

**The Anglican Church of Freiburg
Blue Christmas Service- Online on Zoom
Friday the 17th December 2021**

The Preparation

Amidst the festivities of the Christmas season we acknowledge that several of us live with “blue” feelings. There could be several reasons for the same

Bereavement

Loss

Uncertainty

Existential Angst

We will together try to navigate through the pain, anxiety, agony and sadness by coming to the comforting presence of our Lord who says- Comfort Comfort My People.

We will affirm together our faith in the Immanuel- God who is with us through every moment of our lives.

When the journey becomes tough, God comes closer

Silence

Prelude ACF 121

Wait for the Lord, whose day is near.

Wait for the Lord, keep watch, take heart.

Words and music: Jacques Berthier
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Hymn: O come, O come, Emmanuel,*

O come, O come, Emmanuel,

and ransom captive Israel,

that mourns in lonely exile here

until the Son of God appear.

Rejoice! Rejoice!

Emmanuel shall come to thee, O Israel.

*O come, thou Wisdom from on high,
 who orderest all things mightily;
 to us the path of knowledge show,
 and teach us in her ways to go.
 Rejoice! Rejoice!
 Emmanuel shall come to thee, O Israel.*

*CCLI Song # 31982
 John Mason Neale
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The Gathering of the Community

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

People: ***And also with you.***

Leader: O Lord, you have been a refuge to the poor,
 a refuge to the needy in their distress,
 a shelter from the rainstorm and a shade from the heat.
 When the blast of the ruthless was like a winter rainstorm,
 the noise of aliens like heat in a dry place,
 you subdued the heat with the shade of clouds;
 the song of the ruthless was stilled

(Isaiah 25:4-5)

People: **Then the Lord GOD will wipe away the tears
 from all faces,
 and the disgrace of his people he will take away
 from all the earth,
 for the LORD has spoken.**

(Isaiah 25:8)

Let us pray

Leader

² Cor 1:2 Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.

People

² Cor 1: 3-4 **Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of mercies and the God of all consolation, who consoles us in all our affliction, so that we may be able to console those who are in any affliction with the consolation with which we ourselves are consoled by God.**

The Ministry of the Word of God

A reading from Isaiah 43:1-3

43 But now thus says the LORD,
 he who created you, O Jacob,
 he who formed you, O Israel:
 Do not fear, for I have redeemed you;
 I have called you by name, you are mine.
² 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.
³ For I am the LORD your God,
 the Holy One of Israel, your Savior

The Psalm

Refrain: *In God I trust, and will not fear.*

¹ Be gracious to me, O God, for people trample on me;
 all day long foes oppress me;

Refrain: *In God I trust, and will not fear.*

² my enemies trample on me all day long,

for many fight against me.

Refrain: *In God I trust, and will not fear.*

O Most High,

³ when I am afraid,

I put my trust in you.

Refrain: *In God I trust, and will not fear.*

⁴ In God, whose word I praise,

in God I trust; I am not afraid;

what can flesh do to me?

Refrain: *In God I trust, and will not fear.*

⁵ All day long they seek to injure my cause;

all their thoughts are against me for evil.

Refrain: *In God I trust, and will not fear.*

⁶ They stir up strife, they lurk,

they watch my steps.

As they hoped to have my life,

Refrain: *In God I trust, and will not fear.*

⁷ so repay them for their crime;

in wrath cast down the peoples, O God!

Refrain: *In God I trust, and will not fear.*

⁸ You have kept count of my tossings;

put my tears in your bottle.

Are they not in your record?

Refrain: *In God I trust, and will not fear.*

⁹ Then my enemies will retreat

in the day when I call.

This I know, that God is for me.

Refrain: *In God I trust, and will not fear.*

¹⁰ In God, whose word I praise,

in the LORD, whose word I praise,

Refrain: *In God I trust, and will not fear.*

¹¹ in God I trust; I am not afraid.

What can a mere mortal do to me?

Refrain: *In God I trust, and will not fear.*

¹² My vows to you I must perform, O God;

I will render thank offerings to you.

Refrain: *In God I trust, and will not fear.*

¹³ For you have delivered my soul from death,

and my feet from falling,

so that I may walk before God
in the light of life.

Refrain: *In God I trust, and will not fear.*

***Faithful God,
your deliverance is nearer than we know;
free us from fear
and help us to find courage in your Word,
Jesus Christ our Lord.***

The Gospel

Matthew 11:28-30

²⁸ “Come to me, all you that are weary and are carrying heavy burdens, and I will give you rest. ²⁹ 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. ³⁰ For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light.”

Leader: The Word of the Lord.

People: Thanks be to God.

Hymn: O come, O come, Emmanuel,*

*O come, thou Rod of Jesse, free
thine own from Satan’s tyranny;
from depths of hell thy people save,
and give them victory over the grave.*

Rejoice! Rejoice!

Emmanuel shall come to thee, O Israel.

The Liturgy of the BLUE Communities

We remember all people coping with **bereavement**

Let us Listen to 1 Samuel 12: 21-23

²¹ David's servants said to him, "Why are you doing this? When your child was still alive, you fasted and you cried. Now that the child is dead, you get up and eat food." ²² David said, "While the child was still alive, I fasted, and I cried. I thought, 'Who knows? Maybe the LORD will consider me and let the baby live.' ²³ But now that the baby is dead, why should I fast? I can't bring him back to life. Someday I will go to him, but he cannot come back to me."

Let us thank God for the promise that we will meet the departed dear ones again when we go to them

Let us pray for all who struggle with the vacuum created by the departure of dear ones.

Hymn: O come, O come, Emmanuel,*
*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.
 Rejoice! Rejoice!
 Emmanuel shall come to thee, O Israel*

We remember all people living with **Loss**

When news of the loss came to Job look how he responded

Job 1:20-22 Then Job arose, tore his robe, shaved his head, and fell on the ground and worshiped. ²¹ He said, "Naked I came from my mother's womb, and naked shall I return

there; the LORD gave, and the LORD has taken away; blessed be the name of the LORD.”²² In all this Job did not sin or charge God with wrongdoing.

Let us pray for all who are facing loss in various ways. Loss of jobs, loss of friends, loss of health, loss of direction, loss of enthusiasm, loss of faith

Hymn: O come, O come, Emmanuel,*
*O come, thou Key of David, come,
 and open wide our heavenly home;
 make safe the way that leads on high,
 and close the path to misery.
 Rejoice! Rejoice!
 Emmanuel shall come to thee, O Israel.*

We remember all people living in **uncertainties**

Luke 24:28 As they came near the village to which they were going, he walked ahead as if he were going on.²⁹ But they urged him strongly, saying, “Stay with us, because it is almost evening and the day is now nearly over.” So he went in to stay with them.³⁰ When he was at the table with them, he took bread, blessed and broke it, and gave it to them.³¹ Then their eyes were opened, and they recognized him; and he vanished from their sight

We remember today everyone who journey like the disciples of Emmaus. Not knowing what to do next or where to go now. Let us be reminded that Jesus meets us in our uncertainties and breaks bread with us when we pray- Stay With us O Lord for the night is far gone.

Hymn: O come, O come, Emmanuel,*
*O come, O come, great Lord of might,
 who to thy tribes on Sinai's height
 in ancient times once gave the law*

*in cloud and majesty and awe.
Rejoice! Rejoice!
Emmanuel shall come to thee, O Israel.*

We remember all people coping with **existential angst**

When the journey ahead was filled with uncertainties
Moses interceded with God seeking the presence of God
to travel alongside.

Exodus 33: 13 Now if I have found favour in your sight, show me your ways, so that I may know you and find favour in your sight. Consider too that this nation is your people.” 14 He said, “My presence will go with you, and I will give you rest.” 15 And he said to him, “If your presence will not go, do not carry us up from here. 16 For how shall it be known that I have found favour in your sight, I and your people, unless you go with us? In this way, we shall be distinct, I and your people, from every people on the face of the earth.”

We specially pray for all who are struggling with the question- what next

Hymn: O come, O come, Emmanuel,*
*O come, thou Root of Jesse's tree,
an ensign of thy people be;
before thee rulers silent fall;
all peoples on thy mercy call.
Rejoice! Rejoice!
Emmanuel shall come to thee, O Israel.*

The Prayers of the People

Intercessions (A Time of Silence for People to Pray)

The Lord's Prayer

Our Father in heaven,
 hallowed be your name,
 your kingdom come,
 your will be done,
 on earth as in heaven.
 Give us today our daily bread.
 Forgive us our sins
 as we forgive those who sin against us.
 Lead us not into temptation
 but deliver us from evil.
 For the kingdom, the power,
 and the glory are yours
 now and for ever.
 Amen.



The Lighting of a Candle of Hope

Wherever we are and in whatever state we are let us be aware that God is in our midst. We bring to his presence our brokenness and sorrows. We are in the presence of God who has promised to carry our burdens. He keeps calling us- Come to me all who are carrying heavy burdens, I will give you the calmness that your souls long for.

Let us in our private spaces light a candle as we conclude this service and pray that God will light our dark spaces through Jesus who promised- I am the Light of the World

People

**Come O Light of the World, Illumine Our Darkness
 Come O Way, Show Us the Way Ahead
 Come O Life, Help us Experience the Fullness of Life
 Amen**

The Blessing

Luke 1:78 -79 By the tender mercy of our God,
the dawn from on high will break upon us,
to give light to those who sit in darkness and in the
shadow of death,
to guide our feet into the way of peace.

People

**The Grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, Love of God and
the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with us, now and
for evermore. Amen.**

Postlude:

Within our darkest night, you kindle the light that never
dies away, that never dies away.

Within our darkest night, you kindle the light that never
dies away, that never dies away.

Words and music: Jacques Berthier
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We acknowledge the resources that inspired this liturgy

- (<http://nouwen-network.com/christmas.html>)
- (<https://youngclergywomen.org/blue-christmas-service-when-christmas-hurts/>)