



## **A LITURGY FOR BLUE CHRISTMAS – DEC. 23, 2025**

In the spirit of peaceful dialogue, understanding, reconciliation, and healing, we walk alongside our Indigenous and Métis relations on the Treaty 6 and Treaty 8 Territories, the traditional meeting ground of Cree, Saulteaux, Niitsitapi, Nakota Sioux, Dene, Métis, and Inuit peoples. We give thanks for their hospitality and the opportunity to share common ground.

### **Alison:**

For the most part, Christmas is a time of celebration and joy. For many, however, this is a difficult time of year. Many people are carrying significant burdens: grief, loss, depression, anxiety, financial stress, unemployment, uncertainty, aging parents, sick children, recent diagnoses, unknown illnesses. The public tone of the season does not resonate with many people's private experience.

Our hope is that the worship offered here begins by gathering in honesty about grief, and the troubles and burdens we bear, hearing the consolation found in God's presence and love, and departing with the joy that comes from memory and a sense of shared peace.

### **GREETING AND CALL TO WORSHIP**

The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God,  
and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with you all.

**And also, with you.**

All around us, lights are lit, and carols play. The season heaps joy upon us.  
Yet, we who come here, we carry more than joy; we carry loss, worry, grief and pain.

We come weary, seeking rest from expectations. We also seek a holy presence to be with us.

We come to this place, by the resilient grace of God: love that never lets go.

**Carol:** O Come, O Come, Emmanuel

#### **Verse 1**

O come O come Emmanuel

And ransom captive Israel

That mourns in lonely exile here

Until the Son of God appear

**Chorus**

**Rejoice, rejoice, Emmanuel**

**Shall come to thee, O Israel**

**PRAYER OF APPROACH**

We gather this night, to remember...those who have touched our lives, glad memories and happy stories, and love that we hold dear. We gather in the name of Jesus, vulnerable as an infant, joyful and happy as a youth, wise and caring as an adult.

**We gather in the presence of God, who brings life and light to all.**

All life is precious in God's sight.

**No one is ever alone or forgotten.**

Come, let us gather in the Spirit of hope and peace.

**We worship in the name of joy and love. Amen.**

**Carol:** In the Bleak Midwinter

**Verse 1**

In the bleak midwinter

Frosty wind made moan

Earth stood hard as iron

Water like a stone

Snow had fallen snow on snow

Snow on snow

In the bleak midwinter

Long ago

**Verse 2**

Our God heav'n cannot hold Him

Nor earth sustain

Heav'n and earth shall flee away

When He comes to reign

In the bleak midwinter

A stable place sufficed

The Lord God Almighty

Jesus Christ

**Verse 3**

Angels and archangels

May have gathered there

Cherubim and seraphim

Thronged the air

But His mother only

In her maiden bliss

Worshipped the Beloved  
With a kiss

**Verse 4**

What can I give Him  
Poor as I am  
If I were a shepherd  
I would bring a lamb  
If I were a wise man  
I would do my part  
Yet what can I give Him  
Give my heart

**Jeanette:**

**Scripture Reading:**

**Isaiah 40:1, 6–8**

Comfort, O comfort my people,  
says your God.  
A voice says, 'Cry out!'  
And I said, 'What shall I cry?'  
All people are grass,  
their constancy is like the flower of the field.  
The grass withers, the flower fades,  
when the breath of the LORD blows upon it;  
surely the people are grass.  
The grass withers, the flower fades;  
but the word of our God will stand for ever.

**Alison:**

**Prayer:**

Holy One, you are with us in times of trouble and in times of peace;  
in times of sorrow and times of joy.  
When we're unsure of how to continue living and loving,  
your Spirit intervenes with sighs too deep for words.  
Speak for us now, Loving God.  
Comfort us with your abiding peace... (*silence*)

**Carol:** O Come, O Come, Emmanuel

**Verse 2**

O come Thou Dayspring come and cheer  
Our spirits by Thine advent here  
Disperse the gloomy clouds of night  
And death's dark shadows put to flight

**Chorus**

**Rejoice, rejoice, Emmanuel  
Shall come to thee, O Israel**

**Jeanette:**

**Scripture Reading: Psalm 139:7–12**

Where can I go from your spirit?  
Or where can I flee from your presence?  
If I ascend to heaven, you are there;  
if I make my bed in Sheol, you are there.  
If I take the wings of the morning  
and settle at the farthest limits of the sea,  
even there your hand shall lead me,  
and your right hand shall hold me fast.  
If I say, 'Surely the darkness shall cover me,  
and the light around me become night',  
even the darkness is not dark to you;  
the night is as bright as the day,  
for darkness is as light to you.

**Alison:**

**Prayer:**

God of all, when we feel alone, you draw nearer;  
when we lose our footing, you guide us toward a good path.  
Through the ages, you have promised to be a comfort to your people,  
and you call us to be a comfort to others.  
In all our living, may we never lose the memory  
of our most cherished relationships,  
and may we feel the courage and strength you offer to us  
through those who surround us... (*silence*)

**Carol:** O Come, O Come, Emmanuel

**Verse 3**

O come Thou Wisdom from on high  
And order all things far and nigh  
To us the path of knowledge show  
And cause us in her ways to go

**Chorus**

**Rejoice, rejoice, Emmanuel  
Shall come to thee, O Israel**

**Jeanette:**

**Scripture Reading: John 14:1–4, 18–19**

'Do not let your hearts be troubled. Believe in God, believe also in me. In my Father's house there are many dwelling-places. If it were not so, would I have told you that I go to prepare a place for you? And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and will take you to myself, so that where I am, there you may be also. And you know the way to the place where I am going.'

'I will not leave you orphaned; I am coming to you. In a little while the world will no longer see me, but you will see me; because I live, you also will live.

**Alison:**

**Prayer:**

God of hope and joy, you prepare our hearts for renewal.

You till the soil of our lives and nurture small shoots of possibility.

Even when we are unsure, you repeat your promise:

I will never leave you.

Open us, Holy One, to your promise.

Hold us in your care.

Strengthen us for your future.

Guide us in anticipation and faith... (*silence*)

**Carol:** O Come, O Come, Emmanuel

**Verse 4**

O come Desire of nations bind

All peoples in one heart and mind

Bid envy strife and quarrels cease

Fill the whole world with heaven's peace

**Chorus**

**Rejoice, rejoice, Emmanuel**

**Shall come to thee, O Israel**

## **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. Lord, hear our prayer.

***And in your mercy, answer.***

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

***And in your mercy, answer.***

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

***And in your mercy, answer.***

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

***And in your mercy, answer.***

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

***And in your mercy, answer***

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

***And in your mercy, answer.***

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

**Blue Christmas Meditation**

We greet one another today not so much as an act of friendship and recognition, but because we who gather as a group share a common bond, the bond of loss.

For some of us it may be the loss of a life's partner or a family member, for others it may be a good friend. For some of us it may be the loss of a job or a long-held, cherished dream. Each of us in our different way will feel that loss, feel it in the most sacred part of ourselves, in the depth of what today is called "the soul," and though we may want the loss to go away, it will not.

And we know that at this holiday time our losses are magnified by the spirit of the festive season. This is the time when merriment and laughter rule, the time for the sharing of stories and having fun in the family circle. This is the time when the emphasis is on gifts and giving, on good food and drink. We will want to be a part of this, to welcome family and play with the children, but we also know our loss, our grief, will make itself known when we least expect.

The "Merry" Christmas is no way to counter loss, but the Christmas with the Spirit at the centre will help us through. And if that happens, the tears will flow - health-giving tears will flow.

Christmas may seem to be the time when tears will be alien, unnatural.... Take comfort, for today we are in the good company of those who have suffered loss, and this is a natural place for tears.... And be assured God is not neutral to our sadness.

Scripture often brings home the certainty that we are not alone. In our grief God is with us and will never leave us.

"I will lift up my eyes to the hills—from where will my help come?"  
The psalmist answers his own question in certain confidence:

“My help comes from the Lord, who made heaven and earth.” And the psalmist concludes, “God will keep your going out and your coming in from this time on and forevermore”

And those words of scripture remind us that the peace of God will be ours and will never fade.

God shares grief with us, and God’s Spirit is to be found in those who encourage and support and listen carefully to us. And I want us all in a moment of silence to remember those who have cared for us in the hard times, the times of desolation and despair.....

We thank God for every one of them and for the many and life-bringing ways they have stayed with us.

Above all I want to commend all of us for taking the time to be here today and for acknowledging our loss. And I’m going to ask us all to do the most difficult thing: Remember our loved one, Hold our loved one up before God.....

We have remembered them, brought them back to our mind, our heart, our life, and there is joy and the deepest satisfaction in that. They are gone from this mortal sphere, but they can never be lost to God. Who can separate us from the love of God?

Remember those words from the eighth chapter of Paul’s Letter to the Romans:

*Neither death nor life...nor things present nor things to come... nor height, nor depth, nor anything else in all creation will be able to separate us from the love of God as we know it in Jesus Christ.*

Those we love and have lost are held safe by God, embraced by the love of God, and will be for all eternity. This is the ultimate security for us, and so we are able to let those loved ones go until that future time when we too will know and be known by the Blessed and Holy one.

And as we go from here, make the words of Jesus in the Gospel of John our own. He said,

*Set your troubled hearts at rest, banish your fears, and know peace this Christmas time, the peace that the world cannot give, God’s peace, the peace that passes all understanding! Amen*

**Alison and Jeanette:**  
**REMEMBERING IN HOPE**  
**Ceremony of Commemoration**

We light this candle:

..... in memory of those who gave us birth, who nurtured us, offered love, and cherished us.

**We remember mothers and fathers, guardians, and grandparents, and all our family through the ages.**

.....in memory of those who have been joined to us in the great circle of family.

**We remember sisters and brothers, aunts, uncles, and cousins, those near to us and far away.**

.....in memory of those who have left us before we expected, those we hold dear, and with whom we still walk in our dreams.

**We remember children and grandchildren, those who leaped within the womb and who danced upon the earth.**

.....in memory of those whom we came to know through the eyes of love. We hold sacred the faces and memories of years past, of those who brightened our days and lit up our lives.

**We remember husbands and wives, dearest loves, and closest friends, who changed our lives forever.**

.....in memory of those who shared in our lives in many ways, who worked with us and made our lives more enjoyable.

**We remember friends and neighbours.**

.....for those we do not know, O God, who, like us, have suffered loss, who live with grief, who long for peace and justice, who long for friendship and healing.

**We remember your people, of every time and place.**

Finally, we remember the great truth of this life, that in the fullness of time we, too, will join our loved ones in a realm without sorrow and pain, in the company of unending Love.

**For these and all your children, we give thanks for life, hope and courage. Amen.**

**Alison:**

And now, as our Saviour, Christ, has taught us we are bold to say:

**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**

**Carol:** Silent Night

**Verse 1**

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  
Oh sleep in heavenly peace

**Verse 2**

Silent night, holy night  
Shepherds quake oh at the sight  
Glories stream from heaven afar  
Heavenly hosts sing alleluia  
Christ the Savior is born  
Christ the Savior is born

**Verse 3**

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

**Alison:**

**BENEDICTION**

May God the Father keep us in all our days.  
May God the Son shield us in all our ways.  
May God the Spirit bring us healing and peace.  
May God the Holy Trinity drive all darkness from us  
and pour upon us blessing and light.

**Amen.**

**DISMISSAL**

Let us now go forth, carrying within us the love of God, the faithfulness of Jesus and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit – my dear friends, go in peace to love and serve the Lord.

**Thanks be to God.**