

THE DES PLAINES CLERGY ALLIANCE
WELCOMES YOU TO THE



Community

Blue Christmas

A SERVICE OF HEALING & HOPE

20 December 2024
7:00 PM

**Welcome to all who worship with us today.
We are blessed by your presence.**

*In the interest of creating a peaceful and prayerful space for worship,
please refrain from conversation within the sanctuary 10 minutes before
and after the service.*

*Please silence your cell phone during the service as a sign of respect for
God and the rest of our worshipping community.*

Welcome everyone!

You're invited to stand as indicated,
and to participate by saying the parts written in **bold**.

However, it's most important
that you do what you need to do to facilitate your healing.

So please sit, remain silent, weep, or even pace,
as you feel the need throughout this worship service.

There are people here who will sustain you
with their singing, praying, and healing love.

The Laying-on of Hands for Healing.

This is a very old practice of the Church, offering strength, comfort, and healing through the gift of touch and prayer. You may ask for healing, physical, spiritual, or emotional, for yourself or someone else.

You may tell the ministers what you are asking God for,
or you may remain silent
and they will pray with the Spirit's wisdom.

Prelude *O come, O come Emmanuel* by Curt Oliver

Welcome

Opening Prayer

Officiant: Blessed be the God of our salvation:

All: **Who bears our burdens and forgives our sins.**

Officiant: God of abundant mercy, ...

... in the Name of your Holy Child, Jesus.

All: **Amen.**

Prayer for Light *(all)*

O Lord God Almighty, as you have taught us to call the evening, the morning and the noonday one day; and have made the sun to know its going down; Dispel the darkness of our hearts, that by your brightness we may know you to be the true God and eternal light, living and reigning forever. Amen.

O gracious light (Hymn S60 - vss. 1-2)

1. O gra-cious Light, pure
bright-ness of the ev-er-liv-ing Fa-ther in hea-ven,
O Je-sus Christ, ho-ly and bless-ed! 2. Now as we
come to the set-ting of the sun, and our eyes be-hold the ves-per
light, we sing your prais-es, O God: Fa-ther, Son, and
Ho-ly Spi-rit.

The candles at the Altar are now lighted.

Officiant: God of Mercy, hear our prayer in this Advent Season for ourselves and our families who live with painful experiences of loss. We ask for strength for today, courage for tomorrow and peace for the past. We ask these things in the name of Christ who entered the world at Christmas to share our life in sorrow and joy, death and new birth, despair and promise.

All: Amen.

THE LIGHTING OF THE ADVENT CANDLES



First Candle

Friends, in the Advent season, we light the candle of hope.

Tonight, we light it for all who feel hopeless. This light shines bright for prisoners, for patients with chronic illness, for individuals fighting to get out of debt, for refugees waiting for a safe place to rest, and for relationships that have no clear way forward. Tonight, we light this candle for the hopeless.

All: May God's hope find them now.

Second Candle

In this season, we light the candle of peace.

Tonight, we light this candle for all who need peace. This light shines bright for the anxious and unsettled—for those in seasons of transition and discernment, for all who struggle with mental health, and for people navigating rocky, new beginnings.

All: May God's peace find them now.

Third Candle

In this season, we light the candle of joy.

Tonight, we light this candle for all who need it. May this light shine for those who are overburdened, overstretched, worn out, and worn down. May this candle shine for those who need a good laugh, even in seasons of grief.

All: May God's joy find them now.

Fourth Candle

In this season, we light the candle of love.

Tonight, we light this candle for all who need it. May this light shine for loved ones lost, for love that has been betrayed, for love that has been neglected or forgotten, and for all who long for love and find themselves lonely.

All: May God's love find them now.

Officiant: Thanks be to God.

All: Amen.



READINGS AND PRAYERS

First Reading ~ A reading from the Gospel of Matthew

Matthew 5: 3-9

From The Message: The Bible in Contemporary Language
by Eugene H. Peterson

Psalm 22

My God, my God, why have you forsaken me? Why are you
so far from my help, and from my cry of distress?

**O my God I cry out in the daytime, but you do not answer: at
night also, but I get no relief.**

But you are the Holy One: enthroned on the praises of your
people.

**Our ancestors trusted in you: they trusted and you delivered
them.**

They called to you and were rescued:

They put their trust in you and were not disappointed.

Be not far from me, for trouble is close at hand:

And there is no one to help me.

Do not stand far off from me O Lord:

You are my helper, come quickly to my rescue.

For you, O God, have not despised or abhorred the afflicted:

You have not hidden your face from them,

But you heard them when they called to you.

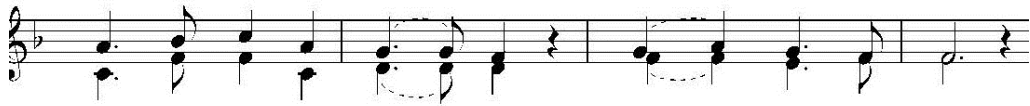
Prayer (*all*)

**In darkness and in light, in trouble and in joy, help us
heavenly Father, to trust your love, to serve your
purpose, and to praise your name, through Jesus Christ
Our Lord. Amen.**

In the Bleak Mid-Winter (Hymn 112 - vs. 1,4)



1 In the bleak mid - win - ter, frost - y wind made moan,
 2 Our God, heaven can - not hold him, nor — earth sus - tain;
 3 An - gels and arch - an - gels may have gath - ered there,
 4 What — can I give him, poor — as I am?



earth stood hard as i - ron, wa - ter like a stone;
 heaven and earth shall flee a - way when he comes to reign:
 cher - u - bim and se - ra - phim thron - ed the air;
 If I were a shep - herd, I would bring a lamb;



snow had fal - len, snow on snow, snow — on — snow,
 in the bleak mid - win - ter a sta - ble - place suf - ficed
 but his mo - ther on - ly, in her maid - en bliss,
 if I were a wise — man, I would do my part;



in the bleak mid - win - ter, long a - go.
 the Lord — God in - car - nate, Je - sus Christ.
 wor - shiped the be - lov - ed with a kiss.
 yet what I can I give him— give my heart.

Second Reading ~ A reading of selected verses from Isaiah 40

Prayer (*all*)

O God the source of eternal light, show forth your unending day on us who watch for you; that our lips may praise you, our hearts bless you and our lives glorify you; through our Savior Jesus Christ. Amen.

Comfort, Comfort Ye (Hymn 67 - vs. 1)

The image shows a musical score for the hymn "Comfort, Comfort Ye" in G major and 4/4 time. It consists of six staves of music with lyrics underneath. The lyrics are: "I Com - fort, com - fort ye my peo - ple, speak ye peace, thus saith our God; com - fort those who sit in dark - ness mourn - ing 'neath their sor - rows' load. Speak ye to Je - ru - sa - lem of the peace that waits for them; tell her that her sins I cov - er, and her war - fare now is o - ver." The music is written in treble clef with a key signature of one sharp (F#).

I Com - fort, com - fort ye my peo - ple, speak ye peace, thus
saith our God; com - fort those who sit in dark - ness
mourn - ing 'neath their sor - rows' load. Speak ye to Je -
ru - sa - lem of the peace that waits for them;
tell her that her sins I cov - er,
and her war - fare now is o - ver.

Psalm 139 (1-2, 6, 10-11)

Lord you have searched me out and known me; *
you know my sitting down and my rising up;
you discern my thoughts from afar.

**You trace my journeys and my resting-places *
and are acquainted with all my ways.**

Where can I go then from your Spirit? *
where can I flee from your presence?

**If I say, "Surely the darkness will cover me, *
and the light around me turn to night,"**

Darkness is not dark to you;
the night is as bright as the day; *
darkness and light to you are both alike.

Prayer (all)

**Living God, in you there is not darkness; shed upon us
through this night the light of your forgiveness, your
healing and peace, that we may know once more the
brightness of your presence, through our Savior Jesus
Christ. Amen.**





HOLDEN Ps 141

2. PSALMODY, READINGS AND CANTICLES

Psalm 141

Refrain

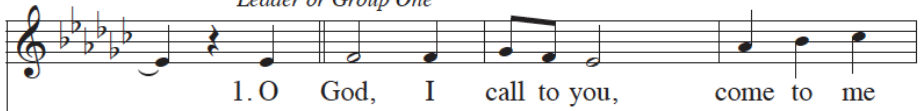
All

Let my prayer rise up like in-cense be - fore you, the
lift-ing up of my hands as an of-fer-ing to you.

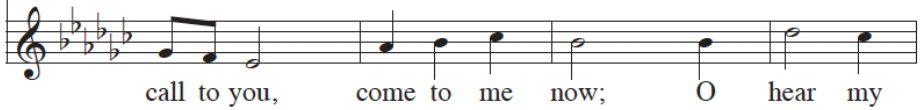
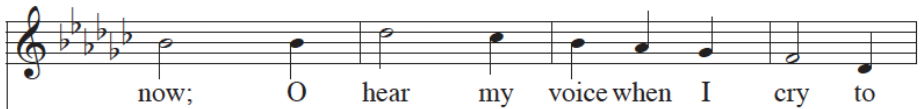
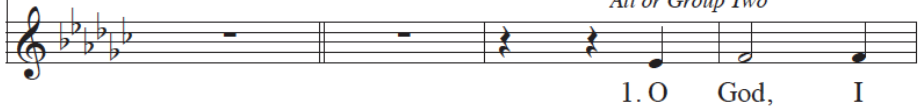
The image shows two staves of musical notation for the refrain of Psalm 141. The first staff begins with a treble clef, a key signature of three flats (B-flat, E-flat, A-flat), and a 3/4 time signature. The melody consists of quarter and eighth notes. The lyrics are written below the staff. The second staff continues the melody with similar note values and rests, also with lyrics underneath.

Verse 1

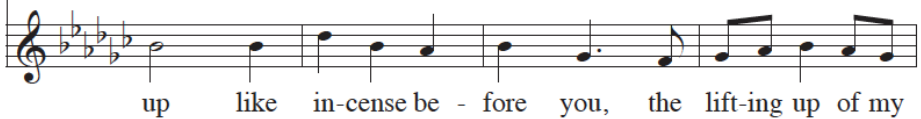
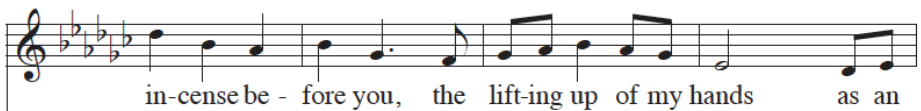
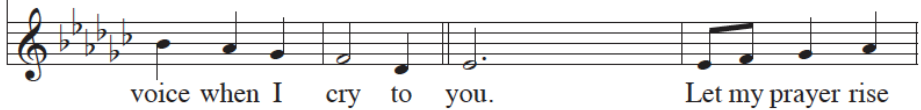
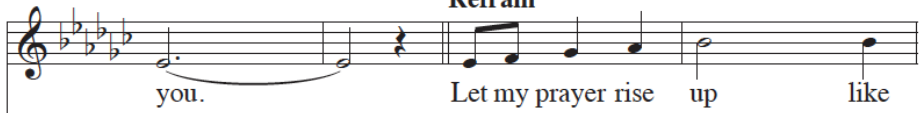
Leader or Group One



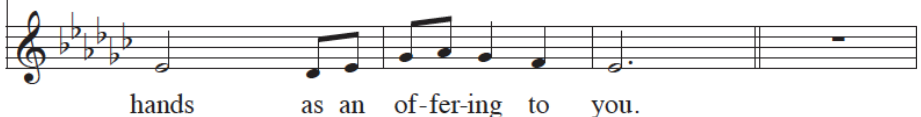
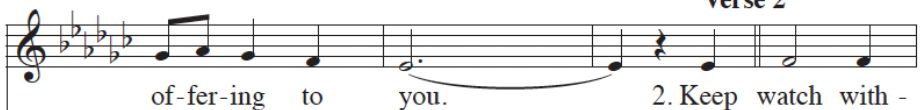
All or Group Two



Refrain



Verse 2



in me, God; deep in my heart may the light of your

2. Keep watch with - in me, God; deep in my

love be burn - ing bright.

heart may the light of your love be burn - ing

Refrain

Let my prayer rise up like in-cense be - fore you, the

bright. Let my prayer rise up like in-cense be -

lift-ing up of my hands as an of-fer-ing to you.

fore you, the lift-ing up of my hands as an of-fer-ing to

Verse 3

3. All praise to the God of all, Cre - a - tor of

you. 3. All praise to the

life; all praise be to Christ and the Spir - it of
 God of all, Cre - a - tor of life; all praise be to

Refrain

love. Let my prayer rise up like
 Christ and the Spir-it of love. Let my prayer rise

in-cense be - fore you, the lift-ing up of my hands as an
 up like in-cense be - fore you, the lift-ing up of my

of-fer-ing to you.
 hands as an of-fer-ing to you.

HOLDEN LITANY

All
A *repeat continuously* B

Hm. God of mer-cy, hold us in love.

A *Leader or Assistant* B

1. We have lost our way and are isolated in sorrow.
2. In our grief, we have turned against you and one another.
3. We speak unjustly against others
4. We blame unfairly; we withdraw or lash out.
5. Because you have been our companion in sorrow.
6. Because nothing can separate us from your goodness.
7. For losses we endure, for broken hearts and lives.
8. For wounded innocence and shattered dreams.
9. That our families, friends, and neighbors may overcome old conflicts
10. That we may walk in justice and mercy.
11. That we will show compassion to the suffering
12. For all those who struggle with despair or addiction.
13. That those who grieve will find compassion
14. That you'll grant help to those we now name:
(vamp as names spoken)
15. That the departed may live with your saints in light
(vamp as names spoken)
16. That we too may depart this life in faith.

A *Leader or Assistant*

Help us, com-fort us, all of our days:

All

Keep us, hold us, gra-cious God.

Prayer for the Evening *(all)*

Officiant: Let us pray. Lord, it is night

**All: The night is for stillness.
 Let us be still in the presence of God.**

Officiant: It is night after a long day.

**All: What has been done has been done;
 What has not been done has not been done; let it be.**

Officiant: The night is dark.

**All: Let our fears of the darkness of the world
 and our own lives rest in you.**

Officiant: The night is quiet.

**All: Let the quietness of your peace enfold us,
 all dear to us, and all who have no peace.**

Officiant: The night heralds the dawn.

**All: Let us look expectantly to a new day,
 new joys, new possibilities.**

Officiant: In your name we pray.

All: Amen.



INVITATION TO LIGHT CANDLES OF REMEMBRANCE OR CONCERN

At this time, the congregation is invited to come forward to light a candle in remembrance of a loss or to mark an event or a concern in your heart, and in prayer to see God's light in the darkness you or someone you love faces.

Healing prayer and anointing are available for those who wish to receive it.

*After the final prayer, we will sing "In deepest night"
and then rest in silence for a few minutes.*

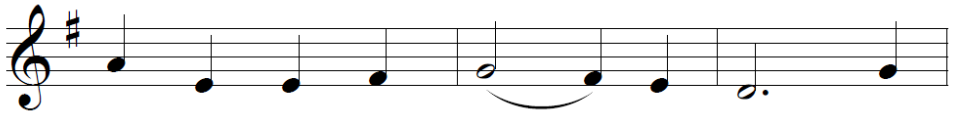
In Deepest Night (Hymn 97 from *Voices Found* - all)



1. In deep - est night, in dark - est days, when
2. When friend was lost, when love _____ de - ceived, dear
3. When through the wa - ters winds _____ our path, a -



harps are hung, no songs _____ we raise, when
Je - sus wept, God was _____ be - reaved; so
round us pain, a - round _____ us death: deep



si - lence must suf - fice _____ as praise, yet
with us in our grief _____ God grieves, and
calls to deep, a sav - ing breath, and



sound-ing in us qui - et - ly... There is the song,
round a - bout us mourn - ful - ly... There are the tears,
found be - side us faith - ful - ly... There is the love,



there is the song, the song _____ of God. Yet
there are _____ tears, the tears _____ of God. And
there is the love, the love _____ of God. And



sound-ing in us is the song of God.
round a - bout us are the tears of God.
found be - side us is the love of God.

The Lord's Prayer

Officiant: As our Savior Christ has taught us, we are bold to say:

**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,
for ever and ever. Amen.**

Blessing & Dismissal

Officiant: And the blessing...
...always.

All: Amen.

Officiant: Let us bless the Lord. Alleluia. Alleluia.

All: Thanks be to God. Alleluia. Alleluia.

Come Thou Long Expected Jesus (Hymn 66 - all) *Next page*

Postlude *Winter Solstice* Michele McLaughlin

Come Thou Long Expected Jesus (Hymn 66 - all)

1 Come, thou long - ex - pect-ed Je - sus, born to set thy peo - ple free;
2 Is - rael's strength and con - so - la - tion, hope of all the earth thou art:
3 Born thy peo - ple to de - liv - er, born a child, and yet a king,
4 By thine own e - ter - nal Spi - rit rule in all our hearts a - lone;

from our fears and sins re - lease us, let us find our rest in thee.
dear de - sire of ev - ery na - tion, joy of ev - ery long - ing heart.
born to reign in us for ev - er, now thy gra - cious king - dom bring.
by thine all - suf - fi - cient mer - it raise us to thy glo - rious throne.

The image shows a musical score for the hymn 'Come Thou Long Expected Jesus'. It consists of two systems of music. The first system has a vocal line (treble clef) and a piano accompaniment (bass clef). The second system also has a vocal line and piano accompaniment. The lyrics are written below the vocal lines. The music is in a common time signature (C) and a key signature of one flat (Bb).

*All are welcome to stay in the sanctuary
for meditation and prayer.*

Please exit in silence.

*Please join us for light refreshments
following the service in the Parish Hall.*

Service Participants

Officiants	The Rev. Hope Chernich The Rev. M.E. Eccles The Rev. Gilbert Martinez The Rev. Linda Thurston
Music Director	Karen Wilberg
Readers	Leslie Meyer Nancy Hoem Karl Dahlstrom Denise Bozza
Altar Guild	Denise Bozza Barb Cortino
Usher	Dee Vihnanek
Fellowship Host	Justin Cochran

*Portions of this service were taken and/or adapted from the
New Zealand Book of Common Prayer*

“Candle Lighting Litany of Remembrance” courtesy of
St. Stephen’s Episcopal Church, Casper, Wyoming

Lighting of individual candles from *Blue Christmas Service: When Christmas Hurts* by Heather
Hill

<https://youngclergywomen.org/blue-christmas-service-when-christmas-hurts/>

St. Martin's Vestry

Bryan Coussens (Senior Warden)

Dee Vihnanek (Junior Warden)

Justin Cochran

Kris Dahlstrom

Robert Smolik

Jack Short, Certified Treasurer

St. Martin's Staff

The Rev. M.E. Eccles, Rector

Karen Wilberg, Music Director/Organist

Helayne Levin, Communications and Operations Mgr.

JB Enterprises West, Inc., Sextons

The Rev. Patrick Pierce, Priest Associate

Des Plaines Clergy Alliance

December 2024



CHRIST CHURCH
UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST

1492 Henry Ave.

12/21 (Sat.) – 7:00 pm – Blue Christmas

12/24 (Tues.) – 4:00 pm – Candlelight & Communion

Christmas Eve Service



THE FIRST UNITED
METHODIST CHURCH
OF DES PLAINES

668 Graceland Ave.

12/24 (Tues.) – 4:00 pm – Candlelight Christmas Eve Service



T R I N I T Y
LUTHERAN CHURCH

675 E. Algonquin Rd.

12/22 (Sun.) – 10:00 am – Intergenerational Christmas Pageant

12/24 (Tues.) – 4:00 pm – Candlelight Christmas Eve Service

12/25 (Weds.) – 10:00 am – Christmas Day Service



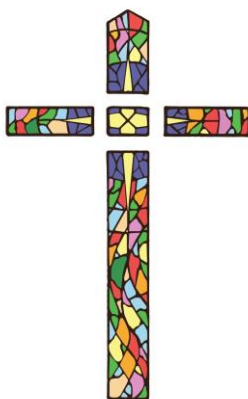
ST. MARTIN'S EPISCOPAL
CHURCH OF DES PLAINES

1095 E. Thacker St.

12/24 (Tues.) – 4:30 pm – Music

5:00 pm – Christmas Eve Festive Eucharist

12/25 (Weds.) – 10:00 am – Christmas Day Festive Eucharist



St. Martin's Episcopal Church

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847-824-2043

All are welcome
and fed with the love of God
pets too!