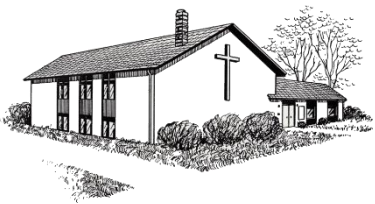


North Kildonan United Church
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Our Mission...
to be an accepting Christian community dedicated to living, sharing and teaching the Word of God.
We respect all aspects of people including race, ethnicity, gender expression, sexual orientation, socio-economic background, age, religion, mental wellness, and ability.

Blue Christmas
December 16th, 2020

***Bold print** indicates a congregational response.*

WE GATHER IN COMMUNITY

"The 'Blue Christmas' service used tonight is based on an order developed and used at The Cathedral Church of Saint Andrew, Honolulu Hawaii."

WELCOME and ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF THE LAND

We acknowledge that we meet and work in Treaty 1 land, the traditional lands of the Anishinaabe, Cree and Dakota peoples, and the homeland of the Metis nation. We are thankful for these first inhabitants and we commit to working together towards justice, truth and reconciliation.

CALL TO WORSHIP

*In the beginning was the Word,
and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.
All things were made by God,
and without God nothing came to be.
What came to be through God was life,
and this life was the light of the world.*

**The Light shines in the darkness,
and the darkness has not overcome it.**

PRELUDE *Solo by Diane McDonald – "I Wonder as I Wander"*

*~Accompaniment by Joan Shaw
(Music played with permission under license #A-620529 One License)*

PSALM 23

**The Lord is my shepherd; I shall not want.
He maketh me to lie down in green pastures;
he leadeth me beside the still waters.
He restoreth my soul;
he leadeth me in the paths of righteousness for his name's sake.
Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death,
I will fear no evil; for thou art with me;**

**thy rod and thy staff, they comfort me.
Thou preparest a table before me in the presence of mine enemies;
thou anointest my head with oil; my cup runneth over.
Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life,
and I will dwell in the house of the Lord for ever.**

LITANY OF REMEMBRANCE

(The first candle is lighted.)

*We light this first candle to remember those whom we have loved and lost.
We pause to remember clearly, their faces, their voices, their bodies.
We embrace and give thanks for the memories that bind them to us in this season
of expectation, when all Creation waits for the Light.*

**We remember them with love.
May God's eternal love surround them.**

(A period of silent reflection.

The second candle is lighted.)

*We light this second candle to remember the pain of loss:
loss of relationships, loss of trust, loss of jobs,
loss of health, loss of faith, the loss of joy.
We acknowledge and embrace the pain of the past, O God, and we offer it to You,
asking that into our wounded hearts and open hands
you will place the gift of peace, shalom.*

**We remember that through you all things are possible.
Refresh, restore, renew us, O God, and lead us into your future.**

(A period of silent reflection.

The third candle is lighted.)

*We light this third candle to remember ourselves this Christmas time.
We pause and remember the past weeks, months, and for some of us years,
that have been heavy with our burdens.
We accept and lay before you, God, the sharpness of memory,
the sadness and grief, the hurt and fear, the anger and pain.
We accept and lay before you the ways we feel we have fallen short,
and the times we have spent blaming ourselves, and you,
for all that we have suffered.
We accept and lay before you the time we have walked alone, in darkness;
and in knowledge of our own mortality.*

**We remember that though we have journeyed far,
and that, while lost, we may have turned away from the light,
the light itself has not failed.
We remember that though winter be upon us
and though the night be dark,
with the turning of the Wheel the dawn will come,
and dawn defeats the darkness.**

(A period of silent reflection.

The fourth candle is lighted.)

*We light this fourth candle to remember faith,
the gift of light and hope that God offers to us
in the stories of Hanukkah and of Christmas,
which both also began in abandonment, insecurity, and humbleness,
in a time of war and in a poor stable.*

*We remember that the loving God who kept the light shining in the temple
and who came to share this life with us promises us comfort and peace.*

**We remember the One who shares our burdens,
who shows us the way to the Light,
and who journeys with us into all our tomorrows.**

SPECIAL MUSIC by Cec Anderson – “Blue Christmas”

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THE PRAYERS OF THE PEOPLE

*God of wisdom,
we come to you this Christmas Season tired, in turmoil, and in pain.
As the nights have grown longer,
so has darkness grown and wrapped itself around our hearts.
In this season of longest night,
we ask your healing blessings upon all that we carry in our hearts --
sorrow we fear may never end, wounds we cannot even put into words.
Lord, hear our prayer,*

And in your love, answer.

*God of mercy and compassion,
there are those among us who are grieving over what might have been.
Death or loss or terrible hurt has changed our experience of Christmas.
We remember that once it was a special day for us, too,
but someone or something precious has gone away from us in this life.
We have lost a beloved, a job, a goal, a cause, a dream.
We find ourselves adrift and alone.
We are weary from the journey, and we have found no room at the inn.
We come to you seeking rest, and peace, and shelter from the storm.
Lord, hear our prayer.*

And in your love, answer.

*God of grace, in the spirit of the season,
grant us all that we need to comfort us
as we journey through this Christmas season.
We ask that you shelter and sustain all those of us,
both here and throughout the world,
who wander or want or weep or are heavy laden,*

*that we may be lifted up in courage and journey on in your peace.
Lord, hear our prayer.*

And in your love, answer.

*God of love, in this Christmas Season we embrace and offer up to you
all that used to be which is now lost to us, and cannot be again.
With celebration all around us, memories of what was, and fears of what may be,
weigh heavy on our hearts. Please hold us close in your embrace,
be near to us this night, until the light returns and morning comes.
Lord, hear our prayer,*

And in your love, answer.

*Watch, dear Lord, with those who wake or weep this night,
and let your angels protect those who sleep.
Tend the sick. Refresh the weary. Sustain the dying.
Calm the suffering. Pity the distressed.
We ask this for your love's sake. Amen.*

SPECIAL MUSIC by Cec Anderson – “Away in a Manger”

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SCRIPTURE READING: Peter Latimer

Luke 2: 1-7

*In those days a decree went out from Emperor Augustus that all the world should
be registered. This was the first registration and was taken while Quirinius was
governor of Syria. All went to their own towns to be registered. Joseph also went
from the town of Nazareth in Galilee to Judea, to the city of David called
Bethlehem, because he was descended from the house and family of David. He
went to be registered with Mary, to whom he was engaged and who was expecting
a child. While they were there, the time came for her to deliver her child. And she
gave birth to her firstborn son and wrapped him in bands of cloth, and laid him in
a manger, because there was no place for them in the inn.*

*These gathered angels represent those who have gone before us serving, in Christ's
presence, as a guiding light in our lives. We light this candle, symbolic of all the candles
we would light together if we could, and in the hope that in time, we will be able to do
so again. We invite you now to light a candle at home in loving remembrance.*

PSALM 121

**I will lift up mine eyes unto the hills,
from whence cometh my help.
My help cometh from the LORD,
which made heaven and earth.
He will not suffer thy foot to be moved:
he that keepeth thee will not slumber.
Behold, he that keepeth Israel**

**shall neither slumber nor sleep.
The LORD is thy keeper:
the LORD is thy shade upon thy right hand.
The sun shall not smite thee by day,
nor the moon by night.
The LORD shall preserve thee from all evil:
he shall preserve thy soul.
The LORD shall preserve thy going out and thy coming in
from this time forth, and even for evermore.**

PRAYER

**Almighty God,
we thank you for your constant love
and for the blessings of this day.
We know that even when we cannot see or feel you,
still you are there.
Help us to remember you
and to listen for your voice
in the words of family, friends and strangers.
Kindle our hearts and awaken hope,
that we may know you
as you reveal yourself in the world and in our lives.
Let the light of your Holy Spirit
shine like these candles in the darkness,
lighting the way for all who feel despairing, lost or forgotten,
and grant that it may come to dwell so deeply in our hearts
that when we leave this place
it may shine on,
for us and for those we meet along the way. Amen.**

SPECIAL MUSIC by Cec Anderson – “Silent Night”
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CONCLUDING PRAYERS

**Another day will come, O God.
I know not what it may bring forth,
but make me ready, God, for whatever it may be.
If I am to stand up, help me to stand bravely.
If I am to sit still, help me to sit quietly.
If I am to lie low, help me to do it patiently.
And if I am to do nothing, help me do it gallantly.
Make these words more than words,
and give me the spirit of your peace. Amen.**

*O Lord, support us all the day long of this troublous life,
until the shadows lengthen, and the evening comes,
and the busy world is hushed,
and the fever of life is over, and our work is done.
Then, in your mercy, give us safe lodging,
a holy rest, and peace at the last, through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.*

POSTLUDE Solo by Diane McDonald – VU #670 **“Precious Lord, Take My Hand”**

~Accompaniment by Joan Shaw

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- 1 Precious Lord, take my hand,
lead me on, let me stand,
I am tired, I am weak, I am worn;
through the storm, through the night,
lead me on to the light:
take my hand, precious Lord, lead me home.**
- 2 When my way grows drear,
precious Lord, linger near,
when my life is almost gone,
hear my cry, hear my call,
hold my hand lest I fall:
take my hand, precious Lord, lead me home.**
- 3 When the darkness appears,
and the night draws near,
and the day is past and gone,
at the river I stand,
guide my feet, hold my hand:
take my hand, precious Lord, lead me home.**

THE BLESSING

*The Lord bless you and keep you;
the Lord make his face to shine upon you and be gracious unto you;
the Lord lift up his countenance upon you,
and give you peace, now and forever more. Amen.*