



**Thursday, December 18, 2025**  
**Blue Christmas Healing Service 7:00 P.M.**  
**St. James UCC**  
Rev. Dr. Patrick Schultz, Pastor  
Randy Sohn, Organist

Meditative Music  
Bells Ring  
Prelude Gathering for Worship:

*God Will Take Care of You*

## **Call to Worship:**

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 acknowledge our pain.

**All who receive Christ are given the power to become children of God.**

In the midst of this season when we celebrate the joy of Christ's coming, we come together to name our fears.

**What has come into being through Christ is life, and that life is the light 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, in the midst of all celebration and sorrow of this season.

## **Prayer:**

We commit our time to you, O Heavenly God, even as for some of us the stars do not shine as brightly, and the songs of the season seem strangely out of tune. We have been told that what we feel to be so is not so. Nevertheless, it *is* so. We feel diminished and out of step with things as they are. So, we come to you and seek your help.

**God of love and comfort, who promises us an end to all mourning, crying, and pain, be present with us now as we bring our struggles before you. Send now your Holy Spirit, our Comforter, to hold us in your love as we acknowledge all the complex emotions that this season brings. May the light of your presence shine among us and warm the bleak midwinter of our hearts. O come, Emmanuel, and fill the whole world with heaven's peace.**

## **Advent Candle Lighting and Reading**

### **Candle of Hope/Grief**

We light the candle of hope remembering those whom we have loved and lost. We pause to remember their name, their face, their voice, and the memory that binds them to us in this season. We pray that you would be Hope to the hopeless.

**May God's eternal hope surround us and overcome our grief.**

## **Candle of Peace/Pain**

We light the candle of peace to redeem the pain of loss in this world and in our lives. Praying that in a world where there seems to be no peace, in all the unsettled places in our own lives, in our anxieties and fears, you would be our Prince of Peace.

**Refresh, restore, renew us O God, and lead us into your peace and future.**

## **Candle of Joy/Struggle**

We light the candle of joy pausing and remembering these past weeks and months, the disbelief, the anger, the downtimes, the poignancy of reminiscing, the hugs and handshakes of family and friends, and all who have stood with us. We pray that your joy will be our strength.

**Let us remember that dawn defeats darkness, and love overcomes fear.**

## **Candle of Love/Fears**

We light the candle of love remembering our faith and the gift of joy which the Christmas story offers to us. And too, we remember those whom we love that are no longer here this Christmas. We remember that God, who shares our life, promises us a place and time of no more pain and suffering where love and joy will abound.

**Let us remember the one who shows the way, who brings the truth, and who bears the light and offers everlasting joy.**

## *Different Kind of Christmas by Mark Schultz*

### **A Meditative Reflection on Psalm 77 with Word, Silence and Song**

A Word of Faith

Psalm 77:1-3 ESV

*I cry aloud to God,  
aloud to God, and he will hear me.  
In the day of my trouble I seek the Lord;  
in the night my hand is stretched out without wearying;  
my soul refuses to be comforted.  
When I remember God, I moan;  
when I meditate, my spirit faints. Selah*

Silent Reflection

♪ Song: *O Come, O Come Emmanuel* Vs 1

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

A Word of Faith

Psalms 77:4-10 ESV

*You hold my eyelids open;  
I am so troubled that I cannot speak.  
I consider the days of old,  
the years long ago.  
I said, "Let me remember my song in the night;  
let me meditate in my heart."  
Then my spirit made a diligent search:  
"Will the Lord spurn forever,  
and never again be favorable?  
Has his steadfast love forever ceased?  
Are his promises at an end for all time?  
Has God forgotten to be gracious?  
Has he in anger shut up his compassion?" Selah  
Then I said, "I will appeal to this,  
to the years of the right hand of the Most High."*

Silent Reflection

♪ Song: *O Come, O Come Emmanuel* Vs 2

O come, Thou Dayspring, from on high, and cheer us by Thy drawing nigh;  
Disperse the gloomy clouds of night, and death's dark shadows put to flight  
Rejoice, rejoice Emmanuel shall come to thee, o Israel

A Word of Faith

Psalms 77:11-15 ESV

*I will remember the deeds of the LORD;  
yes, I will remember your wonders of old.  
I will ponder all your work,  
and meditate on your mighty deeds.  
Your way, O God, is holy.  
What god is great like our God?  
You are the God who works wonders;  
you have made known your might among the peoples.  
You with your arm redeemed your people,  
the children of Jacob and Joseph. Selah*

Silent Reflection

♪ Song: *O Come, O Come Emmanuel* Vs 3

Oh come thou wisdom from on high, and order all things far and nigh;  
To us the path of knowledge show, and cause us in her ways to go.  
Rejoice, rejoice Emmanuel shall come to thee, o Israel

## A Word of Faith

*When the waters saw you, O God,  
 when the waters saw you, they were afraid;  
 indeed, the deep trembled.  
 The clouds poured out water;  
 the skies gave forth thunder;  
 your arrows flashed on every side.  
 The crash of your thunder was in the whirlwind;  
 your lightnings lighted up the world;  
 the earth trembled and shook.  
 Your way was through the sea,  
 your path through the great waters;  
 yet your footprints were unseen.<sup>[a]</sup>  
 You led your people like a flock  
 by the hand of Moses and Aaron.*

## Silent Reflection

♪ Song: *O Come, O Come Emmanuel* Vs 4  
 O come Desire of nations, bind all peoples in one heart and mind;  
 Bid envy strife and quarrels cease; fill the whole world with heaven's peace.  
 Rejoice, rejoice Emmanuel shall come to thee, o Israel

## A Prayer of Hope

Gracious God, we trust that beyond absence there is a presence.  
 That beyond the pain there can be healing.  
 That beyond the brokenness there can be wholeness.  
 That beyond the anger there may be peace.  
 That beyond the hurting there may be forgiveness.  
 That beyond the silence there may be the word.  
 That beyond the word there may be understanding.  
 That through understanding there is love.  
 In Christ's name. *Amen.*

**Hymn:** (next page)

*There's a Balm in Gilead*

Refrain (Unison)

C13 F B $\flat$  F C7

There is a balm in Gil-e-ad to make the wound-ed whole,

C13 F B $\flat$  D F C C13 F

there is a balm in Gil-e-ad to heal the sin-sick soul.

N.C. F F $\sharp$  F C7 F F A C

1 Some-times I feel dis-cour-aged, and think my work's in vain,  
2 If you can-not preach like Pe-ter, if you can-not pray like Paul,  
3 Don't ev-er feel dis-cour-aged, for Je-sus is your friend;

B $\flat$  C F F $\sharp$  G F $\sharp$  A B $\flat$  F C C13 Dm B $\flat$

to Refrain

but then the Ho-ly Spir-it re-vives my soul a-gain.  
you can tell the love of Je-sus, and say, "He died for all."  
and if you lack for knowl-edge he'll ne'er re-fuse to lend.

## **Scripture Reading:**

*Jeremiah 8:18-22 ESV*

*My joy is gone; grief is upon me;  
my heart is sick within me.*

*Behold, the cry of the daughter of my people  
from the length and breadth of the land:*

*"Is the LORD not in Zion?  
Is her King not in her?"*

*"Why have they provoked me to anger with their carved images  
and with their foreign idols?"*

*"The harvest is past, the summer is ended,  
and we are not saved."*

*For the wound of the daughter of my people is my heart wounded;  
I mourn, and dismay has taken hold on me.*

*Is there no balm in Gilead?*

*Is there no physician there?*

*Why then has the health of the daughter of my people  
not been restored?*

## **A Meditation:**

*Our God Heals*

## **People's Prayer:**

Come to us, O God, as we gather together and pray in the name of Jesus, who taught us to pray:

**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 debts, as we forgive our debtors. And lead us not into temptation but deliver us from evil. For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, forever. Amen.**

## **Melody of Music:**

*Manger Lullabies*

## **The Lighting of Candles:**

*Jesus said, "I am the light of the world. Whoever follows me will not walk in darkness but will have the light of life." (John 8:12)*

**Hymn:** (page 101)

*Silent Night*

**Benediction**

**Postlude:**

*Joyful, Joyful, We Adore Thee*



10:30am Services are recorded and available on our church YouTube channel:  
St. Mark's & St. James UCC

Like us on Facebook 

Check out our Website: <https://stmarksstjamesucc.org/>

Join our prayer team; contact Karen in our Church office: [stmstjoffice@gmail.com](mailto:stmstjoffice@gmail.com)