

Welcome to
SAINT MARK'S CHURCH

*Blue Christmas Service of
Remembrance and Hope*



DECEMBER 17, 2023

QUIET MEDITATIVE MUSIC—4:00 TO 4:30 P.M.

Welcome to this time when we can, with others, acknowledge the “blue” feelings we have at Christmas time. For many who have lost a loved one, this is a time of sharp loneliness. For others, who have lost a relationship, health, a job, or had a financial setback it may be a time of pain, confusion, or fear. This is not a joyous season for everyone. The service begins in silence so all may participate in a time of reflection: May God help each of us to participate tonight and throughout the season as we are able.

The people stand as they are able

OPENING HYMN

Come, thou long expected Jesus

Hymnal 66 verses 1,3,4



1. Come, thou long - ex - pect - ed Je - sus, born to set thy peo - ple free;
3. Born thy peo - ple to de - liv - er, born a child, and yet a king,
4. By thine own e - ter - nal Spi - rit rule in all our hearts a - lone;

from our fears and sins re - lease us, let us find our rest in thee,
born to reign in us for ev - er, now thy gra - cious king - dom bring.
by thine all - suf - fi - cient mer - it raise us to thy glo - rious throne.

THE GATHERING OF THE COMMUNITY

Leader: +The Grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God, and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with you all.

People: *And also with you.*

Leader: The people who walked in darkness have seen a great light; on those who live in a land of deep shadow, a light has shone. For the yoke that was weighing upon them, and the burden upon their shoulders, you have broken in pieces, O God, our Redeemer.

Together, let us pray:

People: *God of mercy, hear our prayer in this Advent season for ourselves and for our families who live with painful thoughts and memories. We ask for strength for today, courage for tomorrow and peace for the past. We ask these things in the name of your Christ, who shares our life in joy and sorrow, death and new birth, despair and promise. Amen.*

*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.*

*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.*

The people sit.

THE LITURGY OF THE WORD

A READING FROM THE HEBREW SCRIPTURES

A Reading from the book of the Prophet Isaiah.

(Isaiah 40:1, 25-31)

Comfort, O comfort my people, says your God. To whom then will you compare me, or who is my equal? says the Holy One. Lift up your eyes on high and see: Who created these? He who brings out their host and numbers them, calling them all by name; because he is great in strength, mighty in power, not one is missing. Why do you say, O Jacob, and speak, O Israel, 'My way is hidden from the Lord, and my right is disregarded by my God'? Have you not known? Have you not heard? The Lord is the everlasting God, the Creator of the ends of the earth. He does not faint or grow weary; his understanding is unsearchable. He gives power to the faint, and strengthens the powerless. Even youths will faint and be weary, and the young will fall exhausted; but those who wait for the Lord shall renew their strength, they shall mount up with wings like eagles, they shall run and not be weary, they shall walk and not faint.

Leader: The Word of the Lord.

People: **Thanks be to God.**

PSALM 121 Levavi oculos

¹ I lift up my eyes to the hills; *

from where is my help to come?

² My help comes from the LORD, *

the maker of heaven and earth.

³ He will not let your foot be moved *

and he who watches over you will not fall asleep.

⁴ Behold, he who keeps watch over Israel *

shall neither slumber nor sleep;

⁵ The LORD himself watches over you; *

the LORD is your shade at your right hand,

⁶ So that the sun shall not strike you by day, *

nor the moon by night.

⁷ The LORD shall preserve you from all evil; *

it is he who shall keep you safe.

⁸ The LORD shall watch over your going out and your coming in, *

from this time forth for evermore.

Glory to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit:

as it was in the beginning, is now, and will be for ever. Amen.

The people stand as they are able.

HYMN

O come, O come, Emmanuel

Hymnal 56 verses 3&4

*O come, O come, thou Lord of might,
who to thy tribes on Sinai's height
in ancient times didst give the law,
in cloud, and majesty, and awe.*

Rejoice! Rejoice!

Emmanuel shall come to thee, O Israel.

*O come, thou Branch of Jesse's tree,
free them from Satan's tyranny
that trust thy mighty power to save,
and give them victory o'er the grave.*

Rejoice! Rejoice!

Emmanuel shall come to thee, O Israel.

The people sit.

A LITURGY OF REMEMBRANCE

Lighting of Four Advent Candles

FIRST CANDLE

The first candle we light to remember those persons whom we have loved and lost. We pause to remember their name, their voice, their face, the memory that binds them to us in this season. We hold them before God, giving thanks for their lives in ours.

Please take a moment to remember those who have died. I invite you to name them, aloud or in the silence of your hearts.

Lord,

Each of us takes our loved one by the hand and leads them to you, the God of love, Here we present them to you. Accept our love and thanksgiving as we entrust them to your loving care. We want our loved ones to be free at home with you. We ask that you save a place for us beside them. We ask that you fill us with motivation and energy in the days ahead when we feel like giving up; remind us often of our true homeland when we are caught up in the desolation of the journey. Help us to find joy in the people, events and the beauty of nature which surrounds us.

Thank you for the gift each of these people has been in our lives. We want to believe that we will celebrate the treasure of love with them again, when we are all in your presence forever. May this truth sustain us in the days to come. Take our sad and aching hearts and comfort us. Comfort us, for we only feel hollowness and emptiness. God of sorrowing, draw near! Amen.



Show us your mer - cy, O _____ LORD; and grant us your sal - va - tion.

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SECOND CANDLE

The second candle we light is to redeem the pain of loss; the loss of relationships, the loss of jobs with the security they bring, the loss of health in ourselves or in family members, the loss of joy and peace in our lives from the stresses which surround us, the loss and loneliness we experience when our loved ones do not share our faith. As we gather up the pain of the past we offer it to you, O God, asking that into our open hands you will place the gift of peace.

Please take a moment to remember the losses. I invite you to name them, aloud or in the silence of your hearts.

God of mystery,

We turn our hearts to you. We come before you in need of peace, grateful for the mystery of life and ever keenly aware of your promises of guidance and protection. We want to place our trust in you, but our hearts grow fearful and anxious. We forget so easily that you will be with us in all that we experience. Teach us to be patient with the transformation of our lives and to be open to the changes which we are now going through. Amen.



Show us your mer - cy, O _____ LORD; and grant us your sal - va - tion.

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THIRD CANDLE

The third candle we light for those who experience a loss of direction in their lives. God of the Exodus, you led Moses and your people through the wilderness to a new land. Hear our prayer. We want so much to have a sense of direction, to know where we are and where we ought to be headed. But the darkness and the questions stay. You ask us to be full of faith, to believe deep within that you are our signpost, that you are our wisdom and our guide, and to trust in your presence. Your words to us are clear: "Do not fear, I go before you."

God of our depths, we cry out to you to be our guide. Help us to have a strong sense of inner direction and grant that we may have the reassurance of knowing that we are on the right path. Take our lives and use them according to your will. Take all that is lost in us and bring it home with you. Amen.



Show us your mer - cy, O _____ LORD; and grant us your sal - va - tion.

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FOURTH CANDLE

The fourth candle we light as a sign of hope, the hope that the Christmas story offers to us. We remember that God, who shares our life, promises us a place and time of no more pain and suffering.

O God whose spirit is known by those whose hearts are thankful, and who makes cheerfulness a companion of strength, lift up our hearts, we pray, to a joyous confidence in your care. Guide us when we cannot see the way. Teach us to know that a shadow is only a shadow, because the light of eternal goodness shines behind the object of our fears. Where there is love in life, teach us to find it; help us to trust it and enable us to grow in the power of love. So may our lives bring comfort and encouragement to others. We ask it, in the name of Jesus Christ whose life is our light. Amen.

The people stand as they are able.

HYMN

O come, O come, Emmanuel

Hymnal 56 verses 1&2



1. A can - dle is burn - ing, a flame warm and bright; a
2. A can - dle is burn - ing, a can - dle of Peace; a
3. A can - dle is burn - ing, a can - dle of Joy; a
4. A can - dle is burn - ing, a can - dle of Love; a

can - dle of Hope in De - cem - ber's dark night. While
can - dle to sig - nal that con - flict must cease. For
can - dle to wel - come brave Ma - ry's new boy. Our
can - dle to point us to heav - en a - bove. A

an - gels sing bless - ings from heav'n's star - ry sky our
Je - sus is com - ing to show us the way; a
hearts fill with won - der and eyes light and glow as
ba - by for Christ - mas, a won - der - ful birth; for

hearts we pre - pare now, for Je - sus is nigh.
mes - sage of Peace hum - bly laid in the hay.
Joy bright - ens win - ter like sun - shine on snow.
Je - sus is bring - ing God's Love to our earth.

Words: Sandra Dean, 1986

Music: *Cradle Song*, melody William James Kirkpatrick (1838-1921)

PRAYERS OF THE PEOPLE

In the spirit of this season let us now confidently ask our God for all the good things we need: For ourselves as we participate in this Christmas as special people coping with our many different losses. God, hear our prayer.

People: And in your mercy, answer.

For our families and friends, that they may continue to help and support us. God, hear our prayer.

People: And in your mercy, answer.

For any person we have loved who has died, for all the losses we know in our lives, that all may be redeemed by your Easter promise. God, hear our prayer.

People: And in your mercy, answer.

For our family and friends, that you may bless them with love, peace, and joy. God, hear our prayer.

People: And in your mercy, answer.

For peace throughout the world as proclaimed by the Christmas Angels on that faraway hillside. God, hear our prayer

People: And in your mercy, answer

For greater understanding of the lessons of love and acceptance as taught by Jesus your Christ. God, hear our prayer.

People: And in your mercy, answer.

God of great compassion and love, listen to the prayers of these your people. Grant to all, especially the bereaved and troubled ones this Christmas, the blessing we ask in the name of Jesus, who taught us to pray

*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 trespasses,
as we forgive those who trespass against us.*

*And lead us not into temptation,
but deliver us from evil,*

*For thine is the kingdom,
and the power, and the glory,
for ever and ever. Amen*

LIGHTING OF 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, I will refresh you!" I invite each of you to come forward and light a candle. 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.

If you wish, you may stand or kneel at the altar rail for the laying on of hands and a blessing, or you may return to your seat.

Hymn

Wait for the Lord

The image shows a musical score for the hymn "Wait for the Lord". It consists of two systems of music, each with a vocal line and a piano accompaniment line. The key signature is one sharp (F#) and the time signature is common time (C). The lyrics are: "Wait for the Lord, whose day is near. Wait for the Lord: be strong, take heart!" The score ends with a double bar line and repeat dots.

Text: Isaiah 40, Philippians 4, Matthew 6:33, 7:7; Taizé Community, 1984
Tune: Jacques Berthier, 1923-1994
© 1984, Les Presses de Taizé, GIA Publications, Inc., agent

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

THE BLESSING

As we gather this evening, we embrace and claim the darkness that is present both in the world and in our own lives. As people who are familiar with the darkness, we also know that we gather to be illumined by the light of the Christ Child this Christmas season. May the Christ Child, born in a lowly stable, himself an outcast and marginal, bring light, comfort, peace, and joy this holiday season; and the blessing; and the blessing of God Almighty, + the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit, be upon and remain with you forever. *Amen.*

CLOSING HYMN

Christ, be our light!

Verses 1,2&5

Em Am Bm7 Em

1.Lo nging for light, we wait in dark ness. Lo nging for
 2.Lo nging for peace, our world is trou bled. Lo nging for
 3.Lo nging for food, ma ny are hung ry. Lo nging for
 4.Lo nging for shelter, ma ny are home less. Lo nging for
 5.Ma ny the gifts, ma ny the peo ple. Ma ny the

6 Am7 Bm7 Em Am D

truth, we turn to you. Make us your own, your ho ly
 hope, ma ny des pair. Your word a lone has pow'r to
 water, ma ny still thirst. Make us your bread, bro ken for
 warmth, ma ny are cold. Make us your building, shel te ring
 hearts that yearn to belong. Let us be servants to one a

12 G C A D

peo ple, light for the world to see.
 save us. Make us your li ving voice.
 o thers, shared un til all are fed.
 o thers, walls made of li ving stone.
 no ther, ma king your king dom come.

17 G C G Em Bm Em Am D G

Christ, be our light! Shine in our hearts, shine through the dark ness. Christ,

26 C G C Am D G

be our light! Shine in your church, ga thered to day.

Leader: May the hope of the Christ Child sustain us through this darkness.

People: *That together we may shine again. Amen.*

You are invited to join us for refreshments or to remain in prayer.

This service was adapted from one by the Rev'd Heather Hill, a priest in the Episcopal Church.

* Note: The hymn "O come, O come, Emmanuel" is a song of people in darkness longing for God's light. It is not calling us to rejoice in the worldly form of the word, but calling our spirits and souls to reflect the true hope and joy that only God can give.

2023 Advent & Christmas Services

ROSE SUNDAY, DECEMBER 17TH

The Third Sunday of Advent

Holy Eucharist at 8:00 & 10:00 a.m.

(You are welcome to wear something pink or rose in color)

SUNDAY, DECEMBER 17TH

Blue Christmas Service

4:00 p.m. — Meditative Music

5:00 p.m. — Blue Christmas Service

SUNDAY, DECEMBER 24TH

The Fourth Sunday of Advent

8:00 a.m. — Holy Eucharist

10:00 a.m. — Advent Lessons & Carols with Holy Eucharist

SUNDAY, DECEMBER 24TH

Christmas Eve

Holy Eucharist with Brass Quintet at 5:00 p.m.

Candlelight Holy Eucharist at 9:00 p.m.

SUNDAY, DECEMBER 25TH

Nativity of our Lord Jesus Christ

Holy Eucharist at 9:00 a.m.

SUNDAY, DECEMBER 31ST

The First Sunday after Christmas

Christmas Lessons & Carols with Holy Eucharist at 9:00 a.m.

Followed by Brunch ("Fifth" Sunday)



A Parish in the Episcopal Diocese of Long Island

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Sunday Services

Sundays at 8:00 & 10:00 a.m.—Holy Eucharist in the church (Livestreamed)
The first Sunday of each month Healing & Anointing will be included in both services.

Thursday Midweek Service

11:00 a.m. Holy Eucharist with Prayers for Healing in Fr. Chris' Office

Office Hours

Tuesday—Friday from 9:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m.

The Rt. Rev. Lawrence Provenzano—*Bishop of Long Island*

The Rt. Rev. Geralyn Wolf—*Assisting Bishop*

The Rt. Rev. William Franklin—*Assisting Bishop*

The Rt. Rev. Daniel Allotey—*Assisting Bishop*

The Rev. Christopher D. Jubinski—*Rector*

Email: chris.jubinski@stmarkswhb.org Cell: 410.253.3664

Stephen Hunt—*Director of Music*

Kate Gabrielsen—*Parish Administrator*

Chris Adams—*Facilities Manager*

Rosanna Davis—*Director of St. Mark's Bright Beginnings Preschool*

Diane Stewart—*Warden*

Sandy Wyman—*Warden*

Vestry Members:

Steve DeCaro, Diane Feil, Madeline Glover

Tom Hadlock, Tom Horan, Marjorie Kulesa,

Ashley Lueck, Barbara Pettus and Steve Turner.

Thomas Simson—*Treasurer*

Carol Fitton—*Clerk of the Vestry*

