

Closing Responses

- Reader Into the darkness of our gathering
we brought light –
- All To speak to us of a light stronger than darkness.**
- Reader Our treasured memories woven to create cloth for a cradle –
- All A cloth enfolding the Child
who in turn enfolds our loved ones –
who enfolds us.**
- Reader We gathered as friends – as families – as strangers
- All We gathered in solidarity of sorrow
and prepare to part
with the promise of compassionate remembering –
the cloth of our pains woven
into a symbol of hope and of love.**
- Reader And may the God of all compassion –
himself acquainted with grief and anguish of heart
walk alongside each of us over Christmas
reminding us that the life started in a stable in Bethlehem
opened the way to eternal life for us and for those we love.
- And may the blessing of God,
the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit
be with us all this night and all nights.
- All Amen**

Hymn



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Blue Christmas Service Cloth for the Cradle

A service for hope for those facing a difficult Christmas

Name of church

Date

(optional)



Opening Responses

Reader We light our first candle
a single light that the deepest darkness cannot conquer –
small – insignificant
but a sign of hope.

Reader 2 Let it speak to us of the tiny flame of hope buried within us –
or **All** the stubborn little light that refuses to be extinguished
by all that life has thrown at it.

Reader We light our second candle
a companion to the first –
equally small – equally insignificant –
but witnessing to hope that another light brings.

Reader 2 Let it speak to us of the lights of companionship –
or **All** of our families and our friends –
of strangers
and kindnesses found in unexpected places
that restored our hope in human nature.

Reader We light our third candle
recalling nights of watching and waiting –
sleepless – anxious
when dawn seemed to ebb further from the horizon
and hope seemed forlorn.

Reader 2 Let it speak to us of the sureness of morning –
or **All** of the passing of darkness
of suffering –
and the promise of an eternal sunrise
dawning for those we have loved and lost
and dawning too for us –
though we may yet be in that darkest hour before the dawn.

Reader We light our fourth candle –
marking the closing of the Advent season
and the immediacy of Christmas –
a time of peace and joy
we may not ourselves feel able to welcome –
as our spirits dwell in dark and wintriness.

Reader 2 Let it speak to us of hope –
or **All** of being together in this place of healing and wholeness –
of our companionship this night
at the turning of the year –
of faith that we and those we have loved and lost
are held eternally in the hand
of the One who brought light into being –
and who knows each one of us by name.

Scripture Readings

Hymn

Short reflection / homily

Cloth for the cradle – remembering

Intercessions