

# BLUE CHRISTMAS

A service that acknowledges the mixed  
feelings of a  
Merry Christmas



## INTO THIS SILENT NIGHT

*Into this silent night  
as we make our weary way  
we know not where;  
just when the night becomes its darkest  
and we cannot see our path;  
just then is when the angels rush in,  
their hands full of stars.*

*Ann Weems*

# ~ LIGHT IN OUR DARKNESS ~



## WELCOME

## HYMN      “IN THE BLEAK MIDWINTER”      # 294 ELW

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.

Heaven cannot hold him, nor earth sustain;  
Heav'n and earth shall flee away when he come to reign;  
In the bleak midwinter a stable place sufficed  
The Lord God almighty, Jesus Christ.

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 READING      PSALM 139

+ + +

We begin in dim wintry light, but as we light each candle the darkness recedes a bit more and, gradually, we are surrounded by light. As the light grows may we also feel our own hopefulness and joy grow.

~ CANDLE 1 ~

*Darkness*

*The 1st candle is lit*

*Silent Reflection*

Prayer: O God, you are the light of the world, let your light shine on us and warm our souls. May the warmth of human connection help us to remember the warmth of the summer sun. Amen.

~ CANDLE 2 ~

*Change*

*The 2nd candle is lit*

*Silent Reflection*

Prayer: O God our times are in your hands — let the memories of times past enrich the time we have now. Open our hearts to new traditions that bring joy to us and those around us. Amen.

~ CANDLE 3 ~

*For those who are missing*

*The 3rd candle is lit*

*Silent Reflection*

Prayer: Loving God, we give you thanks for all the people who have been part of our lives over the years. Bless our memories of the loved ones who have died. Bless also the ones who are separated from us by time and space. We entrust them all to your loving care. Amen.

~ CANDLE 4 ~

*Old Wounds*

*The 4th candle is lit*

*Silent Reflection*

Prayer: Loving God, we come to you in need of healing. May your healing peace bring release from past hurts. Help us to let go of the bad feelings and memories that harm us. Even as we entrust ourselves to your care, let us also entrust those old wounds to your care. Amen.

~ CANDLE 5 ~

*Physical Challenges*

*The 5th candle is lit*

*Silent Reflection*

Prayer: Give us patience, O God. Let us be patient with ourselves when our bodies don't do what we want as quickly as we want. Let us be unafraid to seek help when we need it. We ask also for patience and acceptance in our world, so that no one would feel isolated because of physical challenges. Amen.

~ CANDLE 6 ~

*Finances*

*The 6th candle is lit*  
*Silent Reflection*

Prayer: Gracious God, remind us again and again of the precious things in life that have no dollar value. Let us remember that the most important gifts come through human kindness and caring. Thank you for the priceless gift of the baby in the manger. Amen.

~ CANDLE 7 ~

*The unspoken*

*The 7th candle is lit*  
*Silent Reflection*

Prayer: Emmanuel, God-with-us, you hear the silent cries of our heart — the ones that are so hard to put into words. Thank you for the assurance of your loving presence in our lives. May this assurance bring comfort and joy to us this day and all days. Amen.

**HYMN      “WAIT FOR THE LORD”      # 262 ELW**

*(we start singing quiet and as we repeat this simple refrain we will sing louder and louder—we will sing it 4 times)*

Wait for the Lord, whose day is near.  
Wait for the Lord: be strong, take heart!

**A READING    LUKE 1:46-55**

**HYMN      “AS THE DARK AWAITS THE DAWN”    #261 ELW**

As the dark awaits the dawn,  
So we await your light.  
O Star of promise, scatter night,  
Loving bright, loving bright,  
till shades of fear are gone.

As the blue expectant hour  
Before the silv'ring skies,  
We long to see your day arise,  
Whole and wise, whole and wise,  
O lucent Morning Star.

As the moon reflects the sun  
Until the night's decrease,  
May we your healing light release,  
Living peace, living peace,  
Unto your holy dawn.

Shine your future on this place,  
Enlighten ev'ry guest,  
That through us stream your holiness,  
Bright and blest, bright and blest;  
Come dawn, O Sun of grace.

### **RESPONSIVE PRAYER \***

O God of all seasons and senses, grant us the sense of your timing  
to submit gracefully and rejoice quietly in the turn of the seasons.

In this season of short days and long nights,  
of grey and white and cold,

**ALL: teach us the lessons of endings;  
children growing, friends leaving,  
loved ones dying, grieving over,  
grudges over, blaming over, excuses over.  
O God, grant us a sense of your timing.**

In this season of short days and long nights,  
of grey and white and cold,

**ALL: teach us the lessons of beginnings;  
that such waitings and endings may be the starting place,  
a planting of seeds which bring to birth  
what is ready to be born--  
something right and just and different,  
a new song, a deeper relationship, a fuller love--  
in the fullness of your time.**

**O God, grant us the sense of your timing.**

*\*prayer adapted from Ted Loder, Guerillas of Peace*

**P:** God of great compassion and love, listen to the prayers of your people. Grant to all the blessing we ask in the name of Christ who taught us to pray, saying: Our Father ...

*(individual candles will be lit for the singing of the hymn)*

**HYMN:                   “AWAY IN A MANGER”                   # 278 ELW**

Away in a manger, no crib for his bed,  
the little Lord Jesus laid 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 you, Lord Jesus; look down from the sky  
and stay by my cradle 'til morning is nigh.

Be near me, Lord Jesus; I ask you to stay  
close by me forever, and love me, I pray.  
Bless all the dear children in your tender care  
and fit us for heaven, to live with you there.

### **BLESSING AND SENDING FORTH:**

**P:** The prophet Isaiah once said, “The people who have walked in darkness have seen a great light; those who lived in a land of deep darkness—on them light has shined.”

May Christ, the Sun of righteousness, shine upon you and scatter the darkness from your path. Almighty God, Father, Son and Holy Spirit, bless you now and forever.

**ALL: AMEN**

*As the dark awaits the dawn,  
So we await your light.  
O Star of promise, scatter night,  
Loving bright, loving bright,  
till shades of fear are gone.*

*Susan Palo Cherwein*

