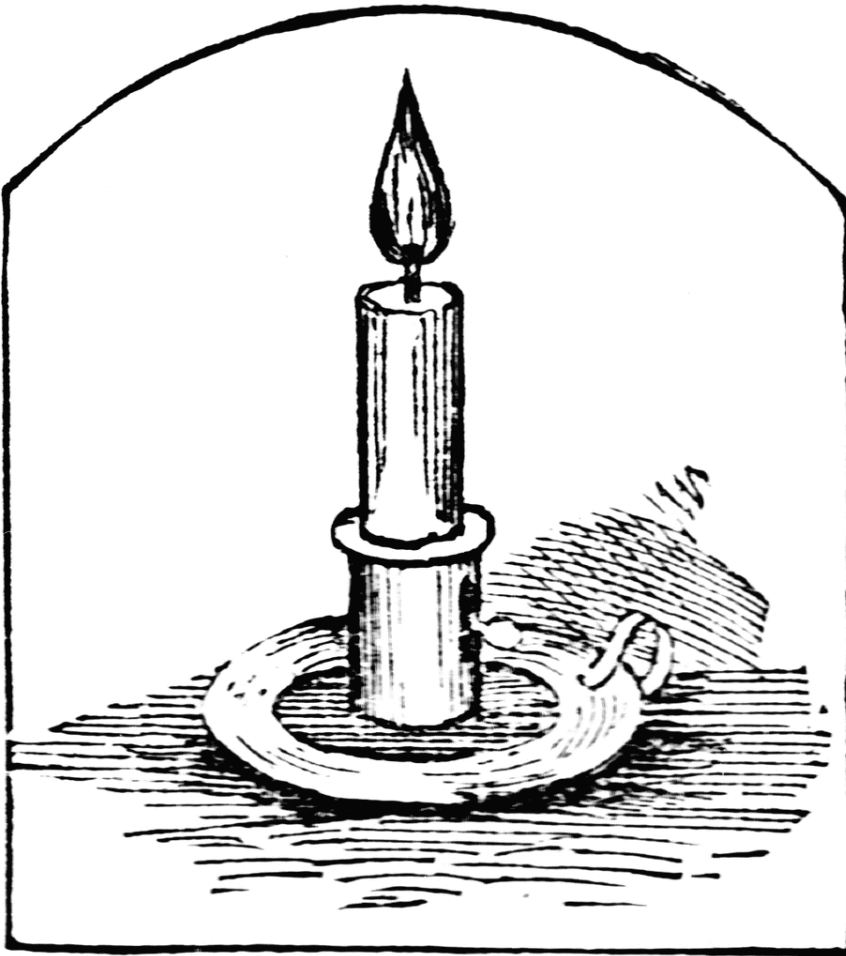


A Time of Remembrance and Hope
Blue Christmas Service



LUTHERAN CHURCH OF THE GOOD SHEPHERD
OLNEY, MARYLAND

DECEMBER 17, 2025 | 7:00 PM

Welcome! We hope that you'll find this a safe place to be transparent with yourself and with God, a safe place to admit that maybe you're not ok at the moment, that maybe what you're really feeling is sad, discouraged, or even angry. This is a place for you to be real with your struggles and your questions.

Welcome

Gathering

- L** The Grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God, and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with you all.
- C And also with you.**
- L** Be merciful to me, O Lord.
- C For in you my soul takes refuge.**
- L** You keep count of all my worries.
- C You put my tears in your bottle; are they not written in your book?**
- L** The people who walked in darkness have seen a great light; on those who live in a land of deep shadow, a light has shone.
- C For the yoke that was weighing upon them, and the burden upon their shoulders, you have broken in pieces, O God, our Redeemer.**
- L** We welcome you O Christ, Light of the World.
In the midst of our suffering, help us to worship you in spirit and in truth.

Opening Prayer

- L** Let us pray.
Merciful God,
In this season of rejoicing, we come to you weary and grieving.
In this season of feasting, we hunger for healing and relief.
In this season of light, our hearts are veiled in sorrow and shadow.
How long, O Lord? Will this season ever end?

Draw near to us, O Father,
and remind us through your Son that
Those who are weary will find rest,
Those who mourn will be comforted,
Those who hunger will be filled.
The Light shines in the darkness,
and the darkness will not overcome it..

- C God of mercy, hear our prayer in this Advent season for those who live with painful thoughts and memories. We ask for strength for today, courage for tomorrow and peace for the past. We ask these things in the name of Christ, who shares our life in joy and sorrow, death and new birth, despair and promise. Amen.**



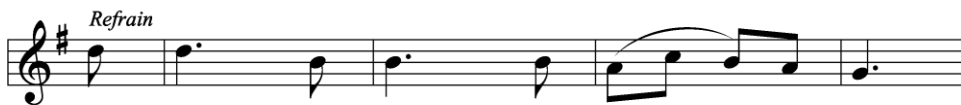
1 O come, O come, Em - man - u - el, And ran - som
 2 O come, Thou Wis - dom from on high, Who or - d'rest
 3 O come, O come, Thou Lord of might, Who to Thy
 4 O come, Thou Branch of Jes - se's tree, Free them from
 5 O come, Thou Key of Da - vid, come, And o - pen



cap - tive Is - ra - el, That mourns in lone - ly
 all things might - i - ly; To us the path of
 tribes on Si - nai's height In an - cient times didst
 Sa - tan's tyr - an - ny That trust Thy might - y
 wide our heav'n - ly home; Make safe the way that



ex - ile here Un - til the Son of God ap - pear.
 knowl - edge show, And teach us in her ways to go.
 give the Law In cloud and maj - es - ty and awe.
 pow'r to save, And give them vic - t'ry o'er the grave.
 leads on high, And close the path to mis - er - y.



Refrain
 Re - joice! Re - joice! Em - man - u - el



Shall come to thee, O Is - ra - el!

6 O come, Thou Dayspring from on high,
 And cheer us by Thy drawing nigh;
 Disperse the gloomy clouds of night,
 And death's dark shadows put to flight. Refrain

7 O come, Desire of nations, bind
 In one the hearts of all mankind;
 Bid Thou our sad divisions cease,
 And be Thyself our King of Peace. Refrain

Text: Latin, c. 12th cent.; Psalterium Canticum Catholicarum, 1710, Köln; tr. John Mason Neale, 1818-66, alt.
 Tune: French, 15th cent.

Text and tune: Public domain

- ¹ How long, O Lord? Will you forget me forever?
How long will you hide your face from me?
- ² **How long must I bear pain in my soul
and have sorrow in my heart all day long?
How long shall my enemy be exalted over me?**
- ³ Consider and answer me, O Lord my God!
Give light to my eyes, or I will sleep the sleep of death,
- ⁴ **and my enemy will say, “I have prevailed”;
my foes will rejoice because I am shaken.**
- ⁵ But I trusted in your steadfast love;
my heart shall rejoice in your salvation.
- ⁶ **I will sing to the Lord
because he has dealt bountifully with me.
Glory be to the Father and to the Son and to the Holy Spirit.
As it was in the beginning, is now, and will be forever. Amen.**

- ¹ “Comfort, comfort My people,” says your God.
- ² “Speak tenderly to Jerusalem, and proclaim to her
that her forced labor has been completed;
her iniquity has been pardoned.
For she has received from the hand of the LORD double for all her sins.”
- ³ A voice of one calling: “Prepare the way for the LORD in the wilderness;
make a straight highway for our God in the desert.
- ⁴ Every valley shall be lifted up, and every mountain and hill made low;
the uneven ground will become smooth, and the rugged land a plain.
- ⁵ And the glory of the LORD will be revealed, and all humanity together will
see it.”

A This is the Word of the Lord.

C Thanks be to God.

- ²⁸ Come to me, all who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest.
- ²⁹ Take my yoke upon you, and learn from me, for I am gentle and lowly in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. ³⁰ For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light.”

A This is the Word of the Lord.

C Thanks be to God.

Hymn

The Lord's My Shepherd, I'll Not Want

LSB 710

1 The Lord's my shep - herd, I'll not want; He makes me
 2 My soul He doth re - store a - gain And me to
 3 Yea, though I walk in death's dark vale, Yet will I
 4 My ta - ble Thou hast fur - nish - ed In pres - ence
 5 Good-ness and mer - cy all my life Shall sure - ly

down to lie In pas - tures green; He
 walk doth make With - in the paths of
 fear no ill; For Thou art with me,
 of my foes; My head Thou dost with
 fol - low me; And in God's house for -

lead - eth me The qui - et wa - ters by.
 righ - teous - ness, E'en for His own name's sake.
 and Thy rod And staff me com - fort still.
 oil a - noint, And my cup o - ver - flows.
 ev - er - more My dwell - ing place shall be.

Text: The Psalms of David in Meeter, 1650, Edinburgh
 Tune: William Gardiner, 1770-1853
 Text and tune: Public domain

Remembering

- L** This first candle we light is in remembrance of those whom we have loved and lost. *(Pause while the first candle is lit.)* We pause to remember their name, their face, their voice, the memory that binds them to us in this season.
- C** **May God's eternal love surround all who mourn.**
- L** This second candle we light is to redeem the pain of loss; the loss of relationships, the loss of jobs, the loss of health. *(Pause while the second candle is lit.)* We pause to gather up the pain of the past and offer it to God, asking that from God's hands we receive the gift of peace.
- C** **Refresh, restore, renew us O God, and lead us into your future.**
- L** This third candle we light is to remember ourselves this Christmas time. We pause and remember these past weeks and months: the disbelief, the feeling of emptiness, the down times, the anger, the poignancy of reminiscing, the hugs and handshakes of family and friends, all those who stood with us. *(Pause while the third candle is lit.)* We give thanks for all the support we have known.

C Let us remember that dawn defeats darkness.

L This fourth candle we light is to remember our faith and the gift of hope which the Christmas story offers to us. *(Pause while the fourth candle is lit.)* We remember that God, who shares our life, promises us a place and time of no more pain and suffering.

C Let us remember the one who shows the way, who brings the truth and who bears the light.

Lighting of Individual Candles

L Each of us comes bearing our own hurts, sorrows, and broken places. I want to invite each of you to offer your personal wound to the God who loves each of us deeply and wants to carry our pain. God waits patiently, gently calling out: "Give me your pain, come to me... all who labor and are heavy laden, I will refresh you!"

I invite each of you to come forward and light a candle and place it in the sand. 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.

If you wish, you may also kneel at the altar rail for the laying on of hands and a blessing, or you may return to your seat.

L These candles in their brightness are only symbols, but as they burn and finally go out, we remember that suffering passes, though memory remains forever.

Hymn

Silent Night, Holy Night

LSB 363



1 Si - lent night, ho - ly night! All is calm,
2 Si - lent night, ho - ly night! Shep - herds quake
3 Si - lent night, ho - ly night! Son of God,
all is bright Round yon vir - gin moth - er and child.
at the sight; Glo - ries stream from heav - en a - far,
love's pure light Ra - diant beams from Thy ho - ly face
Ho - ly In - fant, so ten - der and mild, Sleep in heav - en - ly
Heav'n - ly hosts sing, Al - le - lu - ia! Christ, the Sav - ior, is
With the dawn of re - deem - ing grace, Je - sus, Lord, at Thy



Text: Franz Joseph Mohr, 1792–1848; tr. John F. Young, 1820–85
 Tune: Franz Xaver Gruber, 1787–1863
 Text and tune: Public domain

Note: Music will be played after the Closing Prayer and Benediction. You are invited to stay and pray. You are welcome to leave when you are ready, and we ask that you do so silently out of respect for those still praying. If you would like someone to individually pray with you, please come forward at the end of the service or raise your hand where you are seated and we will join you.

Closing Prayer

- I** Jesus, you are full of compassion, you understand our pain.
 Our suffering changes our experience of you and the celebration of your birth.
 We are caught between remembering happier times and grieving what might have been.
 In our loss we feel cut off- disconnected, adrift, alone.
 Root us in your steadfast love.
 Anchor us in your faithful promises.
 Hold us, and all who weep this holy season throughout the world-
 those who mourn, those far from home, those looking for work,
 the lonely, the addicted, the abused,
 the estranged, the oppressed, the enslaved,
 the poor, victims of war, the sick and dying.
 Shelter and sustain us all with your healing and hope, your peace and light.
 We love you, we need you, we trust you,
 We ask this in your name Jesus, praying as you taught us...

- C** **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

- L** May the hope of the Christ Child sustain us through this darkness that together we may shine again.
- C** **Amen.**

Thank You to the Stephen Ministers of Good Shepherd who helped in the preparing and participating in the evening's Blue Christmas Service.

Acknowledgments

Select portions of the following are used with permission in this Service:
<https://thepastorsworkshop.com/blog/an-order-of-worship-for-a-blue-christmas-service-aka-a-longest-night-service> - This Blue Christmas liturgy is completely free to use and share.
from <https://buildfaith.org/blue-christmas/> This particular service was adapted from "The Whole People of God", a lectionary-based curriculum from 1996. Additional prayers were adapted from "All Desires Known" by Janet Morley and "The Iona Abbey Worship Book" from the Iona Community.
www.dioceseofcleveland.org/files/resources/bluechristmasworshipprogram.pdf
Portions of his service were developed by Heather Hill. She has given permission for others to use it.