

Blue Christmas Service

Wednesday, December 13, 2023 @ 7pm

Please be sure to silence your cell phones. Thank you.
Join us in the fellowship hall following the service for a time of fellowship.

*Stand if you are able

CENTERING MUSIC

WELCOME Pastor Ruth Sanders

*GATHERING WORDS (Responsive)

Leader: In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. All things were made by God, and without God nothing came to be. What came to be through God was life, and this life was the light of the world.

All: The Light shines in the darkness, and the darkness has not overcome it.

MUSICAL INTERLUDE *In the Bleak Midwinter* Claire & Andrew Barhite

A READING - THE LIGHT IS COMING by Nancy Townley
Sandy Perkins/Jim Bredman

THE BRINGING IN OF THE LIGHT Randy Hultgren

HYMN O Little Town of Bethlehem Grace/Jim S

OPENING PRAYER OF THE DAY (Unison)

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 and 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.

SCRIPTURE READINGS

The First Reading: Ecclesiastes 3:1-11 Jim Bredman
Musical Interlude *Be Still My Soul* Claire & Andrew Barhite

The Second Reading: Is. 40:3-5 & Is. 43:14-19 Sandy Perkins
Musical Interlude *God Will Make a Way* Grace, Pastor Ruth, Jim S

Candle Lighting



The First Candle Grace Smith

Leader: We light this first candle.....all Creation waits for the Light.
All: We remember them with love. May God's eternal love surround them. O come, O come, Emmanuel, and ransom captive Israel. That mourns in lonely exile here, until the son of God appears. Rejoice, rejoice, Emmanuel shall come to thee, O Israel.

Meditation Music Jim Schaar, Sax

The Second Candle Jim Bredman

Leader: We light this second candle.....the gift of peace, shalom.
All: We remember that through You all things are possible. Refresh, restore, renew us, O God, and lead us into Your future. O come thou Wisdom from on high, who orderest all things mightily to us the path of knowledge show and teach us in her ways to go. Rejoice, rejoice, Emmanuel shall come to thee, O Israel.

Meditation Music Claire Barhite, Violin

The Third Candle Andrew Barhite

Leader: We light this third candle...knowledge of our own mortality.
All: We remember that though we have journeyed far, and that, while lost, we may have turned away from the light, the light itself has not failed. We remember that though winter be upon us and though the night be dark, with the turning of the wheel the dawn will come, and dawn defeats the darkness. O come thou dayspring, come and cheer our spirits by thy advent here. Disperse the gloomy clouds of night, and death's dark shadows put to flight. Rejoice, rejoice Emmanuel shall come to thee, O Israel.

Meditation Music

Jim Schaar, Guitar

The Fourth Candle

Sandy Perkins

Leader: We light this fourth candle...promises us comfort and peace.

All: We remember the One who shares our burdens, who shows us the way to the Light, and who journeys with us into all our tomorrows. O come desire of nations, bind in one the hearts of all mankind. Bid then our sad, divisions cease, and be thyself our King of Peace. Rejoice, rejoice, Emmanuel shall come to thee, O Israel.

Meditation Music

Claire Barhite, Violin

PRAYERS OF THE PEOPLE

- Leader: Lord of great mercy and love **People: Hear our Prayer**

HYMN

Away in A Manger

Grace/Jim S

The Third Reading: Luke 2:1-7

Claire Barhite

Lighting of the Christ Candle

Randy Hultgren

PRAYER (Unison)

Comforting God, wrap us in Your presence in this time of remembrance. With these candles, help us find Your light, a light that will guide us day by day, step by step, as we try to live life fully and wholly. We cherish the special ways in which our loved ones have touched us. We thank You for the gift their lives have been to us. Now comfort us, encourage us, empower us. Amen.

HYMN

Silent Night (*Duet on vs. 1, ALL sing vs. 2-3*)

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BLESSING

Pastor Ruth

Tonight's Worship Leaders:

Pastor Ruth Sanders, Claire & Andrew Barhite, Jim Bredman, Randy Hultgren, Sandy Perkins, Jim Schaar, Grace Smith

Coffee Fellowship: Randy & Tana Hultgren, Bob & JoAnne Yuergens

****Program ideas adapted from umcdiscipleship.org***

Welcome to the
Blue Christmas
Service



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