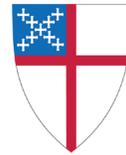




Trinity Episcopal
Church - Anoka



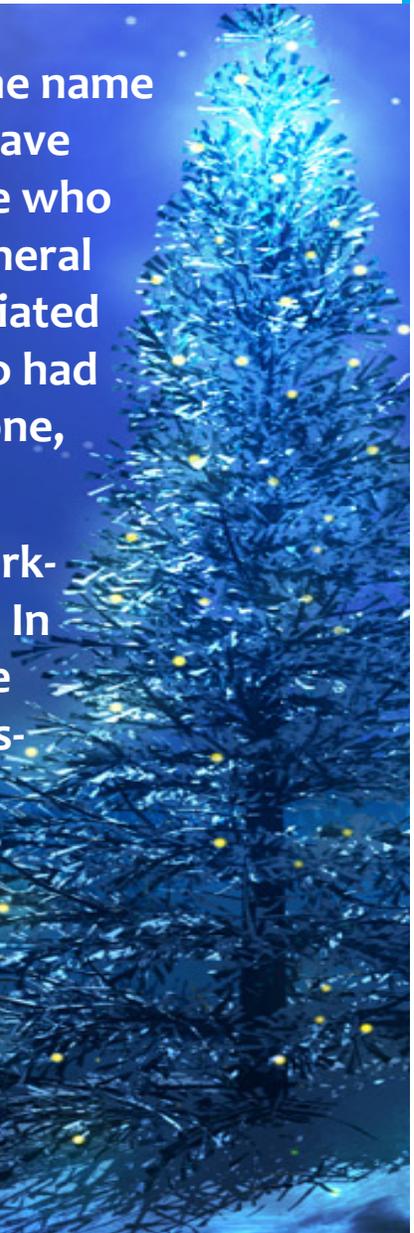
A WELCOMING FAITH COMMUNITY

BLUE CHRISTMAS SERVICE

DECEMBER 21, 2020 | 7:00 PM | VIRTUAL

Welcome to this Blue Christmas service. The name applies to the feeling that a number of us have about this season. This is a service for those who feel at odds with or estranged from the general feeling of joy and happiness typically associated with this time of year. You may be one who had suffered a personal loss: death of a loved one, divorce, illness, or job loss.

This is also the longest night of the year, darkness reminds us of our loneliness, our loss. In this service, we will have songs appropriate to the season, recognizing this is not necessarily a season of joy. We will invite you to meditate on the pain and anguish you may be holding and offer your pain to the Christ Child. This service seeks to comfort you by reminding you that you are not alone and that your feelings are honored.



Order of Service

PRELUDE: *Mary, Did You Know?/Corelli Christmas Concerto*;
arranged by Al Van Der Beek and Steven Sharp Nelson;
Amelia Podolny, cello; Mary Jo Gothmann, piano

WELCOME/ANNOUNCEMENTS

CALL TO WORSHIP:

Edwin Friedman once wrote: "It may be said unequivocally that whenever anyone is in extremis (whether it is a marital crisis, an economic crisis, a political crisis, or a health crisis), their chances of survival are far greater when their horizons are formed of projected images from their own imagination rather than being limited by what they can actually see." So tonight we come together to imagine. Tonight, we come to imagine a place of refuge,

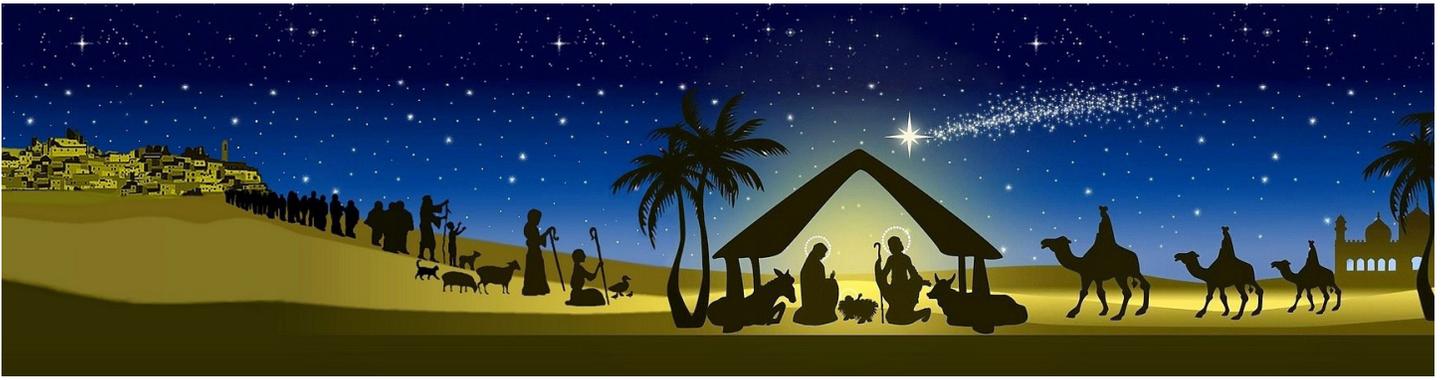
for we are lost, we are lonely, we are afraid.

Tonight, we dare to imagine if God has indeed come in Jesus,
discerning the rejection we have known, intimate with our failed relationships, holding our heartache in hands of tenderness.

Tonight, a family made one by our brokenness,
coming with our hearts full of hope, and our pockets filled with doubts.

Tonight, we come just as we are,
for God has promised to meet us here and to welcome us for who we are.





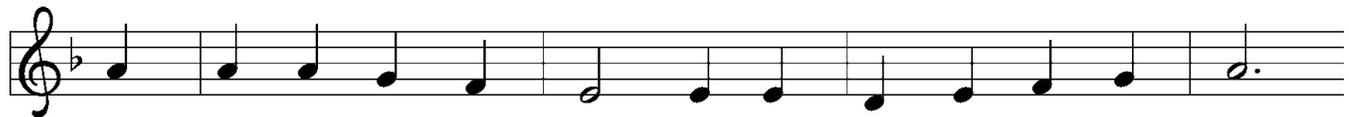
OPENING HYMN: O Little Town of Bethlehem ELW #279 vs. 1 and 2



O lit - tle town of Beth - le - hem, how still we see thee lie!
 For Christ is born of Mar - y, and, gath - ered all a - bove
 How si - lent - ly, how si - lent - ly the won - drous gift is giv'n!
 O ho - ly child of Beth - le - hem, de - scend to us, we pray;



A - bove thy deep and dream-less sleep the si - lent stars go by;
 while mor-tals sleep, the an - gels keep their watch of won-d'ring love.
 So God im - parts to hu - man hearts the bless - ings of his heav'n.
 cast out our sin, and en - ter in, be born in us to - day.



yet in thy dark streets shin - eth the ev - er - last - ing light.
 O morn - ing stars, to - geth - er pro - claim the ho - ly birth,
 No ear may hear his com - ing; but, in this world of sin,
 We hear the Christ - mas an - gels the great glad tid - ings tell;



The hopes and fears of all the years are met in thee to - night.
 and prais - es sing to God the king, and peace to all the earth!
 where meek souls will re - ceive him, still the dear Christ en - ters in.
 oh, come to us, a - bide with us, our Lord Im - man - u - el!

PRAYER OF CONFESSION AND ABSOLUTION:

God, we come to you in this season, 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. The memories of what was, the fears of what may be, stifle us.

Merciful God, forgive us. Our will is handcuffed to sin, and we cannot break free. We have been angry and afraid. We have been captive to our fear and not trusted you with our whole heart. Have mercy on us, through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

Listen, the truth is that God loves you so much. It's a crazy love that forgives you even before you have said a word. You don't have to do this on your own. The Holy Spirit is bound to you. The Spirit will walk with you and help you. It has and will keep blowing in your life. You are forgiven in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit.

HYMN: O Little Town of Bethlehem #279 vs. 3 and 4
(see previous page)

FIRST READING: Isaiah 40:1, 25-31

SECOND READING: Revelation 21:1-7

GOSPEL READING: Matthew 11:28-30

MEDITATION: Pr. Connie Tiede



LITANY OF REMEMBRANCE:

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

HYMN: O Come, O Come, Emmanuel #257 vs. 1



1 O come, O come, Em - man - u - el, and ran - som cap - tive
2 O come, O Wis - dom from on high, em - brac - ing all things
3 O come, O come, O Lord of might, as to your tribes on
4 O come, O Branch of Jes - se, free your own from Sa - tan's



Is - ra - el, that mourns in lone - ly ex - ile here
far and nigh: in strength and beau - ty come and stay;
Si - nai's height in an - cient times you gave the law
tyr - an - ny; from depths of hell your peo - ple save,



un - til the Son of God ap - pear.
teach us your will and guide our way. Re-joyce! Re-joyce!
in cloud, and maj - es - ty, and awe.
and give them vic - t'ry o'er the grave.



Em - man - u - el shall come to you, O Is - ra - el.

Text: *Psalterium Canticum Catholicarum*, Köln, 1710; tr. composite
Music: VENI, EMMANUEL, French processional, 15th cent.
Text sts. 2, 6, 7 © 1997 Augsburg Fortress.

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Silent reflection

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. 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.



We remember that through you Lord, all things are possible. Refresh, restore, renew us, O God, and lead us into your future.

HYMN: O Come, O Come, Emmanuel #257 vs. 2

O come, O Wisdom from on high,
embracing all things far and nigh:
in strength and beauty come and stay;
teach us your will and guide our way.
Rejoice! Rejoice! Emmanuel
shall come to you, O Israel.

Silent reflection

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 of 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 isolation; 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 worrisome, dawn will come and defeat the loneliness.

HYMN: O Come, O Come, Emmanuel #257 vs. 7

O come, O King of nations, come,
O Cornerstone that binds in one:
refresh the hearts that long for you;
restore the broken, make us new.
Rejoice! Rejoice! Emmanuel
shall come to you, O Israel.

Silent reflection

We light this fourth candle to remember faith, the gift of light and hope that God offers to us in the story of Christmas, which began with insecurity, humbleness, in a time of violence and in a poor stable. We remember that our loving God gave a star to light the way to the savior who comes to share this life with us and 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.

HYMN: O Come, O Come, Emmanuel #257 verse 8

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.

PRAYERS OF THE CHURCH

In your merciful love...

Hear our prayer

OFFERING

SPECIAL MUSIC: *O Come O Come Emmanuel*; arr. by Jon Schmidt, Al Van Der Beek & Steven Sharp Nelson; Amelia Podolny, cello; Mary Jo Gothmann, piano

LIGHTING OF THE INDIVIDUAL CANDLES:

Each of us comes bearing our own hurts, sorrows, broken places. I want to invite each of you to offer your personal wound to the God who loves each of us deeply and wants to carry our pain. God waits patiently, gently calling out: “Give me your pain, come to me...all who labor and are heavy laden and I will give you rest.”

I invite you to light a candle in your home. As you light the candle, remember that it is God who lights a candle in our darkness and holds us close until we are able to shine.

SPECIAL MUSIC: *What Child is This?*; arr. by Jon Schmidt, Al Van Der Beek and Steven Sharp Nelson; Amelia Podolny, cello; Mary Jo Gothmann, piano

These lights in their brightness are only symbols, but as they burn and finally go out, we remember that suffering passes, though the memory remains forever.

BENEDICTION

May the hope of the Christ Child sustain us.
That together we may shine again. Amen.



HYMN: Silent Night, Holy Night ELW #281

Stil - le Nacht, hei - li - ge Nacht! Al - les schläft,
 1 Si - lent night, ho - ly night! All is calm,
 2 Si - lent night, ho - ly night! Shep - herds quake
 3 Si - lent night, ho - ly night! Son of God,

ein - sam wacht nur das trau - te, hoch - hei - li - ge Paar.
 all is bright round yon vir - gin moth - er and child.
 at the sight; glo - ries stream from heav - en a - far,
 love's pure light ra - diant beams from your ho - ly face,

Hol - der Kna - be im lok - ki - gen Haar, schlaf in himm - li - scher
 Ho - ly In - fant, so ten - der and mild, sleep in heav - en - ly
 heav'n - ly hosts . . . sing, al - le - lu - ia! Christ, the Sav - ior, is
 with the dawn of re - deem - ing grace, Je - sus, Lord, at your

Ruh, schlaf in himm - li - scher Ruh.
 peace, sleep in heav - en - ly peace.
 born! Christ, the Sav - ior, is born!
 birth, Je - sus, Lord, at your birth.

DISMISSAL

Go now in Peace.

Thanks be to God.

POSTLUDE: *Silent Night*; arr. by Jon Schmidt, Al Van Der Beek and Steven Sharp Nelson; Amelia Podolny, cello; Mary Jo Gothmann, piano



PARTICIPANTS:

Rev. Philp Boelter – Trinity Episcopal Church, Anoka
Rev. Galen Hora – Cross of Hope Lutheran Church, Ramsey
Rev. Laura Hannah – United Methodist Church, Anoka
Rev. Connie Tiede – Zion Lutheran Church, Anoka
Rev. David Lechelt – Lord of Life Lutheran Church, Ramsey
Rev. Joanna Mitchell – Grace Lutheran Church, Andover
Rev. Maria Markman – Grace Lutheran Church, Andover
Rev. Chris McArdle – Anoka United Church of Christ

MUSICIANS:

Mary Jo Gothmann – organist
Amelia Podolny – cellist
Nancy Nordin – vocalist
Bruce Messer – vocalist
Sound & Livestreaming – Rev. Mike Rueckert & Josh Myroniuk



Please join us for

Virtual Worship at Zion

Christmas Eve - December 24th

- **Livestream**
www.Zionanoka.org click on 'Worship Online'
10:00 AM; 12 NOON, 1:30 PM, 3:00 PM, 4:00 PM,
5:30 PM, 8:00 PM, 11:00 PM, & 12 MIDNIGHT
- **Metro Cable Network Cable Channel 6**
4:00 PM, 5:30 PM , 8:00 PM , & 11:00 PM
- **106.1 BOB-FM Radio** - 4:00 PM & 12 MIDNIGHT

Christmas Day - December 25

- **Livestream**
www.Zionanoka.org click on 'Worship Online'
9:00 AM & 10:00 AM

*All Christmas services include candle
lighting, communion and carols.*

