



# St. Martin's Anglican Church

December 16, 2021

**A Service of Comfort and Hope**

**7:00 PM**

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## THE GATHERING OF THE COMMUNITY

Leader: The people who walked in darkness have seen a great light; on those who live in a land of deep shadow, a light has shone. For the yoke that was weighing upon them, and the burden upon their shoulders, you have broken in pieces, O God, our Redeemer.

Let us pray: God of mercy, hear our prayer as we approach the season of your light coming into the world for ourselves and for our families who live with painful thoughts and memories. We ask for strength for today, courage for tomorrow and peace for the past. We ask these things in the name of your Christ, who shares our life in joy and sorrow, death and new birth, despair and promise. **Amen.**

## THE LITURGY OF THE WORD

A Reading from the book of Isaiah (40:1, 25-31)

Comfort, O comfort my people,  
says your God.

To whom then will you compare me,  
or who is my equal? says the Holy One.

Lift up your eyes on high and see:  
Who created these?

He who brings out their host and numbers them,  
calling them all by name;  
because he is great in strength,  
mighty in power,  
not one is missing.  
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.

Leader: The Word of the Lord.

**People: Thanks be to God.**

### **Psalm 121**

Leader: I will lift up my eyes to the hills, from where is my help to come?

**People: My help comes from the Lord, the maker of heaven and earth.**

Leader: He will not let your foot be moved and he who watches over you will not fall asleep.

**People: Behold, he who keeps watch over Israel shall neither slumber nor sleep.**

Leader: The Lord himself watches over you; the Lord is your shade at your right hand.

**People: So that the sun shall not strike you by day, nor the moon by night.**

Leader: The Lord shall preserve you from all evil; it is he who shall keep you safe.

**People: The Lord shall watch over your going out and your coming in, from this time forth for ever more.**

Leader: Glory to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit.

**People: As it was in the beginning, is now, and will be forever. Amen.**

A Reading from the Gospel of Matthew (11:25-30)

At that time Jesus said, "I thank you, Father, Lord of heaven and earth, because you have hidden these things from the wise and the intelligent and have revealed them to infants; yes, Father, for such was your gracious will. All things have been handed over to me by my Father; and no one knows the Son except the Father, and no one knows the Father except the Son and anyone to whom the Son chooses to reveal him.

"Come to me, all you that are weary and are carrying heavy burdens, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you, and learn from me; for I am gentle and humble in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light."

Leader: The Word of the Lord.

People: **Thanks be to God.**

**Hymn 89:** O Come O Come Emmanuel, vs. 1 & 2

1 O come, O come, Emmanuel,  
and ransom captive Israel  
that mourns in lonely exile here  
until the Son of God appear.

*Refrain:*

Rejoice! Rejoice! Emmanuel  
shall come to you, O Israel.

2 O come, O Wisdom from on high,  
who ordered all things mightily;  
to us the path of knowledge show  
and teach us in its ways to go. *[Refrain]*

### **A LITURGY OF REMEMBRANCE**

Lighting of the Candles

First Candle:

Leader: The first candle we light to remember those whom we have loved and lost. We pause to remember their name, their voice, their face, the memory that binds them to us in this season. We hold them before God, giving thanks for their lives in ours.

Please take a moment to remember those who have died and those who are missing. I invite you to name them, aloud or in the silence of your hearts....

We thank God for them and ask for his comfort, and when we are feeling overcome with sadness, we ask for the peace that is greater than we can ever understand.

Lord hear our prayer. **Amen.**

### Second Candle:

Leader: The second candle we light is to redeem the pain of loss; the loss of relationships, the loss of jobs with the security they bring, the loss of health in ourselves or in family members, the loss of joy and peace in our lives from the stresses which surround us, the loss and loneliness we experience when our loved ones do not share our faith. As we gather up the pain of the past, we offer it to you, O God, asking that into our open hands you will place the gift of peace.

Please take a moment to remember the losses. I invite you to name them, aloud or in the silence of your hearts....

God of mystery, we turn our hearts to you. We come before you in need of peace, grateful for the mystery of life and ever keenly aware of your promises of guidance and protection. We want to place our trust in you, but our hearts grow fearful and anxious. We forget so easily that you will be with us in all that we experience. Teach us to be patient with the transformation of our lives and to be open to the changes which we are now going through. **Amen.**

### Third Candle:

Leader: This candle represents our courage: the courage to face our sadness, to share our feelings with others, our doubts and fears, our anger, frustration or depression, and to dare to hope in the depths of our pain.

We pause now for you to tell the God who longs to take you by the hand and says to you, do not fear, I will help you, about some areas where you need help in finding courage.

[Pause]

God of our depths, we cry out to you to be our guide. Help us to have a strong sense of inner direction and grant that we may have the reassurance of knowing that we are on the right path. Take our lives and use them according to your will. Take all that is lost in us and bring it home with you. **Amen.**

Fourth Candle:

Leader: The fourth candle we light as a sign of hope, the hope that the Christmas story offers to us. We remember that God, who shares our life, promises us a place and time of no more pain and suffering.

O God whose spirit is known by those whose hearts are thankful, and who makes cheerfulness a companion of strength, lift up our hearts, we pray, to a joyous confidence in your care. Guide us when we cannot see the way. Where there is love in life, teach us to find it; help us to trust it and enable us to grow in the power of love. So may our lives bring comfort and encouragement to others. We ask it, in the name of Jesus Christ whose life is our light. **Amen.**

The central candle:

Standing here in the centre of the candles represents Jesus who has come to be Immanuel, God with us, in the midst of it all.

Jesus the good shepherd, who knows our hearts and offers us healing and hope in the midst of our suffering. Who came to help us understand just how much God loves us. And who lived and died to restore our relationship with our heavenly father.

Jesus who reigns as King over God's new creation, where there is no more sickness or death or crying or pain for all eternity. And who has given us his Holy Spirit to help, comfort and guide us as we seek to follow him here on earth and wait for his glorious return.

**Hymn: O Come O Come Emmanuel, vs. 3 & 4**

3 O come, O come, great Lord of might,  
who to your tribes on Sinai's height  
in ancient times did give the law  
in cloud and majesty and awe.

*Refrain:*

Rejoice! Rejoice! Emmanuel  
shall come to you, O Israel.

4 O come, O Branch of Jesse's stem,  
unto your own and rescue them!  
From depths of hell your people save,  
and give them victory o'er the grave. *[Refrain]*

## **Prayers of the People**

**Leader:** In the spirit of this season let us now confidently ask our God for all the good things we need: For ourselves as we participate in this Christmas as people coping with our many different losses. Lord in your mercy...

**People:** **Hear our prayer.**

**Leader:** For our families and friends, that they may continue to help and support us. Lord in your mercy...

**People:** **Hear our prayer.**

**Leader:** For any person we have loved who has died, for all the losses we know in our lives, that all may be redeemed by your Easter promise. Lord in your mercy...

**People:** **Hear our prayer.**

**Leader:** For our family and friends, that you may bless them with love, peace, and joy. Lord in your mercy...

**People:** **Hear our prayer.**

**Leader:** For peace throughout the world as proclaimed by the Christmas Angels on that faraway hillside. Lord in your mercy...

**People:** **Hear our prayer.**

**Leader:** For greater understanding of the lessons of love and acceptance as taught by Jesus your Christ. Lord in your mercy...

**People:** **Hear our prayer.**

**Leader:** God of great compassion and love, listen to the prayers of these your people. Grant to all this Christmas, the blessing we ask in the name of Jesus, who taught us to pray

**People:** 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.

### **Lighting of Individual Candles**

**Leader:** Each of us comes bearing our own hurts, sorrows, broken places. I want to invite each of you to offer your personal wound to the God who loves each of us deeply and wants to carry our pain. God waits patiently, gently calling out: "Give me your pain, come to me... all who labor and are heavy laden, I will refresh you!"

I invite each of you to light the candle that you have been given. As you light the candle, remember that it is God who lights a candle in our darkness and holds us close until we are able to shine.

**Leader:** These lights in their brightness are only symbols, but as they burn and finally go out, we remember that good memory and hope remains forever.

During this time: *PROMISES* by *Maverick City Music*

Faithful through the ages  
God of Abraham  
You're the God of covenant  
And of faithful promises  
Time and time again  
You have proven  
You'll do just what You said

Though the storms may come and the winds may blow  
I'll remain steadfast  
And let my heart learn, when You speak a word  
It will come to pass

Great is Your faithfulness to me  
Great is Your faithfulness to me  
From the rising sun to the setting same  
I will praise Your name  
Great is Your faithfulness to me

When the seasons change  
You remain the same

God from age to age  
Though the earth may pass away  
Your word remains the same, yeah  
You're history can prove  
There's nothing You can't do  
You're faithful and true

Though the storms may come and the winds may blow  
I'll remain steadfast  
And let my heart learn, when You speak a word  
It will come to pass

I put my faith in Jesus  
My anchor to the ground  
My hope and firm foundation  
He'll never let me down  
I put my faith in Jesus  
My anchor to the ground (my hope and firm foundation)  
'Cause my hope and firm foundation (He'll never let me  
down)  
He'll never let me down (oh, I put)  
I put my trust (faith) in Jesus (yes, I do)  
My anchor to the ground  
My hope and firm foundation (my hope and firm  
foundation)  
He'll never let me down (He'll never let me down)  
Never let me down  
I put my faith in Jesus (I put my faith in Jesus)  
My anchor to the ground (my anchor to the ground), oh  
He's my hope, my only hope, my only hope (my hope and  
firm foundation)  
He'll never let me down (He'll never let me down)  
He'll never let me down  
  
Great is Your faithfulness to me (faithfulness, oh, great)  
Great is Your faithfulness to me (from the rising sun)  
From the rising sun to the setting same  
I will praise Your name  
In every season, great is Your faithfulness to me

## **CLOSING**

As people who are familiar with the darkness, we also know that we gather to be illuminated by the light of the Christ Child this Christmas season. May the Christ Child, born in a

lowly stable, bring light, comfort, peace, and joy this holiday season. Comforting God, as we leave this place would you continue to wrap us in your presence. Be with us in our struggles, and when we get lost in the darkness, shine your light and help us find our way back to you.

**Leader:** May the hope of the Christ Child sustain us through times of darkness.

**People:** **That together we may shine again. Amen.**

**Hymn:** O Come O Come Emmanuel (last 3 Verses )

5 O come, O Key of David, come  
and open wide our heavenly home.  
Make safe for us the heavenward road  
and bar the way to death's abode.

*Refrain:*

Rejoice! Rejoice! Emmanuel  
shall come to you, O Israel.

6 O come, O Bright and Morning Star,  
and bring us comfort from afar!  
Dispel the shadows of the night  
and turn our darkness into light. *[Refrain]*

7 O come, O King of nations, bind  
in one the hearts of all mankind.  
Bid all our sad divisions cease  
and be yourself our King of Peace. *[Refrain]*

Adapted from the work of Heather Hill, *Young Clergy Women resources*, and the Church of England c. 2021

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**Christmas Services at St. Martin's, 2021**

Friday, December 24, 7 PM: Christmas Eve, Holy Eucharist

Saturday, December 25, 10 AM: Christmas Day, Holy Eucharist

Sunday, December 26, 10 AM: Christmas I, Holy Eucharist

**\*\*Pre-registration is required. All services subject to change or**

**St. Martin's Anglican Church**  
**The Rev. Shelly Pollard, Incumbent**

Honorary Assistant: The Rev Richard Newland  
Rector's Warden: Michelle Loftus  
People's Warden: Brent Levy  
Deputy Wardens: Eugene Farrugia  
Erna Haller

Mr. Edward Moroney, Music Director  
Ms. Gillian Howard, Office Administrator  
Ms. Janis Lynch, Sunday School Leader  
Ms. Moyah Morgan, Youth Leader

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