



Eastminster Presbyterian Church

**A Blue Christmas Service
December 19, 2021**



WELCOME!

Whether you are a member or a visitor, worshiping with us in-person or online, you are welcome here.

Information about our church is found in the narthex or online: eastminsterchurch.org. At the welcome table or on our website, you can sign up for our weekly emails.

In an effort to keep our community safe and to love our neighbor, we are requiring masks in the building regardless of vaccination status.



At Eastminster we seek to be a community where all are welcome and where the needs of people meet the power of God. That is our hope for this night. We are approaching the winter solstice, the longest night of the year, and we recognize that for many the holidays seem long. Shadows exist in our lives and in the world and during this service we intend to recognize the pain, grief, and loss present. Therefore we hope that this service provides a space of calm, quiet, and healing.

Blue Christmas Worship Service

December 19, 2021

7:00 p.m.

GATHERING

Gathering Music

Opening Poem *by Rev. Sarah Speed*

We are raw nerves, exposed and tender.
We are weary bones, hunched and fragile.
We are silent prayers, lips saying your name.
We are wedding rings we can't take off, even though time has passed.
We are the same pew, but it feels different now.
We are a brave face when we have to be strong.
We are tears in the shower when grief roars its head.
We are setting the table, but there are empty seats.
We are stuck in the swell, caught in the storm.
We are moving on, caught in our guilt.
We are okay some days, but some days we're not.
We are familiar with the night, we know it by name.
We are night-walkers, dream-makers, star-chasers.
We are close to home, but home has changed.
We are close to the surface, but the waters are rising.
We are all of this, plus everything else, and we are here.
We are here.
Grief is here.
God is here.
The night is here.
And all of this is true,
and we are not alone.

Take my hand.
Take these words.
Let them be your life raft.
Let this be the longest night,
and let it be
whatever you need it to be.
We are here.
Grief is here.
God is here.
Take what you need.
Amen.

Opening Hymn In the Bleak Midwinter



1 In the bleak mid-win - ter, frost - y wind made moan;
2 Our God, heaven can - not hold him, nor earth sus - tain;
3 An - gels and arch - an - gels may have gath - ered there;
4 What can I give him, poor as I am?



earth stood hard as i - ron, wa - ter like a stone;
heaven and earth shall flee a-way when he comes to reign;
cher - u - bim and ser - a-phim thronged the air;
If I were a shep - herd, I would bring a lamb;



snow had fall - en, snow on snow, snow on snow,
in the bleak mid-win - ter a sta - ble place suf - ficed
but his moth - er on - ly, in her maid - en bliss,
if I were a wise man, I would do my part;



in the bleak mid-win - ter, long a - go.
the Lord God in - car - nate, Je - sus Christ.
wor - shipped the be - lov - ed with a kiss.
yet what I can I give him: give my heart.



READING THE WORD

Prayer for Illumination

Scripture Readings

Isaiah 40 *(selected verses)*

Lamentations 3:21-24

John 14:27-28

Psalm 121

RESPONDING

Prayer of the People

Throughout the prayer we will sing together the first verse of “O Come, O Come, 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 thee, O Israel.*

Lord's Prayer

Our Father who art in heaven, hallowed be thy name. Thy kingdom come, thy will be done, on earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread; and forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors; and lead us not into temptation but deliver us from evil. For thine is the kingdom and the power and the glory, forever. Amen.

Individual Prayer

Prayer Prompts

- *Write five words that describe how you're feeling in this moment.*
- *Write down the names of people you carry in your heart today.*
- *Write down one area of your own life where you could use God's help, comfort, or guidance.*
- *Write down a prayer for your faith journey.*
- *Write down a prayer concern you have for our world.*
- *Take a minute to write any lingering prayers you have at this moment.*

Song of Meditation *"Close to Home"* Barnaby Bright

Candle Lighting

SENDING

Communal Sending

Benediction

Postlude

Participants in today's service:

Minister: Rev. Kristin Stroble

Pianist: Tamar Mikeladze

Worship Credits: The liturgy is by Rev. Sarah Speed, A Sanctified Art; Hymns are printed and streamed with permission from One License #A-725831.

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