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| Blue Christmas |
| 2019 |

**A reading from the book of the prophet Isaiah.**

*Isaiah 40:1-11*

Comfort, O comfort my people,  
says your God.

Speak tenderly to Jerusalem,  
and cry to her

that she has served her term,  
that her penalty is paid,

that she has received from the Lord's hand  
double for all her sins.

A voice cries out:

“In the wilderness prepare the way of the Lord,  
make straight in the desert a highway for our God.

Every valley shall be lifted up,  
and every mountain and hill be made low;

the uneven ground shall become level,  
and the rough places a plain.

Then the glory of the Lord shall be revealed,  
and all people shall see it together,  
for the mouth of the Lord has spoken.”

A voice says, “Cry out!”  
And I said, “What shall I cry?”

All people are grass,  
their constancy is like the flower of the field.

***[MORE]***

The grass withers, the flower fades,  
when the breath of the Lord blows upon it;  
surely the people are grass.

The grass withers, the flower fades;  
but the word of our God will stand for ever.

Get you up to a high mountain,  
O Zion, herald of good tidings;

lift up your voice with strength,  
O Jerusalem, herald of good tidings,  
lift it up, do not fear;

say to the cities of Judah,  
“Here is your God!”

See, the Lord God comes with might,  
and his arm rules for him;

his reward is with him,  
and his recompense before him.

He will feed his flock like a shepherd;  
he will gather the lambs in his arms,

and carry them in his bosom,  
and gently lead the mother sheep.

***[PAUSE]***

**Hear what the Spirit is saying to God’s people.**

**The Psalm for tonight is Psalm 22, verses 1-11, found on page \_ of your service leaflet. Please join me in reading aloud, starting after the first asterisk.**

1 My God, my God, why have you forsaken me? \*  
and are so far from my cry  
and from the words of my distress?

2 O my God, I cry in the daytime, but you do not answer; \*  
by night as well, but I find no rest.

3 Yet you are the Holy One, \*  
enthroned upon the praises of Israel.

4 Our forefathers put their trust in you; \*  
they trusted, and you delivered them.

5 They cried out to you and were delivered; \*  
they trusted in you and were not put to shame.

6 But as for me, I am a worm and no man, \*  
scorned by all and despised by the people.

7 All who see me laugh me to scorn; \*  
they curl their lips and wag their heads, saying,

8 "He trusted in the Lord; let him deliver him; \*  
let him rescue him, if he delights in him."

9 Yet you are he who took me out of the womb, \*  
and kept me safe upon my mother's breast.

10 I have been entrusted to you ever since I was born; \*  
you were my God when I was still in my mother's womb.

11 Be not far from me, for trouble is near, \*  
and there is none to help.

**The Holy Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ according to Matthew.**

*Matthew 11:28-29*

Jesus said,

“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.”

**The Gospel of the Lord.**