



**December 12, 2022
6:30 p.m.**

St. John Ev. Lutheran Church, ELCA

Reverend Maggie Westaby

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Monday, December 12th 2022

Blue Christmas Service

Rev. Maggie Westaby

WELCOME

Blessed be the holy Trinity, ✝ one God, who forgives all our sin, whose mercy endures forever.
Amen.

THANKSGIVING FOR BAPTISM, *by Rev. Maggie Westaby*

In the waters of baptism, we are united with Christ into his death.
In the waters of baptism, we are also united with Christ into his life.
For just as Christ was raised from the dead,
we too are baptized into new life.
For if we are united with Christ in death,
then we are united with Christ in resurrected life,
and for this we give thanks.

Creator God, you are the fountain of living water,
and Your love flows through water,
love that we are invited into, and love that we share with one another.

Love that lives deep within us, so that when our loved ones' pass,
water comes forth as tears, and they flow from our eyes.

Like the tears that flowed from Jesus' eyes when Lazarus died.
For Jesus wept, and the Spirit moved deeply within him.

Tears that flow from our eyes, when we are sad, lonely, and in despair.
When we find ourselves joining in Jesus' cry of desperation,
my God, my God why have you forsaken me?!
Yet you have not forsaken us, even when we cannot feel your presence.
For you are like water, and you are always with us.

For water lives in us,
from every cell, to the water vapor that is in each and every breath.
From the non-visible transpiration of trees,
to the water cycle which connects every living thing on earth.

From the beginning, when your Spirit hovered over the face of the deep,
to now, when your Spirit hovers over the depths of our lives.
Immersing Your Spirit in all our depths, and in all our sorrows.
In places that seem too heavy, empty, or vast to venture into,
You make Your presence known.

To lead us besides still waters,
and to restore our soul.

For you, O Creator are in the midst of all water, all life, and all hope.
You are the source of all mercy and the God of all consolation.
Teach us to grieve, and comfort us in our sorrows.
Till the day we meet you face to face,
where you will wipe every tear from our eyes.
Amen.

OPENING SONG

I Heard the Voice of Jesus Say



1 I heard the voice of Je - sus say, "Come un - to me and rest;
2 I heard the voice of Je - sus say, "Be - hold, I free - ly give
3 I heard the voice of Je - sus say, "I am this dark world's light;



lay down, O wea - ry one, lay down your head up - on my breast."
the liv - ing wa - ter, thirst - y one; stoop down and drink and live."
look un - to me, your morn shall rise, and all your day be bright."



I came to Je - sus as I was, so wea - ry, worn, and sad;
I came to Je - sus, and I drank of that life - giv - ing stream;
I looked to Je - sus, and I found in him my star, my sun;



I found in him a rest - ing - place, and he has made me glad.
my thirst was quenched, my soul re - vived, and now I live in him.
and in that light of life I'll walk till trav - 'ling days are done.

Text: Horatius Bonar, 1808–1889

Music: KINGSFOLD, English folk tune

PRAYER

Longing God,

We are tired. We are worn. Our hearts are broken, shattered and torn.

Life seems to take its toll on all that is good, so we are left by carrying pieces of should. I

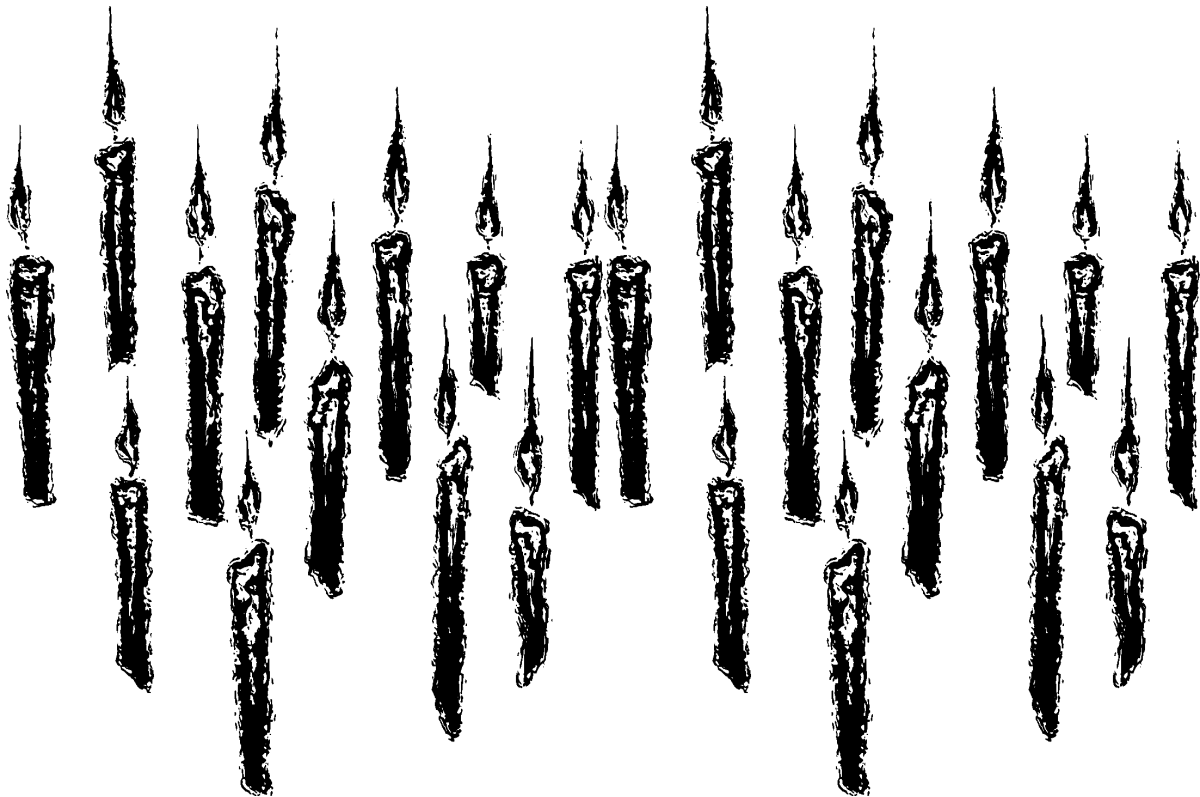
should have done this, I should have done that, leaving our spirits flatter than dusty doormat.

Find us there in the ashes and dust, showing your love, despite all our rust. For you are making all things new, and your love has no limits for what you can do.

Amen.

LIGHTING OF CANDLES

This is a time for silent prayer and reflection. You are invited to come forward and light a candle for a loved one, or to light multiple candles for loved ones.



The Healing That Comes, A Blessing by Jan Richardson

I know how long
you have been waiting
for your story to take
a different turn,
how far
you have gone in search
of what will mend you
and make you whole.
I bear no remedy,
no cure,
no miracle
for the easing
of your pain.

But I know the medicine
that lives in a story that has been broken open.

I know the healing that comes
in ceasing to hide ourselves away
with fingers clutched
around the fragments
we think are
none but ours.

See how they fit together,
these shards
we have been carrying—
how in their meeting
they make a way
we could not
find alone.

PSALMS OF LAMENT *taken from Psalms 3, 5, 6, 7*

O God, how numerous are my fears!
They rise up within me whispering there is no help for you.
My fears consume me and I live in my illusions.
Give ear to my words, O God; give heed to my groaning.
Listen to the sound of my cry.

My God, though I have turned from You,
continue to enfold me with your love.
Be gracious to me, Heart of my heart, for I am sad and weary.
Surround me with your healing Light,
that my body, mind, and soul might heal.

How long must I wait, O God?
For I am tired of so many fears; I cry myself to sleep at night.
While grief and feelings of guilt fill my eyes with tears.
All my doubts and my fears, are creating walls so that I know not love.
Depart from me, my fears and my doubts, for God is aware of my cry.

If I close my heart to love, God awaits by my side.
Love cultivates the soil of my heart, planting sacred seeds in its garden.

Take notice! Even when I wander far from God's path,
though I err and walk on roads of illusions and darkness,
when I act out of fear and ignorance, falling into a pit of despair,
God will remain constant and sure.

And I shall dwell with God in love, gratitude, and joy;
for I am one with all of Creation and one with the Creator.
For it is you, oh Creator who call us back home to love.
Amen.

GOSPEL: Matthew 11:28-29

The holy gospel according to Matthew

Glory to you, O Lord.

Jesus said, come to me, all you who are weary and are carrying heavy burdens, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you, and learn from me, for I am gentle and humble in heart, and you will find rest for your souls.

The gospel of the Lord.

Praise to you, O Christ.

SERMON

HYMN OF THE DAY

Day by Day

1 Day by day, your mer - cies, Lord, at - tend me, bring - ing com - fort
2 Day by day, I know you will pro - vide me strength to serve and
3 Oh, what joy to know that you are near me when my bur - dens

to my anx - ious soul. Day by day, the bless - ings, Lord, you send me
wis - dom to o - bey; I will seek your lov - ing will to guide me
grow too great to bear; oh, what joy to know that you will hear me

draw me near - er to my heav'n - ly goal. Love di - vine, be - yond all
o'er the paths I strug - gle day by day, I will fear no e - vil
when I come, O Lord, to you in prayer. Day by day, no mat - ter

mor - tal mea - sure, brings to naught the bur - dens of my quest; Sav - ior,
of the mor - row, I will trust in your en - dur - ing grace. Sav - ior,
what be - tide me, you will hold me ev - er in your hand. Sav - ior,

lead me to the home I trea - sure, where at last I'll find e - ter - nal rest.
help me bear life's pain and sor - row till in glo - ry I be - hold your face,
with your pres - ence here to guide me, I will reach at last the prom - ised land.

Text: Carolina Sandell Berg, 1832-1903; or Robert Leaf, 1936-2005
Music: BELOTT EN DAG, Oskar Ahnfelt, 1813-1882
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PRAYERS OF INTERCESSION

As we prepare for the fullness of Christ's presence, let us pray for a world that yearns for new hope. Responding to "God of grace," with "hear our prayer."

LORD'S PRAYER

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, forever and ever.

Amen.

BLESSING

May you feel God's presence in all of your sorrows,
May the Holy Spirit provide you comfort, peace, and love
And may Christ provide you hope, hope birthed in His resurrection.

In the name of the Father, ✠ the Son, and the Holy Spirit.

Amen.

SENDING SONG

On Eagle's Wings

Leader or All



1 You who dwell in the shel-ter of the Lord, who a-bide in this shad-ow for life,



say to the Lord: "My ref-uge, my rock in whom I trust!"

Refrain
All



And he will raise you up on eu-gle's wings, bear you on the breath of dawn,



make you to shine like the sun, and hold you in the palm of his hand.

Leader or All



2 The snare of the fowl-er will nev-er cap-ture you, and fam-ine will bring you no



fear; un-der God's wings your ref-uge, with faith-ful-ness your shield.

Leader or All



3 You need not fear the ter-ror of the night, nor the ar-row that flies, by



day, though thou-sands fall a - bout you, near you it shall not come.

Leader or All



4 For to the an-gels God's giv-en a com-mand to



guard you in all of your ways; up - on their hands they will



bear you up, lest you dash your foot a - gainst a stone.

Final refrain
All



And he will raise you up on eu-gle's wings, bear you on the breath of dawn,



make you to shine like the sun, and hold you in the palm of his hand.



And hold you, hold you in the palm of his hand.