



Blue Christmas

*A reflective service for all who grieve,
all who know sorrow, all who yearn for Peace on Earth*



Church of the Good Shepherd

639 Edgewater Drive • Dunedin, FL 34698

www.COGSDunedin.com

(727) 733-4125 • Pastor Becky's cell: (727)458-2625

E-Mail the church office: info@cogsdunedin.com

Sat. Service at 5 PM • Sunday Services at 8 & 10 AM • Wed. Service at 10 AM

Blue Christmas

PRELUDE

Lo, How a Rose E'er Blooming

Bob Burroughs

WORDS OF WELCOME AND EXPLANATION

[P] Priest/[C] Congregation/[L] Lector]

SONG

O Come, O Come, Emmanuel

AI *O come, O come, Emmanuel, and ransom captive Israel,
that mourns in lonely exile here until the Son of God appear.
Rejoice! Rejoice! Emmanuel shall come to thee, O Israel!*

*O come, branch of Jesse, free them from Satan's tyranny;
That trust they mighty power to save, and give them victory o'er the grave.
Rejoice! Rejoice! Emmanuel shall come to thee, O Israel!*

OPENING LITANY

[Please stand]

[P] Because you made the world, and intended it to be a good place,
and called its people your children;
because, when things seemed at their worst, you came in Christ
to bring out the best in us; so gracious God, we can say:

**[C] God's love is stronger than our hate.
God's welcome is wider than our rejection.
God's life is mightier than our death.**

[P] Because confusion can reign inside us, despite our faith;
because anger, tension, bitterness and envy distort our vision,
because sometimes our minds take small things out of all proportion;
because we err, we seek the good news that:

**[C] God's truth is more eternal than our lies.
God's light is more intense than our darkness
God's hope is greater than our despair.**

[P] Let us trust God with our pain.

**[C] God, we come to you on this Christmas season with pain growing inside us.
As the nights have been growing longer, darkness has wrapped itself around
our hearts. Inside 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.**

- ☐ God, we come to you as those who have been hurt physically and emotionally – some of us by strangers, some by loved ones, and some by life itself. Our ability to trust is shattered. Fear lurks behind every glance, sadness prowls behind every smile, and despair follows behind every hope.
- ☑ **God, we are the outsiders. We are the ones who seem to stand on the edges of the group. We find ourselves on the outside looking in, and when we try to move inside and get close to others, too often we feel we are elbowed out of the way, and once again we feel abandoned and alone.**
- ☐ God, some of us are grieving over what might have been. Once this season was a happy and magical time for us, too. But death and loss and heartache have changed it. We find ourselves adrift, alone, lost in a terrifying new world. This season reminds us of all that used to be, and cannot be anymore.
- ☑ **The memories of what was, and anxiety for what may be, suffocate us. All around us we hear the songs of glad tidings, the urging to buy gifts for others. But some of us have nothing we can give, and some of us have no one to give anything to. This is our longest night, Lord. Please be near us tonight.**
- ☐ We ask this in the name of Jesus, who came into this world homeless and left this world betrayed, bereft and forsaken. We ask this in the name of the One who knows the pain in our souls.
- ☑ **Amen.**

PROMISES OF CONSOLATION

READING: Lamentations 3:17–26

[Please be seated]

- ☐ I have been deprived of peace; I have forgotten what prosperity is. So I say, “My splendor is gone and all that I had hoped from the LORD.” I remember my affliction and my wandering, the bitterness and the gall I well remember them, and my soul is downcast within me.

Yet this I call to mind and therefore I have hope: Because of the LORD’S great love we are not consumed, for his compassions never fail. They are new every morning; great is your faithfulness. I say to myself, “The LORD is my portion; therefore I will wait for him.” The LORD is good to those whose hope is in him, to the one who seeks him; it is good to wait quietly for the salvation of the LORD.

- ☐ The Word of the Lord.
☑ **Thanks be to God.**

COMMENT

INVITATION TO LIGHT A CANDLE

SONG*Hark, the Glad Sound*

[Please remain seated]

***Hark, the glad sound! The Savior comes, the Savior promised long;
let every heart prepare a throne, and every voice a song.***

***He comes the broken heart to bind, the bleeding soul to cure,
and with the treasures of his grace to enrich the humble poor.***

READING: Luke 2:1–7

📖 In those days Caesar Augustus issued a decree that a census should be taken of the entire Roman world (This was the first census that took place while Quirinius was governor of Syria.) And everyone went to their own town to register.

So Joseph also went up from the town of Nazareth in Galilee to Judea, to Bethlehem the town of David, because he belonged to the house and line of David. He went there to register with Mary, who was pledged to be married to him and was expecting a child. While they were there, the time came for the baby to be born, and she gave birth to her firstborn, a son. She wrapped him in cloths and placed him in a manger, because there was no guest room available for them.

📖 The Word of the Lord.

🙏 **Thanks be to God.**

COMMENT**INVITATION TO LIGHT A CANDLE****SONG***Away In a Manger*

***Away in a manger no crib for a bed;
the little Lord Jesus lay down His sweet head.
The stars in the bright sky looked down where he lay;
The little Lord Jesus asleep on the hay.***

***The cattle are lowing, the baby awakes,
but little Lord Jesus no crying he makes.
I love thee Lord Jesus, look down from the sky
and stay by my cradle 'til morning is nigh.***

READING: Matthew 2:13-18

☐ An angel of the Lord appeared to Joseph in a dream. “Get up,” he said, “take the child and his mother and escape to Egypt. Stay there until I tell you, for Herod is going to search for the child to kill him.” So he got up, took the child and his mother during the night and left for Egypt, where he stayed until the death of Herod. And so was fulfilled what the Lord had said through the prophet: “Out of Egypt I called my son.”

When Herod realized that he had been outwitted by the Magi, he was furious, and he gave orders to kill all the boys in Bethlehem and its vicinity who were two years old and under, in accordance with the time he had learned from the Magi. Then what was said through the prophet Jeremiah was fulfilled:

*“A voice is heard in Ramah, weeping and great mourning,
Rachel weeping for her children and refusing to be comforted,
because they are no more.”*

☐ The Word of the Lord.

☑ **Thanks be to God.**

COMMENT

INVITATION TO LIGHT A CANDLE

SONG

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 here in such mean estate where ox and ass are feeding?
Good Christian, fear, for sinners here the silent Word is pleading.
Nails, spear shall pierce him through, the cross be borne for me, for you;
Hail, hail the Word made flesh, the babe, the son of Mary!***

READING: Matthew 11:28–29

☐ [Jesus said,] “Come to me, all you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you and learn from me, for I am gentle and humble in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. For my yoke is easy and my burden is light.”

☐ The Word of the Lord.

☑ **Thanks be to God.**

COMMENT

INVITATION TO LIGHT A CANDLE

SONG

O Come All Ye Faithful

***O come all ye faithful, joyful and triumphant,
O come ye, O come ye to Bethlehem.
Come and behold him, born the King of angels.
O come let us adore him, O come let us adore him,
O come let us adore him, Christ the Lord.***

***Child, for us sinners, poor and in the manger,
we would embrace thee with love and awe;
who would not love thee, loving us so dearly?
O come let us adore him, O come let us adore him,
O come let us adore him, Christ the Lord.***

READING: The Revelation 21:1–5

☞ Then I saw a new heaven and a new earth, for the first heaven and the first earth had passed away, and there was no longer any sea. I saw the Holy City, the new Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, prepared as a bride beautifully dressed for her husband. And I heard a loud voice from the throne saying, “Now the dwelling of God is with humans, and he will live with them. They will be his people, and God himself will be with them and be their God. He will wipe every tear from their eyes. There will be no more death or mourning or crying or pain, for the old order of things has passed away.”

He who was seated on the throne said, “I am making everything new!” Then he said, “Write this down, for these words are trustworthy and true.”

☞ The Word of the Lord.

☞ **Thanks be to God.**

COMMENT

INVITATION TO LIGHT A CANDLE

SONG

It Came Upon a Midnight Clear

***It came upon the midnight clear, that glorious song of old,
from angels bending near the earth to touch their harps of gold;
“Peace on the earth, good will to all, from heav’n’s all gracious King.”
The world in solemn stillness lay to hear the angels sing.***

***For lo! The days are hastening on, by prophets seen of old,
when with the ever circling years shall come the time foretold,
when peace shall over all the earth its ancient splendors fling,
and all the world give back the song which now the angels sing.***

OFFERING

The offering requested tonight is one from your memories, your grief, your yearnings, and your hopes. The pastor will explain this more fully at the appropriate time.

PRAYERS OF HOPE AND PROMISE

[Please stand]

P Among the poor, among the bereft, among the privileged,
C **Christ is coming to make all things new.**

P In the private house, in the public place, in the wedding feast,
in the judgment hall,
C **Christ is coming to make all things new.**

P With a gentle touch, with a penetrating word,
with a pure heart, with burning love,
C **Christ is coming to make all things new.**

P That the Reign of God might be at hand, so that the world might believe
that the powerful might kneel, and the hidden might be seen,
C **Christ is coming to make all things new.**

P Within us, without us, behind us, before us,
in this place, in every place, for this time, for all time,
C **Christ is coming to make all things new.**

THE HOLY COMMUNION

EUCCHARISTIC PRAYER

[An extemporaneous Eucharistic prayer will be offered.]

THE LORD'S PRAYER [from the *New Zealand Prayer Book*]

Al **Eternal Spirit, Earth-maker, Pain-bearer, Life-giver, Source of all that is and that shall be, Father and Mother of us all, loving God, in whom is heaven: The hallowing of your name echo through the universe! The way of your justice be followed by the peoples of the world! Your heavenly will be done by all created beings! Your commonwealth of peace and freedom sustain our hope and come on earth. With the bread we need for today, feed us. In the hurts we absorb from one another, forgive us. In times of temptation and test, strengthen us. From trials too great to endure, spare us. From the grip of all that is evil, free us. For you reign in the glory of the power that is love, now and for ever. Amen.**

INVITATION TO RECEIVE COMMUNION

PRAYER AFTER COMMUNION

[Please stand or kneel, as you choose]

BENEDICTION

[Please stand]

P In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.

C **The Word became flesh and lived among us, full of grace and truth,
and we have seen his glory.**

P In him was life, and that life was the light of all.

C **The light shines in the darkness,
and the darkness has never been able to extinguish it.**

P The light and life of God, the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit,
bless you and keep you close in the days and nights unfolding before us.

C **Amen.**

CLOSING SONG

Silent Night

***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.***

***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!***

***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.***

DISMISSAL

P Alleluia! Unto us a Savior is born.

Let all who come in weary and heavy-laden leave here restored and refreshed.

C **Thanks be to God. Alleluia!**

POSTLUDE

O Little Town of Bethlehem

John Carter