

Blue Christmas

A Service of Hope and Healing



DECEMBER 7, 2025

3:00 P.M.

PRELUDE MUSIC

In the Bleak Midwinter

OPENING WORDS (the people read the **bold**)

Rev. Dr. Brad Stagg

The Christmas spirit is that hope which tenaciously clings to the hearts of the faithful and announces in the face of any Herod the world can produce, any inn doors slammed in our faces, all the dark nights of our soul, that with God all things are possible. It's the spirit that says ***"Even now, unto us a child is born!"***

PRAYER

Let us pray. God of love and understanding, we gather here this day to confront our pain in the midst of the world's celebration. We come in the need of your help.

We come burdened with sorrow, loneliness, and sadness. We come seeking a place to set them down; a place where our words will be heard and our feelings honored.

Help us know that you are present with us in all of our moods and feelings in this season. Be among us, O God and let your compassion heal us in this moment.

***Comfort us. Strengthen us. Care for us. Be Christ to us.
Grant us a taste of the hope, peace, joy, and love that you
promise to all of your people through the gift of your son.
Amen.***

HYMN #642

How Long, O God, How Long?

A WELCOME AND INVITATION

Brad Stagg

SCRIPTURE OF COMFORT AND HOPE:

Psalm 22 (v. 1-5, 9-11, 19, 25-26, 29-31)

My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?

Why are you so far from helping me, from the words of my groaning?

O my God, I cry by day, but you do not answer;

and by night but find no rest.

Yet you are holy,

enthroned on the praises of Israel.

In you our ancestors trusted;

they trusted, and you delivered them.

To you they cried and were saved;

in you they trusted and were not put to shame.

Yet it was you who took me from the womb;

you kept me safe on my mother's breast.

*On you I was cast from my birth,
and since my mother bore me you have been my God.
Do not be far from me,
for trouble is near,
and there is no one to help.*

*From you comes my praise in the great congregation;
my vows I will pay before those who fear him.
The poor shall eat and be satisfied;
those who seek him shall praise the Lord.
May your hearts live forever!*

*To him, indeed, shall all who sleep in the earth bow down;
before him shall bow all who go down to the dust,
and I shall live for him.
Posterity will serve him;
future generations will be told about the Lord
and proclaim his deliverance to a people yet unborn,
saying that he has done it.*

Isaiah 40:1-11

*Comfort, O comfort my people, says your God.
Speak tenderly to Jerusalem, and cry to her that she has
served her term, that her penalty is paid,
that she has received from the Lord's hand double
for all her sins.*

*A voice cries out: "In the wilderness prepare the way of the Lord, make
straight in the desert a highway for our God.
Every valley shall be lifted up, and every mountain and hill be made low;
the uneven ground shall become level, and the rough places a plain.*

*Then the glory of the Lord shall be revealed, and all people shall see it
together, for the mouth of the Lord has spoken."*

*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 forever.*

*Get you up to a high mountain, O Zion, herald of good tidings; lift up
your voice with strength, O Jerusalem, herald of good tidings, lift it up,
do not fear; say to the cities of Judah, "Here is your God!" See, the
Lord God comes with might, and his arm rules for him; his reward is
with him, and his recompense before him. He will feed his flock like a
shepherd; he will gather the lambs in his arms, and carry them in his
bosom, and gently lead the mother sheep.*

LIGHTING OF CANDLES

(the people read the **bold**)

We light four candles today in the hope they will be a beacon of light in our darkness. We light one for our grief, one for our courage, one for our memories, and one for our love. Fred Mottaz

We light a candle to represent our *grief*. Brad Stagg

We own the pain of losing loved ones, of dreams that go unfulfilled, of hopes that evaporate in despair. We lament the lives lost and the end to war, poverty, and extreme weather. We grieve the suffering that so many are experiencing. God hears our sorrows, even weeps with us in loss.

We remember them with love. May God's eternal Love surround them. The Light shines in the darkness, and the darkness has not overcome it.

We light a candle to represent our *courage*. Fred Mottaz

It symbolizes the courage to confront our sorrow, to comfort each other, to share our feelings honestly and openly with God, and to dare to hope in the midst of pain. God gives us the courage we need.

We remember that through God all things are possible. The Light shines in the darkness, and the darkness has not overcome it.

We light a candle to represent our *memories*. Brad Stagg

For the times we laughed together, cried together, were angry with each other or overjoyed with each other. We light this candle for the memories of caring and joy we have shared with others. God knows our memories and recalls them with us.

We remember so many things. With God the memories of joy and love can be multiplied and shared. The Light shines in the darkness, and the darkness has not overcome it.

We light a candle to represent our *love*. Fred Mottaz

The love we have given, and the love we have received. The love that has gone unacknowledged and unfelt; the love that has been shared in times of joy and sorrow. God knows our love and bears it with us.

We remember the power of love as still being so important to our souls. With God's help it can be alive in us. The Light shines in

the darkness, and the darkness has not overcome it.

You are invited to come forward to light candles Brad Stagg
and be in a spirit of prayer... *Lo, How a Rose Er' Blooming*

We light the Christ candle, remembering that Jesus Christ is Fred Mottaz
always in the center of our lives. He hears our cries,
he knows our hearts and, in the midst of all our thoughts
and emotions, he offers us hope and healing.

Let us pray. Comforting God, wrap us in your presence in this time
of remembrance. With these candles, help us find your light, a light
that will guide us day by day, step by step, as we try to live life fully
and wholly. We cherish the special ways in which we have been
touched by our loved ones. We thank you for the gift their lives
have been to us. Now comfort us, encourage us, empower us.
Amen.

HYMN #636

Abide With Me

LITANY OF INTERCESSION FOR HEALING

Brad Stagg

(the people read the **bold**)

The God of strength moves within us;
the God of courage hears our distress.
The God of hope reveals wholeness to us;
the God of healing touches us when we are broken.
When the pain overwhelms us, when the burden is too heavy,
we turn to our God, who is sustaining and redeeming.
When there is loneliness, when there is isolation,
we turn to our God, who is loving and present.
For God created us, redeemed us and sustains us,
***and we are not alone. Lead us in your ways, O God, and
bring us your healing touch.***

PRAYER (the people read the **bold**)

***God of mercy, hear our prayer for healing and wholeness in this
Advent season. Help us remember the messengers of faith we have
known and give thanks for their witness. May we too, prepare the
way of Christ, help to level the hills and valleys of life, that all would
be held in your heart this day. Amen.***

HYMN #638 (please stand)

In the Bulb There Is a Flower

Go in peace. ***Amen.***

PARTICIPATING IN TODAY'S SERVICE

Rev. Dr. Brad Stagg, clergy

Fred Mottaz, elder

Travis McFarlane, accompanist



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