

\* Denotes that those who are able may stand.

## ***We Gather to Worship God***

### **LIGHTING OF THE CHRIST CANDLE - Centering On the Birth of Christ**

#### **WELCOMING IN THE NAME OF CHRIST**

#### **OPENING PRAYER FOR WORSHIP**

#### **\*PASSING OF THE PEACE OF CHRIST**

## ***We Proclaim God's Word Through Lessons and Carols***

#### INTRODUCTION

#### FIRST LESSON:

In this first lesson, rebellious humanity learns the price for abusing its freedom. The long years of separation from God's love and presence begin, as does the reign of sin.

#### **GENESIS 3:8-15, 17-19**

Hymn                      ***"O Come, O Come, Emmanuel"***                      **#234 v.1**

#### SECOND LESSON:

Abraham acts on the basis of faith alone, and God promises Abraham that through his faithful response, on echoing back to blessed time in Eden, all of humanity shall be blessed by way of Abraham's descendants.

#### **GENESIS 22:15-18**

Hymn                      ***"Lo, How a Rose E'er Blooming"***                      **#216 v.1,2**

#### THIRD LESSON

In the midst of the people's greatest darkness, the prophet announces God's gift of light in the person of a King in the line of David, the King of promise, the King of hope.

#### **ISAIAH 9:2, 6-7**

Hymn                      ***"Hark! The Herald Angels Sing"***                      **# 240 v.1**

#### FOURTH LESSON

The preexistent ruler is coming indeed, and in his wake shall flow forth peace and justice throughout all the earth.

#### MICAH 5:2-5A

Hymn                      ***"O Little Town of Bethlehem"***                      **# 230 v.1**

#### FIFTH LESSON:

The angel Gabriel announces to the virgin Mary that she will give birth to long awaited promised Son of God, whose kingdom shall never end.

#### **LUKE 1:26-35, 38**

Hymn                      ***"Infant Holy"***                      **# 229 v.1,2**

#### SIXTH LESSON

Against the oppressive dark backdrop of the sinful governance of Rome and its taxes, the child of light, Jesus, is born.

#### **LUKE 2:1-7**

Hymn                      ***"Away In a Manger"***                      **#217 v.1,2**

#### SEVENTH LESSON

The good news is brought to the lowly in the fields, as heaven and earth join in chorus praise of the holy birth of salvation.

#### **LUKE 2:8-16**

Hymn                      ***"Angels We Have Heard on High"***                      **#238 v.1**

#### EIGHTH LESSON

To those who have expectant eyes focused upon the heavens, the good news is broadcast to the whole world through a cosmic sign. The wise men follow to see the long expected saviour and King of the Jews, Jesus the Christ.

#### **MATTHEW 2:1-11**

Hymn                      ***"We Three Kings"***                      **#254 v.1,2,5**

#### **SHARING OF JOYS AND CONCERNS**

#### **PASTORAL PRAYER**

## THE LORD'S PRAYER #895

### OFFERING

#### \*DOXOLOGY #95

#### \*Offering Prayer:

**All:** Like Joseph being called to follow, we are called to follow you, O God. As we celebrate this New Year, we pause to listen to your call in our lives. You provide direction for our journey. Lead us now. Guide our actions not with one more resolution, but with true purpose and meaning. Out of this spirit, we dedicate unto you our tithes and offerings given for the ministry and mission of this congregation throughout the New Year. Amen.

### NINTH LESSON

The circle is completed. God's plan is revealed through John. The preexistent word of God, the love and acceptance of God throughout creation, violated by humanity in Eden, broken through distrust and disobedience, is now mended through the coming of God into the world in the form of a child. The great mystery of the Incarnation unfolds before us today!

#### JOHN 1:1-14

\*Hymn            "*O Beautiful Star of Bethlehem*"            Insert

#### \*DISMISSAL WITH BLESSING

**Leader:** May the Christ who by his Incarnation gathered into one things earthly and heavenly, fill you with the sweetness of inward peace and goodwill; and the blessing of God Almighty, the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit, be upon you and remain with you always.

**All:**        **AMEN**

**Leader:** Go forth in peace and Joy.

**All:**        **Thanks be to God. Alleluia!!**

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ISAIAH 9:6