

The Cathedral Church of St. James

Blue Christmas A Service of Remembrance and Hope

Saturday, December 17, 2022 at 4:00pm



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

BLUE CHRISTMAS – A SERVICE OF REMEMBRANCE AND HOPE

Prelude

The service starts after a period of silence.

A Collect

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 O Come, O Come Emmanuel

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 Wisdom from on high, who orders all things mightily;
to us the path of knowledge show, and teach us in her ways to go.

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

The Greeting

Officiant Grace and peace to you from God our Father, and the Lord, Jesus Christ.

People **Grace and peace to you.**

A Word of Welcome

Hymn O Come, O Come Emmanuel

Tune: Veni Emmanuel

O come, O come, great Lord of might, who to your tribes on Sinai's height
in ancient times once gave the law, in cloud and majesty and awe.

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

O come, O Rod of Jesse's stem, from every foe deliver them
that trust your mighty power to save, and give them victory o'er the grave.

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

Lighting the Candles in the Advent Wreath

The First Candle – 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 Saviour. The Psalmist says:

A Psalm of Hope: Psalm 121

One I lift up my eyes to the hills;
from where is my help to come?

All **My help comes from the Lord,
the maker of heaven and earth.**

One He will not let your foot be moved
and he who watches over you will not fall asleep.

All **Behold, he who keeps watch over Israel
shall neither slumber nor sleep;**

One The Lord himself watches over you;
the Lord is your shade at your right hand,

All **So that the sun shall not strike you by day,
nor the moon by night.**

One The Lord shall preserve you from all evil;
it is he who shall keep you safe.

All **The Lord shall watch over your going out and your coming in,
from this time forth for evermore.**

Leader Be present, merciful God, and protect us in times of danger, so that we who are wearied by the changes and chances of this life may rest in your eternal changelessness; through Jesus Christ our Lord.

People **Amen.**

The First Candle is lit.

Leader Let us pray.

All **Loving Lord, we prepare to celebrate the birth of Jesus, though our hearts may be weighed down with grief, 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. Amen.**

Music

The Second Candle – Peace

Leader In anticipation of the Christmas celebrations which can be a difficult time for those who have suffered the loss of loved ones, we light the Second Candle of Advent, the candle of **PEACE**. This candle reminds us that Jesus, the Prince of Peace, offers us his peace. The Psalmist says:

A Psalm of Peace: Psalm 29

One Ascribe to the Lord, you gods,
ascribe to the Lord glory and strength.

All **Ascribe to the Lord the glory due his name;
worship the Lord in the beauty of holiness.**

One The voice of the Lord is upon the waters; the God of glory thunders;
the Lord is upon the mighty waters.

All **The voice of the Lord is a powerful voice;
the voice of the Lord is a voice of splendour.**

One The voice of the Lord breaks the cedar trees;
the Lord breaks the cedars of Lebanon;

All **He makes Lebanon skip like a calf,
and Mount Hermon like a young wild ox.**

One The voice of the Lord splits the flames of fire;
the voice of the Lord shakes the wilderness;
the Lord shakes the wilderness of Kadesh.

All **The voice of the Lord makes the oak trees writhe
and strips the forests bare.**

One And in the temple of the Lord
all are crying, "Glory!"

All **The Lord sits enthroned above the flood;
the Lord sits enthroned as king for evermore.**

One The Lord shall give strength to his people;

All **the Lord shall give his people the blessing of peace.**

Leader God of mystery and power, open our eyes to the flame of your love, and open our ears to the thunder of your justice, that we may receive your gifts of blessing and peace, to the glory of your name; through Jesus Christ our Lord.

People **Amen.**

The Second Candle is lit.

Leader Let us pray.

All **Lord Jesus, Light of the World, who brings peace, comforts the broken and the bereaved, give us your peace. Help us today, and every day to worship you, and to hear your invitation to all who are carrying heavy burdens to come to you where we find rest for our souls. We ask this in the name of the one who is our peace. Amen.**

Music

The Third Candle – Joy

Leader In our anxiety and uncertainty about the things we cannot control, disruption in families, inequities in a troubled world, and the loneliness and grief of the ongoing 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 Psalmist says:

A Psalm of Joy: Psalm 126

One When the Lord restored the fortunes of Zion,
then were we like those who dream.

All **Then was our mouth filled with laughter,
and our tongue with shouts of joy.**

One Then they said among the nations,
“The Lord has done great things for them.”

All **The Lord has done great things for us,
and we are glad indeed.**

One Restore our fortunes, O Lord,
like the watercourses of the Negev.

All **Those who sowed with tears
will reap with songs of joy.**

One Those who go out weeping, carrying the seed,

All **will come again with joy, shouldering their sheaves.**

Leader Praise to you, God of our salvation. Your generous gifts surpass all that we can ask or imagine. You have delivered us from the exile of sin and restored us to new life in Jesus Christ our Saviour. Glory and honour and praise to you for ever and ever.

People **Amen.**

The Third Candle is lit.

Leader Let us pray.

All **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 your joy. Amen.**

Music

The Fourth Candle – 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 Psalmist says:

A Psalm of Love: Psalm 86: 1-5

One Bow down your ear, O Lord, and answer me,
for I am poor and in misery.

All **Keep watch over my life, for I am faithful;
save your servant who puts his trust in you.**

One Be merciful to me, O Lord, for you are my God;
I call upon you all the day long.

All **Gladden the soul of your servant,
for to you, O Lord, I lift up my soul.**

One For you, O Lord, are good and forgiving,

All **and great is your love toward all who call upon you.**

Leader God of mercy, fill us with the love of your name, and help us to proclaim you before the world, that all peoples may celebrate your glory in Jesus Christ our Lord

People **Amen.**

The Fourth Candle is lit.

Leader Let us pray.

All **Lord of all creation, thank you for your love made known to us in your Son, Jesus Christ. Help us to share that love with all those whom you have put in our lives in our time of bereavement and remembrance, and to see others as you see them, cherished and beloved. Amen.**

Music

Hymn O Come, O Come Emmanuel

Tune: Veni Emmanuel

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 thee, O Israel.

O come, O Dayspring from on high and cheer us by your drawing nigh;
disperse the gloomy clouds of night, and death's dark shadow put to flight.

Rejoice! Rejoice! Emmanuel shall come to thee, O Israel.

O come, Desire of nations, bind in one the hearts of humankind;
O bid our bitter conflict cease, and be for us our Prince of Peace.

Rejoice! Rejoice! Emmanuel shall come to thee, O Israel.

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 Hark the Glad Sound! The Saviour Comes

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.

Christ comes, the broken heart to bind, the bleeding soul to cure,
and from the treasures of grace to bless the humble poor.

Our glad hosannas, Prince of Peace, thy welcome shall proclaim;
and heaven's eternal arches ring with thy beloved name.

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 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: may these doves, which we will now offer in memory of our departed loved ones, be a reminder of the love, joy, and peace they shared when they were with us and now share in your nearer presence with you with 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 and 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.**

Hymn People, Look East!

Tune: Bensançon

People, look east! The time is near
of the crowning of the year.

Make your house fair as you are able,
trim the hearth and set the table.

People, look east and sing today:
Love, the guest, is on the way.

Stars, keep the watch. When night is dim
one more light the bowl shall brim,
Shining beyond the frosty weather,
bright as sun and moon together.
People, look east and sing today:
Love, the star, is on the way.

Angels, announce with shouts of mirth
Christ who brings new life to earth.
Set every peak and valley humming
with the word, the Lord is coming.
People, look east and sing today:
Love, the Lord, is on the way.

Officiant Let us bless the Lord

People **Thanks be to God.**

Postlude

*Members of the clergy are available in the Lady, St. John's and
St. George's chapels for prayer.*

Officiant: The Reverend Canon Dr. Stephen Fields

Reflection: The Very Reverend Peter Wall

Reader: Karin Tari

Candle Lighters: Leslie Derbecker, Nick Tunnacliffe, Daisy Pittis, Quentin Toderick

Litany: Peggy Crowther and Peter Harris

Final Prayers: The Reverend Canon Beth Benson

Music Director & Organist: Thomas Bell

Guitarist: Jonathan Stuchbery