

Loving God, we give you thanks for the Christ Child, who was born into our world in darkness, uncertainty, and danger, to offer light, hope, and peace to our world.

People: We give thanks for the light of Christ.

Leader: We give thanks for your love that is not diminished by our grief, anger, despair, or cynicism. For there is nothing in all creation that can separate us from the love of God that is shown to us in the birth, life, death, and resurrection of Christ.

People: We receive your love and give thanks.

Leader: We pray these things, and all things, in the name of Jesus, the coming One, who taught us to pray saying...

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 debts, as we forgive our debtors. Lead us not into temptation, and deliver us from evil. For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory forever. Amen.

CHRIST CANDLE Readers: Stephen Ball, Gigi Johnston

Introduction

Response

Leader: God, we are waiting.

People: **Come, Emmanuel, Come.**

Reading: *"The Blessing of a Child Entering the World"*
John O'Donohue

Scripture Reading Isaiah 9:2, 6-7

Response #88 **O Come, O Come Emmanuel** (v. 7)

Christmas Story - John 1:1-5, 10-14 Rev. Johnson

Ritual of renewal

Participants will be invited to take a rose and place it on the table in the front of the sanctuary

Instrumental Music: *Lo, How a Rose E're Blooming*

Carol #123 *It Came Upon the Midnight Clear* (vss. 1, 3, 4)

Benediction

Postlude *People, Look East!* by Anne Krentz

Our Caregiver Support Group meets after worship on the 3rd Sunday of each month.

Our Grief Support Group meets following worship on the 4th Sunday of the month. Anyone is welcome to attend. Please contact Rev. Chris Herrin or Rev. David Johnson for more information.

LOWCOUNTRY PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

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STAFF

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Office Hours: Monday-Thursday: 8:30am to 4:00pm

Friday: 8:30am - 12:00pm

The Session

Janit Maguire, Clerk
845-527-6409

Class of 2024

Sandy Benninger
843-705-5233
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Jan Alpert
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Kevin MacCarthy
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Class of 2026

Elaine Branda
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Blue Christmas Worship

A SERVICE OF REFLECTION AND HOPE

***Lowcountry
Presbyterian
Church***

*Surrounded by God's grace, we are a family of faith
joined together through Christ, offering meaning and hope
to all by the way we worship, serve and live.*

***10 Simmonsville Road
Bluffton, SC 29910***

***Blue Christmas Service
December 15, 2024
3:30pm***

Blue Christmas Service
December 15, 2024
3:30pm

Prelude *Come Now, O Prince of Peace* Anne Krentz

Welcome Rev. David Johnson

Opening Prayer

Carol #82 *Come, Thou Long-Expected Jesus*

ADVENT WREATH LIGHTING

CANDLE 1 Readers: Gray Toulmin, Debbie Hager

Introduction

Response

Leader: God, we ache.

People: **Grief threatens to overwhelm us.**

Reading *"When Great Trees Fall"* Maya Angelou

Responsive Psalm – Psalm 22

Leader: My God, my God, why have you forsaken me? Why are you so far from helping me, so far from the words of my groaning?

People: **O my God, I cry by day, but you do not answer; and by night but find no rest.**

Leader: In you, our ancestors trusted. They trusted and you delivered them.

People: **It was you who took me from the womb, you who kept me safe upon my mother's breast; since my mother bore me, you have been my God.**

Leader: Do not be far from me, for trouble is near and there is no one to help.

People: **God does not despise the affliction of the afflicted; God does not hide from me. When I cry to God, God hears me. Thanks be to God!**

Response #88 *O Come, O Come, Emmanuel* (v. 1)

The Christmas Story – Luke 2:1-4 Rev. Johnson

CANDLE 2 Readers: Scott Johnson, Wendy MacCarthy

Introduction

Response

Leader: God, we feel empty.

People: **The losses break our hearts**

Reading *"Heartbreak"* David Whyte

Scripture Reading from Jeremiah 29

Response #88 *O Come, O Come, Emmanuel* (v. 2)

The Christmas Story Luke 2:5-7 Rev. Johnson

CANDLE 3 Readers: Fran Parker, Lori Higgins

Introduction

Response

Leader: God, the darkness is difficult to bear.

People: **God, we long for light.**

Reading *"Live the Questions"* Rainer Rilke

Scripture Reading Lamentations 3:1-3, 19-26

Response #88 *O Come, O Come, Emmanuel* (v. 5)

The Christmas Story - Luke 2:8-14 Rev. Johnson

CANDLE 4 Readers: Sue Dason, Vicki Melton

Introduction

Response

Leader: God, we are watching.

People: **God, we are open.**

Reading *"Anthem"* Leonard Cohen

Responsive Psalm Psalm 121

Leader: I will lift up my eyes to the hills, from where is my help to come?

People: **My help comes from the Lord, the maker of heaven and earth**

Leader: He will not let your foot be moved and he who watches over you will not fall asleep.

People: **Behold, he who keeps watch over Israel shall neither slumber nor sleep.**

Leader: The Lord himself watches over you; the Lord is your shade at your right hand.

People: **So that the sun shall not strike you by day, nor the moon by night**

Leader: The Lord shall preserve you from all evil; it is he who shall keep you safe.

People: **The Lord shall watch over your going out and your coming in, from this time forth for ever more.**

Leader: Glory to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit.

People: **As it was in the beginning, is now, and will be forever. Amen.**

Response #88 *O Come, O Come, Emmanuel* (v. 6)

The Christmas Story - Luke 2: 15-20 Rev. Johnson

Carol #144 *In the Bleak Midwinter* (vss. 1, 4)

Litany of Prayer Robin Lind and Karen Ball

Leader: Loving God, in this season of long darkness and brief light, we open ourselves to you in prayer. We give to your care the absence and emptiness we feel as we grieve the losses in our lives.

People: **We pray that it would remind us of the depth of our love and our loved one's importance to us.**

Leader: We give to your care our feelings of being out of sorts with Christmas, when so many are filled with joy.

People: **Give us, we pray, what we need to make it through this difficult season.**

Leader: We give into your care, the longing for what was, the life we used to know, the way things were.

People: **Give us, we pray, hope and courage to open ourselves to what will yet be.**

Leader: We give into your care, future days that hold so much uncertainty.

People: **We pray for strength and courage to face an unknown future.**

Leader: Having entrusted these things to you, we pray for those we have loved and lost.

People: **May they know your love and be secure in your care. Let their memory remain alive in our hearts and actions.**

Leader: We pray for the pain of others: those known and unknown with whom we share a common, if unwanted, bond. We pray for all those who have suffered loss: work, health, relationships, loved ones, hopes, and more.

People: **May their grief be comforted and their pain eased.**

Leader: We pray for this new life that has been thrust upon us; a life that feels so foreign, so unreal, so unwanted.

People: **Breathe your spirit into us, we pray, that we might live again.**

Leader: Opening our hearts to God, we take a few quiet moments to offer our own prayers and to allow God's spirit to move within and among us...

Having offered our prayers, we remember to give thanks...

Leader: For distractions that provide respite from sadness, and routines that offer some brief semblance of normal.

People: **We give you thanks, O God.**

Leader: For the gift of sleep when it comes, that rejuvenates and restores our bodies and souls.

People: **We give you thanks, O God.**

Leader: For family and friends who understand, with whom we don't have to pretend. And for companions on the journey; those who have experienced losses themselves and can help us take the next steps

We take a few moments to give thanks for them now...