

# *A Blue Christmas Service*

*Facing our Struggles ~ Embracing our Hope, Peace, Love, & Joy  
Advent ~ Christmas 2020*

**Prelude**

**Caleb Bates**

**Words of Welcome**

**Call to Worship**

**Opening Music**

**“The Prayer of St. Francis”**  
*St. Paul’s Sanctuary Choir*

**The Empty Chair**

**A Reading from Scripture-Ecclesiastes 3:1-11**

**New Revised Standard Version**

For everything there is a season, and a time for every matter under heaven:

<sup>2</sup> a time to be born, and a time to die;

a time to plant, and a time to pluck up what is planted;

<sup>3</sup> a time to kill, and a time to heal;

a time to break down, and a time to build up;

<sup>4</sup> a time to weep, and a time to laugh;

a time to mourn, and a time to dance;

<sup>5</sup> a time to throw away stones, and a time to gather stones together;

a time to embrace, and a time to refrain from embracing;

<sup>6</sup> a time to seek, and a time to lose;

a time to keep, and a time to throw away;

<sup>7</sup> a time to tear, and a time to sew;

a time to keep silence, and a time to speak;

<sup>8</sup> a time to love, and a time to hate;

a time for war, and a time for peace.

<sup>9</sup> What gain have the workers from their toil? <sup>10</sup> I have seen the business that God has given to everyone to be busy with. <sup>11</sup> [God] has made everything suitable for its time; moreover [God] has put a sense of past and future into their minds, yet they cannot find out what God has done from the beginning to the end.

**Praying the Psalms-Psalm 23**

**King James Version**

The LORD is my shepherd; I shall not want.

<sup>2</sup> He maketh me to lie down in green pastures: he leadeth me beside the still waters.

<sup>3</sup> He restoreth my soul: he leadeth me in the paths of righteousness for his name's sake.

<sup>4</sup> Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil: for thou art with me; thy rod and thy staff they comfort me.

<sup>5</sup> Thou preparest a table before me in the presence of mine enemies: thou anointest my head with oil; my cup runneth over.

<sup>6</sup> Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life: and I will dwell in the house of the LORD for ever.

**Musical Interlude**

**“I Wonder as I Wander”**

Emily Preston and Caleb Bates  
*written by John Jacob Niles, 1933*

## Litany of Candle Lighting

In this season of Advent, when we approach the longest nights of the year, we gather through this new avenue of grace, mindful of the losses that have multiplied throughout the year.

...We are not alone.

*(Lighting of the Christmas Tree)*

We mourn this night the loss of life.

*[Lighting of the First Candle]*

...I invite you to repeat after me:

We mourn this loss of life.

**We mourn this loss of life.**

We honor and remember these beloveds.

**We honor and remember these beloveds.**

We pray for comfort and peace.

**We pray for comfort and peace.**

Amen. **Amen.**

## Musical Interlude

### “I’m Just Agoin’ Over Jordan”

*Violist Dana Huyge*

We mourn this night the loss of livelihoods.

*[Lighting of the Second Candle]*

...I invite you to repeat after me:

We mourn this loss of livelihood.

**We mourn this loss of livelihood.**

We honor and remember the dreams now deferred.

**We honor and remember the dreams now deferred.**

We pray for sustenance and resilience.

**We pray for sustenance and resilience.**

Amen. **Amen.**

We mourn this night the loss of love.

*[Lighting of the Third Candle]*

...I invite you to repeat after me:

We mourn this loss of love.

**We mourn this loss of love.**

We honor and remember the work of prophets who proclaim justice.

**We honor and remember the work of prophets who proclaim justice.**

We pray for compassion and change.

**We pray for compassion and change.**

Amen. **Amen.**

We mourn this night the loss of liveliness.

*[Lighting of the Fourth Candle]*

...I invite you to repeat after me:

We mourn this loss of liveliness.

**We mourn this loss of liveliness.**

We honor and remember that each person is precious and whole.

**We honor and remember that each person is precious and whole.**

We pray for recovery and renewed vigor.

**We pray for recovery and renewed vigor.**

Amen. **Amen.**

### **Musical Interlude**

Caleb Bates

*[Lighting of the Fifth Candle]*

### **A Reading of Scripture-Isaiah 40:1-5**

**New Revised Standard Version**

Comfort, O comfort my people,  
says your God.

<sup>2</sup> Speak tenderly to Jerusalem,  
and cry to her

that she has served her term,  
that her penalty is paid,  
that she has received from the LORD's hand  
double for all her sins.

<sup>3</sup> A voice cries out:

"In the wilderness prepare the way of the LORD,  
make straight in the desert a highway for our God.

<sup>4</sup> Every valley shall be lifted up,  
and every mountain and hill be made low;  
the uneven ground shall become level,  
and the rough places a plain.

<sup>5</sup> Then the glory of the LORD shall be revealed,  
and all people shall see it together,  
for the mouth of the LORD has spoken."

### **Musical Interlude**

**"Silent Night for Singing Violist"**

*arr. & played by Dana Huyge*

### **A Reading from Scripture-Luke 2:1-7**

**New Revised Standard Version**

And it came to pass in those days, that there went out a decree from Caesar Augustus that all the world should be taxed.

<sup>2</sup> (And this taxing was first made when Cyrenius was governor of Syria.)

<sup>3</sup> And all went to be taxed, every one into his own city.

<sup>4</sup> And Joseph also went up from Galilee, out of the city of Nazareth, into Judaea, unto the city of David, which is called Bethlehem; (because he was of the house and lineage of David:)

<sup>5</sup> To be taxed with Mary his espoused wife, being great with child.

<sup>6</sup> And so it was, that, while they were there, the days were accomplished that she should be delivered.

<sup>7</sup> And she brought forth her firstborn son, and wrapped him in swaddling clothes, and laid him in a manger; because there was no room for them in the inn.

### **Isaiah's Proclamation-Isaiah 9:2-7**

**New Revised Standard Version**

<sup>2</sup> <sup>[a]</sup> The people who walked in darkness  
have seen a great light;

those who lived in a land of deep darkness—  
on them light has shined.

<sup>3</sup> You have multiplied the nation,  
you have increased its joy;  
they rejoice before you  
as with joy at the harvest,  
as people exult when dividing plunder.

<sup>4</sup> For the yoke of their burden,  
and the bar across their shoulders,  
the rod of their oppressor,  
you have broken as on the day of Midian.

<sup>5</sup> For all the boots of the tramping warriors  
and all the garments rolled in blood  
shall be burned as fuel for the fire.

<sup>6</sup> For a child has been born for us,  
a son given to us;  
authority rests upon his shoulders;  
and he is named

Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God,  
Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace.

<sup>7</sup> His authority shall grow continually,  
and there shall be endless peace  
for the throne of David and his kingdom.  
He will establish and uphold it  
with justice and with righteousness  
from this time onward and forevermore.  
The zeal of the LORD of hosts will do this.

## **Closing Prayer**

## **Benediction**

## **Postlude**

**Romance in A-major by Edwin York Bowen**  
*Violist Dana Huyge*