

Welcome to Kingswood Church

Blue Christmas Service

December 20, 2022

Prelude *O Little Town of Bethlehem* Redner

Welcoming & Centering Rev. James Preston

Opening Hymn* *O Come, O Come, Emmanuel* Blue Hymnal #211 (v. 1, 5, 6 & 7)

Words of Gathering* Pastor Clayton Edwards

One: An angel visited Zechariah

All: And hope was found!

One: An angel visited Mary

All: And she rejoiced!

One: An angel visited Joseph

All: And love prevailed!

One: An angel visited shepherds

All: And lives were changed!

Opening Prayer

God of love and understanding, we gather this evening to listen for your wisdom. We come before you longing for your comfort. Help us to know your presence in all of our moods, feelings, and fears. May your angels sing a song of healing and peace to us tonight. Amen.

Lighting of the Advent Wreath Rev. James Preston & Pastor Clayton Edwards

Sung Response *Infant Holy, Infant Lowly* Blue Hymnal #229

A Reading from the Psalms *Psalms 77: 1-15* Pastor Clayton Edwards

A Reading from the Gospel *Matthew 1: 18-25* Pastor Clayton Edwards

One: Hear what the Spirit is saying to the Church.

All: Thanks be to God. Amen.

Sermon *Angels Bring Comfort* Rev. James Preston

The Lighting of Candles

One: We light five candles tonight in anticipation of the coming of Christ! We light one for our pain, one for our losses, one for our memories, one for our faith and hope and one for the disasters and wars of this world.

One: The First Candle we light to redeem the pain of loss; the loss of relationships, the loss of jobs, the loss of health...loss. We pause to gather up the pain of the past. We offer it to God, asking that from God's hands we may receive the gift of peace.

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All: Refresh, restore, renew us, O God, and lead us into your future.

One: The Second Candle we light to remember those whom we have loved and lost. We pause to remember their names, their faces, their voices, and the memories that bind them to us in this season.

All: May God's eternal love surround them.

One: The Third Candle we light to remember ourselves this Christmastime. We pause and remember these past weeks, months and, for some of us, years of disbelief, anger, sadness, illness, fear. We remember the power of memories, the grief, the sadness, the hurts the pain of reflection on our own mortality. We remember hugs and handshakes of family and friends, all those who stood with us.

All: Let us remember that dawn defeats darkness--love diminishes fear.

One: The Fourth Candle we light to remember our faith and the gift of hope, which the Christmas story offers to us. We remember that God, who shares our life, promises us a place and time of no more pain and suffering.

All: Let us remember the One who shows the way, who brings the truth, and who bears the light—who goes with us into our tomorrows.

One: The Fifth Candle we light is for all impacted by the pandemic, by disasters, by tragedy, by gun violence, and by war. Bring your eternal peace to all places and help us reconcile with you and with one another. O God, we long for peace! Come, Lord Jesus, Come!

All: Indeed, we long for peace, O God! Amen.

(Persons are invited to come forward and light candles as prayers and remembrances.)

A Time of Silence

Prayer of Intercession & The Lord's Prayer

Pastor Clayton Edwards

Song of Reflection

What Child is This?

English Carol

Words of Assurance and Comfort

Rev. James Preston

The Light shines in the darkness, and darkness and shadows of life do not overcome it. The Light comes in our most difficult times and brings us hope and healing. Amen.

Hymn of Sending Forth*

In the Bleak Midwinter

Blue Hymnal #221 v. 1 & 2

Postlude

The First Noel

English Carol

*Stand as you are able.

Greeter: Sue Kluge

Usher: Janet Marasco

Accompanist: Dawn Karris