

The Cathedral Church of St. James

Blue Christmas A Service of Remembrance and Hope

Tuesday, December 14, 2021 at 6:00pm



*The Cathedral Church of St. James
Diocese of Toronto • Anglican Church of Canada*

BLUE CHRISTMAS – A SERVICE OF REMEMBRANCE AND HOPE

Prelude

Please stand, as you are able.

Hymn **Hark the Glad Sound! The Saviour Comes** (vv. 1-2) Tune: Bristol

Hark the glad sound! The Saviour comes, the Saviour promised long:
Let every heart prepare a throne, and every voice a song.

Christ comes, the prisoners to release in Satan's bondage held;
The gates of brass before him burst, the iron fetters yield.

The Greeting

Officiant The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God and the fellowship
of the Holy Spirit be with you all.

People **And also with you.**

A Word of Welcome

A Collect

Please remain standing.

Officiant O God, the maker and redeemer of all, we gather in thankful
remembrance for the lives of all the faithful departed, especially our loved
ones, whom we continue to carry in our hearts. Mindful of the sure
benefits of your Son's saving passion and glorious resurrection and that
at last, you will gather up all things in Christ, we pray that they continue
to enjoy the fullness of your promises as they share in your nearer
presence; through Jesus Christ our Lord, who lives and reigns with you
in the unity of the Holy Spirit, God for ever and ever.

People **Amen.**

Hymn **Hark the Glad Sound! The Saviour Comes** (v. 3) Tune: Bristol

Christ comes, the broken heart to bind, the bleeding soul to cure;
And from the treasuries of grace to bless the humble poor.

Lighting the Candles in the Advent Wreath

First Candle – The Candle of Hope

Leader As we continue to experience the grief of the loss of our loved ones, we light the first candle, the candle of **HOPE**. Like God's people centuries ago, we also look forward with hope to the coming of the Savior. The Psalmist says this, "And now, O Lord, for what do I wait? My hope is in you." (*Psalm 39:7*)

People **Lord, may that same hope burn within us.**

The First Candle is lit.

Leader Let us pray.

Lord as we prepare to celebrate the birth of Jesus, grant that the light of your love for us will help us to become lights and signs of hope in the lives of those around us. Prepare our hearts for the joy and gladness of your coming, for Jesus is our hope.

People **Amen.**

Second Candle – The Candle of Peace

Leader As we feel the anxiety of a Christmas, of worry for ourselves, and all who have suffered the loss of those dear to them, we light the Second Candle of Advent, the candle of **PEACE**. We are reminded that Jesus is the Prince of Peace and that through him peace is found.

The Second Candle is lit.

Leader Let us pray.

Lord Jesus, Light of the World, the One who brings peace and saves your people from trouble. We ask that you would give us your peace. Help us today, and everyday to worship you, to hear your word, and to do your will. We ask this in the name of the one who was born in Bethlehem.

People **Amen.**

Third Candle – The Candle of Joy

Leader As we feel the pain of uncertainty, disruption in families, inequities in a troubled world, and the loneliness and grief of the pandemic, we light the candle of **JOY**. We remember the assuring words of God from the mouth of the prophet Isaiah: “Be glad and rejoice forever in what I am creating; for I am about to create Jerusalem as a joy, and its people as a delight.”
(*Isaiah 65:18*)

The Third Candle is lit.

Leader Let us pray.
We joyfully praise you, O Lord, for the fulfillment of your promise of a Saviour. Thank you for the gift of salvation through the birth of your Son, Jesus. Create us anew as we wait, and help us to see your glory as you fill our lives with peace, hope and joy.

People **Amen.**

Fourth Candle – The Candle of Love

Leader As we feel the burden of loneliness, the sense that no one can share our pain, we light the fourth candle, the candle of **LOVE**. The evangelist reminds us that “God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life”.
(*John 3:16*)

The Fourth Candle is lit.

Leader Let us pray.
Lord, you promise that the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord. Thank you for giving us your Son. Help us to extend the love of Jesus to all those whom you’ve put in our lives, and to see others as you see them, as dearly beloved children of God.

People **Amen.**

Hymn **Hark the Glad Sound! The Saviour Comes** (v. 4) Tune: Bristol
Our glad hosannas, Prince of Peace, thy welcome shall proclaim;
And heaven’s eternal arches ring with thy beloved Name.

The Reading

Luke 1: 46-56

Reader

A Reading from the Gospel according to Luke

And Mary said, 'My soul magnifies the Lord, and my spirit rejoices in God my Saviour, for he has looked with favour on the lowliness of his servant. Surely, from now on all generations will call me blessed; for the Mighty One has done great things for me, and holy is his name. His mercy is for those who fear him from generation to generation. He has shown strength with his arm; he has scattered the proud in the thoughts of their hearts. He has brought down the powerful from their thrones, and lifted up the lowly; he has filled the hungry with good things, and sent the rich away empty. He has helped his servant Israel, in remembrance of his mercy, according to the promise he made to our ancestors, to Abraham and to his descendants for ever.' And Mary remained with her for about three months and then returned to her home.

Reader

The word of the Lord.

People

Thanks be to God.

Reflection

Hymn

O Come, O Come Emmanuel (vv. 1,5,7)

Tune: Veni Emmanuel

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

Rejoice! Rejoice! Emmanuel shall come to you, O Israel!

O come, O Key of David, come, and open wide our heavenly home;
Make safe the way that leads on high, and close the path to misery.

Rejoice! Rejoice! Emmanuel Shall come to you, O Israel!

O come, Desire of nations, bind all peoples in one heart and mind.
O bid our bitter conflict cease, and be for us our Prince of Peace.

Rejoice! Rejoice! Emmanuel Shall come to you, O Israel!

Litany of Remembrance and Hope

Leader In the spirit of this season we approach the God of all hope and grace praying, “God of hope”, “Hear our prayer.”

That the peace proclaimed by the Christmas angels, may be visited throughout the world; God of hope,

People **Hear our prayer.**

Leader That’s all those who know pain and loneliness as a constant companion, and those who live without hope, may hear and receive the glad tidings of your love for them; God of hope,

People **Hear our prayer.**

Leader That our family and friends, and all who share our pain and grief, may know your peace and love; God of hope,

People **Hear our prayer.**

Leader That we do not try to minimize our loss during this time but in our vulnerability we might meet you, who came to us as a vulnerable child; God of hope,

People **Hear our prayer.**

Leader That for those things done and left undone, we might be forgiven and restored; God of hope,

People **Hear our prayer.**

Leader That nothing good in the lives of our departed loved ones be lost but will be of much value to the world; God of hope,

People **Hear our prayer.**

In silence or aloud let us remember our departed loved ones.

Leader Rest eternal grant to them, O Lord.

People **And let light perpetual shine upon them.**

Leader May the souls of the departed, through the mercy of God rest in peace and rise in glory.

People **Amen.**

Blessing of the Doves

Officiant O God, whose blessed Son has sanctified and transfigured the use of material things: Received these doves, which we will now offer in memory of our loved ones who are no longer with us. May they be a reminder of the love, joy, and peace they shared with us and now share with you and all the saints in light; through Jesus Christ our Lord.

People **Amen.**

Prayer Before the Votive Candles are Lighted

Officiant Gracious God, accept these candles which we now light in your name. May they be a sign of your presence and the promise of eternal light, through Jesus Christ our Lord.

People **Amen.**

Doves on the Tree of Hope

Members are invited to light a votive candle at the St. John's chapel and then hang a white dove on the Christmas tree in memory of the departed.

Final Prayers

Loneliness and Love

Leader Loving God be with us in our loneliness. Give us wisdom to see one another's sorrows, and to comfort one another. We pray for all those who are lonely and missing the presence of friends and family, and for those who will celebrate Christmas alone this year. Help us to see those around us who are willing to help us. We give thanks for all those we love, and for those who us and for those who live a life of love to ease the loneliness of others in their ministry to the sick and dying, the homeless and hungry and those in prisons. We thank you in all things for the greatest gift of love to us all, as revealed in your Son Jesus Christ.

Silence

Stress and Faith

Leader Loving God, give us a simple faith to trust in you. We pray for all who find it difficult to face the celebration of Christmas. Give us grace to turn away from envy, discouragement, and fear, and to find peace in your coming to be God-with-us. We remember those facing challenges in employment, finances, health or relationships. May we be assured of

your longing for our security; help us to put our trust in you, whatever our difficulties may be.

Silence

Uncertainty and Hope

Leader Loving God, we turn to you in our unknowing. We pray for those who have lost comforting familiar things: a job, a home, family support, the presence of friends, and for those who have suffered a loss of health or for whom daily life is becoming more difficult or painful. Help us to see hope in new circumstances and give us the patience to accept change, whatever it looks like. Comfort us, in this moment and may we trust in the renewing power of your spirit.

Silence

People Lord, in your mercy,
Hear our prayer. Amen.

The Advent Blessing and Dismissal

Officiant Be steadfast in faith, joyful in hope, and untiring in love all the days of your life; and the blessing of God almighty, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit, be among you and remain with you always.

People **Amen.**

Officiant Go in peace to love and serve the Lord.

People **Thanks be to God.**

Postlude

Officiant: The Reverend Canon Beth Benson

Homilist: The Reverend Canon Dr. Stephen Fields

Reader: The Very Reverend Stephen Vail

Candle Lighters: Peggy Crowther, Peter Harris & Jayne Hobbs

Litany: Nick Tunnacliffe

Music Director & Organist: Thomas Bell

Cantor: Jonathan Stuchbery