

Lord, hear our prayer.

We have lost a beloved, a job, a goal, a cause, a dream. We find ourselves adrift and alone. We are weary from the journey, and we have found no room at the inn. We come to you seeking rest, and peace, and shelter from the storm.

Lord, hear our prayer.

God of love, in this Christmas Season we embrace and offer up to you all that used to be which is now lost to us, and cannot be again. With celebration all around us, memories of what was, and fears of what may be, weigh heavy on our hearts. Please hold us close in your embrace, be near to us this night, until the light returns and morning comes.

Lord, hear our prayer.

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

Amen.

HYMN

IT CAME UPON THE MIDNIGHT CLEAR

#218, v.1, 3, & 4

WORDS BY EDMUND H. SEARS

MUSIC BY RICHARD STORRS WILLIS

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1. It came upon the midnight clear, that glorious song of old, from angels bending near the earth to touch their harps of gold: "Peace on the earth, good will to men, from heaven's all-gracious King." The world in solemn stillness lay, to hear the angels sing.
3. And ye, beneath life's crushing load, whose forms are bending low, who toil along the climbing way with painful steps and slow, look now! for glad and golden hours come swiftly on the wing. O rest beside the weary road, and hear the angels sing!
4. For lo! the days are hastening on, by prophet seen of old, when with the ever circling years shall come the time foretold when peace shall over all the earth its ancient splendors fling, and the whole world send back the song which now the angels sing.

FOURTH READING

LUKE 2:1-7

DEVOTIONAL

PSALM 121

I will lift up mine eyes unto the hills, from where comes my help. My help comes from the Lord, who has made heaven and earth. He will not suffer thy foot to be moved; he that keeps us will not slumber; behold, the God that keeps Israel shall neither slumber nor sleep. The Lord is our keeper; the Lord is my shade upon thy right hand. The sun shall not defeat me by day nor the moon at night. The Lord shall preserve me from all evil and shall sustain my soul. He shall preserve my going out and my coming in, from this time forth and forevermore.

***HYMN**

O COME, ALL YE FAITHFUL

#234, v. 1-3

WORDS & MUSIC BY JOHN F. WADE

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1. O come all ye faithful, joyful and triumphant, O come ye, O come ye, to Bethlehem. Come and behold him, born the King of angels;
Refrain: O come, let us adore him, O come, let us adore him, O come, let us adore him, Christ the Lord.
2. True God of true God, Light from Light Eternal, lo, he shuns not the Virgin's womb; Son of the Father, begotten, not created; [Refrain]
3. Sing, choirs of angels, sing in exultation; O sing, all ye citizens of heaven above! Glory to God, all glory in the highest; [Refrain]

***PRAYER**

Another day will come, O God. I know not what it may bring forth, but make me ready, God, for whatever it may be. If I am to stand up, help me to stand bravely. If I am to sit still, help me to sit quietly. If I am to lie low, help me to rest peacefully. And if I am to do nothing, help me to do it gallantly. Make these words more than words, and give me the Spirit of thy Peace. Amen.

***BLESSING AND DISMISSAL**

POSTLUDE

CHRISTMAS CHORUS

Blue Christmas Service

*Sunday
December 5, 2021
5:00 PM
Sanctuary & Online*



FIRST UNITED METHODIST CHURCH

406 SHIRLEY ST. • DERIDDER, LA 70634 • 337.463.4491

WWW.FUMCIDERIDDER.ORG • INFO@FUMCIDERIDDER.ORG

*Central to DeRidder, Centered in Christ
Our Mission is to Grow and Serve in Christ*

ORDER OF WORSHIP

PRELUDE
SILENT NIGHT
FRANZ GRUBER & BOB MCGEE

WORDS OF WELCOME
REV. LARAINÉ WAUGHTAL

REFLECTIVE READING

***HYMN**
O LITTLE TOWN OF BETHLEHEM
#230

WORDS BY PHILLIPS BROOKS
MUSIC BY LEWIS H. REDNER
USED BY PERMISSION. CCLI LICENSE #1203752

1. 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.
3. How silently, how silently, the wondrous gift is given; so God imparts to human hearts the blessings of his heaven. No ear may hear his coming, but in this world of sin, where meek souls will receive him, still the dear Christ enters in.
4. O holy Child of Bethlehem, descend to us, we pray; cast out our sin, and enter in, be born in us today. We hear the Christmas angels the great glad tidings tell; O come to us, abide with us, our Lord Emmanuel!

FIRST READING
ECCLESIASTES 3:1-11

PSALM 22

My God, my God, why have you forsaken me? Why are you so far from helping me, so far from the words of my groaning?

O my God, I cry by day but you do not answer, and by night, but I find no rest.

In you, our ancestors trusted. They trusted and you delivered them.

It was you who brought me from the womb, you who kept me safe on my mother's breast. Since my mother bore me, you have been my God.

Do not be far from me, for trouble is near and there is no one to help.

God does not despise the affliction of the afflicted. God does not hide from me. When I cry to God, God hears me. Thanks be to God.

SECOND READING
ISAIAH 43:1-3A

***HYMN**
GREAT IS THY FAITHFULNESS
#140, v. 1 & 3

WORDS BY THOMAS O. CHISHOLM
MUSIC BY WILLIAM M. RUNYAN
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1. Great is thy faithfulness, O God my Father; there is no shadow of turning with thee; thou changest not, thy compassions, they fail not; as thou hast been, thou forever wilt be.
Refrain: Great is thy faithfulness! Great is thy faithfulness! Morning by morning new mercies I see; all I have needed thy hand hath provided; great is thy faithfulness, Lord, unto me!
3. Pardon for sin and a peace that endureth, thine own dear presence to cheer and to guide; strength for today and bright hope for tomorrow, blessings all mine, with ten thousand beside! [Refrain]

LITANY OF REMEMBRANCE
FIRST CANDLE IS LIGHTED

We light this first candle to remember those whom we have loved and lost. We pause to remember clearly, their faces and their voices. 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.

SUNG RESPONSE

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 thee, O Israel.

SILENT REFLECTION

SECOND CANDLE IS LIGHTED

We light this second candle to remember the pain of loss: loss of relationships, loss of trust, loss of jobs, loss of health, loss of faith, the loss of joy, the loss from Covid-19, and the loss from hurricanes. 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, renew us, O God, and lead us into Your future.

SUNG RESPONSE

O come, thou Wisdom from on high, and order all things far and nigh; to us the path of knowledge show and cause us in her ways to go. Rejoice! Rejoice! Emmanuel shall come to thee, O Israel.

SILENT REFLECTION

THIRD CANDLE IS LIGHTED

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. 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 accept and lay before you the time we have walked alone, in darkness; and in knowledge of our own mortality.

We remember that though we have journeyed far, and that, while lost, we may have turned away from the light, the light itself has not failed. We remember that though winter be upon us and though the night be dark, with the turning of the wheel the dawn will come, and light defeats the darkness.

SUNG RESPONSE

O come, thou Dayspring, come and cheer our spirits by thy justice here; disperse the gloomy clouds of night, and death's dark shadows put to flight. Rejoice! Rejoice! Emmanuel shall come to thee, O Israel.

SILENT REFLECTION

FOURTH CANDLE IS LIGHTED

We light this fourth candle to remember faith, the gift of light and hope that God offers to us in the stories of Christmas, which also began in abandonment, insecurity, and humbleness, and in a poor stable. We remember that the loving God who kept the light shining in the temple and 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 with us into all our tomorrows.

SUNG RESPONSE

O come, Desire of nations bind all peoples in one heart and mind. From dust thou brought us forth to life; deliver us from earthly strife. Rejoice! Rejoice! Emmanuel shall come to thee, O Israel.

LAYING OUR BURDENS DOWN

SILENT REFLECTION

THIRD READING
ISAIAH 40:1-5, 11, 28-31

THE PRAYERS OF THE PEOPLE

God of wisdom, we come to you this Christmas Season tired, in turmoil, and in pain. As the nights have grown longer, so has darkness grown and wrapped itself around our hearts. In this season of longest night, we ask your healing blessings upon all that we carry in our hearts —

Lord, hear our prayer.

God of mercy and compassion, there are those among us who are grieving over what might have been. Death or loss or terrible hurt has changed our experience of Christmas. We remember that once it was a special day for us, too, but someone or something precious has gone away from us in this life.