

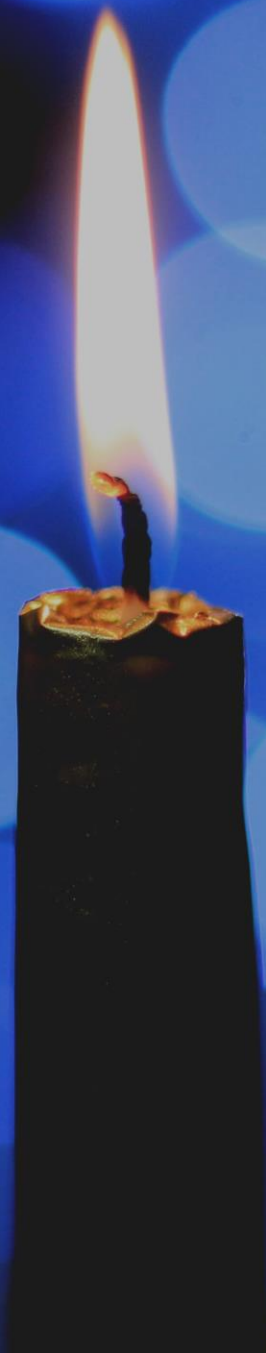
HARRIS UNITED METHODIST CHURCH

Blue Christmas

A quiet time to acknowledge
grief, pain, loss and receive
God's comfort and love

December 16, 2023 @ 5:00 pm

We are an open and reconciling
church. All are welcome!



December 16, 2023

Blue Christmas

**Please rise in body and in spirit as you are able.*

Pastor: Welcome to this Blue Christmas service. Our prayer is that as we express the reality of our loss, our pain, our emptiness, that we will all be able to make room for the blessing of the healing power of our Gracious, Loving God. Let us begin with these words of healing from the Holy Scriptures:

Leader: Isaiah sees the people of Israel in their distress from being deported from their homeland, and speaks to the promise of their return. (Isaiah 40:1 & 2a): "Comfort, O comfort my people, says your God. Speak tenderly to Jerusalem . . ."

People: Have mercy upon us, Holy God, and send your comfort to surround us; speak tenderly to us in our time of need.

Leader: In the midst of our pain and loss, hear these words from the prophet Jeremiah (29:11): "For surely I know the plans I have for you, says the Lord, plans for your welfare and not for harm, to give you a future with hope."

People: Hold us in your love, Merciful God, so that even in our pain and loss, we may find the blessing of hope you have for us.

Hymn "Come, Thou Long Expected Jesus" UMH 196

Lighting the first two Candles of the Advent Wreath

Leader: During Advent we are on a "Journey in Hope" Hear these words from Psalm 62:5-6. "For God alone my soul waits in silence, for my hope is from God, who alone is my rock and my salvation . . ."

People: Even in the midst of devastating loss, we pray that our "Journey in Hope" will be from this time of darkness into the light of the Christ Child; from

hopelessness into the Hope that comes from the Lord Our God. We light the first candle of Advent, the candle of Hope. (Light one of the purple candles.)

Song of Response:..... "O Lord, Hear My Prayer" TFWS 2200 (3x)

**O Lord, hear my prayer. O Lord, hear my prayer.
When I call, answer me.
O Lord, hear my prayer. O Lord, hear my prayer.
Come and listen to me.**

Leader: The second Sunday in Advent we lit the candle of Peace. In our loss we cry out with the Psalmist, "Peace, peace," and there is no peace. Where is the peace that passes understanding that Jesus promises?

People: Out of the depths of our pain and loss we cry to you, O Lord. Hear our voice, and give heed to the pain of our distress. Have mercy on us, O Lord, and visit us with your steadfast love and healing presence. Show us your peace in the midst of our loss. This is our heartfelt prayer. We light the second candle, the candle of Peace. (Light another purple candle.)

Song of Response: "In the Lord I'll Be Ever Thankful". TFWS 2195 (2x)

**In the Lord I'll be ever thankful, in the Lord I will rejoice!
Look to God, do not be afraid.
Lift up your voices, the Lord is near, lift up your voices,
the Lord is near.**

Leader: The next two Sundays in Advent we will light the last purple candle, and the pink candle of Love. On Christmas Eve we will light the center candle, the Christ Candle. During these next two weeks, we may cry out with the Psalmist (Psalm 137:1-2): "By the rivers of

Babylon, there we sat down and wept... On the willows there we hung up our harps... How shall we sing the Lord's song?... "

Leader: Let us join in Prayer:

Holy God, During this Advent and Christmas season. We may not feel like singing the Christmas Carols. We may be too sad. We may not feel like joining in Christmas celebrations. We may feel too blue. The hole in our heart may be too large — too heavy — almost unbearable. But we are here together in our loss, to express our grief, our feelings of sadness. We are here to express what feeling hopeless and blue is like. In doing so, our prayer is that we may also find strength and the healing power of God that will see us through the darkness and lead us into the light. Have mercy upon us, Holy God, and hear our prayer. Amen.

Video:..... "Sanctuary" by Carrie Newcomer

Wally: We are invited to come forward, take a candle and light it as we as we express our grief and loss, and say a prayer. If you do not wish to say anything, come and light a candle and pray in your heart. After you place your candle, please take a Blue Ornament, to remind you of God's blessing in the midst of whatever trial and loss you are experiencing. *(Come forward around the table, and as you are moved, take a candle, and after expressing your feelings of grief and loss, place it on the altar. Then please take a Blue Ornament.)*

Praise Song:..... "Come and Fill Our Hearts" TFWS 2157 (3 Xs)
(Please take your seat during the singing of the praise song.)

**Come and fill our hearts with your peace, you alone,
O Lord, are holy.
Come and fill our hearts with your peace, Alleluia!**

Pastoral Prayer: Rev. Dr. Fran Wiebenga

Hymn:..... "It Is Well with My Soul" UMH 377 v.1,
Repeat the Refrain 3 Xs, the 3rd time a capella

Benediction.....Rev. Dr. Fran Wiebenga

Hear these words of Promise and Comfort from the Psalms: From Psalm 46: "God is our refuge and strength, a very present help in trouble." From Psalm 118: "The Lord is my strength and my power; The Lord has become my salvation." From Psalm 121: "My help comes from the Lord, who made heaven and earth."

Prayer of Benediction

Christmas Carol:..... "Silent Night" UMH 239

<p><u>PURPOSE</u> To make a difference in our community and the world as we seek to follow Jesus Christ.</p>	<p><u>VISION</u> Building a Christ-Centered Community by Extending God's Hospitality to One Another and to Our Neighbors.</p>
<p>Lead Pastor: Rev. Dr. Fran Wiebenga, 536-9602, ext. 201 Church Secretary: Erin Takahashi, 536-9602, ext. 208 Facilities Secretary & Receptionist: Mona-Ray Kino, 536-9602 ext. 200 Preschool Director: Tasha Gushi-Kaneshiro, 808-532-4175</p>	<p><u>Co-Lay Leaders:</u> Mel Billingsley & Wally Wake</p> <hr/> <p><u>Covenant Missionaries:</u> Rev. Claudia Genung Yamamoto (Japan) Jonathan McCurley (Japan) Miguel Mairena (Mexico)</p>

Ministries of Sight & Sound

Pianist & Organist: Kaori Kawabuchi

Multimedia

Multimedia Volunteers: George Nabea,
Isabel Ohta

Projectionist: Carole Suzui

Coordinator: Mahe Vaka'uta

Ministries of Hospitality

Litany Credits

*Rev. Dr. Fran Wiebenga

Music Credits

Song Title: "All Are Welcome (URWB Hymn #58)"

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O Lord, Hear My Prayer #00134 List Type: Words and Music; First Line: O Lord hear my prayer, O Lord hear my prayer Language: English Contributors: Jacques Berthier, Taizé Community Tune: Jacques Berthier, © 1982, Les Presses de Taizé, GIA Publications, Inc., agent Text: Taizé Community, © 1982, Les Presses de Taizé, GIA Publications, Inc., agent

Come, Thou Long-Expected Jesus #84272 List Podcast / Streaming Type: Words and Music; First Line: Come, thou long-expected Jesus Language: English Text: 87 87; Charles Wesley, 1707–1788. Music: Christian F. Witt's Harmonia Sacra, 1715; adapt. by Henry J. Gauntlett, 1805–1876. Contributors: STUTTGART

In the Lord I'll Be Ever Thankful / El Señor #00118 List Type: Words and Music; First Line: In the Lord I'll be ever thankful Language: English Contributors: Jacques Berthier, Taizé Community Tune: © 1986, 1991, Les Presses de Taizé, GIA Publications, Inc., agent Text: © 1986, 1991, Les Presses de Taizé, GIA Publications, Inc., agent

Confitemini Domino / Come and Fill Our Hearts / Liéna-nos, Señor / Dâng Muốn Cầu Ca Khen #TaizeVN22 List Type: Music Language: Latin, Vietnamese, English © 1981 Ateliers et Presses de Taizé, GIA Publications, Inc., agent Contributors: Jacques Berthier, Taizé Community Text: Public Domain

It Is Well with My Soul #95056 List Type: Words and Music; First Line: It Is Well with My Soul Language: English Contributors: Public Domain

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