



Blue Christmas Worship December 2020

ORDER OF SERVICE The assembly speaks the bold verses

*Some of us walk into Advent
tethered to our unresolved yesterdays.
The pain is still stabbing,
the hurt still throbbing.
It's not that we don't know better;
it's just that we can't stand up anymore by ourselves.
On the way to Bethlehem,
will you give us a hand?*

Yesterday's Pain, "Keeping in Bethlehem" by Ann Weems

WELCOME

Welcome to this worship of hope and strength. In the long, dark winter nights, memories of past experiences and the pain of grief and loss can become overwhelming. For some, Christmas Day is the most difficult. For others, it is Christmas Eve or New Year's. During this time of worship, we invite you to listen. We invite you to pray. We invite you to sing. We invite you to meditate upon the pain and loneliness you may have—and we invite you to offer your pain to the Christ-child. We trust that you will find hope and comfort in knowing that you are not alone. There will be a time during this worship, where you will be invited to light a candle or candles in memory of your loved one or to honor your dreams, hopes, and for whatever you need to have Jesus Christ hear tonight.

PRAYER OF PREPARATION

God of compassion and love, we give you thanks and praise for the opportunity to share our sorrow and pain at a time when many are laughing and filled with great joy. The holidays are difficult for us as we remember the loss of those we have loved and the loss of dreams that have been left unfulfilled. May this time in your presence grant us comfort and peace as we acknowledge our feelings and rest in the eternal hope you offer through Jesus Christ, in whose name we pray. **Amen.**

DIALOGUE

Leader: Drawn together by God, we bring our hurts, our worries, and our fears.

People: Yet we are compelled and encouraged to embrace life.

Leader: We come recalling the past.

People: Yet looking to the future.

Leader: We come today with memories of loved ones and past dreams.

People: Memories that bear agony, invoke joy, challenge us, and inspire us.

Leader: Continuing to love, we gather in prayer.

People: Continuing to grieve, we gather in hope.

Leader: Come, Lord Jesus.

People: Come, Lord Jesus.

READING *Psalm 69:1-3, 13-18*

Save me, O God,
for the waters have come up to my neck.
I sink in deep mire,
where there is no foothold;
I have come into deep waters,
and the flood sweeps over me.
I am weary with my crying;
my throat is parched.
My eyes grow dim
with waiting for my God.
But as for me, my prayer is to you, O Lord.
At an acceptable time, O God,
in the abundance of your steadfast love, answer me.
With your faithful help rescue me
from sinking in the mire;

let me be delivered from my enemies
and from the deep waters.
Do not let the flood sweep over me,
or the deep swallow me up,
or the Pit close its mouth over me.
Answer me, O Lord, for your steadfast love is good;
according to your abundant mercy, turn to me.
Do not hide your face from your servant,
for I am in distress—make haste to answer me.
Draw near to me, redeem me,
set me free because of my enemies.

GOSPEL *Matthew 11:28-30*

“Come to me, all you that are weary and are carrying heavy burdens, 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.”

VIDEO REFLECTION

Let There Be

Poetry by Sarah Are | Art & film by Lisle Gwynn Garrity

PRAYER

Almighty God, we thank you for your constant love and for the blessings of this day. We know that even when we cannot see or feel you, still you are there. Help us to remember you and to listen for your voice in the words of family, friends, and strangers. Kindle our hearts and awaken hope, that we may know you as you reveal yourself in the world and in our lives. Let the light of your Holy Spirit shine like these candles in the darkness, lighting the way for all who feel despairing, lost, or forgotten, and grant that it may come to dwell so deeply in our hearts that when we leave this place it may shine on, for us and for those we meet along the way.
Amen.

LITANY OF REMEMBRANCE

We light this first candle to remember those whom we have loved and lost. We pause to remember clearly, their faces, their voices, their bodies. We embrace and give thanks for the memories that bind them to us in this season of expectation, when all Creation waits for the Light.

All: We remember them with love. May God's eternal love surround them.

We light this second candle to remember the pain of loss:
loss of relationships, loss of trust, loss of jobs, loss of health, loss of faith, the loss of joy.
We acknowledge and embrace the pain of the past, O God, and we offer it to You, asking that into our wounded hearts and open hands You will place the gift of peace.

All: We remember that through You all things are possible. Refresh, restore, renew us, O God, and lead us into your future.

We light this third candle to remember ourselves this Christmas time. We pause and remember the past weeks, months, and for some of us years, that have been heavy with our burdens. We accept and lay before you, God, the sharpness of memory, the sadness and grief, the hurt and fear, the anger and pain. We accept and lay before you the ways we feel we have fallen short, and the times we have spent blaming ourselves, and you, for all that we have suffered. We accept and lay before you the time we have walked alone, in darkness; and in knowledge of our own mortality.

All: We remember that though we have journeyed far, and that, while lost, we may have turned away from the light, the light itself has not failed. We remember that though winter be upon us and though the night be dark, the dawn will come, and dawn defeats the darkness.

We light this fourth candle to remember faith, the gift of light and hope that God offers to us in the stories of Christmas, which began in abandonment, insecurity, and humbleness, in a time of war and in a poor stable. We remember that the loving God who kept the light shining and who came to share this life with us promises us comfort and peace.

All: We remember the One who shares our burdens, who shows us the way to the Light, and who journeys with us into all our tomorrows.

The fifth candle is the light of **Christ**. We light the Christ candle, remembering that Jesus Christ is always in the center of our lives. He hears our cries, he knows our hearts and, in the midst of all our thoughts and emotions, he offers us hope and healing.

All: Come, Lord, Jesus, Come.

LIGHTING OF THE INDIVIDUAL CANDLES

The soft glow of a memorial candle has a special place during a celebration. The symbol of a light in the darkness is universal in representing hope. You are invited to light a candle representing the light of your loved one or of the dreams in your life. As you light the candle, remember that it is God who lights a candle in our darkness and holds us close until we are able to shine.

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.**

**Silent night, holy night!
Shepherds quake at the sight;
glories stream from heaven afar,
heav'nly 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 your holy face,
with the dawn of redeeming grace,
Jesus, Lord, at your birth,
Jesus, Lord, at your birth.**

SILENCE FOR REFLECTION

PRAYER

God of love, in this Christmas Season, we embrace and offer up to you all that used to be which is now lost to us and cannot be again. With celebration all around us, memories of what was, and fears of what may be, weigh heavy on our hearts. Please hold us close in your embrace, be near to us this night, until the light returns and morning comes.

Keep watch, dear Lord, with those who work, or watch, or weep this night, and give your angels charge over those who sleep.

Tend the sick, Lord; give rest to the weary, bless the dying, soothe the suffering, comfort the afflicted, shield the joyous; and all for your love's sake. **Amen.**

THE LORD'S PRAYER

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, as we forgive those who trespass against us; and lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil. For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory forever and ever. Amen.

BLESSING

May we hear the song of the Angels
proclaiming peace on earth.
May we feel the stirrings of hope
bringing light in every darkness.
May we know love this Christmas
born as a baby in a manger.
And may we know the comfort of being cradled by God
whose love carries us through all of life and death.
God with us now and forever. **Amen.**

SHARING THE PEACE

The peace of Christ be with you all.
And also with you.



MISSION STATEMENT

Prince of Peace Lutheran Church is a community who believes in God's love, knows Jesus as Savior, and is blessed by the presence of the Holy Spirit.

Thankful for these gifts, we gather to pray and praise, explore God's Word and its meaning for our lives, strengthen each other in our witness, and serve each other and our neighbors in the world.

VISION STATEMENT

Gathered by Grace ~ Sent to serve.
*Core Values: Spirituality, Community,
Grace, Helping Others, Creativity.*

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