

BLUE CHRISTMAS

A service of reflection and remembrance.
A service of healing and hope.



Wednesday
December 14, 2022
6:00 p.m.

St. Peter's by-the-Lake
Episcopal Church

1954 Spillway Road
Brandon, Mississippi

The Rev. Carol Mead,
Rector

The Rev. Dennis Wilson, R.N.,
Deacon

The Gathering of the People

Celebrant Light and peace, in Jesus Christ, our Lord.
People **Thanks be to God.**

Celebrant

If I say, "Surely the darkness will cover me, and the light around me turn tonight," darkness is not dark to you, O Lord; the night is as bright as the day; darkness and light to you are both alike.

Hymn **I Want To Walk As A Child of the Light**

**I want to walk as a child of the light. I want to follow Jesus.
God set the stars to give light to the world. The star of my life is Jesus.**

refrain **In Him there is no darkness at all.
The night and the day are both alike.
The Lamb is the light of the city of God.
Shine in my heart, Lord Jesus.**

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Kathleen Thomerson/Hymnal 1982 #490

A Collect For Advent

Almighty God, give us grace to cast away the works of darkness, and put on the armor of light, now in the time of this mortal life in which your Son Jesus Christ came to visit us in great humility; that in the last day, when he shall come again in his glorious majesty to judge both the living and the dead, we may rise to the life immortal; through him who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and for ever. **Amen.**

A Reading from Jeremiah 29:11-14

For surely I know the plans I have for you, says the LORD, plans for your welfare and not for harm, to give you a future with hope. Then when you call upon me and come and pray to me, I will hear you. When you search for me, you will find me; if you seek me with all your heart, I will let you find me, says the LORD, and I will restore your fortunes and gather you from all the nations and all the places where I have driven you, says the LORD, and I will bring you back to the place from which I sent you into exile.

People The Word of the Lord.
Thanks be to God.

The Gospel: Matthew 11:4-10

The Holy Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ
according to Matthew.

People **Glory to you Lord Christ.**

Jesus answered them, 'Go and tell John what you hear and see: the blind receive their sight, the lame walk, the lepers are cleansed, the deaf hear, the dead are raised, and the poor have good news brought to them. And blessed is anyone who takes no offence at me.'

As they went away, Jesus began to speak to the crowds about John: 'What did you go out into the wilderness to look at? A reed shaken by the wind? What then did you go out to see? Someone dressed in soft robes? Look, those who wear soft robes are in royal palaces. What then did you go out to see? A prophet? Yes, I tell you, and more than a prophet. This is the one about whom it is written,

“See, I am sending my messenger ahead of you,
who will prepare your way before you.”

The Gospel of the Lord.

People **Praise to you, Lord Christ.**

Litany of Remembrance

O Come, O Come Emmanuel

**O come, O come Emmanuel, and ransom captive Israel,
that mourns in lonely exile here until the Son of God appear.**

Refrain **Rejoice! Rejoice! Emmanuel
shall come to thee, O Israel!**

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First Candle

Officiant: We light this first candle to remember those persons who have been loved and lost. We pause to remember their names, their faces, their voices.

Silence

We embrace and give thanks for the memories that bind them to us in this season of expectation, when all Creation waits for the Light.

We remember them with love. May God's eternal love surround them.

O Little Town of Bethlehem

**O little town of Bethlehem, how still we see thee lie!
Above thy deep and dreamless sleep the silent stars go by;
yet in thy dark streets shineth the everlasting Light;
the hopes and fears of all the years are met in thee tonight.**

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Words: Phillips Brooks/Music: *St. Louis*, Lewis H. Redner

Second Candle

Officiant: We light the second candle to redeem the pain of loss: the loss of relationships, the loss of jobs, the loss of health, the loss of faith, the loss of joy.

Silence

We acknowledge and embrace the pain of the past, O god, and we offer it to You, asking that into our wounded hearts and open hands you will place the gift of peace, shalom.

We remember that through you all things are possible. Refresh, restore, and renew us, O God.

Wonderful, Merciful Savior

**Wonderful, merciful Savior, precious redeemer and friend.
Who would have thought that a Lamb could rescue the souls of men?
Oh, you rescue the souls of men.**

refrain: **You are the one that we praise, you are the one we adore.
You give the healing and grace our hearts always hunger for.
Oh, our hearts always hunger for.**

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Third Candle

Officiant: We light this third candle to remember ourselves this Christmas time. We pause and remember the past weeks, months, and for some of us years, that have been heavy with our burdens.

Silence

We accept and lay before you, God, the sharpness of memory, the sadness and grief, the hurt and fear, the anger and pain. We accept and lay before you the ways we feel we have fallen short, and the times we have spent blaming ourselves, and you, for all that we have suffered.

We remember that dawn defeats the darkness.

The Light Of Christ

Refrain: **The light of Christ has come into the world.
The light of Christ has come into the world.**

**The light of God has come to us so that we might have salvation;
from the darkness of our sins we walk into glory with Christ Jesus. *refrain***

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Fourth Candle

Officiant: We light this fourth candle to remember faith, the gift of light and hope that God offers us in the story of Christmas.

Silence

We remember that the loving God who came to share this life with us promises us comfort and peace.

We remember the One who shares our burdens, who shows us the way to the Light, and who journeys the way with us.

Officiant:

In the spirit of this season, let us now ask God for what we need for ourselves as we participate in the Christmas season, as people coping with our loss, pain, suffering, loneliness, grief, sadness.

Intercessor:

God, we come to you as Christmas dawns with the pain growing inside us. As the nights have been growing longer, so has the darkness wrapped itself around our hearts. In this season of our longest nights, we offer to you the pain in our hearts, the traumas that some of us cannot put into words. Loving God, hear our prayer. **Amen.**

The Christmas season reminds us of all that used to be and cannot be anymore. The memories of what was, the fears of what may be, stifle us. All around us we hear the sounds of celebration. But all we experience is a sense of feeling blue. Please be near us this night. Loving God, hear our prayer. **Amen.**

The Peace

Celebrant The peace of the Lord be always with you.

People **And also with you.**

THE LITURGY OF THE TABLE

The Great Thanksgiving

Eucharistic Prayer D

Celebrant The Lord be with you.

People **And also with you.**

Celebrant Lift up your hearts.

People **We lift them to the Lord.**

Celebrant Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.

People **It is right to give him thanks and praise.**

It is truly right to glorify you, Father, and to give you thanks; for you alone are God, living and true, dwelling in light inaccessible from before time and for ever.

Fountain of life and source of all goodness, you made all things and fill them with your blessing; you created them to rejoice in the splendor of your radiance.

Countless throngs of angels stand before you to serve you night and day; and, beholding the glory of your presence, they offer you unceasing praise. Joining with them, and giving voice to every creature under heaven, we acclaim you, and glorify your Name, as we sing,

**Holy, holy, holy Lord, God of power and might,
heaven and earth are full of your glory.**

Hosanna in the highest.

Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord.

Hosanna in the highest.

We acclaim you, holy Lord, glorious in power. Your mighty works reveal your wisdom and love. You formed us in your own image, giving the whole world into our care, so that, in obedience to you, our Creator, we might rule and serve all your creatures. When our disobedience took us far from you, you did not abandon us to the power of death. In your mercy you came to our help, so that in seeking you we might find you. Again and again you called us into covenant with you, and through the prophets you taught us to hope for salvation.

Father, you loved the world so much that in the fullness of time you sent your only Son to be our Savior. Incarnate by the Holy Spirit, born of the Virgin Mary, he lived as one of us, yet without sin. To the poor he proclaimed the good news of salvation; to prisoners, freedom; to the sorrowful, joy. To fulfill your purpose he gave himself up to death; and, rising from the grave, destroyed death, and made the whole creation new.

And, that we might live no longer for ourselves, but for him who died and rose for us, he sent the Holy Spirit, his own first gift for those who believe, to complete his work in the world, and to bring to fulfillment the sanctification of all.

When the hour had come for him to be glorified by you, his heavenly Father, having loved his own who were in the world, he loved them to the end; at supper with them he took bread, and when he had given thanks to you, he broke it, and gave it to his disciples, and said, "Take, eat: This is my Body, which is given for you. Do this for the remembrance of me."

After supper he took the cup of wine; and when he had given thanks, he gave it to them, and said, "Drink this, all of you; This is my Blood of the new Covenant, which is shed for you and for many for the forgiveness of sins. Whenever you drink it, do this for the remembrance of me."

Father, we now celebrate this memorial of our redemption. Recalling Christ's death and his descent among the dead, proclaiming his resurrection and ascension to your right hand, awaiting his coming in glory; and offering to you, from the gifts you have given us, this bread and this cup, we praise you and we bless you.

Celebrant and People

**We praise you, we bless you,
we give thanks to you,
and we pray to you, Lord our God.**

The Celebrant continues

Lord, we pray that in your goodness and mercy your Holy Spirit may descend upon us, and upon these gifts, sanctifying them and showing them to be holy gifts for your holy people, the bread of life and the cup of salvation, the Body and Blood of your Son Jesus Christ.

Grant that all who share this bread and cup may become one body and one spirit, a living sacrifice in Christ, to the praise of your Name.

Remember, Lord, your one holy catholic and apostolic Church, redeemed by the blood of your Christ. Reveal its unity, guard its faith, and preserve it in peace.

And grant that we may find our inheritance with the Blessed Virgin Mary, with patriarchs, prophets, apostles, and martyrs, with Peter and all the saints who have found favor with you in ages past. We praise you in union with them and give you glory through your Son Jesus Christ our Lord. Through Christ, and with Christ, and in Christ, all honor and glory are yours, Almighty God and Father, in the unity of the Holy Spirit, for ever and ever. *AMEN.*

And now, as our Savior Christ has taught us, we are bold to say,

**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,
for ever and ever. Amen.**

The Breaking of the Bread

Celebrant Alleluia. Christ our Passover is sacrificed for us;
People **Therefore let us keep the feast. Alleluia.**

Communion Hymns

Emmanuel

**Emmanuel, Emmanuel, His name is called Emmanuel.
God in our midst, revealed to us, His name is called Emmanuel.**

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The Lord Is My Light

**The Lord is my light and my salvation,
the Lord is my light and my salvation,
the Lord is my light and my salvation;
whom shall I fear?**

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Postcommunion Hymn

While We Are Waiting Come

**While we are waiting come; while we are waiting come.
Jesus, our Lord, Emmanuel, while we are waiting come.**

**Come Savior quickly come; come, Savior, quickly come.
Jesus, our Lord, Emmanuel, while we are waiting come.**

**With power and glory, come; with power and glory, come.
Jesus, our Lord, Emmanuel, while we are waiting come.**

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Postcommunion Prayer

**Eternal God, heavenly Father, you have graciously accepted us as living members
of your Son our Savior Jesus Christ, and you have fed us with spiritual food
in the Sacrament of his Body and Blood. Send us now into the world in peace,
and grant us strength and courage to love and serve you with gladness and single-
ness of heart; through Christ our Lord. Amen.**

The Blessing

Procession into the World

Christ Be Our Light

**Longing for light, we wait in darkness.
Longing for truth, we turn to you.
Make us your own, your holy people,
light for the world to see.**

refrain: **Christ be our light! Shine in our hearts.
Shine through the darkness.
Christ, be our light!
Shine in your church gathered today.**

**Longing for peace, our world is troubled.
Longing for hope, many despair.
Your word alone has power to save us.
Make us your living voice. *refrain***

**Many the gifts, many the people,
many the hearts that yearn to belong.
Let us be servants to one another,
signs of your kingdom come. *refrain***

text: Bernadette Farrell 1957/Music: Christ Be Our Light - Bernadette Farrell

The Dismissal Response

Thanks be to God. Alleluia, Alleluia.