

A Service of Worship
December 21, 2022, 7:00 p.m.
Blue Christmas

PLEASE ENTER IN SILENCE

We Gather at God's Call

*Call to Worship (*responsively*)

Today, we come looking for the Christ Child.

We come, bringing our hurts, our worries, our fears.

We come seeking relief from pain. With the psalmist of old we say,

**“O Lord, you are my refuge, my portion in the land of the living.
Give heed to my cry, for I am brought very low.”**

*Hymn

Abide with Me

836

*Abide with me: fast falls the eventide.
The darkness deepens; Lord, with me abide!
When other helpers fail and comforts flee,
help of the helpless, O abide with me.*

*Swift to its close ebbs out life's little day;
earth's joys grow dim; its glories pass away;
change and decay in all around I see.
O thou who changest not, abide with me.*

*I need thy presence every passing hour;
what but thy grace can foil the tempter's power?
Who, like thyself, my guide and stay can be?
Through cloud and sunshine, Lord, abide with me.*

*I fear no foe, with thee at hand to bless;
ills have no weight, and tears no bitterness.
Where is death's sting? Where, grave, thy victory?
I triumph still, if thou abide with me.*

*Hold thou thy cross before my closing eyes;
shine through the gloom and point me to the skies.
Heaven's morning breaks, and earth's vain shadows flee;
in life, in death, O Lord, abide with me.*

*Call to Confession

*Prayer of Confession (*responsively*)

Dear Lord, we come to you this day
to express our failures and confusion regarding our relationship with you:

**You know that we come to you with heavy hearts
that we find hard to unburden.**

**It is particularly in this time of year when the darkness of long nights
collides with the brilliance of Christmas lights,
that we find it hard to express our losses.**

We may be confused, sad, lonely, and feeling our losses
without remembering that you are always there to support us.

We tend even toward anger at you, Lord,
because we feel in some way it is your will that we are unhappy.

Sometimes we feel cut off from you
because we allow our many hurts to engulf us.

We lack trust in you.

**Open us to the understanding that you are the source of all love
and we need not feel so alone in our grief.**

**Grant us wisdom to know that you - most of all - can be trusted,
and that you are with us,
especially when we are at our absolute worst. Amen.**

*Assurance of Forgiveness (*responsively*)

Let us open our lives to God's healing presence
and receive our Lord's acceptance of us!

**We know, God of love, that you are always with us
even in our very darkest times.**

**We know that you forgive our many transgressions
and that by leaning into your infinite patience and strength,
we receive your mercy, your care, and your grace today. Amen.**

We Gather around God's Word

Prayer for Illumination

Scriptures

Isaiah 40:1-2, 6-8, 27-31; John 1:1-14;
Matthew 5:14-16; Revelation 21:1-4; Revelation 22:1-5

Meditation

Pastor Keith Phillips

We Respond to God's Word

*Intercession for Healing

The God of strength moves within us;

the God of courage hears our distress.

The God of hope reveals wholeness to us;

the God of healing touches us when we are broken.

When pain overwhelms us, when the burden is too heavy,

we turn to our God, who is sustaining and redeeming.

When there is loneliness, when there is isolation,

we turn to our God, who is loving and present.

For God created us, redeemed us, and sustains us,

and we are not alone.

Lead us in your ways, O God, and bring us your healing touch.

*Healing Ritual with Oil and Lighting of Candles

You are invited to come forward to be anointed with oil and/or to light a candle for yourself and/or loved ones. The anointing on your forehead is a very old gesture used to give strength on the journey of being healed and healing others.

Prayers of Supplication

The Lord's Prayer (unison)

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 debts as we forgive our debtors; and lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil. For thine is the kingdom, and the power and the glory, forever. Amen.

We Are Sent to the World

*Hymn

Still, Still, Still

124

Still, still, still, he sleeps this night so chill!

The virgin's tender arms enfolding,

warm and safe the child are holding.

Still, still, still, he sleeps this night so chill.

Sleep, sleep, sleep, he lies in slumber deep

while angel hosts from heaven come winging,

sweetest songs of joy are singing.

Sleep, sleep, sleep, he lies in slumber deep.

*Benediction