A Christmas/Advent Litany for Intergenerational Worship
with a Mission and Stewardship Theme

Give Joyfully

Theme Presentation
Even though it is called a season of giving, Christmas has a lot of emphasis on getting. A person can feel overwhelmed with all the stuff to get. We may be afraid that we will not measure up to the images of success and happiness for the season. The surprise of Christmas is when we let go of expectations about stuff to get and discover how to give with joy.

“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: to you is born this day in the city of David a Savior, who is the Messiah, the Lord.’” Luke 2:10-11

Do not be afraid!
But on a dark night
those shepherds were afraid.
They did not fear the darkness.
They feared the unexpected light.

They never thought of angels
and they never imagined that the gift of great joy
was a gift for them to share.
Yet, on that dark night,
the unexpected light shone
and they went to a humble stable
to rejoice in the birth of the Christ child.

Here is the good news of Christmas –
that light can shine where we never thought to find it.
It shines in our gifts and giving,
where there is hunger, poverty or war.
It shines as we work for justice and peace
and the dignity of all people.
Light shines in unexpected ways through our gifts and giving, that great joy might be found in the love of God for this world.

And here is another surprise of Christmas. Our giving is not just in one special season. Christmas is a signal of the love that God would share for each and every day of every year.

We do not fear the gift of unexpected light. It is good news for us to share, and through our gifts and giving, a great joy for the world.

“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: to you is born this day in the city of David, a Savior, who is the Messiah, the Lord.’”

Presentation Suggestions
For this reading one person is needed for both readings of the scripture verse. One or more persons (perhaps people involved in outreach ministries) may read the other verses.

They could enter the worship area as the music to a Christmas carol is played softly.

They might stand around an Advent wreath and light the appropriate candles.

Follow this presentation with the singing of a hymn such as “All Poor Men and Humble” or “Go Tell It On The Mountain” or “While Shepherds Watched Their Flocks.”

After the hymn, if you have one or two readers representing outreach ministries, invite them to share a story of unexpected joy in their outreach work.

Ideas and Activities
If you have invited guests to share stories in worship about outreach ministries, these guests might visit Sunday school classes to continue sharing their story. Prepare children or youth a week ahead of this visit and invite them to consider what questions they would like to ask.

Or, locate video resources that tell the story of outreach ministries for sharing in children's or youth programs following this presentation.

Involve children and youth in collecting, organizing and disbursing gifts to world and local outreach ministries. Have a prayer of dedication (written and led by children and youth) when all gifts are assembled and are ready to be sent out, either by mail or disbursed to a food agency, etc.

Have a discussion or debate about the differences between justice and charity, between short-term relief and long-term relief. Review various efforts of outreach to see how both aspects might be included.

Adapted from Here’s Something You Can Do, written by Leslee Alfano and produced by the Canadian Interchurch Stewardship Committee.

Here’s Something You Can Do contains 12 presentations for intergenerational worship, each with accompanying activities for children and youth. The presentations focus on stewardship and mission themes, following the changing seasons of the year and the church calendar.

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