



Blue Christmas

St. Augustine Parkland Anglican Church
131 Church Road
Spruce Grove Alberta

7 p.m Service, December 19th, 2021

The Very Rev. Neil Gordon

www.staugustinesparkland.org

Words of Welcome

Of Eternal Love Begotten - CP 132

Of eternal Love begotten ere the worlds began to be,
he is Alpha and Omega, he the source, the ending he,
of the things that are and have been, and that future years shall see,
evermore and evermore.

At his Word the worlds were framed. He commanded, it was done:
heaven and earth and depths of ocean in their threefold order one;
all that grows beneath the shining of the moon and burning sun,
evermore and evermore.

Christ, to thee, with God the Father, and, O Holy Ghost, to thee,
hymn and chant and high thanksgiving, and unwearied praises be,
honour, glory, and dominion and eternal victory,
evermore and evermore.

The Collect

Celebrant: Let us say together the Collect,

All: God of mercy, hear our prayers on this Advent season. We pray for ourselves and our families who are living with painful memories of loss at this time of year. We ask for strength for today, courage for tomorrow, and pave for the past. We ask these things in the name of Jesus Christ, who shared our life in joy and sorrow, in death and new birth, in despair and in promise. Amen.

The Proclamation of the Word

First Reading (Hazel)

A READING FROM THE BOOK OF ISAIAH

Comfort, O comfort my people, says your God. 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. A voice cries out: 'In the wilderness prepare the way of the LORD, make straight in the desert a highway for our God. 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. Then the glory of the LORD shall be revealed, and all people shall see it together, for the mouth of the LORD has spoken.' A voice says, 'Cry out!' And I said, 'What shall I cry?' All people are grass, their constancy is like the flower of the field. The grass withers, the flower fades, when the breath of the LORD blows upon it; surely the people are grass. The grass withers, the flower fades; but the word of our God will stand for ever. Why do you say, O Jacob, and speak, O Israel, 'My way is hidden from the LORD, and my right is disregarded by my God'? Have you not known? Have you not heard? The LORD is the everlasting God, the Creator of the ends of the earth. He does not faint or grow weary; his understanding is unsearchable. He gives power to the faint, and strengthens the powerless. Even youths will faint and be weary, and the young will fall exhausted; but those who wait for the LORD shall renew their strength, they shall mount up with wings like eagles, they shall run and not be weary, they shall walk and not faint.

The Word of the Lord.

People Thanks be to God.

PSALM 121- I Lift My Eyes Up

I lift my eyes up to the mountains; where does my help come from;
my help comes from You, maker of heaven, creator of the earth.

I lift my eyes up to the mountains; where does my help come from;
my help comes from You, maker of heaven, creator of the earth.

Oh, how I need You, Lord; you are my only hope;
you're my only prayer; so I will wait for You
to come and rescue me; come and give me life.

I lift my eyes up to the mountains; where does my help come from;
my help comes from You, maker of heaven, creator of the earth.

Second Reading (Winnie)

Reader A READING FROM THE BOOK OF MATTHEW

Now the birth of Jesus the Messiah took place in this way. When his mother Mary had been engaged to Joseph, but before they lived together, she was found to be with child from the Holy Spirit. Her husband Joseph, being a righteous man and unwilling to expose her to public disgrace, planned to dismiss her quietly. But just when he had resolved to do this, an angel of the Lord appeared to him in a dream and said, 'Joseph, son of David, do not be afraid to take Mary as your wife, for the child conceived in her is from the Holy Spirit. She will bear a son, and you are to name him Jesus, for he will save his people from their sins.' All this took place to fulfil what had been spoken by the Lord through the prophet: 'Look, the virgin shall conceive and bear a son, and they shall name him Emmanuel', which means, 'God is with us.' When Joseph awoke

from sleep, he did as the angel of the Lord commanded him; he took her as his wife. Then Herod secretly called for the wise men and learned from them the exact time when the star had appeared. Then he sent them to Bethlehem, saying, 'Go and search diligently for the child; and when you have found him, bring me word so that I may also go and pay him homage.' When they had heard the king, they set out; and there, ahead of them, went the star that they had seen at its rising, until it stopped over the place where the child was. When they saw that the star had stopped, they were overwhelmed with joy. On entering the house, they saw the child with Mary his mother; and they knelt down and paid him homage. Then, opening their treasure-chests, they offered him gifts of gold, frankincense, and myrrh. And having been warned in a dream not to return to Herod, they left for their own country by another road. Now after they had left, an angel of the Lord appeared to Joseph in a dream and said, 'Get up, take the child and his mother, and flee to Egypt, and remain there until I tell you; for Herod is about to search for the child, to destroy him.' Then Joseph* got up, took the child and his mother by night, and went to Egypt, and remained there until the death of Herod. This was to fulfil what had been spoken by the Lord through the prophet, 'Out of Egypt I have called my son.' When Herod died, an angel of the Lord suddenly appeared in a dream to Joseph in Egypt and said, 'Get up, take the child and his mother, and go to the land of Israel, for those who were seeking the child's life are dead.' Then Joseph got up, took the child and his mother, and went to the land of Israel. But when he heard that Archelaus was ruling over Judea in place of his father Herod, he was afraid to go there. And after being warned in a dream, he went away to the district of Galilee. There he made his home in a town called Nazareth, so that what had been spoken through the prophets might be fulfilled, 'He will be called a Nazorean.' The Word of the Lord.

People **Thanks be to God.**

Wait for the Lord - CP 94

Wait for the Lord, whose day is near.

Wait for the Lord, be strong, take heart!

Homily

A Litany of Remembering

The first candle we light is to remember those whom we have loved and have lost. We pause to remember their names, their voices, the memory that binds us to them in this season.

All: **May God's eternal love surround them.**

The second candle we light is to acknowledge the pain of that loss, the loss of relationships, the loss of jobs and the loss of health. We gather up this pain and we offer it to God, asking that from God's hands we may receive the gift of peace.

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

The third candle we light to remember ourselves at this Christmas time. We pause and remember the past weeks and months, the disbelief, the anger, the downtimes, the hugs and handshakes of family and friends and those who were with us. We give thanks for all the support we have known.

All: Let us remember that dawn defeats the darkness.

The fourth candle is lit to remember the faith and the gift of hope which the Christmas story offers us. We remember that God shares our life and promises us a place and time where there will be no more pain or suffering.

All: Let us remember the One who shows the way, who brings the truth and who bears the light.

At this time everyone is invited to come forward to light a candle in remembrance of a life or lives that now are with the great cloud of witnesses praising God in heaven.

In the Bleak Midwinter - CP 122

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 - my heart.

While Shepherds Watched Their Flocks by Night - CP 136

While shepherds watched their flocks by night all seated on the ground,
the angel of the Lord came down and glory shone around.

“Fear not,” said he, for mighty dread had seized their troubled mind.
“Glad tidings of great joy I bring to you and humankind.

To you in David’s town this day is born of David’s line
a Saviour, who is Christ the Lord; and this shall be the sign:

the heavenly babe you there shall find to human view displayed,
all meanly wrapped in swaddling bands, and in a manger laid.”

“All glory be to God on high, and to the world be peace;
good will henceforth from heaven to earth begin, and never cease.”

O Little Town of Bethlehem - CP 120

O little town of Bethlehem, how still we see thee lie!
Above thy deep and dreamless sleep the silent stars go by;
yet in thy dark streets shineth the everlasting light;
the hopes and fears of all the years are met in thee tonight.

For Christ is born of Mary; and, gathered all above,
while mortals sleep, the angels keep their watch of wondering love.
O morning stars, together proclaim the holy birth,
and praises sing to God the King, and peace to all the earth.

How silently, how silently the wondrous gift is given
as love imparts to human hearts the blessings of God’s heaven!
No ear may hear his coming; but in this world of sin,
where meek souls will receive him, still the dear Christ enters in.

O holy child of Bethlehem, descend to us, we pray;
cast out our sin and enter in; be born in us today.
We hear the Christmas angels the great glad tidings tell;
O come to us, abide with us, our Lord Emmanuel.

The Prayers

Presider: In the spirit of the season let us now confidently ask God for all the things we need for ourselves as we participate in whatever we can this Christmas. Lord hear our prayer

All: and in your mercy answer.

For our families and friends that they may continue to help and support us. Lord, hear our prayer

All: And in your mercy answer

For the people we have loved who have died, for all the losses we know, that they may be redeemed by your Easter promise. Lord, hear our prayer

All: And in your mercy answer

For our family and friends that they may know love and peace and happiness in you. Lord, hear our prayer

All: And in your mercy answer

God of compassion and love, listen to the prayers of your faithful people. Grant to all, especially the bereaved and troubled this Christmas, your special blessings and we ask this in the name of Christ, who taught us that when we pray we should say:

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, forever and ever.

AMEN

I Heard the Voice of Jesus Say - CP 508

I heard the voice of Jesus say, "Come unto me and rest;
lay down, thou weary one, lay down thy head upon my breast."
I came to Jesus as I was, so weary, worn, and sad;
I found in him a resting place, and he has made me glad.

I heard the voice of Jesus say, "Behold, I freely give
the living water; thirsty one, stoop down and drink and live."
I came to Jesus and I drank of that life-giving stream;
my thirst was quenched, my soul revived, and now I live in him.

I heard the voice of Jesus say, "I am this dark world's light;
look unto me, thy morn shall rise, and all thy day be bright."
I looked to Jesus and I found in him my star, my sun;
and in that light of life I'll walk till travelling days are done.

Blessing