



# Blue Christmas

*You are not alone*

***Emmanuel Episcopal Church***

*Wakefield, MA*

*Wednesday, December 10, 2025*

*7:00 PM*

# Blue Christmas *You are not alone*

## **Welcome**

*Welcome to this Blue Christmas worship service on this dark, sacred night. This is your time. Each of us has come for different reasons, carrying different concerns and needs. For some, memories of past experiences and the pain of present experiences and situations can become overwhelming.*

*In this service, we invite you to listen – to pray – to sing – to meditate on whatever you are carrying. Emmanuel--God with us—is here. Our God shines light into our darkness, stands with us in our sorrows, and reminds us that even the longest nights do not last forever. The darkness is not final.*

*Receive hope and comfort knowing **you are not alone.***

### **The Gathering (please stand as you are able)**

Come, all you who are thirsty, come to the waters; and you who have no money, come, buy and eat! Come, buy wine and milk without money and without cost. Why spend money on what is not bread, and your labor on what does not satisfy? Listen, listen to me, and eat what is good, and you will delight in the richest of fare. Give ear and come to me; listen, that you may live. I will make an everlasting covenant with you, my faithful love promised to David. (Isaiah 55:1-3) **Thanks be to God.**

Come to me, all you that are weary and are carrying heavy burdens, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you, and learn from me; for I am gentle and humble in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light. (Matthew 11:28-30) **Thanks be to God.**

Holy and Healing God, pour out your Holy Spirit on all those gathered here this evening. Strengthen our weary hearts and console us as we come to you, open, in need, in yearning, in curiosity, in silence -- looking for healing and for your great goodness. Bless these moments, Holy Spirit, as we create the space we need to offer the weight of our lives into your compassionate arms. **Amen.**

*(Please be seated - silence will be kept, for personal preparation)*

Officiant: God, I want “green pastures” in my life; I’m always in search of something better.

**People: A place to rest.**

Officiant: You have the perfect places in mind for me; quiet meadows beside crystal clear water to drink.

**People: You know what will refresh my soul.**

Officiant: Show me those places; I am trying to trust in you.

**People: And teach me to follow you every day, as if there was no other. Amen.**

**First Reading**  
**Ready for Silence   Madeleine L'Engle**

Then hear now the silence  
He comes in the silence  
in silence he enters  
the womb of the bearer  
in silence he goes to  
the realm of the shadows  
redeeming and shriving  
in silence he moves from  
the grave cloths, the dark tomb  
in silence he rises  
ascends to the glory  
leaving his promise  
leaving his comfort  
leaving his silence

So come now, Lord Jesus  
Come in your silence  
breaking our noising  
laughter of panic  
breaking this earth's time  
breaking us breaking us  
quickly Lord Jesus  
make no long tarrying

When will you come  
and how will you come  
and will we be ready  
for silence  
your silence

*(Silence will be kept for personal reflection)*

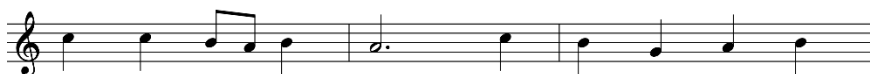
# Hymn vss. 1, 2 & 4 *O God, why are you silent?*



1. O God, why are you si - lent? I can - not  
 2. Now lost with - in my griev - ing, I fall and  
 3. My hope lies bruised and bat - tered, My wound - ed  
 4. Through end - less nights of weep - ing, Through wea - ry  
 5. May pain draw forth com - pas - sion, Let wis - dom



hear your voice. The proud and strong and vio - lent All  
 lose my way, My frag - ile, faint be - liev - ing So  
 heart is torn; My spir - it spent and shat - tered By  
 days of grief, My heart is in your keep - ing, My  
 rise from loss. O take my heart and fash - ion The



claim you and re - joice. You prom - ised you would  
 swift - ly swept a - way. O God of pain and  
 life's re - lent - less storm. Will you not bend to  
 com - fort, my re - lief. Come, share my tears and  
 im - age of your cross. Then may I know your



hold me With ten - der - ness and care. Draw near, O  
 sor - row, My com - pass and my guide, I can - not  
 hear me, My cries from deep with - in? Have you no  
 sad - ness, Come, suf - fer in my pain; O bring me  
 heal - ing Through heal - ing that I share, Your grace and



Love, en - fold me, And ease the pain I bear.  
 face the mor - row With - out you by my side.  
 word to cheer me When night is clos - ing in?  
 home to glad - ness, Re - store my hope a - gain.  
 love re - veal - ing Your ten - der - ness and care.

Text: Marty Haugen, b.1950, © 2003, GIA Publications, Inc.

Tune: PASSION CHORALE, 7 6 7 6 D; Hans Leo Hassler, 1564–1612; harm. by Marty Haugen, b.1950, © 2003, GIA Publications, Inc.

Officiant: A reading from Psalm 42:8:

“By day the Lord commands his steadfast love, and at night his song is with me, a prayer to the God of my life.”

*(Pause for stillness)*

*(lights one candle)*

Officiant: Your stories have brought you here. Now let us bring them into the light of God. This candle represents our suffering and the suffering of the world. In the light of God’s love, we claim God’s gift of truth. There is no need to hide or deny. God welcomes us as we are.

**All: Incline your ear, O Lord, and answer me, for I am poor and needy. (Psalm 86)**

*(Pause for stillness)*

*(lights another candle)*

Officiant: This candle represents our suffering and the suffering of the world. In the light of God’s love, we claim God’s gift of lament. We recognize our wounds and cry out to God. We accept God’s invitation to express every feeling and question.

**All: My God, my God, why have you forsaken me? Why are you so far from helping me, from the words of my groaning? O my God, I cry by day, but you do not answer; and by night, but find no rest. (Psalm 22:1-2)**

*(Pause for stillness)*

*(lights another candle)*

Officiant: This candle represents our suffering and the suffering of the world. In the light of God’s love, we claim God’s gift of courage. Courage to be honest, to seek help, to comfort one another. Courage to dare to love and dream again.

**All:       The Lord is my strength and my shield; in him my heart trusts; so I am helped, and my heart exults, and with my song I give thanks to him. (Psalm 28:7)**

*(Pause for stillness)*  
*(lights another candle)*

Officiant: This candle represents our suffering and the suffering of the world. In the light of God's love, we claim God's gift of hope. God is good. God is strong. God is near, leading us to a day without tears and pain, without sin and death. Healing and deliverance are coming; if not now, then on that day.

**All:       By awesome deeds you answer us with deliverance, O God of our salvation; you are the hope of all the ends of the earth and of the farthest seas. (Psalm 65:5)**

*(Pause for stillness)*  
*(lights final candle)*

Officiant: You received a slip of paper and a pen when you walked in. You are encouraged to write your burdens and sorrows on that piece of paper. In a few minutes, you can place it in the large bowl on the table.

## **NAMING OUR SORROWS**

### **Prayer**

Officiant: God, help us name what is at the core of our sadness and loss today. Speak in the stillness as we wait. Comfort us as the truth surfaces.

Taizé chant WLP #827 *O Lord, hear my prayer (5x)*

O Lord hear my pray'r, O Lord hear my pray'r.

When I call, an - swer me. O Lord hear my pray'r. O

Lord hear my pray'r, Come and lis - ten to me. O *Fine*

Words: Psalm 102. Music: Jacques Berthier (1923-1994).



## Second Reading

As the deer longs for streams of water,  
so I long for you, O God.

I thirst for God, the living God.  
When can I go and stand before him?

Day and night, I have only tears for food,  
while my enemies continually taunt me, saying,  
“Where is this God of yours?”

My heart is breaking  
as I remember how it used to be:  
singing for joy and giving thanks  
amid the sound of a great celebration!

Why am I discouraged?  
Why is my heart so sad?  
I will put my hope in God!  
I will praise him again—  
my Savior and my God!

Now I am deeply discouraged,  
but I will remember you

Each day the Lord pours his unfailing love upon me,  
and through each night I sing his songs,  
praying to God who gives me life.

“O God my rock,” I cry,  
“Why have you forgotten me?  
Why must I wander around in grief,

Why am I discouraged?  
Why is my heart so sad?  
I will put my hope in God!  
I will praise him again—  
my Savior and my God!  
(Selections from Psalm 42)

## Reflection

*(silence will be kept for personal stillness)*

### **Prayers of the People    A Litany of Healing**

*(Please stand or kneel as you are able)*

*Intercessor:* In the spirit of this season let us thank God for the blessings in our lives and ask God for all the things we need. We give you thanks for this gathered community and we give you thanks for all the many blessings of this life.

*People:* **Hear us, O God of life.**

*Intercessor:* Remember and grant your healing grace to all who are sick, injured or disabled; and restore those in emotional distress to soundness of mind and serenity of spirit.

*People:* **Hear us, O God of life.**

*Intercessor:* May the power of your holy presence clear a path through the rubble of broken lives and hearts to make our world and all of us a new creation. For ourselves as we prepare and participate in whatever ways we can this Advent and Christmas season, help us to be merciful with our selves. Grant us wisdom, courage, and patience for the days ahead.

*People:* **Hear us, O God of life.**

*Intercessor:* Grant to all who seek your guidance, and to all who are lonely, anxious or despondent, a knowledge of your will and an awareness of your presence.

*People:* **Hear us, O God of life.**

*Intercessor:* For our families, friends, and neighbors, and for all who have commended themselves to our prayers: that you may watch over them and intervene to heal them in the places of which only you and they know. Mend broken relationships within our families; and

forgive us for the brokenness we have caused, the hurt we have produced, the sins we have committed.

*People:* **Hear us, O God of life.**

*Intercessor:* Look with compassion upon the hurting places of our world, especially Ukraine, Palestine, Israel, and our own nation. Shelter and protect us and our neighbors who live in any kind of danger, particularly from gun violence, prejudice and oppression, and cruel and lawless authorities. Make us all a generous people so that no one lives in need or want of food, housing, and healthcare. Save us from weak resignation and bring us peace with justice.

*People:* **Hear us, O God of life.**

*Intercessor:* Bless all who minister to those who suffer, granting them wisdom and skill, sympathy and patience.

*People:* **Hear us, O God of life.**

*Intercessor:* Grant to the dying peace and a holy death, and uphold by the grace and consolation of your Holy Spirit all who are bereaved.

*People:* **Hear us, O God of life.**

*Intercessor:* Bless all who have died, that they may have rest in that place where there is no pain or grief, but life eternal.

*People:* **Hear us, O God of life.**

*Intercessor:* You are a God who does wonders

*People:* **You have declared your power among the peoples.**

*Intercessor:* With you, God, is the well of life.

*People:* **The darkness and the light, to you, are both alike.**

*Intercessor:* Hear us, O God of life.

*People:* **Heal and restore us, O God.**

*Intercessor:* Grant, O Lord, to all who are in sorrow the spirit of faith and courage, that they may have strength to meet the days to come;

in the multitude of your mercies look with compassion upon us and all who turn to you for help, forgive us our sins, and strengthen us to do your will; for you are gracious, O lover of souls, and to you we give glory, Creator, Redeemer, and Sanctifier, now and forever.

*People: Amen.*

**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 trespasses as we forgive those who trespass against us. And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil. Amen.**

*(Please be seated)*

*Hymn #104 A Stable Lamp is Lighted*



- 1 A sta - ble lamp is light - ed Whose
- 2 (This) child through Da - vid's ci - ty Shall
- 3 (Yet) he shall be for - sak - en, And
- 4 (But) now, as at the end - ing, The



glow shall wake the sky;	The stars shall bend their voic - es,
ride in tri - umph by;	The palm shall strew its branch - es,
yield - ed up to die;	The sky shall groan and dark - en,
low is lift - ed high;	The stars shall bend their voic - es,



And ev - ery stone shall cry. _____	And ev - ery stone shall cry,
And ev - ery stone shall cry. _____	And ev - ery stone shall cry;
And ev - ery stone shall cry. _____	And ev - ery stone shall cry,
And ev - ery stone shall cry. _____	And ev - ery stone shall cry,



And straw like gold shall shine;	A barn shall har - bor hea - ven,
Though hea - vy, dull, and dumb,	And lie with - in the road - way
For ston - y hearts of men:	God's blood up - on the spear - head,
In prais - es of the Child	By whose de - scent a - mong us



And straw like gold shall shine;      A barn shall har - bor hea - ven,  
Though hea - vy, dull, and dumb,      And lie with - in the road - way  
For ston - y hearts of men:      God's blood up - on the spear - head,  
In prais - es of the Child      By whose de - scent a - mong us



A stall be - come a shrine. \_\_\_\_  
To pave his king - dom come. \_\_\_\_  
God's love re - fused a - gain. \_\_\_\_  
The worlds are rec - on - ciled. \_\_\_\_

2 This  
3 Yet  
4 But



Words: © Richard Wilbur (b. 1921)  
Music: *Andújar*, David Hurd (b. 1950)

76. 76. 66. 76

## Candle Lighting & Invitation to Healing

If you wish to receive anointing and prayers for healing for yourself or as a vessel of God's healing grace for another, please come forward to one of the four of us and we will pray with you.

As you come forward, bring your piece of paper with your burdens and sorrows and place it in the large bowl in front of God's table.

They will not be read.

You are welcome to light a candle in remembrance,  
for any special intention,  
or for laying down your private burdens.

Taizé chant *Within our darkest night*

The musical score is written for a four-part setting (Soprano, Alto, Tenor, Bass) in G major and 4/4 time. It consists of four systems of staves. The lyrics are: "With - in our dark - est night, you kin - dle the fire that nev - er dies a - way, nev - er dies a - way. With - in our dark - est night, you kin - dle the fire that nev - er dies a - way, nev - er dies a - way." The melody is simple and repetitive, using whole and half notes. The accompaniment is a steady bass line of chords.

With - in our dark - est night, you kin - dle the

fire that nev - er dies a - way, nev - er dies a -

way. With - in our dark - est night, you kin - dle the

fire that nev - er dies a - way, nev - er dies a - way.

After the anointing prayers, candle lighting,  
and time of healing has concluded:

## **The Work of Christmas   Howard Thurman**

When the song of the angels is stilled,  
When the star in the sky is gone,  
When the kings and princes are home,  
When the shepherds are back with their flocks,  
The work of Christmas begins:  
    To find the lost,  
    To heal the broken,  
    To feed the hungry,  
    To release the prisoner,  
    To rebuild the nations,  
    To bring peace among the people,  
    To make music in the heart.

*(Silence will be kept for personal reflection)*

*Intercessor:* Keep watch, dear Lord, with those who work, or watch, or weep this night, and give your angels charge over all of us. Tend the sick, Lord Christ; give rest to the weary, bless the dying, soothe the suffering, pity the afflicted, shield the joyous; and all for your love's sake. **Amen.**

*We pray together, remaining seated:*

**Almighty God, we thank you for your constant love. We know that even when we cannot see or feel you, still you are there. Help us to remember you and to listen for your voice in the words of family, friends, and strangers. Kindle our hearts and awaken hope, that we may know you as you reveal yourself in the world and in our lives. Let the light of your holy Spirit shine like these candles in the darkness, lighting the way for all who feel despairing, lost, or forgotten, and grant that it may come to dwell so deeply in our hearts that when we leave this place it may shine on, for us and for those we meet along the way. Amen.**

## CONCLUDING BLESSING

*Officiant:* My friends, life is short, and we do not have much time to gladden the hearts of those who are on this journey with us. So be swift to love and hasten to be kind, and always, always offer hospitality to the stranger.

May the God of Grace heal you, body and soul.

May your pain cease.

May your strength increase.

May your fears and worries be released.

And may blessings, love, and joy surround you—now and always.

**Amen.**

As we prepare to leave this sacred space, may you feel uplifted and cleansed, lightened and refreshed. May the love of God surround you, the peace of Christ fill your hearts, and the Holy Spirit guide your steps in the days to come. **Amen.**

And the blessings of God who made us, who loves us, and who travels with us, be with you and those you love now and always.

**Amen.**

*Please stay as long as you wish. When you are ready, please exit quietly, respecting the silence for others.*

## PARTICIPANTS IN TODAY'S SERVICE

Officiants:

The Rev. Brett R. Johnson, Emmanuel Episcopal Church, Wakefield

The Rev. Isaac Martinez, Trinity Parish, Melrose

Rev. Chris Lyman Waldron, Melrose Highlands Congregational Church

Karen Aalto, Seminarian Intern

Organist & Music Director: Luca Cantone

Usher: Tim Moran

Altar Guild: Carol Johnson, Nicole Russo,  
Lisa Ventura

Streaming Coordinator: David McSweeney

YouTube Editor: Kim Collins

YouTube Scheduler: Denise Mallen