

A Meditation to Guide Us Through Grief During the Holidays

By Jim Henkleman and Kris Green

In the past, St. Mary's has offered a "Blue Christmas" contemplative service to sit, be still in our grief, and recognize "The Long Night Before the Dawn." While we are unable to host such a service this year, we can, instead, draw together in prayer as we look towards the dawn. Here are excerpts from last year's service:

He has sent Me to heal the brokenhearted (Luke 4:18)

God is with us...we are not alone. This is our sorrow as we wait...and wait...and wait for God and for what's broken to be made whole. Here we are, together on this dark long night, as we wait for what is broken to be made whole with God's help.

Come to me, all who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest (Matt 11:28)

A Prayer for Healing:

God of mercy, God of comfort, we come before you in this time of difficulty, mindful of human frailty and need. We pray for those who are suffering and can make no sense of tragedy. Grant to the dying, peace, and uphold by the grace and consolation of your Holy Spirit those who are bereaved.

Open us to your healing power, O God. We entrust ourselves to your care, knowing that you are doing for us and for all the world far better things than we can ask or imagine. With you as our companion and guide, strengthen us to hope for all that is good, and to fear no evil. For your love is stronger than death, and your faithfulness reaches to the heavens.

A Closing Blessing comes from *A New Zealand Prayer Book* (p. 185)

Lord, it is night. The night is for stillness. Let us be still in the presence of God. It is night after a long day. What has been done has been done; what has not been done has not been done; let it be. The night is dark. Let our fears of the darkness of the world and of our own lives rest in you. The night is quiet. Let the quietness of your peace enfold us, all who are dear to us, and all who have no peace. The night heralds the dawn. Let us look expectantly to a new day, new joys, new possibilities. In your name we pray.

Now we rest knowing the dawn is approaching, and we turn towards the light.

Fill us with your Spirit -

So that we may find peace and comfort. Fill us with your Spirit where we live lives that are expressions of your love to the broken and hurting.

Amen