BLUE CHRISTMAS
DECEMBER 8, 2021
7 PM

Maybe

Maybe it is in the waiting for God,
not in the wandering from store to store,
that we find our way.

Maybe it is in the friendship of God,
not in the frenzy of the crowds,
that we are led to the manger.

Maybe it is in the steadfast love of God,
and not in the pile of stuff under the tree,
that we find what we have been searching for all
our lives.

Maybe, just maybe, God of Advent,
this year will be different.
Maybe, just maybe,
we will let you lead us to Bethlehem.

Thom M Shuman (Candles & Conifers, 2005)

WORTHINGTON
PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

Brought to you by Jesus...to make a difference

BLUE CHRISTMAS

SANCTUARY (IN-PERSON & LIVESTREAM)

DECEMBER 8, 2021 – 7:00 PM

WORTHINGTON PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

**Please rise in body or spirit.*

PRELUDE

See Amid the Winter's Snow	John Goss, arr. Lloyd Larson
with "O Come, Let Us Adore Him"	
"Of the Father's Love Begotten"	French Carol, arr. Mark Hayes
"The Wexford Carol"	English Carol, arr. Mark Hayes

WELCOME — Rev. Kevin Horrigan

LIGHTING THE ADVENT CANDLES — Phil & Carol Giessler

One: We begin worship by lighting the Advent candles. We light the first candle, the candle of hope. "Hope that is seen is not hope." (Romans 8:24)

All: **We open our hearts to hope.**

One: We light the candle of peace. "Peace I leave with you; my peace I give to you." (John 14:27)

All: **We open our hearts to peace.**

One: We wait to light the candle of joy. The angel told the shepherds, "I am bringing you good news of great joy for all the people." (Luke 2: 10)

All: **We await the coming of joy.**

One: We wait to light the candle of love. "God so loved the world that he gave his only Son,so that everyone who believes in him may not perish but may have eternal life." (John 3:16)

All: **We await the coming of love.**

One: On Christmas Eve, we will light the Christ candle. "He will be great,and will be called the Son of the Most High…He will reign over the house of Jacob forever, and of his kingdom there will be no end." (Luke 2:32-33)

All: **We await the coming of Christ.**

OPENING PRAYER — Tom Syron

One: Holy God of Advent, you became weak so that we might find strength even in moments of heartbreak. You left the safety of heaven to wander the wilderness of this world, holding our hands when we feel hopeless. You became one of us so that we would never be alone.

All: **Come now, child of Bethlehem, to strengthen us in these days. May we feel your presence in a clear and powerful way, not just as one born in a stable long ago and far away, but as the One born in our hearts.**

One: You go before us: into our hospital rooms, into our loneliness, into a future only you know and control.

All: **You are here, even now, to serve us, to hold us, to comfort us, to heal us, to live in us—now and forever. Amen.**

*** HYMN #145 verses 1&3** — ***"What Child Is This?"*** — GREENSLEEVES

FIRST BIBLE READING — **Micah 5: 2-5a**

But you, O Bethlehem of Ephrathah, who are one of the little clans of Judah, from you shall come forth for me one who is to rule in Israel, whose origin is from of old, from ancient days. Therefore he

shall give them up until the time when she who is in labor has brought forth; then the rest of his kindred shall return to the people of Israel. And he shall stand and feed his flock in the strength of the LORD, in the majesty of the name of the LORD his God.

And they shall live secure, for now he shall be great to the ends of the earth; and he shall be the one of peace.

SECOND BIBLE READING **Matthew 2: 10-12**

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.

THIRD BIBLE READING **Luke 2: 34-35**

Then Simeon blessed them and said to his mother Mary, "This child is destined for the falling and the rising of many in Israel, and to be a sign that will be opposed, so that the inner thoughts of many will be revealed—and a sword will pierce your own soul too."

MEDITATION Rev. Betsy Rice

HYMN # 785 ***"In Deepest Night"*** ROSE MARY

PRAYERS OF INTERCESSION Judy Gray

One: Christmas is coming, faithful God. The calendar promises it, and greetings arrive in the mailbox as they always have, but this pandemic Christmas is different. So many of us are home, alone. Deep within us we—or someone we love—carry pain. In this time when night can stretch into eternity, we come to you, bringing our gifts; not gold, frankincense and myrrh, but our prayers, our hope, and our grief.

All: **We have come from different backgrounds, from different families, from different faith traditions. But we all know what it is like to feel like we are wandering in "the far country"—far from You and far from Your peace.**

One: In a season when so many people don't have enough hours in the day to get their lists checked off, their cards mailed, their presents wrapped, many of us feel like we have TOO much time—time to grieve over a job, a dream, or a loved one.

All: **Our fear of the future, our remembrance of the past, our pain that is difficult to bear and harder to release, our emptiness which cannot be filled with platitudes: all can make this a season of long nights.**

One: Be with us, O God. Be with all of us in our loneliness, in our longing, in our hopes and fears, in our lives. Be with us and with those we love—those we hold in our hearts. Be with us and hear us as we pray with Jesus.

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 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.**

HYMN #795 ***"Healer of Our Every Ill"*** HEALER OF OUR EVERY ILL

CANDLE LIGHTING

(You are now invited to light a candle, representing your prayers and the light of Christ shining in the midst of loss.)

MUSICAL MEDITATION	***"In the Bleak Midwinter"***	Gustav Holst, arr. Lloyd Larson
	"Silent Night, Holy Night! with "Still, Still, Still"	Franz Gruber, arr. Lloyd Larson
HYMN #115 verses 1 & 3	***"Away in a Manger"***	MUELLER

GOSPEL READING John 1:1-5, 14

In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God and the Word was God. He was in the beginning with God. All things came into being through him, and without him not one thing came into being. What has come into being in him was life, and the life was the light of all people. The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness did not overcome it.

And the Word became flesh and lived among us, and we have seen his glory, the glory as of a father's only son, full of grace and truth.

LITANY "Come, Light of Life"

Kevin: Lord, in the beginning when all was very dark, you said: "Let there be light."
All: And there was light and life throughout the universe.
Betsy: And when the human race was exhausted, tired and weary, in the darkness of anxiety, confusion and sin,
All: Into that darkness you came as light in Jesus Christ. God became a human being among us all.
Kevin: Once again it is dark. Not just dark at midnight but dark in ourselves:
All: Dark with fear and uncertainty, dark with confusing and conflicting voices in our ears.
Betsy: Come, Light of life, with your mighty word of love, lighten the darkness in our lives and in the lives of those we love.
All: Lighten our hearts with the joy of your promised coming. Lighten our world with the hope that faith in you brings.
Kevin: We will go out into the peace of Jesus Christ. May His peace that lifts the spirit with hope and leavens the world with love
All: Be ours tonight and always. Amen.

BLESSING

In your silence, may the Word dwell in your heart. In your brokenness, may the Bread of Life heal you. In your pain and in your joy, may the Living God touch your soul. **Amen.**

POSTLUDE ***"Candlelight Carol"*** John Rutter

WORSHIP LEADERS

Rev. Betsy Rice and Rev. Kevin Horrigan
Stephen Minister Readers: **Carol & Phil Giessler, Tom Syron, Judy Gray**
Pianist: **Melissa Robol** A/V: **Russ Nagy**

This service is based on services written by Thom M. Shuman and Bonny Mulder-Behnia

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