



# Blue Christmas

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

*6:00 PM Monday, December 13, 2021*



**Church of the Good Shepherd**

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

# Blue Christmas

VOLUNTARY

*Savior of the Nations, Come*

Michael Burkhardt

WORDS OF WELCOME AND EXPLANATION

[P Priest/C Congregation/L Lector]

HYMN

*Come, Thou Long-expected Jesus*

***Come, thou long expected Jesus, born to set thy people free;  
from our fears and sins release us, let us find our rest in thee.***

***Israel's strength and consolation, hope of all the earth thou art:  
dear desire of every nation, joy of every longing heart.***

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.**

P 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.

- C 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.**
- P 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.
- C 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.**
- P 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.
- C Amen.**

#### PROMISES OF CONSOLATION

#### READING: Lamentations 3:17–26

*[Please be seated]*

- L 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.

- L The Word of the Lord.  
**C Thanks be to God.**

#### COMMENT

#### INVITATION TO LIGHT A CANDLE

HYMN

*O Come, O Come, Emmanuel*

*[Please remain seated]*

***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, thou Dayspring from on high, and cheer us by thy drawing nigh;  
Disperse the gloomy clouds of night, and death's dark shadow put to flight.  
Rejoice! Rejoice! Emmanuel shall come to thee, O Israel!***

READING: **Luke 2:1–7**

L 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.

L The Word of the Lord.

C **Thanks be to God.**

COMMENT

INVITATION TO LIGHT A CANDLE

HYMN

*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.***

**READING: Matthew 2:13-18**

L 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.”*

L The Word of the Lord.

C **Thanks be to God.**

**COMMENT**

**INVITATION TO LIGHT A CANDLE**

**HYMN**

*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!***

**READING: Matthew 11:28–29**

L [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.”

L The Word of the Lord.

C **Thanks be to God.**

**COMMENT**

**INVITATION TO LIGHT A CANDLE**

**HYMN**

*Of the Father's Love Begotten*

***Of the Father's love begotten, ere the worlds began to be,  
he is Alpha and Omega, he the source, the ending he,  
of the things that are, that have been, and that future years shall see,  
evermore and evermore!***

***O that birth for ever blessed, when the Virgin, full of grace,  
by the Holy Ghost conceiving, bore the Savior of our race;  
and the Babe, the world's Redeemer, first revealed his sacred face,  
evermore and evermore!***

**READING: The Revelation 21:1–5**

L 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.”

L The Word of the Lord.

C **Thanks be to God.**

**COMMENT**

**INVITATION TO LIGHT A CANDLE**

**HYMN**

*It Came Upon the 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.***

**PRAYERS OF HOPE AND PROMISE**

*[Please stand]*

D Among the poor, among the bereft, among the privileged,

**C Christ is coming to make all things new.**

D 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.**

D With a gentle touch, with a penetrating word,  
with a pure heart, with burning love,

**C Christ is coming to make all things new.**

D 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.**

D 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.**

#### OFFERING

*The offering requested tonight is one from your memories, your grief, your yearnings,  
and your hopes.*

#### THE HOLY COMMUNION

#### EUCCHARISTIC PRAYER A

BCP 361

#### CLOSING PRAYER

*[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 HYMN

*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.*

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**DISMISSAL**

D 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!**

**VOLUNTARY**

*Once in Royal David's City*

John A. Behnke