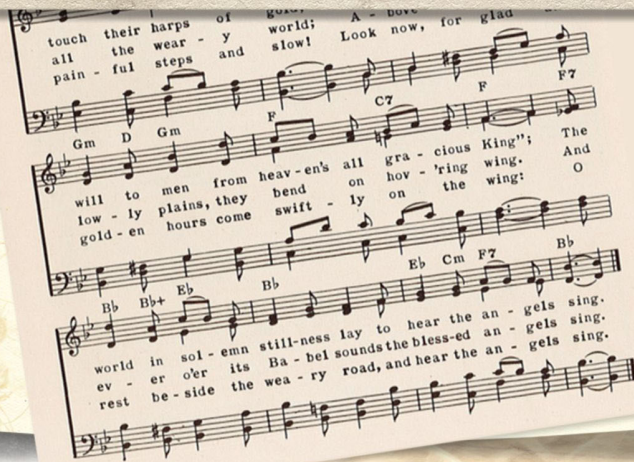


It Came Upon A Midnight Clear
RICHARD S. WILLIS

THE
Blue Christmas

SERVICE

Sunday | December 14, 2025 | 2:00 p.m. | First Presbyterian Church, Lancaster, PA



Blue Christmas
A Service of Remembrance

First Presbyterian Church, Lancaster, PA
in partnership with
DeBord Snyder Funeral Home & Crematory, Inc.

LEADERS

Rev. Dan Snyder, First Presbyterian Church
Rev. Claire George-Drumheller, First Presbyterian Church
Brian Maxwell, DeBord Snyder Funeral Home
Jeremy DeBord, DeBord Snyder Funeral Home

ACOLYTES

Sloane K. Bretz, Austin J. DeBord, Ethan R. DeBord, and Sawyer K. Duncan

MUSIC

Rila Hackett, piano
Alison Mekeel, soprano

*The reading "This Christmas I'll Be Grieving. Here's How I'll Be Finding Joy," by Windsor Johnston
aired on Morning Edition on December 22, 2024, and a transcript was published at www.npr.org.*

Liturgy adapted from prayers by Rev. Sarah A. Speed / A Sanctified Art LLC / sanctifiedart.org.



Order of Worship

PRELUDE ***Let All Mortal Flesh Keep Silence***

arr. by Mark Hayes

WELCOME

*CALL TO WORSHIP & INVOCATION

ONE Today we come looking for peace.

ALL: We come with our hurts, our worries, our fears. We come seeking relief from our burdens.

ONE: With the psalmist, we cry out:

ALL: "From the end of the earth I call to you, when my heart is faint. Lead me to the rock that is higher than I, for you are my refuge."

ONE: Eternal God, our help in every time of trouble, send your Spirit to comfort and strengthen us, that we may find rest in your mercy and hope in your love.

ALL: Amen.

*HYMN #88 ***O Come, O Come, Emmanuel*** (verses 1-4)

VENI EMMANUEL

FIRST SCRIPTURE READING: **Isaiah 40:1-11**

Written during the exile when many of the Israelites were captives in a foreign land, this is a text of lament, asking for God's comfort.

SECOND SCRIPTURE READING: **John 14:25-27**

This passage is a reminder from Jesus that his peace is with us.

READING **"This Christmas I'll Be Grieving. Here's how I'll Be Finding Joy"**

by Windsor Johnston

MUSIC ***In the Bleak Midwinter***

arr. by Larry Shackley

THE FIRST CANDLE: *Hope*

ONE: In the Advent season, we light the candle of hope. We light this candle for all who feel hopeless. This light shines bright for families who have lost loved ones and for people who are experiencing more grief than joy. This light shines bright for people who are sick, for individuals fighting to get out of debt, and for refugees waiting for a safe place to rest. This candle shines bright for those in relationships that have no clear way forward.

ALL: May God's hope find us and all who long for light.

THE SECOND CANDLE: *Peace*

ONE: In this season, we light the candle of peace. We light this candle for all who need peace. This light shines bright for the anxious and unsettled and for those in seasons of transition and discernment. This candle shines bright for all who struggle with mental health and for people navigating rocky, new beginnings.

ALL: May God's peace find us and all who long for light.

THE THIRD CANDLE: *Joy*

ONE: In this season, we light the candle of joy. We light this candle for all who need it. This light shines for those who are overburdened or overstretched, underworked or overworked. This light shines for those who are worn out and worn down. This candle shines for those who need a good laugh, even in seasons of grief.

ALL: May God's joy find us and all who long for light.

THE FOURTH CANDLE: *Love*

ONE: In this season, we light the candle of love. This candle reminds us of God's light, which no darkness can overcome. We light the candle of love for all who need it. This candle shines for loved ones who have died. This light shines bright for love that has been betrayed and for love that has been forgotten. This candle shines bright for all who long for the love of community.

ALL: May God's love find us and all who long for light.

MUSIC FOR REFLECTION

Bethlehem Carol (Traditional Irish Carol)

arr. by Larry Shackley

Silent Night

arr. by Jay Rouse

During this time of music, you are invited to come forward to light a candle as a symbol of your prayer.

REMEMBERING OUR LOVED ONES

PASTORAL PRAYER & THE LORD'S PRAYER

ALL: 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.

*HYMN #836 ***Abide with Me***

EVENTIDE

*LITANY OF GRATITUDE

ONE: God of our joy and God of our weariness, we have brought our worn-down hearts to you—hearts full of grief, hearts carrying fear, hearts tender to the touch.

ALL: We have brought our weariness to you because we know that you are present with us.

ONE: Therefore, as we prepare to leave the safe protection of this sanctuary, as we prepare to return to the fullness of our lives, we ask that you continue to walk with us.

ALL: Make your presence known. Help us feel your comfort. Stay close by our side.

ONE: For we cannot move from weariness to joy without you. With honesty and gratitude, we give you these prayers of our hearts, those named and left unnamed. We give them all to you.

ALL: Amen.

*BENEDICTION

POSTLUDE ***It Came Upon the Midnight Clear***

arr. by Jay Rouse

The Word is Light

By Susan Palo Cherwien

In each
there are times of darkness
times of murk
and blood-muddied waters.
There are times of bondage.
Times of frogs
and flies.
There are times of void
times of drought
and plague.

A light shines in the darkness.

Behold in the darkness —
a spark.
Hark in the stillness —
a voice.
See in the desert—
a column of flame.
A light shines in the darkness.

God the Deliverer
stands in the desert
speaks in the stillness
shines in the darkness
That we may be
led out from fear
led out from dust
led out from desire
led out from despair
led out from slavery.

Behold and see:
A light shines in the darkness.



Christmas Eve Schedule

Wednesday, December 24

4:00 p.m.

Family Ministry Service, Sanctuary

A family-friendly service for all ages celebrating the gift of Christmas, featuring worship leadership and music by participants in Christmas Choral Camp.

8:00 p.m.

Lessons and Carols, Sanctuary

This service of lessons tells the story of Christ's birth through Scripture and music, featuring our Chancel Choir, special instrumentalists, and of course, the voice of our magnificent organ. An extended prelude will begin at 7:40 p.m.

Christmas Eve Online

Lessons and Carols

Available on YouTube and airing on LCTV (Comcast Channel 66).

Sunday, December 28

9:00 a.m., Shirk Hall

10:30 a.m., Sanctuary

Online Worship on YouTube and LCTV (Comcast Channel 66)



Funeral Home & Crematory, Inc.

debordsnyder.com



FIRST

PRESBYTERIAN
CHURCH

Lancaster, PA

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