



*Let*

**LIGHT**

*shine out of darkness.*



## THE UNITED METHODIST CHURCHES

LIBERTY POLE — Sun. Worship 9:00 AM — S6759 Hwy. 27 — (608) 675-3630

VIROQUA — Sun. Worship 10:30 AM — 221 S. Center Ave. — (608) 637-3551

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December 21, 2009

Blue Christmas Service

\*Please stand if you are able

PRELUDE *a time to prepare for worship through prayer and meditation*

### WELCOMING WORDS

\*GATHERING (responsively)

The people walking in darkness have seen a great light;

**on those living in the land of the shadow of death a light has dawned.**

\*ADVENT CAROL "O Come, O Come, Emmanuel" (vs. 1-4) Hymnal No. 211

\*OPENING PRAYER (unison)

God of mercy and light, in this season of Advent, we come as people with hope but also as people with hearts that are broken from the memories of loss. We ask for strength for today and courage for tomorrow and peace for what has passed. We ask all these things in the name of Jesus Christ who came to share in our lives the experiences of joy and sorrow, birth and death, despair and the promise of hope.

### INTRODUCTION

#### FIRST SCRIPTURE READING

*Isaiah 40:1-3 and 25-26*

Comfort, comfort my people, says your God. Speak tenderly to Jerusalem, and proclaim to her that her hard service has been completed, that her sin has been paid for, that she has received from the LORD'S hand double for all her sins.

A voice of one calling: "In the desert prepare the way for the LORD; make straight in the wilderness a highway for our God.

"To whom will you compare me? Or who is my equal?" says the Holy One. Lift your eyes and look to the heavens: Who created all these? He who brings out the starry host one by one, and calls them each by name. Because of his great power and mighty strength, not one of them is missing.

#### SPECIAL MUSIC

"Comfort Ye My People"

G. F. Handel

**SECOND SCRIPTURE READING** (responsively) *Psalm 121*

I lift up my eyes to the hills — where does my help come from?

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

He will not let your foot slip — he who watches over you will not slumber;

**indeed, he who watches over Israel will neither slumber nor sleep.**

The Lord watches over you — the Lord is your shade at your right hand;

**the sun will not harm you by day, nor the moon by night.**

The Lord will keep you from all harm — he will watch over your life;

**the Lord will watch over your coming and going both now and forevermore.**

**THIRD SCRIPTURE READING**

*Matthew 2:13-18*

When they had gone, an angel of the Lord appeared to Joseph in a dream. "Get up," he said, "take the child and his mother and escape to Egypt. Stay there until I tell you, for Herod is going to search for the child to kill him." So he got up, took the child and his mother during the night and left for Egypt, where he stayed until the death of Herod. And so was fulfilled what the Lord had said through the prophet: "Out of Egypt I called my son." When Herod realized that he had been outwitted by the Magi, he was furious, and he gave orders to kill all the boys in Bethlehem and its vicinity who were two years old and under, in accordance with the time he had learned from the Magi. Then what was said through the prophet Jeremiah was fulfilled: "A voice is heard in Ramah, weeping and great mourning, Rachel weeping for her children and refusing to be comforted, because they are no more."

**SPECIAL MUSIC**

"In the Bleak Midwinter"

Metz Family Singers

**MESSAGE**

Pastor Ethan

**THE LORD'S PRAYER** (unison)

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 trespasses, as we forgive those who trespass against us. And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil. For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, forever. Amen.

**LIGHTING THE CANDLES OF REMEMBRANCE**

*Those who have experienced a loss are invited to come forward to light a candle.*

**A TIME OF SILENT MEDITATION**

\*CHRISTMAS CAROL

"O Little Town of Bethlehem"

Hymnal No. 230

\*BENEDICTION

\*POSTLUDE

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*You are invited downstairs after the service for a time of refreshments and fellowship.*

Pastor Ethan Larson

Organists: Joyce Funk (Liberty Pole), Kathy Hanson & Barb Casper (Viroqua)

Choir Director (Viroqua): Lynn Whitney

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