

Blue Christmas Service prepared by the Twin Valleys Creative Worship Group - 2004

What you will need: Four Large Candles of different colours either placed in the Advent Wreath or placed side by side on the communion table. One Large White candle which will remain hidden until near the end of the service and as many other candles of different colours and sizes, used and unused, that you can find, placed all over the sanctuary.

Welcome to this time of worship when we acknowledge to ourselves and others that at Christmas time there is sadness, sorrow, pain and grief in our lives that needs to be honoured. Later during this service, you will be invited to light candles as petitions to God or in memory of loved ones who are not with us this Christmas.

Introit: (#55 verse 1 adapted)

In the bleak midwinter, frosty wind makes moan, earth stands hard as iron, water like a stone.
Snow has fallen, snow on snow, snow on snow, in the bleak midwinter, now as long ago.

Prayer of Approach:

Loving and gracious God, In the quiet of the evening, we come to you, trusting that you hear our prayer. We gather in this place with friends and strangers, seeking your peace and comfort. We come with feelings of deep hurt, sadness, anger, relief, and hope. We know that your love is deep enough and profound enough to accept our feelings, our fears, and our longings that go beyond words. Just as candles break through the darkness of a room, let your light, dear Christ, break through the darkness of our souls. Give us the courage to open our eyes and hearts to your healing love. We pray in the name of Jesus, Our Christ. Amen. [Gathering, Advent/Christmas/Epiphany 2001-2002, page 37.]

Hymn:#278 In the Quiet Curve of Evening

Scripture Reading: Luke 2:1-20

Hymn: #27 Tomorrow Christ is Coming (Tune # 120 in VU)

Prayer: Hope of the hopeless, Our tears are stillborn within us. Our hope disappears like the sun slipping below the horizon. How will we survive. We are surrounded on all sides. We struggle with diseases that may overcome our bodies. We struggle not to allow it to overcome our spirits too. We face the possibility that this is no longer even next year country for some of us. The farms that have sustained and nourished our families for generations are under siege. Our families are in crisis and when separated by great distances, we cannot even comfort each other. We wonder what our purpose is in the world. We find ourselves looking into the abyss of despair and this night we pray to you for relief, for hope that we fear will never again come to us.

One: This candle is traditionally know as the candle of Hope, but tonight as we light this candle we acknowledge those things that rob us of Hope. (First candle is lit)

All: Tonight we are seeking and waiting for Hope.

Scripture Reading Lamentations 3:19-23

Hymn: #6 A Candle is Burning Verse 1

Prayer: Prince of Peace, Our world is so full of conflict and fear. There is anger all around us. We look forward to family Christmas celebrations but at the same time wonder who will get into an argument or fight with whom in this season of peace and goodwill. This night we pray to you for relief, for peace that we fear will never again come to us.

One: This candle is traditionally known as the candle of Peace, but tonight as we light this candle, we acknowledge those things that rob us of Peace. (Second candle is lit)

All: Tonight we are seeking and waiting for Peace.

Scripture Reading: John 14:27

Hymn: #44 It Came upon the Midnight Clear Verses 3&4

Prayer: Almighty God, There is so much grief in this world that we feel like we are drowning in it. Loss is everywhere, lost opportunities that will never come around again; loss of independence when we have to relinquish our drivers licence or when we have to go on living without the help and care that our partners provided; loss of self when alzheimer's and other diseases of the mind rob us of memory and understanding; loss of expectations when our bodies begin to break down, when our health changes and we cannot do what we used to do; loss of the familiar when the usual patterns of life change through children leaving home, couples separating and divorcing, family members dying. This night we pray to you for relief, for joy that we fear will never again come to us.

One: This candle is traditionally known as the candle of Joy, but tonight as we light this candle, we acknowledge those things that rob us of Joy. (Third candle is lit)

All: Tonight we are seeking and waiting for Joy.

Scripture: Matthew 1:22-23

Hymn: #1 O Come, O Come Emmanuel Verses 1 & 6

Prayer: Source of Love, Our hearts feel like dry wells. The ones we love are gone. They are far from us this night. For some the barrier between us is the barrier between life and death, for other there are barriers of distance, of misunderstanding, of different paths chosen. We feel isolated and alone and yet it is a struggle to go out and be with other people. This night we pray to you for relief, for love that we fear will never again come to us.

One: This candle is traditionally known as the candle of Love, but tonight as we light this candle, we acknowledge those things that rob us of Love. (Fourth candle is lit)

All: Tonight we are seeking and waiting for Love.

Scripture: 1 John 4:7-10

Hymn: #46 Gentle Mary Laid Her Child (Tune that congregation knows)

Prayer: Emmanuel, God with us, help us to feel the hope that is inherent in the next breath we take. Help that tiny movement of breath to grow into Hope that moves us into a future yet undreamed.

Emmanuel, God with us, help us to feel the peace that comes over us as a sigh gently releases the pent up air from our lungs. Help that tiny space to grow into Peace that fills body and soul, relationships and community.

Emmanuel, God with us, help us to feel the joy of drawing fresh clean air into our lungs. Help that tiny lift of spirit grow into a Joy that can connect our spirit beyond happy or sad.

Emmanuel, God with us, help us to feel the love that created us, bringing light and air, water and earth, energy and spirit together into life. Help that tiny spark of life within us to grow into a raging fire of Love that consumes all that robs us of hope, peace, joy, love. In the name of the one who comes to us as Saviour, we pray these and all things. Amen.

Hymn: #7 Hope is a Star

You are invited to come forward at this time to light as many candles as you wish in memory of loved ones, as acknowledgment of those things that have robbed you of hope, peace, joy, love and as petition to God for the help that has been there for human beings in ages past. From the shadows that surround us, let us fill this sanctuary with light. Do not feel you have to hurry with this task. Take the time you need. While we are lighting the candles, we will be singing #19 of our hymn book. Let us sing it through twice before we begin so that we can just let the words and the music flow over us. [Ask organist to continue playing this chorus until all the candles in the sanctuary are lit and people have returned to their seats.]

[Once all the candles are lit, the worship leader or another person will bring the large white candle and places it in a prominent place in the center of the communion table/sanctuary/candles.]

One: We have filled this sanctuary with the light of our lives and our living. In this place there is loneliness and longing, there is sadness and grief, there is loss and broken dreams. Yet too, in this place there is a future waiting to be dreamed, peace that enfolds us, joy that touches our souls with new life, love that sustains and nurtures us. In this place, where two or three are gathered, there is Christ, the light of the world. [Light the Christ candle]

Hymn: Silent Night #67

Benediction:

The Light of Christ is within you! Choose to live in this Light. Choose to allow this light to fill the space within you and around you. Allow the shadows to move to the edges. Feel the hope, peace, joy and love that is yours this day and always. Amen.