

Blue Christmas



**DECEMBER 20, 2018
7:00 P.M.**



**First United
Methodist Church**

A U S T I N

Transformation Happens Here

www.fumcaustin.org

GATHERING AS THE CHURCH

Asterisks (*) indicate an invitation to stand as you are able.

WORDS OF WELCOME

* CALL TO WORSHIP

Tonight, we gather here in this place of refuge,
for we are lost, we are lonely, we are afraid.

Tonight, we gather daring to wonder if God has indeed come in Jesus,
**discerning the rejection we have known,
intimate with our failed relationships,
holding our heartache in hands of tenderness.**

Tonight, we gather with neighbors and strangers,
a family made one by our brokenness
**coming with our hearts full of hope,
and our pockets filled with doubts.**

Tonight, we gather just as we are,
for God has promised to meet us here
and to welcome us with love.

Thom Shuman

* HYMN

We Cannot Measure How You Heal

1. We can - not meas - ure how you heal or an - swer ev - 'ry
2. The pain that will not go a - way, the guilt that clings from
3. So some have come who need your help and some have come to

suf - frer's prayer, yet we be - lieve your grace re - sponds where faith and
things long past, the fear of what the fu - ture holds, are pres - ent
make a - mends, as hands which shaped and saved the world are pres - ent

doubt u - nite to care. Your hands, though blood - ied on the cross, sur -
as if meant to last. But pres - ent too is love which tends the
in the touch of friends. Lord, let your Spir - it meet us here to

vive to hold and heal and warn, to car - ry all through
hurt we nev - er hoped to find, the pri - vate ag - o -
mend the bod - y, mind, and soul, to dis - en - tan - gle

death to life and cra - dle chil - dren yet un - born.
nies in - side, the mem - - 'ries that haunt the mind.
peace from pain, and make your bro - ken peo - ple whole.

Words: John L. Bell

Music: YE BANKS AND BRAES - Scottish traditioinal; arr. by John L. Bell

© 1989 Iona Community, GIA Publications, Inc. agent

(All rights reserved. Used by permission OneLicense.net #A705700.)

OPENING PRAYER

LIGHTING THE ADVENT CANDLES

We light our first candle,
a single light that the deepest darkness cannot conquer –
small and insignificant,
yet a sign of hope.

**Let it speak to us of the tiny flame of hope buried within us,
the stubborn little light that refuses to be extinguished
by all that life has thrown at it.**

We light our second candle,
a companion to the first –
equally small, equally insignificant,
but witnessing to hope that another light brings.

**Let it speak to us of the light from companionship of our families,
our friends and of strangers,
of kindnesses found in unexpected places
that restore our hope in human nature.**

We light our third candle,
recalling nights of watching and waiting,
anxious nights without sleep,
when dawn seemed to ebb further from the horizon
and hope seemed forlorn.

**Let it speak to us of the sureness of morning,
of the passing of darkness and suffering,
and the promise of an eternal sunrise dawning
for those we have loved and lost.**

**Let it speak of the light dawning too for us –
though we may yet be in that darkest hour before the dawn.**

We light our fourth candle,
marking the closing of the Advent season and the immediacy of Christmas.
It is a time of peace and joy we may not ourselves feel able to welcome –
as our spirits dwell in dark and winter.

**Let it speak to us of hope,
of being together in this place of healing and wholeness,
of our companionship this night at the turning of the year.**

**Let it speak of faith that we and those we have loved and lost
are held eternally in the hand of the One who brought light into being
and who knows each one of us by name.**

Hymn

O Come, O Come Emmanuel

1. O come, O come, Em - man - u - el, and ran - som cap - tive Is - ra - el,
that mourns in lone - ly ex - ile here un - til the Son of God ap - pear.
Re - joice! Re - joice! Em - man - u - el shall come to thee, O Is - ra - el.

Words: 9th century Latin; trans. The Hymnal 1940, renewed 1981 The Church Pension Fund

(All rights reserved. Used by permission OneLicense.net #A705700.)

Music: VENI EMMANUEL - plainsong, Mode 1, Processionale, 15th century

HEARING GOD'S WORD

PSALM 46

God is our refuge and strength,
a very present help in trouble.

Therefore we will not fear,

**though the earth should change,
though the mountains shake in the heart of the sea;**
though its waters roar and foam,
though the mountains tremble with its tumult.

**There is a river whose streams make glad the city of God,
the holy habitation of the Most High.**

God is in the midst of the city;
it shall not be moved;
God will help it when the morning dawns.

**The nations are in an uproar,
the kingdoms totter;
he utters his voice,
the earth melts.**

The Lord of hosts is with us;
the God of Jacob is our refuge.

**Come, behold the works of the Lord;
see what desolations he has brought on the earth.**

He makes wars cease to the end of the earth;
he breaks the bow and shatters the spear;
he burns the shields with fire.

“Be still, and know that I am God!

**I am exalted among the nations,
I am exalted in the earth.”**

The Lord of hosts is with us;
the God of Jacob is our refuge.

SCRIPTURE

Matthew 11:28-29

New Testament, page 11

MEDITATION

FEASTING AT THE TABLE OF GRACE

* THE GREAT THANKSGIVING

The Lord be with you.

And also with you.

Lift up your hearts.

We lift them up to the Lord.

Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.

It is right to give our thanks and praise.

It is right, and a good and joyful thing,
always and everywhere to give thanks to you,
almighty God, creator of heaven and earth.
From the silence before creation
your Word spoke all that is into being.
You saw the darkness and called forth light,
dividing the day from the night,
and giving each its name and your blessing.

We abused your blessing,
choosing to control rather than tend,
to consume rather than nourish,
to turn away from your light,
and turn your darkness into a hiding place,
a place of fear and shame.
Still you chose to bless us and redeem us,
calling us to restored fellowship
through prophets, leaders, and faithful people.

And so, with your people on earth
and all the company of heaven
we praise your name and join their unending hymn:
**Holy, holy, holy Lord, God of power and might,
heaven and earth are full of your glory.
Hosanna in the highest.
Blessed is the one who comes in the name of the Lord.
Hosanna in the highest.**

Holy are you, and blessed is your Son Jesus Christ.
From the darkness of a stable,
you brought forth the light of the world,
he carried your light into every darkened corner,
calling those kept in darkness
to rejoice in your love,
and exposing those who hid from your Truth
to the light of your righteous judgment.

By the baptism of his suffering, death, and resurrection
you gave birth to your church,
delivered us from slavery to sin and death,
and made with us a new covenant by water and the Spirit.

On the night in which he gave himself up for us
he took bread,
gave thanks to you,
broke the bread,
gave it to his disciples, and said:
“Take, eat; this is my body which is given for you.
Do this in remembrance of me.”

When the supper was over, he took the cup,
gave thanks to you,
gave it to his disciples, and said:
“Drink from this, all of you;
this is my blood of the new covenant,
poured out for you and for many
for the forgiveness of sins.
Do this as often as you drink it,
in remembrance of me.”

And so,
in remembrance of these your mighty acts in Jesus Christ,
we offer ourselves in praise and thanksgiving
as a holy and living sacrifice,
in union with Christ’s offering for us,
as we proclaim the mystery of faith:

Christ has died;

Christ is risen;

Christ will come again.

Pour out your Holy Spirit on us gathered here,
and on these gifts of bread and wine.
Make them to be for us the body and blood of Christ,
that we may be for the world the body of Christ,
redeemed by his blood.

By your Spirit,
make us one with Christ in his sufferings,
one with each other in mutual love,
and one in ministry to all the world with healing grace,
until Christ comes in final victory,
and we feast at his heavenly banquet.

Through your Son Jesus Christ,
with the Holy Spirit in your holy church,
all honor and glory is yours, almighty God,
now and forever.

Amen.

And now as Jesus has taught us,
we are bold 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.**

Amen.

The pastor breaks the bread and says:
Alleluia! In the midst of our longest night,
Christ our Savior dwells among us!
Therefore let us keep the feast.
Alleluia!

RECEIVING THE BREAD AND CUP

After you have received Holy Communion, all are invited to take the flame from the candle of love - which cannot be extinguished by death - and light a candle for the persons you mourn or the pain you endure.

MUSIC WHILE RECEIVING AND REMEMBERING

Anthem

Within Our Hearts be Born

Michael Joncas

Hymn

Healer of Our Every Ill

Refrain

Heal - er of our ev - 'ry ill, light of each to - mor - row,
give us peace be - yond our fear, and hope be - yond our sor - - - row.

Verses

1. You who know our fears and sad - ness, grace us with your peace and glad - ness,
2. In the pain and joy be - hold - ing, how your grace is still un - fold - ing,
3. Give us strength to love each oth - er, ev - 'ry sis - ter, ev - 'ry bro - ther,
4. You who know each thought and feel - ing, teach us all your way of heal - ing,

D.C.
Spir - it of all com - fort: fill our hearts.
give us all your vi - sion: God of love.
Spir - it of all kind - ness: be our guide.
Spir - it of com - pas - sion: fill each heart.

Words and Music: Marty Haugen
© 1987 GIA Publications, Inc. agent
(All rights reserved. Used by permission OneLicense.net #A705700.)

PRAYER AFTER RECEIVING

**On this long dark night
we await the coming of Christ.
We long for the light of his presence,
with us and in us.
When our souls are deeply troubled,
and our hearts break with the weight of sorrow,
may our grief be seasoned with love,
and our sorrow be buoyed by hope.
In our times of God-forsakenness and estrangement,
may we gaze on the innocent One,
made perfect through suffering
and see in him our vulnerable God,
who saves in weakness and pain.
May our suffering empty us of pride,
and lead us to true joy, our only security,
in Christ the infinite depths of God's grace.
Amen.**

GOING OUT TO SERVE

* **BENEDICTION**

* **HYMN 221**

In the Bleak Midwinter

CLOSING MUSIC

+ + +

WORSHIP LEADERS

Preacher: Reverend Taylor Fuerst
Piano: Susannah Willms
Cantor: Victoria Tijerina