

Trinity Evangelical Lutheran Church

6:30 p.m. Facebook Online Worship Service

December 16, 2020

Blue Christmas: A Service of Healing and Wholeness



The intention of the Blue Christmas service is to allow all who are down, mourning a loss, uncertain about the world around them, or simply struggling for any reason to engage in those feelings through prayer and reflection. We hope this will be a deeply meaningful way of connecting with God and owning these feelings.

Thank you for joining us online as a new way of connecting to God's word as we transition during this time of social distancing to protect ourselves and others.

Please feel free to contact Pastor Tina if you need help in any way during this time. Her phone number is listed below. Just know that she is only a phone call away.



The Reverend Tina Melusky, Pastor
William C. Solomon, Interim Organist
Congregation of Trinity Lutheran, Ministers of the Word
6812 River Road, Newport News, VA 23607
Church office: (757) 245-7861; Pastor's cell: (734) 239-4013
www.trinitylutheran-nn.com

Trinity Lutheran is a partner church with Peninsula Pastoral Counseling Center.

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Prelude

Welcome

(We begin in quiet reflection, seeking to come before God to find peace, comfort and restoration.)

Call to Worship

The God who speaks comfort to us calls us here.

The God who addresses us with tenderness meets us here.

The God who guides us with gentleness cares for us here.

We come to prepare a way for the Lord.

We come to ready ourselves for the transformation of our lives.

For the glory of the Lord will be revealed, and all people will see it.

Gathering Hymn

Comfort, Comfort Now My People

ELW 256



- 1 "Com - fort, com-fort now my peo - ple; tell of peace!" So says our God.
- 2 For the her - ald's voice is cry - ing in the des - ert far and near,
- 3 Straight shall be what long was crook - ed, and the rough - er plac - es plain.



Com-fort those who sit in dark - ness mourn-ing un - der sor - row's load.
call - ing us to true re - pen - tance, since the reign of God is here.
Let your hearts be true and hum - ble, as be-fits God's ho - ly reign.



To God's peo - ple now pro-claim that God's par - don waits for them!
Oh, that warn - ing cry o - bey! Now pre - pare for God a way.
For the glo - ry of the Lord now on earth is shed a - broad,



Tell them that their war is o - ver; God will reign in peace for - ev - er.
Val - leys, rise to greet the Sav - ior; hills, bow down in hum-ble fa - vor.
and all flesh shall see the to - ken that God's word is nev - er bro - ken.

Greeting

The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God, and the communion of the Holy Spirit be with you all.

And also with you.

Prayer of the Day

God of abundant mercy,

you have given us grace to pray with one heart and one voice, even though our hearts are broken and our voices tremble with grief and sorrow. Comfort, comfort, Lord, your Holy people. Comfort those of us who sit in darkness, mourning beneath our sorrow's load. Speak to us of the peace that awaits us, of the balm of healing for our weary and wounded souls. We ask all this, trusting in the promise you have made to hear the prayers of two or three who have gathered in the Name of your Holy Child, Jesus. Amen.

First Reading: Isaiah 40:1, 25-31

Comfort, O comfort my people,
says your God.

To whom then will you compare me,
or who is my equal? says the Holy One.

Lift up your eyes on high and see:

Who created these?

He who brings out their host and numbers them,
calling them all by name;
because he is great in strength,
mighty in power,
not one is missing.

Why do you say, O Jacob,
and speak, O Israel,

"My way is hidden from the LORD,
and my right is disregarded by my God"?

Have you not known? Have you not heard?

The LORD is the everlasting God,
the Creator of the ends of the earth.

He does not faint or grow weary;
his understanding is unsearchable.

He gives power to the faint,
and strengthens the powerless.

Even youths will faint and be weary,
and the young will fall exhausted;
but those who wait for the LORD shall renew their strength,
they shall mount up with wings like eagles,
they shall run and not be weary,
they shall walk and not faint.

Word of God, word of life. **Thanks be to God.**

Psalm: 121 (read responsively)

I will lift up my eyes to the hills, from where is my help to come?

My help comes from the Lord, the maker of heaven and earth

He will not let your foot be moved and he who watches over you will not fall asleep.

Behold, he who keeps watch over Israel shall neither slumber nor sleep.

The Lord himself watches over you; the Lord is your shade at your right hand.

So that the sun shall not strike you by day, nor the moon by night

The Lord shall preserve you from all evil; it is he who shall keep you safe.

The Lord shall watch over your going out and your coming in, from this time forth for ever more.

Gospel Acclamation

Wait for the Lord (sung twice)

ELW 262

The musical score is written for two staves, Treble and Bass clef, in the key of D major (one sharp). The time signature is 8/8. The first system contains the lyrics: "Wait for the Lord, whose day is near." The second system contains the lyrics: "Wait for the Lord: be strong, take heart!" The score includes various musical notations such as chords, stems, and rests.

Gospel Lesson: John 1:1-14

P: The Holy Gospel of the Lord, according to St. John

C: **Glory to you, O Lord.**

In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was in the beginning with God. All things came into being through him, and without him not one thing came into being. What has come into being in him was life, and the life was the light of all people. The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness did not overcome it.

There was a man sent from God, whose name was John. He came as a witness to testify to the light, so that all might believe through him. He himself was not the light, but he came to testify to the light. The true light, which enlightens everyone, was coming into the world.

He was in the world, and the world came into being through him; yet the world did not know him. He came to what was his own, and his own people did not accept him. But to all who received him, who believed in his name, he gave power to become children of God, who were born, not of blood or of the will of the flesh or of the will of man, but of God.

And the Word became flesh and lived among us, and we have seen his glory, the glory as of a father's only son, full of grace and truth.

P: The Gospel of our Lord.

C: **Praise to you, O Christ.**

Homily

Pastor Tina

Silence is kept for reflection after the sermon.

Hymn of the Day

Light One Candle to Watch for Messiah

ELW 240



- 1 Light one can-dle to watch for Mes-si - ah: let the light ban-ish dark - ness.
- 2 Light two can-dles to watch for Mes-si - ah: let the light ban-ish dark - ness.
- 3 Light three can-dles to watch for Mes-si - ah: let the light ban-ish dark - ness.
- 4 Light four can-dles to watch for Mes-si - ah: let the light ban-ish dark - ness.



He shall bring sal - va - tion to Is - ra - el, God ful - fills the prom - ise.
He shall feed the flock like a shep-herd, gent - ly lead them home-ward.
Lift your heads and lift high the gate-way for the King of glo - ry.
He is com - ing, tell the glad tid - ings. Let your lights be shin - ing!

A Liturgy of Remembrance with Candle Lighting

First Candle

The first candle we light to remember those persons whom we have loved and lost. We pause to remember their name, their voice, their face, the memory that binds them to us in this season. We hold them before God, giving thanks for their lives in ours. Let us pray:

Lord, we lift up our loved ones to you. We give thanks for the gift of resurrection and the promise that our loved ones are resting in your eternal care. Thank you for the gift each of these people has been in our lives. We pray that on the days that are hard, you fill us with strength and hope for the journey, on the days that are easier, may you walk with us, guiding our steps. Help us to find joy in the people, events and the beauty of nature which surrounds us. May we at all times feel your comforting presence surrounding us. Amen.

Second Candle

The second candle we light is to redeem the pain of loss; the loss of relationships, the loss of jobs and 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 the world feels heavy. 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. Let us pray:

God of mystery, we turn our hearts to you. We come before you in need of peace, grateful for the mystery of life and ever keenly aware of your promises of guidance and protection. We want to place our trust in you, but our hearts grow fearful and anxious. We forget so easily that you will be with us in all that we experience. Teach us to be patient with the transformation of our lives and to be open when change comes into our lives. Amen.

Third Candle

The third candle we light for each of us. We offer up to God our pasts, the times of regret and sorrow, the times of mourning, the difficult memories, the times of grief and sadness, and of loneliness and pain. We ask that God take away the darkness. Let us pray:

God of our depths, we ask you to be our guide. Help us to have a strong sense of inner direction and grant that we may have the reassurance of knowing that we are on the right path. Take our lives and use them according to your will. Take all that is lost in us and bring it home with you. Amen.

Fourth Candle

The fourth candle we light as a sign of hope, the hope that the Christmas story offers to us. We invite and celebrate the coming of the One who promises us no more suffering, the One who promises us light. Let us pray:

O God, we give you thanks that in the midst of darkness, you promise to be a light that no darkness can overcome. We give you thanks that you breathe hope into this world and into our hearts. Help us to turn to you when we struggle and when we rejoice. May we feel the joy of your presence with us each and every day, trusting that in all things you walk by our sides. Amen.

Sharing of the Peace

The peace, which enables people to live in unity and in the spirit of mutual forgiveness, comes from Christ whose word has been proclaimed.

The peace of the Lord be with you always. **And also with you.**

Reflection Hymn

Come, Thou Long-Expected Jesus

ELW 254



1 Come, thou long-ex - pect-ed Je - sus, born to set thy peo - ple free;
2 Born thy peo - ple to de - liv - er, born a child, and yet a king;



from our fears and sins re - lease us; let us find our rest in thee.
born to reign in us for - ev - er, now thy gra - cious king - dom bring.



Is - rael's strength and con - so - la - tion, hope of all the earth thou art,
By thine own e - ter - nal Spir - it rule in all our hearts a - lone;



dear de - sire of ev - 'ry na - tion, joy of ev - 'ry long - ing heart.
by thine all - suf - fi - cient mer - it raise us to thy glo - rious throne.

Litany of Assurance

Hear the good news of the psalmist's proclamation:

**If I say, "Surely the darkness will overwhelm me,
And the light around me will be night,"**

Even the darkness is not dark to God,
and the night is as bright as the day.

**The God who promised never to leave us or forsake us
has come to us in Jesus Christ
who binds up the brokenhearted.**

**heals all our infirmities,
and relieves our burden of sin.**

**So arise, shine; for your light has come,
And the glory of the Lord has risen upon you.
Thanks be to God!**

Closing Prayer and Lord's Prayer

Holy and gracious God, we give you thanks for your presence with us tonight, for your dwelling amongst your people in darkness and in light. Fill our hearts with hope for the days that are to come. May your peace which passes all understanding descend upon this world and within our hearts. We entrust all of our hopes and fears to you in the name of your Son, Jesus Christ, our Lord, who taught us to pray...

**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.**

Benediction

This Christmas I wish for you light to crumple up the darkness.
This Christmas I wish for you love to pull us closer to one another.
This Christmas I wish for you peace the same the angels sang.
This Christmas I wish for you starlight to follow on your way home.
This Christmas I wish for you promise to keep hope alive for you.
This Christmas I wish for you God newly born and in the flesh.

This Christmas I wish for you Jesus Christ born this night light of the world.
 This Christmas I wish for you grace in the name of the Father, (+) the Son, and the Holy Spirit.
Amen.

Sending Hymn

As the Dark Awaits the Dawn

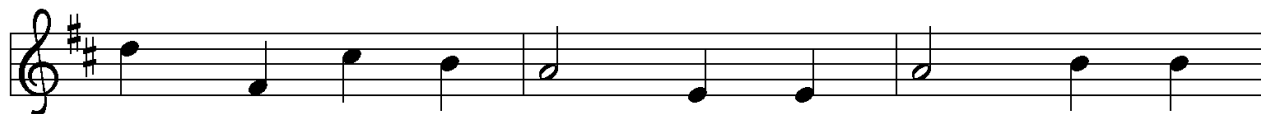
ELW 261



1 As the dark a - waits the dawn,
 2 As the blue ex - pec - tant hour
 3 As the moon re - flects the sun
 4 Shine your fu - ture on this place,



so we a - wait your light. O Star of
 be - fore the sil - v'ring skies, we long to
 un - til the night's de - crease, may we your
 en - light - en ev - 'ry guest, that through us



prom - ise, scat - ter night, lov - ing bright, lov - ing
 see your day a - rise, whole and wise, whole and
 heal - ing light re - lease, liv - ing peace, liv - ing
 stream your ho - li - ness, bright and blest, bright and



bright, till shades of fear are gone.
 wise, O lu - cent Morn - ing Star.
 peace, un - to your ho - ly dawn.
 blest; come dawn, O Sun of grace.

Dismissal

Go in peace. Go in hope. Go in love. Christ is with you always.

Amen. Thanks be to God.

Postlude