



*Blue Christmas (Longest Night)
A Service of Healing and Hope*

First Presbyterian Church of Belle Vernon
501 Fayette Avenue
Rostraver Township, PA 15012

Blue Christmas (Longest Night) Service

December 16, 2023

PRELUDE

GREETING

Pastor

OPENING PRAYER

Pastor

CALL TO WORSHIP

Led by Liturgist

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.

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

HYMN

“O Little Town of Bethlehem” (vv 1 and 4)

**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.**

**O holy Child of Bethlehem, descend to us we pray.
Cast out our sin, and enter in, be born in us this day.
We hear the Christmas angels the great glad tidings tell.
O come to us, abide with us, our Lord Emmanuel.**

SCRIPTURE

Ecclesiastes 3:1-11 (NIV)

Liturgist

REFLECTION

Pastor

RESPONSIVE SCRIPTURE: Psalm 22

Liturgist

Leader: 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?

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

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

**People: 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.**

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

**People: 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.**

REFLECTION

Pastor

***SCRIPTURE**

PSALM 23 (NIV)

Led by Liturgist

**1 The Lord is my shepherd, I lack nothing. 2 He makes me lie
down in green pastures, he leads me beside quiet waters,
3 he refreshes my soul. He guides me along the right paths for
his name's sake. 4 Even though I walk through the darkest
valley, I will fear no evil, for you are with me; your rod and
your staff, they comfort me. 5 You prepare a table before me
in the presence of my enemies. You anoint my head with oil;
my cup overflows. 6 Surely your goodness and love will follow
me all the days of my life and I will dwell in the house of the
Lord forever.**

“Comfort, Comfort You My People”

Nathan C George and Family

(Used with permission)

LITANY OF REMEMBRANCE

(The first candle is lighted.)

Pastor: . . . 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

The second candle is lighted.

Pastor: . . . 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 orderest all things
mightily. To us the path of knowledge show, and teach us in
her ways to go. Rejoice, rejoice, Emmanuel shall come to
thee, O Israel.”

A period of silent reflection

The third candle is lighted.

Pastor: . . . 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 dayspring, 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

The fourth candle is lighted.

Pastor: . . . 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 mankind 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

The Christ Candle is lighted.

Pastor: . . .dispelling the shadows of grief, hopelessness, and pain.

OFFERING OF LIGHT

Pastor

INVITATION

Liturgist

MUSIC

**Psalm 121 (He Watches Over You)
[feat. Luke Lynass] by The Psalms Project**

***PRAYER (ALL STAND)**

Liturgist: Let us pray.

Almighty God, we thank you for your constant love and for the blessings of this day. We know that even when we cannot see or feel you, still you are there. Help us to remember you and to listen for your voice in the words of family, friends, and strangers.

Kindle our hearts and awaken hope, that we may know you as you reveal yourself in the world and in our lives. Let the light of your Holy Spirit shine like these candles in the darkness, lighting the way for all who feel despairing, lost, or forgotten, and grant that it may come to dwell so deeply in our hearts that when we leave this place it may shine on, for us and for those we meet along the way. Amen.

Hymn

“Silent Night”

Verses 1 and 3

**Silent night, holy night,
All is calm, all is bright
Round yon virgin mother and Child,
Holy Infant, so tender and mild.
Sleep in heavenly peace.
Sleep in heavenly peace.**

**Silent night, holy night,
Son of God, love's pure light
Radiant beams from Thy holy face,
With the dawn of redeeming grace,
Jesus, Lord, at Thy birth.
Jesus, Lord, at Thy birth.**

Concluding Prayers *(Remain standing.)*

**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.**

Closing Prayer

Pastor

Blessing and Dismissal

Liturgy adapted from Cathedral Church of St. Andrew, 229
Queen Emma Square, Honolulu, HI 96813; 808-524-2822;
saintandrewscathedral.net



FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH of Belle Vernon

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We invite you to join us in worship this Sunday, the fourth Sunday of Advent, at 9:55 am and again that evening for our annual Christmas Eve Service at 11 pm. Both services are streamed on Facebook Live and on our website at www.fpresbv.org.



May the peace of Christ fill your hearts
this holiday season.