



# Mount Royal United Church

"At Mount Royal United Church, our mission is to serve God;  
living our faith inside and outside these walls and nurturing  
each individual on their faith journey."

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## December 21<sup>st</sup>, 2022 – Blue Christmas

Congregational responses in bold.

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Prelude.... *(this is an opportunity for us to appreciate the gift of music and prepare our hearts for worship)*

### Welcome:

Good evening, and welcome to worship. This evening we gather in God's presence, to make space for our hurting hearts. We know that Advent can be a season of immense joy. Advent can be a season of laughter, hope, and loved ones gathered. Advent can be a season of light, fireplaces, and warmth. However, many of us gathered here also know that Advent can be a season of hurt and pain. This evening we make a space for that pain while at the same time opening our hearts to the healing Grace of Christ who knew what it was to grieve, experience loss, and feel the heartache of reaching out to God and hearing no reply. Tonight, we make a space for that pain and for the possibility of healing.

### Call to Worship:

One: Creator God, hover over this space—

**All: For grief is like an ocean, pulling us back in, and we need You in the midst of the waves.**

One: Creator God, hold us in your arms—

**All: For our hands are already full, carrying memories and heartache, and we need You to carry us.**

One: Creator God, in times of joy and in times of sorrow, we turn to you.

**All: Thank you for surrounding and enfolding us on this longest night.**

One: We worship in love longing for God's healing embrace.

**Hymn:** "In the Bleak Midwinter"

**VU#55**

Opening Prayer (*Unison*)

**Holy One, You gave us love and a vision of what our lives and world can be, but have yet to be. Tonight, we come to You with restless hearts seeking comfort and light. Flood our minds with memories of love and with gratitude for each moment of Your Grace. As we wade through this Advent season, help us to catch glimpses of You in the midst of our heartache. God of light and hope, give us peace instead of resentment. Give us You instead of the mere thought of You. And if You can, give it to us sooner rather than later. Gratefully we pray. Amen.**

**Hymn:** "Dream a Dream"

**MV#158**

Scripture: Mark 1: 1-8

Reflection: "Advent Wilderness"

Pastoral Prayer / Lord's Prayer

Candle Lighting:

Jesus is the light of the world and the light of our lives guiding us and shining within us even through this longest night. During the Advent season, some of us may be grieving, some may be ill or have loved ones who are, some come this evening not knowing where our sadness or anxiety comes from and yet we come seeking connection and healing. More than anything, we long to know that it's ok to be unhappy even as the world around us sings Christmas hymns delighting in the joy of the season. Tonight, you are invited to light a candle as your living prayer, and as you light your light, know that God enters every moment of our living, and even in darkness, there is light. (***Silence***)

**Hymn:** "May God's Sheltering Wings" x2

**MV#214**

Blessing (*Unison*)

**We go out into this evening with the warmth of God holding us, the Light of Christ enfolding us, and the Spirit of God leading us this night and every night. Amen.**

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