

Welcome to St Timothy's

Living our faith in Jesus Christ
with Open Arms, Open Hearts, Open Minds

A graphic with a dark blue background featuring a bright light source in the upper right corner with rays emanating from it. The background is filled with small, light blue stars. In the lower half, there are silhouettes of rolling hills. On the hills, there are several white angel figures with wings spread, appearing to be in flight or standing. The text 'Blue Christmas' is written in a white, elegant font, with 'Blue' in a cursive script and 'Christmas' in a serif font. A small white angel figure is positioned to the right of the word 'Christmas'.

Blue Christmas

A service of remembrance and hope

December 18th, 2021
In-Person and Online Service at 4:30pm

In this season when we are expecting the joy of Christ's coming, some of us are in sadness and pain. This year we are particularly sensitive to the experiences of loneliness, loss and fear as people everywhere are affected by the Covid-19 pandemic. We are called therefore to gather as a whole community, surrounded by love, to listen to God's word, remember God's promises, and to praise God who is the source of all light and hope.

Acknowledgment of Indigenous Territory

This sacred land is the territory of several indigenous Nations – the Wendat, the Haudenosaunee, and the Anishnaabe, with special recognition to the Mississaugas of New Credit.

We also acknowledge that we are on the shores of Niigaanigichigami/Lake Ontario. This territory is governed by the Dish With One Spoon Wampum Belt Treaty, an agreement between the Haudenosaunee Confederacy and the Anishnaabe Confederacy to peaceably share and sustain the life of the Great Lakes. In the spirit of that Treaty we seek to place at the centre of our gatherings the values of respectful reciprocity, diversity, peace, responsibility, and mutual aid.

The Gathering of the Community

Prelude: Liturgical Improvisation on
'My Soul Hath a Longing' George Oldroyd
Performed by Edward Connell

Welcome - Land Acknowledgement

The land from which we gather is the traditional territory of many nations including the Huron-Wendat, Haudenosaunee, Anishinabek, and the Mississaugas of the Credit First Nation. This territory is governed by the Dish With One Spoon Wampum Belt Treaty. Today, Toronto is home to many Indigenous people from across Turtle Island.

A Time of Guided Silent Prayer

Presider: For you, O God, our souls in silence wait.

All: Truly our hope is in you.

Presider: *For your comfort in the midst of our troubles...*
For your strength in the midst of our fears...
For your promise in the midst of our sadness...
For your presence in the midst of the loneliness that surrounds us...
For your light in our in the midst of the darkness that surrounds us...

Opening Hymn: **In the Bleak Midwinter**

In the bleak midwinter, frosty wind made moan,
earth stood hard as iron, water like a stone;
snow had fallen, snow on snow, snow on snow,
in the bleak midwinter, long ago.

Our God, heaven cannot hold him, nor earth sustain;
heaven and earth shall flee away when he comes to reign:
in the bleak midwinter a stable place sufficed
the Lord God almighty, Jesus Christ.

Angels and archangels may have gathered there,
cherubim and seraphim thronged the air;
but his mother only, in her maiden bliss,
worshipped the beloved with a kiss.

What can I give him, poor as I am?
If I were a shepherd, I would bring a lamb;
if I were a wise man, I would do my part;
yet what I can, I give him -- give my heart.

(Cranham)

(Soloist - Jesse Clark)

Opening Sentences

Presider: The Grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, the love of
God, and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be
with you all.

All: And also with you.

Presider: The people who walked in darkness have seen a great light; on those who live in a land of deep shadow, a light has shone. For the yoke that was weighing upon them, and the burden upon their shoulders, you have broken in pieces, O God, our Redeemer.

Let us pray:

All: God of mercy, hear our prayer in this Christmas season for ourselves and for our families. For those who live with painful thoughts and memories. For those who live with loneliness and are separated from families and friends. We ask for strength for today, courage for tomorrow and peace for the past. We ask these things in the name of your Christ, who shares our life in joy and sorrow, death and new birth, despair and promise. Amen.

The Proclamation of The Word

A Reading from the Book of Isaiah:

Sarah Flint

There will be no gloom for those who were in anguish. In the former time he brought into contempt the land of Zebulun and the land of Naphtali, but in the latter time he will make glorious the way of the sea, the land beyond the Jordan, Galilee of the nations.

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

Isaiah 9: 1 – 7

Reader: Listen to what the Spirit is saying to the churches.

All: **Thanks be to God.**

Psalm 139

O Lord, you have searched me out and known me:
you know when I sit or when I stand,
you comprehend my thoughts long before.

**You discern my path and the places where I rest:
you are acquainted with all my ways.**

For there is not a word on my tongue:
but you, Lord, know it altogether.

**You have encompassed me behind and before:
and have laid your hand upon me.**

Such knowledge is too wonderful for me:
so high that I cannot endure it.

**Where shall I go from your spirit:
or where shall I flee from your presence?**

If I ascend into heaven you are there:
if I make my bed in the grave you are there also.

**If I spread out my wings towards the morning:
or dwell in the uttermost parts of the sea,**

Even there your hand shall lead me:
and your right hand shall hold me.

**If I say 'Surely the darkness will cover me:
and the night will enclose me',**

The darkness is no darkness with you,
but the night is as clear as the day:
the darkness and the light are both alike.

**For you have created my inward parts:
you knit me together in my mother's womb.**

I will praise you, for you are to be feared:
fearful are your acts, and wonderful your works.

**You knew my soul,
and my bones were not hidden from you:
when I was formed in secret,
and woven in the depths of the earth.**

Your eyes saw my limbs when they were yet imperfect:
and in your book were all my members written;

**Day by day they were fashioned:
and not one was late in growing.**

How deep are your thoughts to me, O God:
and how great is the sum of them!

**Were I to count them,
they are more in number than the sand:
were I to come to the end, I would still be with you.**

Glory to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit,
**As it was in the beginning is now and ever shall be.
Amen.**

The Gospel

read by The Rev. Canon Michael Burgess

Priest: The Lord be with you.

People: And also with you.

Priest: The Holy Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ,
according to Matthew.

People: Glory to you, Lord Jesus Christ.

At that time Jesus said, 'I thank you, Father, Lord of heaven and earth, because you have hidden these things from the wise and the intelligent and have revealed them to infants; yes, Father, for such was your gracious will.

All things have been handed over to me by my Father; and no one knows the Son except the Father, and no one knows the Father except the Son and anyone to whom the Son chooses to reveal him. Come to me, all you that are weary and are carrying heavy burdens, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you, and learn from me; for I am gentle and humble in heart, and you will find rest for your souls.'

Matthew 11: 25 – 29

Priest: The Gospel of Christ.

People: Praise to you, Lord Jesus Christ.

Homily

The Rev. Canon Michael Burgess

A bell will open and close a time of silent reflection.

A Liturgy of Remembrance and Light

The Rev. Canon Dr. Eric Beresford

**O come, O come, Emmanuel,
And ransom captive Israel,
That mourns in lonely exile here
Until the Son of God appear.**

Silent reflection as the first candle is lit.

Presider: We light this Advent candle to remember those people who have been loved and lost. We pause to remember their name, their face, their voice. We give thanks for the memory that binds them to us this season which anticipates Christmas.

All: Thank you for the gift each of these people has been in our lives. Take our sad and aching hearts and comfort us in the remembrance of their love and the promise that they are forever in your presence. Amen.

**O come, Thou Wisdom from on high,
Who orderest all things mightily;
To us the path of knowledge show,
And teach us in her ways to go.**

Silent reflection as the second candle is lit.

Presider: We light this second candle to redeem the pain
of loss:
the loss of relationships,
the loss of jobs,
the loss of health.

As we gather up the pain of the past,
we offer it to you, O God,
asking that into our open hands,
you will place the gift of peace.

**All: God of mystery, we turn our hearts to you.
We come before you in need of peace,
grateful for the mystery of life and ever aware
of your promises of guidance and protection.
Heal our fearful and anxious hearts that we
might place our trust in you.
Teach us to be patient as you bring healing
and growth into our lives. Amen.**

**O come, Thou Rod of Jesse, free
Thine own from Satan's tyranny;
From depths of hell Thy people save,
And give them victory over the grave.**

Silent reflection as the third candle is lit.

Presider: We light this third candle to acknowledge the loss of direction we have experienced in our lives at this time.

We remember that God is our guide and our keeper. He says, "Do not fear, I go before you.

**All: God of the Exodus,
you led Moses and your people through the
wilderness to a new land.**

**Hear our prayer that we may learn to follow
you in faithfulness and joy.**

**Go before us as our way, our truth, and our
life. Amen.**

**O come, Thou Day-spring, come and cheer
Our spirits by Thine advent here;
Disperse the gloomy clouds of night,
And death's dark shadows put to flight.**

Silent reflection as the fourth candle is lit.

Presider: We light this fourth candle to acknowledge
time lost over this last year:
The celebrations that could not take place,
the memories that could not be made,
the gatherings which could not be enjoyed.

**All: Living God,
you have promised that everything in heaven
and earth finds its fulfillment in you,
as we experience our own sense of exile
remind us that you are the God
who even in the depths of loss
promises to bring your people home with
songs of joy. Amen.**

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

Silent reflection as the Christmas candle is lit.

Presider: The Christmas candle we light as a sign of hope, the hope that the Christmas story offers to us, of a light in the darkness, of compassion even in the face of cruelty and neglect. We remember that God, who shares our life, promises us a place and time of no more pain and suffering.

All: O God your spirit is known by those whose hearts are thankful, and who makes cheerfulness a companion of strength, lift up our hearts, we pray, to a joyous confidence in your care. Guide us when we cannot see the way. Teach us to know that a shadow is only a shadow, because the light of eternal goodness shines beyond what we fear. Where there is love in life, teach us to lay hold of it so that we might grow in the power of your love, and our lives bring comfort and encouragement to others. We ask it, in the name of Jesus Christ whose life is our light. Amen.

A bell will open and close a time of silent reflection.

Leader: So, in the spirit of this season let us now confidently ask our God for all the good things we need: For ourselves as we participate in this Christmas as special people coping with our many different losses. God, hear our prayer,
All: and in your merciful love, answer.

Leader: For our families and friends, that, even when we are apart, we may continue to help and support each other. God, hear our prayer,
All: and in your merciful love, answer.

Leader: For any person we have loved who has died, for all the losses we know in our lives, that all may be redeemed by your Easter promise. God, hear our prayer,
All: and in your merciful love, answer.

Leader: For our family and friends, that you may bless them with love, peace, and joy. God, hear our prayer,
All: and in your merciful love, answer.

Leader: For peace throughout the world as proclaimed by the Christmas Angels on that faraway hillside. God, hear our prayer,
All: and in your mercy, answer.

Leader: For a greater understanding of the lessons of love, generosity and compassion shown and

taught by Jesus the Christ. God, hear our
prayer,

All: and in your mercy, answer.

Leader: God of great compassion and love, listen to the
prayers of these your people. Grant to all,
especially the bereaved and troubled ones this
Christmas, the blessing we ask in the name of
Jesus, who taught us to pray:

**All: 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,
the power and the glory,
for ever and ever. Amen.**

***Hymn:* It Came Upon the Midnight Clear**

It came upon the midnight clear,
that glorious song of old,
from angels bending near the earth,
to touch their harps of gold:
"Peace on the earth, to all good will

from heaven's all-gracious king!"
The world in solemn stillness lay,
to hear the angels sing.

Still through the cloven skies they come
with peaceful wings unfurled,
and still their heavenly music floats
o'er all the weary world;
above its sad and lowly plains
bend on hovering wing,
and ever o'er its Babel sounds
the blessed angels sing.

And you, beneath life's crushing load,
whose forms are bending low,
who toil along the climbing way
with painful steps and slow;
look now, for glad and golden hours
come swiftly on the wing:
O rest beside the weary road
and hear the angels sing.

For lo, the days are hastening on,
by prophets seen of old,
when with the ever-circling years
shall come the time foretold:
when the new heaven and earth shall own
the Prince of Peace their King,
and the whole world send back the song
which now the angels sing.

(Carol)

(Soloist - Jesse Clark)

The Blessing

Presider: In peace we will lie down and sleep;

All: for you alone, Lord, make us dwell in safety.

Presider: Abide with us, Lord Jesus,

**All: for the night is at hand and the day is now
past.**

Presider: As the night watch looks for the morning,

All: so do we look for you, O Christ.

Presider: Restore us again, O God of hosts;
show us the light of your countenance
and we shall be saved.

Bless and keep us, this night and always.

All: Amen.

Postlude: Liturgical Improvisation on

'Pour Light Upon Us'

George Oldroyd

Performed by Edward Connell



*The Promises
of God*

Source: Source

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Our Wardens can be reached at wardens@sttimothy.ca

Our Vision

**“Living our faith in Jesus Christ
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