

WELCOME

LIGHTING OF THE ADVENT CANDLES

Friends, in the darkness of night, we give thanks for light.

We light a candle of hope:

hope for ourselves, and for God's beloved world.

We light a candle of peace:

peace in our hearts, and on earth.

We light a candle of joy:

joy to the world, and within our whole being.

We light a candle of love:

the promise of God's love for us, and for all creation.

And now the hour has come and the season is fulfilled.

Shine on us on God.

All: Shine on us, O God of justice;

Guide our path through gloom of night;

Bear within us Wisdom's glory;

Come to us, O Christ the Light.

CALL TO WORSHIP

Like the shepherds, we come to the stable,
uncertain of what we have heard and seen,
longing to hear a word of peace and joy.

Like the wise ones, we have journeys to make,
gifts to offer, and hope in our hearts,
that this world can change for the better.

Here, in the stillness of a winter's night,
we gather to share the light of Christ,
a light that shines in the nightfall.

**We gather in the wonder of this night to share our
joy and thanks for new life.**

HYMN “He Came Down”

He came down that we may have love;
He came down that we may have love;
He came down that we may have love,
Hallelujah forevermore.

He came down that we may have peace;
He came down that we may have peace;
He came down that we may have peace,
Hallelujah forevermore.

He came down that we may have joy;
He came down that we may have joy;
He came down that we may have joy,
Hallelujah forevermore.

He came down that we may have hope;
He came down that we may have hope;
He came down that we may have hope,
Hallelujah forevermore.

He came down that we may have life;
He came down that we may have life;
He came down that we may have life,
Hallelujah forevermore.

OPENING PRAYER

LESSONS AND CAROLS

THE FIRST LESSON

Genesis 3:8-15

⁸ They heard the sound of the LORD God walking in the garden at the time of the evening breeze, and the man and his wife hid themselves from the presence of the LORD God among the trees of the garden. ⁹ But the LORD God called to the man and said to him, “Where are you?” ¹⁰ He said, “I heard the sound of you in the garden, and I was afraid, because I was naked, and I hid myself.” ¹¹ He said, “Who told you that you were naked? Have you eaten from the tree of which I commanded you not to eat?” ¹² The man said, “The woman whom you gave to be with me, she gave me fruit from the tree, and I ate.” ¹³ Then the LORD God

said to the woman, “What is this that you have done?”
The woman said, “The serpent tricked me, and I
ate.” ¹⁴ The LORD God said to the serpent,

“Because you have done this,
cursed are you among all animals
and among all wild creatures;
upon your belly you shall go,
and dust you shall eat
all the days of your life.

¹⁵ I will put enmity between you and the woman
and between your offspring and hers;
he will strike your head,
and you will strike his heel.”

CAROL “O Come, O Come, Emmanuel”

O come, O come, Emmanuel,
And ransom captive Israel
That mourns in lonely exile here,
Until the Son of God appear

[Refrain]

**Rejoice! Rejoice! Emmanuel
Shall come to thee, O Israel**

O come, Thou Wisdom from on high
And order all things, far and nigh
To us the path of knowledge show
And cause us in her ways to go **(Refrain)**

THE SECOND LESSON Isaiah 9:2-7

² The people who walked in darkness
 have seen a great light;
those who lived in a land of deep darkness—
 on them light has shined.

³ You have multiplied exultation;
 you have increased its joy;
they rejoice before you
 as with joy at the harvest,
 as people exult when dividing plunder.

⁴ For the yoke of their burden
 and the bar across their shoulders,
 the rod of their oppressor,
 you have broken as on the day of Midian.

⁵ For all the boots of the tramping warriors
 and all the garments rolled in blood
 shall be burned as fuel for the fire.

⁶ For a child has been born for us,
 a son given to us;
authority rests upon his shoulders,
 and he is named

Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God,
 Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace.

⁷ Great will be his authority,
 and there shall be endless peace
for the throne of David and his kingdom.

He will establish and uphold it
with justice and with righteousness
from this time onward and forevermore.
The zeal of the LORD of hosts will do this.

CAROL “Come Thou Long Expected Jesus”

Come Thou long expected Jesus
Born to set Thy people free
From our fears and sins release us
Let us find our rest in Thee
Israel's strength and consolation
Hope of all the earth Thou art
Dear desire of every nation
Joy of every longing heart

Joy to those who long to see thee
Day-spring from on high appear
Come thou promised Rod of Jesse
Of Thy birth we long to hear
O'er the hills the angels singing
News glad tidings of a birth
Go to him your praises bringing
Christ the Lord has come to earth

Come to earth to taste our sadness
He whose glories knew no end
By his life he brings us gladness

Our Redeemer Shepherd Friend
Leaving riches without number
Born within a cattle stall
This the everlasting wonder
Christ was born Lord of all

Born Thy people to deliver
Born a child and yet a King
Born to reign in us forever
Now Thy gracious kingdom bring
By Thine own eternal spirit
Rule in all our hearts alone
By Thine all sufficient merit
Raise us to Thy glorious throne
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THE THIRD LESSON Isaiah 11:1-9

The Peaceful Kingdom

A shoot shall come out from the stump of Jesse,
and a branch shall grow out of his roots.

² The spirit of the LORD shall rest on him,
the spirit of wisdom and understanding,
the spirit of counsel and might,
the spirit of knowledge and the fear of the LORD.

³ His delight shall be in the fear of the LORD.
He shall not judge by what his eyes see
or decide by what his ears hear,

- ⁴ but with righteousness he shall judge for the poor
and decide with equity for the oppressed of the earth;
he shall strike the earth with the rod of his mouth,
and with the breath of his lips he shall kill the wicked.
- ⁵ Righteousness shall be the belt around his waist
and faithfulness the belt around his loins.
- ⁶ The wolf shall live with the lamb;
the leopard shall lie down with the kid;
the calf and the lion will feed together,
and a little child shall lead them.
- ⁷ The cow and the bear shall graze;
their young shall lie down together;
and the lion shall eat straw like the ox.
- ⁸ The nursing child shall play over the hole of the asp,
and the weaned child shall put its hand on the adder's
den.
- ⁹ They will not hurt or destroy
on all my holy mountain,
for the earth will be full of the knowledge of the LORD
as the waters cover the sea.

CAROL “O Little Town Of Bethlehem”

O little town of Bethlehem,
How still we see thee lie
Above thy deep and dreamless sleep
The silent stars go by
Yet in thy dark streets shineth
The everlasting Light
The hopes and fears of all the years
Are met in thee tonight

How silently, how silently
The wondrous gift is given
So God imparts to human hearts
The blessings of His heaven
No ear may hear His coming
But in this world of sin
Where meek souls will receive him still
The dear Christ enters in

O holy Child of Bethlehem
Descend to us, we pray
Cast out our sin and enter in
Be born to us today
We hear the Christmas angels
The great glad tidings tell
O come to us, abide with us
Our Lord Emmanuel --||--

THE FOURTH LESSON

Luke 1:26-35

The Birth of Jesus Foretold

²⁶ In the sixth month the angel Gabriel was sent by God to a town in Galilee called Nazareth, ²⁷ to a virgin engaged to a man whose name was Joseph, of the house of David. The virgin's name was Mary. ²⁸ And he came to her and said, "Greetings, favored one! The Lord is with you." ²⁹ But she was much perplexed by his words and pondered what sort of greeting this might be. ³⁰ The angel said to her, "Do not be afraid, Mary, for you have found favor with God. ³¹ And now, you will conceive in your womb and bear a son, and you will name him Jesus. ³² He will be great and will be called the Son of the Most High, and the Lord God will give to him the throne of his ancestor David. ³³ He will reign over the house of Jacob forever, and of his kingdom there will be no end." ³⁴ Mary said to the angel, "How can this be, since I am a virgin?" ³⁵ The angel said to her, "The Holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the Most High will overshadow you; therefore the child to be born will be holy; he will be called Son of God.

CAROL

"Canticle Of The Turning"

My soul cries out with a joyful shout that the
God of my heart is great, And my spirit sings of the
wondrous things that you bring to the ones who wait.
You fixed your sight on your servant's plight, and my
weakness you did not spurn, So from east to west shall
my name be blest. Could the world be about to turn?

Though I am small, my God, my all, you work great things in me, And your mercy will-last from-the depths of- the- past

To-the-end of the age to be.

Your very name puts the proud to shame, and to those who would for you yearn,

You will show your might, put the strong to flight, for the world is about to turn.

From the halls of pow'r to the fortress tow'r, not a stone will be left on stone. Let the king beware for your justice tears every tyrant from his throne. The hungry poor shall weep no more, for the food they can never earn; There are tables spread, ev'ry mouth be fed, for the world is about to turn.

Though the nations rage from age to age, we remember who holds us fast: God's mercy must deliver us from the conqueror's crushing grasp.

This saving word that our forebears heard is the promise which holds us bound, 'Til the spear and rod can be crushed by God, who is turning the world around. My heart shall sing of the day you bring. Let the fires of your justice burn. Wipe away all tears, for the dawn draws near, and the world is about to turn!

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The Birth of Jesus

2 In those days a decree went out from Caesar Augustus that all the world should be registered. ² This was the first registration and was taken while Quirinius was governor of Syria. ³ All went to their own towns to be registered. ⁴ Joseph also went from the town of Nazareth in Galilee to Judea, to the city of David called Bethlehem, because he was descended from the house and family of David. ⁵ He went to be registered with Mary, to whom he was engaged and who was expecting a child. ⁶ While they were there, the time came for her to deliver her child. ⁷ And she gave birth to her firstborn son and wrapped him in bands of cloth and laid him in a manger, because there was no place in the guest room.

CAROL “Angels We Have Heard On High”

Angels we have heard on high
Sweetly singing o're the plains
And the mountains in reply
Echoing their joyous strains

Refrain -

Gloria in excelsis Deo

Gloria in excelsis Deo

Come to Bethlehem and see
Him Whose birth the angels sing;
Come, adore on bended knee,
Christ the Lord, the newborn King. **Refrain**

See Him in a manger laid,
Whom the choirs of angels praise;
Mary, Joseph, lend your aid,
While our hearts in love we raise. **Refrain**

THE SIXTH LESSON Luke 2:8-16

The Shepherds and the Angels

⁸ Now in that same region there were shepherds living in the fields, keeping watch over their flock by night. ⁹ Then an angel of the Lord stood before them, and the glory of the Lord shone around them, and they were terrified. ¹⁰ But the angel said to them, “Do not be afraid, for see, I am bringing you good news of great joy for all the people: ¹¹ to you is born this day in the city of David a Savior, who is the Messiah, the Lord. ¹² This will be a sign for you: you will find a child wrapped in bands of cloth and lying in a manger.” ¹³ And suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host, praising God and saying,

¹⁴ “Glory to God in the highest heaven,
and on earth peace among those whom he favors!”

¹⁵ When the angels had left them and gone into heaven, the shepherds said to one another, “Let us go now to Bethlehem and see this thing that has taken place, which the Lord has made known to us.” ¹⁶ So they went with haste and found Mary and Joseph and the child lying in the manger.

CAROL “Silent Night”

Silent night! Holy night!

All is calm, all is bright

Round yon virgin mother and child!

Holy infant, so tender and mild,

Sleep in heavenly peace!

Sleep in heavenly peace!

Silent night! Holy night!

Shepherds quake at the sight!

Glories stream from heaven afar,

Heavenly hosts sing Alleluia!

Christ the Saviour is born!

Christ the Saviour is born!

Silent night! Holy night!

Son of God, love's pure light

Radiant beams from thy holy face

With the dawn of redeeming grace,

Jesus, Lord, at thy birth!

Jesus, Lord, at thy birth!

RESPONDING IN LOVE

THE SEVENTH LESSON

Matthew 2:1-11

The Visit of the Magi

² In the time of King Herod, after Jesus was born in Bethlehem of Judea, magi from the east came to Jerusalem, ² asking, “Where is the child who has been born king of the Jews? For we observed his star in the east and have come to pay him homage.” ³ When King Herod heard this, he was frightened, and all Jerusalem with him, ⁴ and calling together all the chief priests and scribes of the people, he inquired of them where the Messiah was to be born. ⁵ They told him, “In Bethlehem of Judea, for so it has been written by the prophet:

⁶ ‘And you, Bethlehem, in the land of Judah,
are by no means least among the rulers of Judah,
for from you shall come a ruler
who is to shepherd my people Israel.’ ”

⁷ Then Herod secretly called for the magi and learned from them the exact time when the star had appeared. ⁸ Then he sent them to Bethlehem, saying, “Go and search diligently for the child, and when you have found him, bring me word so that I may also go and pay him homage.” ⁹ When they had heard the king, they set out, and there, ahead of them, went the star that they had seen in the east, until it stopped over the place where the child was. ¹⁰ When they saw that the star had

stopped, they were overwhelmed with joy. ¹¹ On entering the house, they saw the child with Mary his mother, and they knelt down and paid him homage. Then, opening their treasure chests, they offered him gifts of gold, frankincense, and myrrh.

CAROL “In The Bleak Midwinter”

In the bleak midwinter, frosty wind made moan,
Earth stood hard as iron, water like a stone;
Snow had fallen, snow on snow, snow on snow,
In the bleak midwinter, long ago.

Our God, heaven cannot hold Him, nor earth sustain;
Heaven and earth shall flee away when He comes to
reign.

In the bleak midwinter a stable place sufficed
The Lord God Almighty, Jesus Christ.

What can I give Him, poor as I am?
If I were a shepherd, I would bring a lamb;
If I were a Wise Man, I would do my part;
Yet what I can I give Him... give my heart.

OFFERING

OFFERTORY PRAYER

PRAYERS OF THE PEOPLE

THE LORD'S PRAYER

**Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your name,
your kingdom come, your will be done, on earth as in
heaven. Give us today our daily bread. Forgive us our
sins as we forgive those who sin against us.**

Save us from the time of trial and deliver us from evil.

**For the kingdom, the power, and the glory are yours
now and for ever. Amen.**

THE EIGHTH LESSON

John 1:1-14

1 In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. **2** He was in the beginning with God. **3** All things came into being through him, and without him not one thing came into being. What has come into being **4** in him was life, and the life was the light of all people. **5** The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness did not overtake it.

6 There was a man sent from God whose name was John. **7** He came as a witness to testify to the light, so that all might believe through him. **8** He himself was not the light, but he came to testify to the light. **9** The true light, which enlightens everyone, was coming into the world.

¹⁰ He was in the world, and the world came into being through him, yet the world did not know him. ¹¹ He came to what was his own, and his own people did not accept him. ¹² But to all who received him, who believed in his name, he gave power to become children of God, ¹³ who were born, not of blood or of the will of the flesh or of the will of man, but of God.

¹⁴ And the Word became flesh and lived among us, and we have seen his glory, the glory as of a father's only son, full of grace and truth.

LIGHTING OF THE CHRIST CANDLE

Rejoice, people of God! The light has come into the world. Now we light the candle of your nativity!

God, our Life and Light, thank you for coming this night to us. In every corner of the world, shine this night with your peace. In every corner of our hearts, shine this night with your grace. Amen.

PASSING OF THE LIGHT DURING SINGING

CAROL “Christ Be Our Light”

Longing for light, we wait in darkness.

Longing for truth, we turn to you.

Make us your own, your holy people,
light for the world to see.

Refrain

Christ, be our light! Shine in our hearts.

Shine through the darkness.

Christ, be our light!

Shine in your church gathered today.

Longing for peace, our world is troubled.

Longing for hope, many despair.

Your word alone has pow’r to save us.

Make us your living voice. **Refrain**

Many the gifts, many the people,

many the hearts that yearn to belong.

Let us be servants to one another,

making your kingdom come. **Refrain**

BLESSING

HYMN “Joy To The World”

Joy to The world! the Lord is come

Let earth receive her King

Let ev'ry heart prepare him room

And heaven and nature sing, And heaven and nature
sing

And heaven and nature sing

Joy to the world! the Savior reigns

Let men their songs employ

While fields and floods, rocks, hills and plains

Repeat the sounding joy, Repeat the sounding joy

Repeat the sounding joy

He rules the world with truth and grace

And makes the nations prove

The glories of His righteousness

And wonders of His love And wonders of His love

And wonder wonders of His love