

BLUE CHRISTMAS DECEMBER 19, 2021

READERS: names for specific sections are in bold, starting at the bottom of page 1 the readers light candles. Light the candle after you say **WE LIGHT THIS CANDLE...** , the readers will have several candles each to light. The candle should be able to be seen by all the Zoom viewers so you may want to have a taller candle for this reason. Candles will burn through the whole service and put out after service is over.

MELODY: *Welcome to this Blue Christmas, a time when we can, with others, acknowledge the "blue" feelings we have at Christmas time, the reasons for them, and offer them to God. This time has been called the "long dark night of the soul" and "the winter of our discontent" in which memories of past experiences and the pain of present experiences can become overwhelming. For some, Christmas Day is the most difficult. For others, it may be Christmas Eve, or New Years Eve, or the beginning of another lonely New Year. In this service, we'll have some music and visual liturgy appropriate to the season, recognizing that this is not a season of joy for everyone. We will invite you to reflect on the pain, the loneliness, and the sadness you may feel and offer it to God for healing and transformation. We pray that you will find hope and comfort in knowing that you are not alone. Always remember that God knows your pain and loves you unconditionally.*

DENNIS: "WHERE CAN I GO?" based on Psalm 139)

DORY: God who is with us, in this season of looking forward, of anticipating the celebration of your Son's birth and return in glory, we often find ourselves uncomfortable, uneasy, worried and sad. The lights and gaiety, the music, the bright joy around us, often make us more unquiet, more out of step, feeling even more disconnected and different.

JUDY: Some of these feelings come from false expectations. Others come from real situations and issues that face us or those we love. Some are from events we may influence and some are beyond our control. Trusting in your grace and provision, we name these situations and face the pain and dislocation they cause us. We claim your promise to companion us in bearing them. We claim your steadfast love for us, knowing you will help us find peace for our troubled spirits. We claim your wise and merciful power, that you will meet each need as is best for us.

God of all compassion,
we pray that your Spirit would uphold us.
When we wander through the deep darkness,
help us to see the light of your love,
give us a sense of your presence
that we might know that you are with us yet,
just as you have promised to be.
Lift us above our present sorrow
into the peace of your presence.

In Jesus' name we pray. Amen

MELODY: God of Light and Life, we light this candle for all those who are struggling with issues involving physical or mental health. We especially remember those struggling with cancer, depression, or thoughts of suicide. May its light remind us all of the healing available to us in Christ Jesus. Hear our prayers that anguish be minimized and your good plan fulfilled for each who suffer.

Psalm 23

God is my shepherd;
I have everything I need.
God gives me new strength
and guides me along the right paths.
When I go through the darkness
God is with me.
I am safe.
God will be with me all my life.
God's house will be my home.

DENNIS: AUDIO VISUAL Jamie Cullum - In The Bleak Midwinter -UTUBE

TENA: We light this candle for all those who are struggling with issues involving financial concerns, job loss, seemingly insurmountable debt. May its light remind us all that you are the Great Provider, you will give us our daily bread. Empower us to take the steps we need to solve these problems. Draw us to the right people and programs to help us.

DORY: We light this candle for all those who grieve. You know our deepest need, you understand our pain- lost dreams, lost opportunities, the separation of death. May its light remind us that we are not orphaned, we are not alone. Grant us grace that in pain we may find comfort, in sorrow hope, and in death resurrection.

We name our losses before God:

the loss of a partner in life,
the loss of a family member,
the loss of a friend,
the loss of a loved one,
the loss of a pet,
the loss of health,
the loss of a cherished dream,
the loss of independence,
the loss of self-confidence ...

We name our own particular losses in silence before God:

moments of memory – the good ones and the hard ones,
reflecting on the feelings that have been ours in loss.

We pause and remember and reflect (a time of silence) ...

JUDY: We light this candle for all those who wrestle with the chains of addiction. Help us to name that which enslaves us and face it: food, alcohol, drugs, pornography, shopping, escapism, self medication, and self abuse in all its forms. May this candle bring your light to those secret, and not so secret, activities of imprisonment. Hear our prayers for deliverance and freedom; help us and those we love break the hold of these evils.

Sometimes we need to borrow hope from each other. In the middle of real life, real struggles, real loss, real crises of faith, and real humanity, it's easy to become weary, exhausted, and hopeless. Sometimes one of the only things that can sustain us comes from other people or God or an inspiration that helps us take the next breath or the next step, or make it though the next day.

DENNIS-AUDIO VISUAL -I AM WITH YOU FROM THE WORK OF THE PEOPLE

MELODY: We light this candle for all those who are victims of violence in any of its forms. May its light lead us to peace, safety, and truth. Pour forth encouragement to claim your help in healing physically and spiritually, to trust in your justice, to find assistance, to resist blaming ourselves, to be confident in the future you have planned for us, a future full of hope.

TENA: We light this candle for all those who are experiencing the pain of broken relationships with family, children, spouses, and friends. May its light remind us of the pure communion you desire for all your creation. Our desire for this same communion makes estrangement so painful. Lead us to relinquish the hold broken relationships have on us, to forgive ourselves for our contribution to the breach, to forgive those who have hurt us, to take the steps to mend that relationship, if possible. Lord, we know that sometimes we suffer from a broken relationship with someone who is now dead. Help us to prayerfully examine, receive and extend forgiveness in that situation, that we may live again.

DORY: We light this candle for all those who are suffering the consequences of war, famine and unbridled disease. May its light remind us of your holy calling to every one who believes you are the light of the world. Change the hearts of all who resort to violence, who seek revenge. Protect those who find themselves far from home serving their nations or the needy. We know you are in the midst of those in anguish and pray that your healing presence will be seen, felt, and embraced. Reveal to us how to join in your saving work- to make tangible gifts to alleviate suffering, to support those on the front lines of natural and manmade disasters, to pray unceasingly for peace in our families, our neighborhoods, our world.

DENNIS: AUDIO VISUAL "MAKE ROOM" FROM WORK OF THE PEOPLE

JUDY: We light this candle for all those who are estranged from you, who have doubts, who are overwhelmed by the world and do not claim your presence in their lives. We pray for them, and therefore ourselves, for we confess that each of us knows this condition. Lord, may the light of your love lead us all home to you.

We now light the Christ candle, a symbol of peace to all on earth;
and we remember all who yearn for a word from God,
all who gaze into the night sky in longing and in hope,
all who listen for an angel song.

As we light this candle we remember
the promise of hope that the Messiah would bring
and we pray that this light would also kindle
a flame of hope within our own hearts.
(Light Christ candle.)

MELODY: God of the ages,
all around us we see the lights of Christmas,

we hear the sounds of joyful celebration;
at times, we struggle with how to respond.
As the nights have grown longer,
sadness and emptiness, loneliness and pain
wrap around the hearts of many of us, Eternal God.
We aren't always able to put into words
that which causes us to feel melancholy rather than joy.

DORY: And so we turn to you, O God, with all of our pain,
and lay it at your feet:
for some, a loved one has died;
for others, a friend has moved away;
others have lost a job, a cherished dream, or a sense of hope.
Some of us are feeling worried, trapped, insecure, adrift or alone.
Some of us are grieving what might have been but will not be,
or grieving over what used to be, but cannot be any more.
Most of us are in need of a place of quiet and calm
in the midst of this busy season.

TENA: Whatever it was that has brought us here,
we offer it to you, Mighty God –
you, who were born frail and innocent in Bethlehem's stable –
that we might know of your great and unending love.
We know that there is no pain that does not echo in your heart, O God,
and no joy that does not come from your hand.
We trust that through all the shadows of this world
there yet shines the Light of your Love.

JUDY: In our darkness, and in the darkness of this world,
may your light continue to shine,
bringing peace, bringing hope, bringing strength and love
to us and to all in need.
We pray
in the name of Jesus Christ Emmanuel,
who is God-with-us. Amen

Amen.

DENNIS: AUDIO VISUAL "O come, O come, Emmanuel" - (Piano/Cello) - The Piano
Guys- utube

MELODY; My friends, life is short, and we do not have much time to gladden the hearts of those who
make this earthly pilgrimage with us, so be swift to love, and make haste to do kindness, and the blessing

of God, who comes to us as +Creative Presence, Saving Grace and Lifegiving Spirit be upon you and all whom you love and pray for this day, and forever more.

May God bless us
and heal us
and hold us in love
today, tonight
and for evermore. Amen
Julie Rennick, Spill the Beans

All: Amen.

DENNIS: AUDIO VISUAL: PASSION "O HOLY NIGHT" CROWDER

Silence