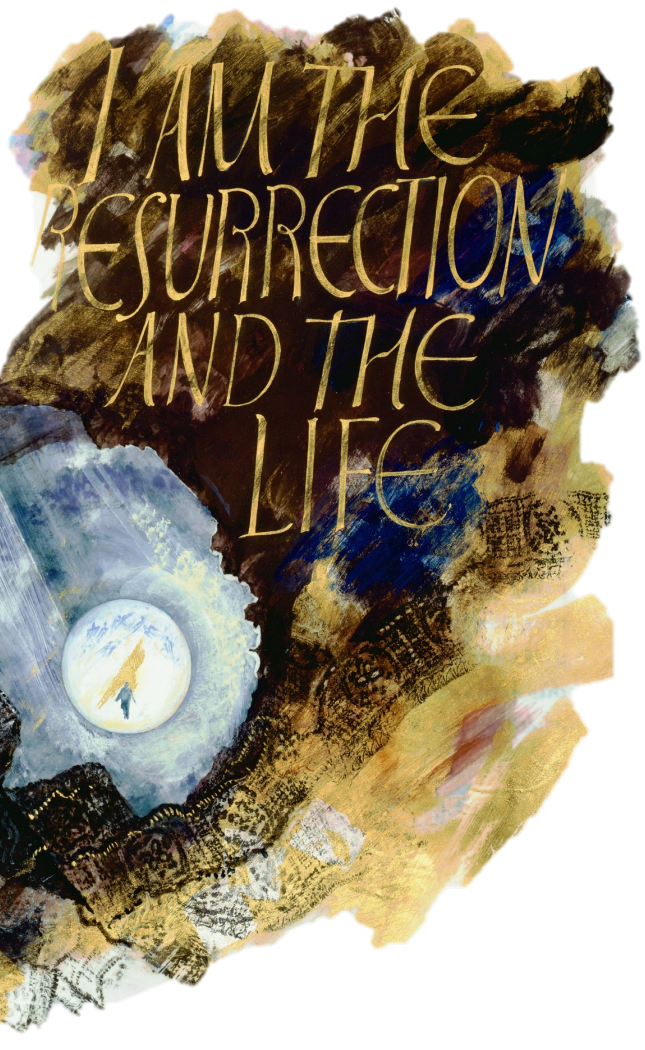
Blue Christmas Service
Thursday, December 14, 2023, 7:00 PM

Welcome to this Blue Christmas service, a time when we can, as a community, acknowledge the sadness we may feel at Christmas time. This time of 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.

If this is your first time visiting, you have a prayer request, or you would like to get more connected, please fill out a pew card and place it in the offertory plate or in the box on the Welcome Table in the Gathering Space. The Bible we are using to proclaim the Gospel is The Saint John's Bible, Heritage Edition. Thank you for joining us this evening.

Light a Candle & Take a Rock

As you enter this holy space, you are invited to light a candle and take a rock. We light a candle to honor this sacred time of mourning as we arrive, burdened with sorrow, loneliness, or sadness. We come seeking a place to set down our burdens, to drop our masks of good cheer, to let our tears flow freely, and to wear, authentically, our cares on our face. Tonight, we acknowledge that the intensity of our grief and suffering represents the depth of our love. We pray for faith and courage to face dark days when we feel frightened and alone. We offer friendship with others to help bear it all. We are thankful for gathering with others who are also broken-hearted and know our sorrow.



Raising of Lazarus, Donald Jackson, Copyright 2002, The Saint John's Bible, Saint John's University, Collegeville, Minnesota USA. Used by permission. All rights reserved.

Opening Song

(Please stand as you are able)

I Wonder As I Wander

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|---|--|
| <p>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.</p> <p>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.</p> | <p>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.</p> <p>4. 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.</p> |
|---|--|

The Gathering of the People

Celebrant: Blessed are you, holy and living One.

People: You come to your people and set them free.

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*

A Collect for Blue Christmas

Celebrant: The Lord be with you.

People: **And also with you.**

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; deal graciously with us in our grief, surround us with your love, that we may not be overwhelmed by our loss, but have confidence in your goodness, and strength to meet the days to come, through him who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and for ever. **Amen.**

A Reading from the Prophet Isaiah (61:1-3)

The spirit of the Lord GOD is upon me, because the Lord has anointed me; he has sent me to bring good news to the oppressed, to bind up the brokenhearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives, and release to the prisoners; to proclaim the year of the Lord's favor, and the day of vengeance of our God; to comfort all who mourn; to provide for those who mourn in Zion – to give them a garland instead of ashes, the oil of gladness instead of mourning, the mantle of praise instead of a faint spirit. They will be called oaks of righteousness, the planting of the Lord, to display his glory.

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 anointest 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.

Sequence Hymn

In the bleak midwinter

Hymn 112

1. In the bleak midwinter,
frosty wind made moan,
earth stood hard as iron,
water like a stone;
snow had fallen, snow on snow,
snow on snow,
in the bleak midwinter,
long ago.
2. Our God, heaven cannot hold him,
nor earth sustain;
heaven and earth shall flee away
when he comes to reign:
in the bleak midwinter
a stable-place sufficed
the Lord God incarnate,
Jesus Christ.

The Gospel

Deacon The Holy Gospel of Our Lord Jesus Christ According to John. (11:21-27)

People **Glory to you, Lord Christ.**

Martha said to Jesus, "Lord, if you had been here, my brother, Lazarus, would not have died. But even now I know that God will give you whatever you ask of him." Jesus said to her, "Your brother will rise again." Martha said to him, "I know that he will rise again in the resurrection on the last day." Jesus said to her, "I am the resurrection and the life. Those who believe in me, even though they die, will live, and everyone who lives and believes in me will never die. Do you believe this?" She said to him, "Yes, Lord, I believe that you are the Messiah, the Son of God, the one coming into the world."

Deacon The Gospel of the Lord.

People **Praise to you, Lord Christ.**

Sequence Hymn

In the bleak midwinter

Hymn 112

4. What can I give him,
poor as I am?
If I were a shepherd,
I would bring a lamb;
if I were a wise man,
I would do my part;
yet what I can I give him-
give my heart.

A Time of Prayer & Remembrance

During this time of prayer, we invite you to come forward and place your prayer rock in the water basin. Watch as the water overflows. May the heaviness of the rock remind you of the heaviness of the burdens that you release. As you allow your rock to slip into the water, may you be reminded that even in our grief, God's love surrounds us. May you be reminded of your baptism and Jesus' overflowing love for you because you matter. As you sing or hum these words, may you be reminded of your connection to others in our shared losses, because you are not alone.

Taizé

Bless the Lord my soul and bless God's holy name. Bless the Lord my soul, Who leads me into life.

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Ubi caritas et amor. Ubi caritas Deus ibi est.

~~~

Jesus remember me when you come into your kingdom.

Prayers of the People

(Please kneel in body or spirit)

Reader God, our loving creator,

People **Be with us.**

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

People **Be with us.**

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

People **Be with us.**

Reader When grief surrounds us,

People **Be with us.**

Reader When sorrow overwhelms,

People **Be with us.**

Reader When we are weary and in need of strength,

People **Be with us.**

Reader When we feel lost and sick at heart,

People **Be with us.**

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

People **Be with us.**

Reader When we do not have any answers,

People **Be with us.**

Reader When we are in need of comfort and consolation,

People **Be with us.**

Clergy 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.

People Loving God, hear our prayer,
And in your merciful love, answer.

Clergy 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.

People Loving God, hear our prayer,
And in your merciful love, answer.

Clergy 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.**

Clergy I invite you to now offer your own prayers and thanksgivings.

Silence

Gathering all our prayers, Lord Christ, we ask that you be near and close to us this night. Comfort us with your presence in this season.

(Please be seated)

Meditation **Gloria** by Phil Wickham & Jonathan Smith

Peace May the peace of the Lord be always with you.
And also with you.

Announcements

Offertory **Holy Darkness** Dan Schutte

1. I have tried you in fires of affliction
I have taught your soul to grieve
In the barren soil of your loneliness
There will I plant my seed

2. I have taught you the prize of compassion
You have stood before the grave
Though my love can seem like a raging storm
This is the love that saves
Refrain

Refrain:
Holy darkness, blessed night
Heaven's answer hidden from my sight
As we await you, O God of silence
We embrace your holy night

3. In your deepest hour of darkness
I will give you wealth untold
When the silence stills your spirit
Will my riches fill your soul
Refrain

The Great Thanksgiving Prayer 2 Enriching Our Worship

Celebrant All things come of thee O Lord.
People **And of thine own have we given thee.**

Celebrant The Lord be with you.
People **And also with you.**

Celebrant Lift up your hearts.
People **We lift them to the Lord.**

Celebrant Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.
People **It is right to give God thanks and praise.**

Celebrant We praise you and we bless you, holy and gracious God, source of life abundant.

From before time you made ready the creation. Your Spirit moved over the deep and brought all things into being: sun, moon, and stars; earth, winds, and waters; and every living thing.

You made us in your image, and taught us to walk in your ways. But we rebelled against you, and wandered far away; and yet, as a mother cares for her children, you would not forget us.

Time and again you called us to live in the fullness of your love. And so this day we join with Saints and Angels in the chorus of praise that rings through eternity, lifting our voices to magnify you as we say:

People **Holy, Holy, Holy Lord, God of power and might,
heaven and earth are full of your glory.
Hosanna in the highest.
Blessed is the one who comes in the name of the Lord.
Hosanna in the highest.**

Celebrant Glory and honor and praise to you, holy and living God. To deliver us from the power of sin and death and to reveal the riches of your grace, you looked with favor upon Mary, your willing servant, that she might conceive and bear a son, Jesus the holy child of God.

Living among us, Jesus loved us. He broke bread with outcasts and sinners, healed the sick, and proclaimed good news to the poor. He yearned to draw all the world to himself yet we were heedless of his call to walk in love.

Then the time came for him to complete upon the cross the sacrifice of his life, and to be glorified by you. On the night before he died for us, Jesus was at table with his friends. He took bread, gave thanks to you, broke it, and gave it to them, and said: "Take, eat: This is my Body, which is given for you. Do this for the remembrance of me."

As supper was ending, Jesus took the cup of wine. Again he gave thanks to you, gave it to them, and said: "Drink this, all of you: This is my Blood of the new Covenant, which is poured out for you and for all for the forgiveness of sins. Whenever you drink it, do this for the remembrance of me."

Now gathered at your table, O God of all creation, and remembering Christ crucified and risen, who was and is and is to come, we offer to you our gifts of bread and wine, and ourselves, a living sacrifice.

Pour out your Spirit upon these gifts that they may be the Body and Blood of Christ. Breathe your Spirit over the whole earth and make us your new creation, the Body of Christ given for the world you have made.

In the fullness of time bring us, with St. Michael and all your saints, from every tribe and language and people and nation, to feast at the banquet prepared for the foundation of the world.

Through Christ and with Christ and in Christ, in the unity of the Holy Spirit, to you be honor, glory, and praise, for ever and ever. **Amen.**

Celebrant And now, as our Savior Christ has taught us, we are bold to say,

The Lord's Prayer

The Book of Common Prayer Pg. 364

**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,
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.**

Breaking of the Bread

Enriching Our Worship

The Celebrant breaks the consecrated Bread. A period of silence is kept.

Celebrant This is the true bread which comes down from heaven and gives life to the world.

People **Whoever eats this bread will live for ever.**

Celebrant The Gifts of God for the People of God. Take them in remembrance that Christ died for you, and feed on him in your hearts by faith, with thanksgiving.

*All are welcome to receive communion at St. Michael's. At the altar rail, you may kneel or stand, and place one hand in the other, like a manger or bowl. Once you receive the bread, you may consume it, or wait for the cup. When the wine comes to you, you may dip (intinct) your wafer into the wine and then consume it and return to your pew. If you would like to sip from the common cup, please assist the chalice bearers by guiding the chalice to your lips with one hand. If you would like to receive a blessing only, simply cross your arms in an X form across your chest and a priest will offer you a blessing. **Celiac friendly:** Please come to the left side (as you face the altar) and let the clergy know if you would like to receive a gluten free host and wine.*

As you return to your seat, please take a candle for the closing hymn.

Communion Hymns

Taizé

Bless the Lord my soul and bless God's holy name. Bless the Lord my soul, Who leads me into life.

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Ubi caritas et amor. Ubi caritas Deus ibi est.

~~~

Jesus remember me when you come into your kingdom.

Post Communion Prayer

Enriching Our Worship

**Loving God,
we give you thanks
for restoring us in your image
and nourishing us with spiritual food
in the Sacrament of Christ's Body and Blood.
Now send us forth
a people, forgiven, healed, renewed;
that we may proclaim your love to the world
and continue in the risen life of Christ our Savior. Amen.**

Final Blessing

Celebrant

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 bring you a foretaste of his heavenly glory.

And may the Blessing of God the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit be with you and live in you, forever and ever. **Amen.**

(Please kneel in body or spirit)

Closing Hymn

Silent night, holy night

Hymn 111

1. 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.
2. Silent night, holy night,
shepherds quake at the sight,
glories stream from heaven afar,
heavenly hosts sing alleluia;
Christ, the Savior, is born!
3. 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.

Please depart in silence ... *(You are invited to stay and pray as long as you like.)*

Upcoming Events:

Christmas Pageant - Sunday, December 17, 10:30 AM*

"Shine Bright!" Christmas Show by J. – Saturday, December 23, 6:30 PM

Advent 4 – Sunday, December 24, 10:00 AM*

Christmas Eve Services – Sunday, December 24, 2023

Family Service, 4:00 PM | Traditional Service, 7:00 PM | Midnight Service, 11:00 PM**

Christmas Day Service – Monday, December 25, 10:00 AM*

A Service for a New Year – Sunday, December 31, 10:00 AM*

**Livestreamed Services*

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