

*Lacey United Methodist Church
2024 Blue Christmas Service*

Prelude

Call to Worship

In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. All things were made by God, and without God nothing came to be. What came to be through God was life, and this life was the light of the world.

**The Light shines in the darkness,
and the darkness has not overcome it.**

Welcome

***Hymn** *In the Bleak Midwinter* **UMH 221 (v. 1,3)**

Reading: Isaiah 40:1, 25-31

***Psalter: Psalm 13 UMH 746**

***Hymn** **Lo, How A Rose E'er Blooming** **UMH 216 (v. 1,3)**

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.

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

*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.
(A period of 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, shalom.

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

*O come thou Wisdom from on high, who orders all things far
and nigh. To us the path of knowledge show,
and teach us in those ways to go.
Rejoice, rejoice, Emmanuel shall come to thee, O Israel.
(A period of 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 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.

All: 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 dawn defeats the darkness.

*O come thou day-spring, come and cheer our spirits
by thy advent here. Disperse the gloomy clouds of night,
and death's dark shadows put to flight
Rejoice, rejoice Emmanuel shall come to thee, O Israel.
(A period of 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 in abandonment, insecurity, and humbleness, in a time of oppression and in a poor stable. We remember that the loving God who came to share this life with us promises us comfort and peace.

All: 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. O come desire of nations, bind in one the hearts of all humankind

*Bid then our sad, divisions cease,
and be thyself our King of Peace
Rejoice, rejoice, Emmanuel shall come to thee, O Israel.
(A period of silent reflection)*

Reading: Luke 2:25-35

Reflection: The Pain of Love

The Prayers of the People

(During this time, please lift up the name(s) of those you mourn as you light a candle in their memory or light a candle to remind yourself of the light of Christ during your difficult journey)

***Hymn Be Still, My Soul UMH 534 (v.1,2,3)**

Concluding Prayer

Let us pray:

All: 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 do it patiently. And if I am to do nothing, help me do it gallantly. Make these words more than words, and give me the Spirit of thy Peace. Amen.

O God, support us all the daylong in this troubled life, until the shadows lengthen and the evening comes, and the busy world is hushed, and the fever of life is over, and our work is done. Then Lord, in thy mercy, grant us safe lodging, and a holy rest, and peace at the last. Amen.

Blessing and Dismissal

The Lord bless you and keep you; the Lord make his face to shine upon you and be gracious unto you; the Lord lift up his countenance upon you, and give you peace, both now and forever more. Amen.

The peace of the Lord be always with you.

And also with you.

People may greet one another in the name of the Lord.

Lacey United Methodist Church

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