

Blue Christmas
Service of Hope



Blue Christmas Service
December 21st, 2016 ~ The Longest Night
7 p.m.

*Please stand as you are able.

PRELUDE

Silent Prayer & Reflection Encouraged

WORDS OF PEACE

CALL TO WORSHIP

Susan Paisley

One: In the midst of festivities, shouts, and bright lights, we feel the darkness of our souls.

Many: Come, God of power and light, help us.

One: In the midst of gatherings, we feel alone and alienated.

Many: Come, God of peace and hope, hear our cries.

One: In the midst of celebration, our hearts cry out.

Many: Lord, hear us and come to us. Bring us peace. AMEN.

***HYMN**

“Let All Mortal Flesh Keep Silence”

No. 626

UNISON PRAYER

God of love and understanding, we gather here this evening to confront our pain in the midst of the world's celebration. Help us to know that you are present with us in all of our moods, feelings, and seasons. Grant us a taste of the hope, peace, joy, and love that you promise to all of your people through the gift of your son, Jesus. AMEN.

HYMN

“It Came Upon a Midnight Clear”

No. 218, V. 1

OLD TESTAMENT READING

Isaiah 40:1-11

HYMN

“It Came Upon a Midnight Clear”

No. 218, V. 3

***GOSPEL READING**

Luke 2:10-14

***RESPONSE**

Pastor: This is the Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ.

People: **Thanks be to God.**

SPECIAL MUSIC

MESSAGE OF HOPE

“Silent Christmas Letters”

HYMN

“In the Bleak Midwinter”

No. 221

CANDLELIGHTING

One: We light four candles tonight in remembrance of our loved ones. We light these candles for our own needs. We light one for our grief, one for our courage, one for our memories and one for our love.

Reader 1: This candle represents our grief. We own the pain of losing loved ones, of dreams that go unfulfilled, of hopes that evaporate in despair. Thank you for the gift each of these people has been in our lives. We want to believe that we will celebrate the treasure of love with them again, when we are all in your presence forever.

Candle is lit.....a brief silence follows

Reader 2: The second candle we light is to redeem the pain of loss; the loss of relationships, the loss of jobs with the security they bring, the loss of health in ourselves or in family members, the loss of joy and peace in our lives from the stresses which surround us, the loss and loneliness we experience when our loved ones do not share our faith. As we gather up the pain of the past we offer it to you, O God, asking that into our open hands you will place the gift of peace.

Candle is lit.....a brief silence follows

Reader 3: The third candle we light for those who experience a loss of direction in their lives. God of the Exodus, you led Moses and your people through the wilderness to a new land. Hear our prayer. We want so much to have a sense of direction, to know where we are and where we ought to be headed. But the darkness and the questions stay. You ask us to be full of faith, to believe deep within that you are our signpost, that you are our wisdom and our guide, and to trust in your presence. Your words to us are clear: "Do not fear, I go before you."

Candle is lit.....a brief silence follows

Reader 4: The fourth candle we light as a sign of hope, the hope that the Christmas story offers to us. We remember that God, who shares our life, promises us a place and time of no more pain and suffering. O God whose spirit is known by those whose hearts are thankful, and who makes cheerfulness a companion of strength, lift up our hearts, we pray, to a joyous confidence in your care. Guide us when we cannot see the way. Teach us to know that a shadow is only a shadow, because the light of eternal goodness shines behind the object of our fears. Where there is love in life, teach us to find it; help us to trust it and enable us to grow in the power of love.

Candle is lit.....a brief silence follows

One: You are invited to come forward to light one of the votive candles which represents your burdens, griefs, sorrows, all those things which make

Christmas a "blue" time for you. You may speak the name or the event if you wish to do so as you light the candle. Then you may return to your seat.

One: In the center of this table 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.

Leader: Let us pray....

***GOSPEL READING**

John 1:5-9

***HYMN**

"O Come, O Come Emmanuel"

No. 211,
verses 1,5,6,7

***BENEDICTION**

POSTLUDE

*Parts of the service are adapted from the Blue Christmas Worship service
written by Rev. Nancy C. Townely.*

We thank tonight's service participants: Pastor Monica Guepet, Pastor Shirley Daddario, Susan Paisley and Betsy Smith, Music Director



Christmas Eve Services

12:00 pm Wiggly, Giggly Children's Christmas Eve Service

6:00 p.m. Family Christmas Eve Service with Pickup Pageant and Memory Bells

7:15 p.m. Christmas Eve at Jenner's Pond

8:30 p.m. Contemporary Christmas Eve Service with PraiseWorks Band

11:00 p.m. Traditional Candlelit Christmas Eve Service with Holy Communion and
The Chancel Choir

West Grove United Methodist Church

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