

## Opening Poem, used on Blue Christmas 2021

*by Rev. Sarah Speed*

We are raw nerves, exposed and tender.  
We are weary bones, hunched and fragile.  
We are silent prayers, lips saying your name.  
We are wedding rings we can't take off, even though time has passed. We are the same pew,  
but it feels different now.  
We are a brave face when we have to be strong.  
We are tears in the shower when grief roars its head.  
We are setting the table, but there are empty seats.  
We are stuck in the swell, caught in the storm.  
We are moving on, caught in our guilt.  
We are okay some days, but some days we're not.  
We are familiar with the night, we know it by name.  
We are night-walkers, dream-makers, star-chasers.  
We are close to home, but home has changed.  
We are close to the surface, but the waters are rising.  
We are all of this, plus everything else, and we are here.  
We are here.  
Grief is here.  
God is here.  
The night is here.  
And all of this is true,  
and we are not alone.  
Take my hand.  
Take these words.  
Let them be your life raft.  
Let this be the longest night,  
and let it be  
whatever you need it to be.  
We are here.  
Grief is here.  
God is here.  
Take what you need.  
Amen.

## Prayer from Blue Christmas Service 2021

*Adapted from a prayer by Rev. Sarah Speed*

God who always welcomes us home—  
tonight is a long night.

We gather together heavy with prayer concerns.

They tumble out of our mouths,  
they saturate every word we think and pray and hear,  
they lay over us like a quilt, weighing on our spirits.

We are a million combinations of weary and sad, lonely and grieving, angry and hurt.  
It is obvious that we need you.

God, we need you in the messy middles,  
in the unclear paths forward, the transition seasons,  
and the splinterings of what once was.

God, we need you in the grieving places,  
in the dining rooms with empty chairs, in the empty wombs,  
and in the dark of the tomb.

God, we need you in our failed dreams,  
in shame that rises quickly, in the unknown next steps,  
in the discernment that is always easier said than done.

Flood our grieving hearts.

Pour out your Spirit on this world.

Where there is suffering, loneliness, poverty, abuse, addiction, depression—be there.

Be all there.

Wrap your arms around those hurting places, and carry us to your promised day.

Now using the words your son taught us to pray, we say together,

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.