

REID MEMORIAL PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH (U.S.A.)

Blue Christmas Service

December 22, 2024

6:00pm



2261 Walton Way, Augusta, Georgia 30904
706-733-2275 reidchurchaugusta.org

PRELUDE

WELCOME

Dr. Brandi Casto-Waters

CALL TO WORSHIP (John 1:1-14)

In the midst of this season when we celebrate the hope of Christ's coming, we come together to share our grief.

The Word became flesh and lived among us, full of grace and truth.

In the midst of this season when we celebrate the peace that Christ brings, we come together to name our fears.

What has come into being through Christ is life, and that life is the light of all people.

In the midst of this season when we celebrate the love that Christ brings, we come together to be upheld in our struggles.

The light shines in the darkness and the darkness will not overcome it. Let us worship Emmanuel, God with us.

OPENING PRAYER¹

Rev. Nadine Ellsworth-Moran

*HYMN 144

In the Bleak Mid-Winter

CRANHAM

FIRST READING

Isaiah 40:1-5, 28-31

Rev. Boyd Lien

SECOND READING

When the Heart Waits by Sue Monk Kidd

Rev. Ellsworth-Moran

THIRD READING

Matthew 11:28-30

Dr. Casto-Waters

SPECIAL MUSIC

Still, Still, Still

arr. by Thomas Keesecker

FOURTH READING

Gilead by Marilynne Robinson

Rev. Lien

FIFTH READING

Psalms 126

Rev. Ellsworth-Moran

SIXTH READING

Not Celebrate? by Ann Weems

Dr. Casto-Waters

PERSONAL CANDLE LIGHTING

(you may come to the tables to light a candle as you feel ready)

RESPONSIVE PRAYERS OF THE PEOPLE

...weariness that will not leave us. Lord, hear our prayer.

Draw close, Lord Jesus, that we may feel your presence.

...solace and shelter from our storms. Lord, hear our prayer.

Draw close, Lord, that we may find rest.

...strengthened in our spirit. Lord, hear our prayer.

Draw close, Lord, that we may lean into your embrace.

... until a new dawn comes. Lord, hear our prayer,

Draw close, Lord, that we may know your wondrous love.

... and all for thy love's sake.

Amen.²

*HYMN 92

While We Are Waiting, Come

WAITING (Cason)

*AFFIRMATION OF FAITH

Rev. Ellsworth-Moran

I believe that there are skies like deep blue velvet that weigh heavily on our shoulders, and that our God will come to share that burden in our seasons of distress. I believe that God looked deep into his own heart and there felt the pangs of suffering in God's children. In Christ, there is a healer of wounds and a keeper of hope, whose light cannot be extinguished by anything or anyone. In our darkest hours he will come with a glimmer on the horizon of sorrow and pain and his light will steadily grow until we are embraced by it. In the Holy Spirit, there is a sigh that rises with our sighs and fills our lungs with new breath. In our holy Trinity, Father, Son, and Spirit we are held and loved and loved and loved. I believe there is no greater power than this. Amen.

LIGHTING OF THE CHRIST CANDLE ³

PASSING OF THE LIGHT

*HYMN 88

*O Come, O Come Emmanuel
(verses 1, 5, 6, and 7)*

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

*O come, 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.*

*O come, Desire of nations, bind all peoples in one heart and mind;
Bid envy, strife, and discord cease; fill the whole world with heaven's peace.
Rejoice! Rejoice! Emmanuel shall come to thee, O Israel.*

*BLESSING

Dr. Casto-Waters

* All who are able, please stand

*Allowing for continued meditation and worship, please exit the sanctuary in silence.
Greetings may be exchanged after the service in the narthex.*

Participating in Worship

Worship Leaders

Dr. Brandi Casto-Waters
Rev. Nadine Ellsworth-Moran
Rev. Boyd Lien

Musicians

Dr. Wayne Lord

Music—Music is reprinted by permission through OneLicense.net #A-721337

¹ “Blessings in the Chaos” by Jan Richardson

² The 'Blue Christmas' litany used tonight is based on an order developed and used at The Cathedral Church of Saint Andrew, Honolulu, Hawaii.

³ by Ashley Anne Masters (edited for RMPC)



Hearing assistance. Hearing aid wearers with a “T” (telecoil) setting can now hear the service broadcast directly through their hearing aids. Others desiring hearing assistance may check out a portable receiver / headset.