

“Blue Christmas”
A Service of Remembrance and Healing
Christ Lutheran Church, Mililani, Hawaii
December 20, 2024, 7:00p.m.

WELCOME AND ANNOUNCEMENTS

–WE GATHER–

The gathering stands.

INVOCATION AND CONFESSION

P: In the name of the Father, ✝ and the Son, and the Holy Spirit.

C: Amen.

P: We praise you, O God, for you are the Father of mercies and the Mother of all consolation. You comfort and care for us.

C: **We confess the way we feel now. Our hearts feel heavy within us; we are weighed down with the loss of loved ones, the loss of opportunities, the shifting of hopes and dreams. As many people eagerly wait for Jesus’ birth, it’s hard for us to lift up our hearts. As many yearn to celebrate and sing with joy, we often find the days seem gray and our tongues cannot rejoice. Help us. Embrace us. Heal us. You, who know the grief of the world, meet each of us in our aching hearts. Please hold us close until the days dawn a bit brighter and we find we can walk in delight once more.**

P: God knows the emptiness we feel. God knows the feelings of abandonment, anger, loneliness, and relief we feel, too. God knows us from the depths of our hearts, and God sits with each one of us. Be assured of God’s love and compassion. In Jesus’ name.

C: Amen.

**VERSE OF GATHERING: *O Come, O Come, Emmanuel* (ELW 257
verse 1)**

**O Come, O come, Emmanuel
And ransom captive Israel
That mourns in lonely exile here
Until the Son of God appear.**

Refrain

**Rejoice! Rejoice! Emmanuel
Shall come to you, O Israel.**

GREETING

From the one who was, who is, and who is to come:
Grace and peace be with you all.
And also with you.

PRAYER OF THE DAY

P: E pule, Kakou. Let us pray.

**C: God of light and life, in the midst of a busy season when so many
around us are despairing for the birthday of Jesus, we come
listening for your voice and hoping for your comforting grace. Draw
near us as we draw near to you. We pray in Jesus' name: Amen.**

The gathering may be seated.

—WE HEAR WORDS OF HEARTBREAK—

**VERSE OF HEARTBREAK: *O Come, O Come, Emmanuel* (ELW
257 verse 6)**

**O come, O Dayspring, come and cheer;
O Sun of justice, now draw near.
Disperse the gloomy clouds of night,
and death's dark shadow put to flight.**

Refrain

**Rejoice! Rejoice! Emmanuel
Shall come to you, O Israel.**

SCRIPTURE

¹My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?
Why are you so far from helping me, from the words of my groaning?

²O my God, I cry by day, but you do not answer;
and by night, but find no rest.

¹⁴I am poured out like water,
and all my bones are out of joint;
my heart is like wax;
it is melted within my breast... (*Psalm 22:1-2,14*)

¹⁸My joy is gone, grief is upon me,
my heart is sick.

²¹For the hurt of my poor people I am hurt,
I mourn, and dismay has taken hold of me.

²²Is there no balm in Gilead?
Is there no physician there?
Why then has the health of my poor people
not been restored?

¹ O that my head were a spring of water,
and my eyes a fountain of tears,
so that I might weep day and night
for the slain of my poor people! (*Jeremiah 8:18,21-9:1*)

When Mary reached the place where Jesus was and saw him, she fell at his feet and said, “Lord, if you had been here, my brother would not have died.” When Jesus saw her weeping, and the Jews who had come along with her also weeping, he was deeply moved in spirit and troubled. “Where have you laid him?” he asked. “Come and see, Lord,” they replied. Jesus wept. (*John 11:32-35*)

VERSE OF REMEMBRANCE *O Come, O Come, Emmanuel* (ELW 257 verse 7)

**O come, O King of nations, come,
O Cornerstone that binds in one:
refresh the hearts that long for you;
restore the broken, make us new.**

Refrain

**Rejoice! Rejoice! Emmanuel
Shall come to you, O Israel.**

RESPONSE: Litany of Remembrance

L: We light this candle to remember those who are captive to darkness. (*The first candle is lit.*) For those lost in the night of addiction, depression, anxiety, or unexpected grief, we pray to God, who guided the Israelites through the darkness with a pillar of fire:

C: Disperse the gloomy clouds of night.

L: We light this candle to remember those who have died, and those who mourn the dead. (*The second candle is lit.*) The shadow of death can seem impenetrably dark during these long nights. We pray to God, whose first act in creation was to call light from darkness:

C: Death's dark shadow put to flight.

L: We light this candle to remember those who are alone. (*The third candle is lit.*) We remember those who isolated from loved ones; far from home; wandering down the wrong path; or convinced that God is unconcerned with their suffering. We pray to God, who is like the woman who lit a lantern to search all night for one lost coin:

C: Refresh the hearts that long for you.

L: We light this candle to remember those who are battling illness. (*The fourth candle is lit.*) We lift up those who suffer the pain, indignity, and bewilderment that accompany a broken body. For all who desire to be returned to wholeness, we pray to God, who gently lit the night sky with

a star to guide three magi to the healing Christ:

C: Restore the broken: make us new.

L: We light this candle to remember those who feel that hardship will overwhelm them. (*The fifth candle is lit.*) For the poor, the persecuted, the hungry, and the homeless, we pray to God, who walked with three men through the consuming flames of a fiery furnace:

C: In strength and beauty come and stay.

L: We light this candle to remember those affected by war. (*The sixth candle is lit.*) For soldiers; for civilians in war-torn nations; for families who mourn the loss of loved ones to violent conflict. We pray to God, with eyes of blazing fire, who promises a vision of peace:

C: Teach us your will and guide our way.

L: We light this candle to remember those overwhelmed by these turbulent times. (*The seventh candle is lit.*) In the midst of pandemics, polarizing politics, and religious fanaticism, envelope them in your peace and presence. For leaders of nations, give a sense of responsibility, probity and wisdom, especially for the most vulnerable. For all people, free us from fear and anxiety as we endure and mourn, persist and prepare, change and adapt. We pray to God, who was born to die, that we might live:

**C: Free your own from Satan's tyranny;
from the depths of hell your people save.**

–WE HEAR WORDS OF HOPE–

VERSES OF HOPE: *O Come, O Come, Emmanuel (ELW 257 verses 4 & 5)*

**4. O come, O Branch of Jesse, free
your own from Satan's tyranny;
from depths of hell your people save,
and give them vict'ry o'er the grave.**

Refrain

**Rejoice! Rejoice! Emmanuel
Shall come to you, O Israel.**

**5. O come, O Key of David, come,
and open wide our heav'nly home;
make safe the way that leads on high,
and close the path to misery.**

Refrain

**Rejoice! Rejoice! Emmanuel
Shall come to you, O Israel.**

SCRIPTURE:

²In days to come
the mountain of the LORD's house
shall be established as the highest of the mountains,
and shall be raised above the hills;
all the nations shall stream to it.

³Many peoples shall come and say,
"Come, let us go up to the mountain of the LORD,
to the house of the God of Jacob;
that he may teach us his ways
and that we may walk in his paths."

For out of Zion shall go forth instruction,
and the word of the LORD from Jerusalem.

⁴He shall judge between the nations,
and shall arbitrate for many peoples;
they shall beat their swords into plowshares,
and their spears into pruning hooks;
nation shall not lift up sword against nation,
neither shall they learn war any more. (*Isaiah 2:2-4*)

¹Then I saw a new heaven and a new earth; for the first heaven and the first earth had passed away, and the sea was no more. ²And I saw the holy city, the new Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband. ³And I heard a loud voice from the throne saying,

"See, the home of God is among mortals.

He will dwell with them;

they will be his peoples,

and God himself will be with them;

⁴he will wipe every tear from their eyes.

Death will be no more;

mourning and crying and pain will be no more,

for the first things have passed away."

⁵And the one who was seated on the throne said, "See, I am making all things new." Also he said, "Write this, for these words are trustworthy and true." (*Revelation 21:1-5*)

The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness did not overcome it. (*John 1:5*)

²⁸Come to me, all you that are weary and are carrying heavy burdens, and I will give you rest. ²⁹Take my yoke upon you, and learn from me; for I am gentle and humble in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. ³⁰For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light. (*Matthew 11:28-30*)

RESPONSE: LITURGY OF HEALING

The presiding minister addresses the assembly with these words.

Sisters and brothers, I invite you to come and receive a sign of healing and hope in the name of the triune God.

Those who wish to receive laying on of hands may stand in place. The minister blesses them one at a time. The minister may also make the sign of the cross.

Name _____, in the name of our Savior Jesus Christ, be encouraged and filled with God's grace, that you may know the healing power of the Spirit. **Amen.**

Receive this sign of the cross as a symbol of forgiveness and healing in Jesus Christ. **Amen.**

After all have returned to their places, the assembly stands, and the presiding minister continues.

Let us pray. Living God, through the laying on of hands and spiritual anointing, grant comfort in suffering to all who are in need of healing. When they are afraid, give them courage; when afflicted, give them patience; when dejected, give them hope; and when alone, assure them of the support of your holy people. We ask this through Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

VERSES OF HEALING: O Come, O Come, Emmanuel (ELW 257 verses 2 & 3)

**O come, O Wisdom from on high,
embracing all things far and nigh:
in strength and beauty come and stay;
teach us your will and guide our way.**

Refrain

**Rejoice! Rejoice! Emmanuel
Shall come to you, O Israel.
O come, O come, O Lord of might,
as to your tribes on Sinai's height
in ancient times you gave the law
in cloud, and majesty, and awe.**

Refrain

**Rejoice! Rejoice! Emmanuel
Shall come to you, O Israel.**

–WE ARE SENT–

LORICA OF ST. PATRICK

L: I arise today

**C: Through a mighty strength, the invocation of the Trinity
Through belief in the threeness
Through confession of the Oneness
Towards the creator.**

L: I arise today

**C: Through God's strength to pilot me:
God's might to uphold me,
God's wisdom to guide me
God's eye to look before me,
God's ear to hear me,
God's word to speak for me,
God's hand to guard me,
God's way to lie before me,
God's host to secure me.**

L: I arise today

**C: Through the strength of Christ with his baptism,
Through the strength of his crucifixion with his burial,
Through the strength of his resurrection with his ascension
Through the strength of his descent for the Judgment of doom.**

L: Christ with me, Christ before me, Christ behind me,

C: Christ in me, Christ beneath me, Christ above me,

P: Christ on my right, Christ on my left

C: Christ where I lie, Christ where I sit, Christ where I arise

P: Christ in the heart of everyone who thinks of me,
C: **Christ in the mouth of everyone who speaks of me,**

P: Christ in every eye that sees me,
C: **Christ in every ear that hears me.**

P: Salvation is of the Lord
C: **Salvation is of the Lord**

P: Salvation is of Christ
C: **May thy salvation, O Lord, be ever with us.**

Benediction

L: May the Lord bless you and keep you.

May the Lord's face shine on you and be gracious to you.

May the Lord look upon you with favor and ✝ give you peace.

SENDING HYMN: *Silent Night, Holy Night!* (ELW 281)

**1 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.**

**2 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!**

**3 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.**

DISMISSAL:

L: Go forth in the name of the promised Christ.

C: **Thanks be to God.**

All may depart in silence.

Acknowledgements: Mahalo nui loa for the following sources:

- Confession and Prayer of the Day: "Mourning into Dancing" service. Good Shepherd Lutheran Church, Wilmington DE. (Kathy Ierien.)
- Format and scripture suggestions for the Words of Heartbreak and the Words of Healing: "A Service for the Longest Night." First United Methodist Church, Myrtle Beach, SC. (Jonathan Tompkins)
- Litany of Remembrance: "Darkest Night" service. Christus Victor Lutheran Church, Naples, FL. (Victoria Larson)
- The Loric of St. Patrick is a slimmed-down version of [this](#).
- The Laying on of Hands and Anointing from [Sundays and Seasons](#)
- LutheranMoxie.wordpress.com