

“Blue Christmas”
A light that shines in the darkness

*Saint Patrick’s Episcopal Church
Falls Church, Virginia*

December 23rd at 10:30 am



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, or any life altering experience, it may be a time of pain, confusion, or fear. This is not a joyous season for everyone.



PRAYER SERVICE

Officiant Blessed be the God of our salvation.

All **Who bears our burdens and forgives all our sins.**

Officiant Let us pray.

God of Mercy, hear our prayer in this Advent Season for ourselves and our families who live with painful experiences of loss. We ask for strength for today, courage for tomorrow and peace for the past. We ask these things in the name of Christ who entered the world at Christmas to share our life in sorrow and joy, death and new birth, despair and promise.

All **Amen.**

The candles at the Altar are now lit.

First Candle

We light this candle to remember those persons who have been loved and lost. We pause to remember their names, their faces, their voices.

Silence

Officiant We give thanks for the memory that binds them to us this season that anticipates Christ.

All **May God's eternal love surround them.**

Second Candle

We light this second candle to redeem the pain and loss – the loss of relationships, the loss of health, the loss of jobs, and the loss of financial security. As we gather up the pain of the past, we offer it to you, O God, asking that into our welcome hearts and open hands, you place the gift of peace.

All *Refresh, restore, renew us, Oh God, and lead us into Your future.*

Third Candle

We light this third candle to remember ourselves this Christmas time. We pause and remember the past weeks, months and for some of us, years of down times. We remember the poignancy of memories, the grief, the sadness, the hurts, and the pain of reflecting on our own mortality.

All *Let us remember that dawn defeats darkness.*

Psalm 139:1-18

^{1 and 2} Lord, you have searched me out and known me; * you know my sitting down and my rising up; you discern my thoughts from afar.

³You trace my journeys and my resting-places * and are acquainted with all my ways.

⁴ Indeed, there is not a word on my lips, * but you, O Lord, know it altogether.

⁵ You press upon me behind and before * and lay your hand upon me.

⁶ Such knowledge is too wonderful for me; * it is so high that I cannot attain to it.

⁷ Where can I go then from your Spirit? * where can I flee from your presence?

⁸ If I climb up to heaven, you are there; * if I make the grave my bed, you are there also.

⁹ If I take the wings of the morning * and dwell in the uttermost parts of the sea,

¹⁰ Even there your hand will lead me * and your right hand hold me fast.

^{1 and 2} CHÚA ôi, Ngài đã dò xét con và biết con. ² Ngài biết khi con ngồi, lúc con đứng dậy; Từ xa Ngài đã thấu hiểu tất cả ý tưởng con.

³ Ngài biết rõ lối nào con ra đi hay khi nào con nằm ngủ; Ngài quen thuộc mọi đường lối con.

⁴ Ngay cả khi lưỡi con chưa thốt thành lời, Kìa, CHÚA ôi, Ngài đã biết tất cả rồi.

⁵ Ngài bao vây con cả phía sau lẫn phía trước, Và đặt tay Ngài trên con.

⁶ Kiến thức như thế thật diệu kỳ quá cho con, Cao diệu quá, con không hiểu được.

⁷ Con có thể đi đâu để tránh khỏi Thần Ngài? Con sẽ trốn ở đâu hầu thoát khỏi sự hiện diện của Ngài?

⁸ Nếu con lên trời, Ngài đang ngự tại đó; Nếu con xuống âm phủ, kìa, Ngài cũng có ở đó.

⁹ Nếu con lấy cánh bình minh bay đến tận chân trời góc bể,

¹⁰ Thì tại đó, tay Ngài sẽ dẫn dắt con; Tay phải Ngài sẽ nắm lấy con.

¹¹ If I say, “Surely the darkness will cover me, * and the light around me turn to night,”

¹² Darkness is not dark to you; the night is as bright as the day; * darkness and light to you are both alike.

¹³ For you yourself created my inmost parts; * you knit me together in my mother’s womb.

¹⁴ I will thank you because I am marvelously made; * your works are wonderful, and I know it well.

¹⁵ My body was not hidden from you, * while I was being made in secret and woven in the depths of the earth.

¹⁶ Your eyes beheld my limbs, yet unfinished in the womb; all of them were written in your book; * they were fashioned day by day, when as yet there was none of them.

¹⁷ How deep I find your thoughts, O God! * how great is the sum of them!

¹⁸ If I were to count them, they would be more in number than the sand; * to count them all, my life span would need to be like yours.

¹¹ Nếu con nói, “Chắc bóng tối sẽ che khuất được mình, Khi ánh sáng chung quanh mình đổi thành bóng tối,”

¹² Thế nhưng đối với Ngài, bóng tối chẳng tối tăm gì cả, Ban đêm sáng rõ như ban ngày; Ngài thấy rõ như nhau dù trong bóng tối hay ngoài ánh sáng.

¹³ Vì Ngài đã dựng nên những bộ phận trong người con; Ngài đã dệt thành con trong dạ của mẹ con.

¹⁴ Con cảm tạ Ngài, vì con được dựng nên cách đáng sợ và lạ lùng; Công việc của Ngài quá diệu kỳ, lòng con biết rõ lắm.

¹⁵ Các xương cốt con không thể giấu được Ngài, Khi con được tạo thành trong nơi kín đáo, Được đan kết diệu kỳ trong những nơi sâu thẳm của đất.

¹⁶ Mắt Ngài đã thấy rõ thể chất chưa thành hình của con; Tất cả những ngày định cho đời con đã được ghi vào sách của Ngài rồi, Trước khi con sống một ngày nào trong các ngày ấy.

¹⁷ Đức Chúa Trời ôi, các tư tưởng của Ngài thật quý báu cho con thay! Cộng các tư tưởng ấy lại, chúng nhiều vô số!

¹⁸ Nếu con đếm, chắc chúng nhiều hơn cát. Khi con thức dậy, con vẫn còn với Ngài.

All 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.

A Reading from Isaiah 43: 1b-2, 4-5a

Do not fear, for I have redeemed you; I have called you by name, you are mine. When you pass through the waters, I will be with you; and through the rivers, they shall not overwhelm you; when you walk through fire you shall not be burned, and the flame shall not consume you. Because you are precious in my sight, and honored, and I love you, I give people in return for you, nations in exchange for your life. Do not fear, for I am with you.

^{1b} Đừng sợ, vì Ta đã chuộc người; Ta đã gọi đích danh người; Người thuộc về Ta. ² Khi người đi qua nước, Ta sẽ ở với người; Khi người vượt qua sông, nước sẽ chẳng cuốn trôi người; Khi người băng qua lửa, lửa sẽ không đốt cháy người; Ngọn lửa sẽ không thiêu rụi người. ⁴ Vì người rất quý báu trước mặt Ta; Người đã được Ta trân quý, Và Ta đã yêu thương người, Nên Ta ban những người khác chịu thay cho người, Phó các dân khác thế mạng người. ⁵ Đừng sợ, vì Ta ở với người;

Canticle: A Song of Our True Nature by Julian of Norwich

Christ revealed our frailty and our falling, * our trespasses and our humiliations.

Christ also revealed his blessed power, * his blessed wisdom and love.

He protects us as tenderly and as sweetly when we are in greatest need; * he raises us in spirit and turns everything to glory and joy without ending.

God is the ground and the substance, the very essence of nature; *
God is the true father and mother of natures.

We are all bound to God by nature, * and we are all bound to God by grace.

And this grace is for all the world, * because it is our precious mother, Christ.

For this fair nature was prepared by Christ for the honor and nobility of all, and for the joy and bliss of salvation.

Silence

Third Reading

Wild Geese by Mary Oliver

You do not have to be good.
You do not have to walk on your knees
 for a hundred miles through the desert, repenting.
You only have to let the soft animal of your body
 love what it loves.
Tell me about despair, yours, and I will tell you mine.
Meanwhile the world goes on.
Meanwhile the sun and the clear pebbles of the rain
 are moving across the landscapes,
 over the prairies and the deep trees,
 the mountains and the rivers.
Meanwhile the wild geese, high in the clean blue air,
 are heading home again.
Whoever you are, no matter how lonely,
 the world offers itself to your imagination,
 calls to you like the wild geese, harsh and exciting –
 over and over announcing your place
 in the family of things.

Reader
All

Hear what the Spirit is saying to the Church.
Thanks be to God.

The Prayers *(standing, as able)*

Leader In the spirit of this season let us now confidently ask God for what we need. We pray, as well, for ourselves as we participate in whatever way we can this Christmas.

All are invited to offer their prayers aloud or silently

Leader God hear our Prayer

All ***And in your mercy answer.***

Leader For our families and friends that they may know love and peace and happiness in you and that they may continue to help and support us.

*All are invited to offer their prayers aloud or silently for
families and friends*

Leader God hear our Prayer

All ***And in your mercy answer.***

Leader For those we have loved who have died. For all the losses that we know, that all may be redeemed by your Easter promise.

*All are invited to offer their prayers aloud or silently for
those who have died*

Leader God hear our Prayer

All ***And in your mercy answer.***

Leader For the peace proclaimed by the Christmas angels, to come throughout the whole world.

*All are invited to offer their prayers aloud or silently for
our region and world*

Leader God hear our Prayer

All ***And in your mercy answer.***

Leader God of great compassion and love, listen to the prayers of these your people. Grant to all, especially all who are bereaved and saddened this Christmas, the blessing we ask in the name of Christ who taught us to pray together saying

All 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.

Collect of the Day

Sir up your power, O Lord, and with great might come among us: and because we are sorely hindered by our sins, let your bountiful grace and mercy speedily help and deliver us; through Jesus Christ our Lord, to whom, with you and the Holy Spirit, be honor and glory, now and for ever.

All Amen.

A Collect for Protection

O God, the life of all who live, the light of the faithful, the strength of those who labor, and the repose of the dead: We thank you for the blessings of the day that is past, and humbly ask for your protection through the coming night. Bring us in safety to the morning hours; through him who died and rose again for us, your Son our Savior Jesus Christ.

All Amen.

A Collect for Peace

Most holy God, the source of all good desires, all right judgments, and all just works: Give to us, your servants, that peace which the world cannot give, so that our minds may be fixed on the doing of your will, and that we, being delivered from the fear of all enemies, may live in peace and quietness; through the mercies of Christ Jesus our Savior.

All Amen.

Hymn *Silent Night*

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.*

² *Silent night, holy night,
shepherds quake at the sight,
glories stream from heaven afar,
heavenly hosts sing alleluia;
Christ, the Savior, is born!*

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.*

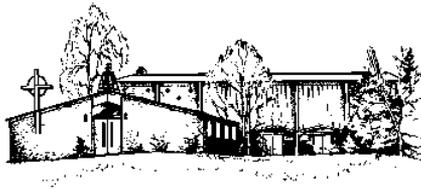
Silence

Officiant Let us bless the Lord.

All ***Thanks be to God.***

Officiant May the God of hope fill us with all joy and peace in believing
through the power of the Holy Spirit.

All ***Amen.***



**The Ministers of St. Patrick's Church are
the People of this Parish**

We serve our Lord as part of the Diocese of Virginia
led by our chief pastors

The Right Reverend Susan Ellyn Goff, Bishop Suffragan
and Ecclesiastical Authority

The Right Reverend Jennifer Brooke-Davidson, Assistant Bishop

The Right Reverend Porter Taylor, Assisting Bishop

The Reverend Steve Rorke, Interim Rector

Ms. Mariko Hiller, Organist

The Reverend Tinh Trang Huynh, Rector Emeritus

Kindly remain silent before and during the service
in respect for those praying.

Before the service, speak to the Lord.

During the service, let the Lord speak to you.

After the service, speak with one another.

St. Patrick's Episcopal Church

3241 Brush Drive, Falls Church, Virginia 22042

(703) 532-5656 ▪ <http://saintpatricks.us>

stpatepiscopal@gmail.com

Saint Patrick's Episcopal Church is a community of care
called to be Christ-centered and multicultural
in worship, Christian education and action
to proclaim Christ's love to the world.