



LESSONS AND CAROLS 1

A children's time, reflection on the Scriptures, and other elements of a worship service can be added at the appropriate place in this service, as needed.

CALL TO WORSHIP and/or OPENING PRAYERS

One: Isaiah the prophet said:
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.

All: O Come, O Come, Emmanuel

One: Zechariah the priest said before John's birth:
by the tender mercy of our God,
the dawn from on high will break upon us,
to give light to those who sit in darkness,
to guide our feet into the way of peace.

All: O Come, O Come, Emmanuel

One: Mary the mother of Jesus said:
God has brought down the powerful from their thrones,
and lifted up the lowly;
has filled the hungry with good things.

All: O Come, O Come, Emmanuel

One: God is with us.
The birth of the Christ-child is the renewal of hope.
God is coming into our lives in a new way.

All: O Come, O Come, Emmanuel

Prayer of Adoration

First and Last,
Creator of the world,
Lover of the world,
Life of the world, life within us and around us,

Creator, Christ, and Spirit; beside you there is no greater.
You stir in our hearts and bring joy to our lives,
you stir in our minds and bring wisdom.
You stir in the world and put on flesh
and came as the Christ-child, born a baby in a cattle stall,
so that we might have true, full and everlasting life.
And we stir this morning and desire to praise you:
We come like the shepherds to adore you,
and we join our voices with the angels and archangels
in praising you
for you became flesh and lived among us.
You are the first and the last,
the brightest and best,
the most true,
the most pure,
Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.

Prayer of Confession

Lord God, we confess that we are not ready for Christmas. We may be ready with the gifts and the meals, but our hearts and minds are still a million miles away. We have been distracted, we have been careless and we have come full tilt into the season forgetting whose birthday it truly is. Forgive us O Lord; forgive us. Still our hearts and our minds and prepare us for this time. May this time of worship be our Christmas preparation and may it be a precious gift to you.

Assurance of Pardon

The Prince of Peace comes to redeem all things. Know that you are forgiven and have the courage and grace to forgive one another and be at peace. Amen

HYMN 159 *O come, all ye faithful*

WELCOME AND ANNOUNCEMENTS

HYMN 36 *The First Nowell*

LIGHTING THE ADVENT CANDLES

*If the congregation uses the PWS&D liturgies they may be used here.
If not, the following or some other resource might be used.*

Leader: First we light the candle of HOPE

People: Because Jesus is our hope.

Leader: Second we light the candle of PEACE

People: Because Jesus is our peace.

Leader: Third we light the candle of JOY

People: Because Jesus brings joy.

Leader: Fourth we light the candle of LOVE

People: Because Jesus is love.

Leader: Finally we light the centre candle.

This is the Christ candle.

People: Jesus is born.

Jesus has come.

Jesus is our salvation.

LESSON *The prophet Isaiah foretells of a coming messiah*

Isaiah 9:2,6-7

PRAYER O God of hope

You comfort us in grief; you strengthen us in weakness; you restore us when we are afraid. Help us to love others as you love us – tenderly and without restraint – so that our relationships may be a reflection of the covenant you have with us.

HYMN **110** *Come, thou long expected Jesus*

LESSON *The coming reign of peace is revealed*

Isaiah 11:1-10

PRAYER O God of redemption:

You straighten the winding ways of our hearts and smooth the paths made rough by careless living. Keep our eyes alert for evidence of your reign, our hearts watchful in holiness, and bring to perfection the good you have begun in us. Make us strong, that we may join you in your holy work, as friends of strangers and victims, companions of those whom others shun, and comfort to those whose hearts are broken.

HYMN **126** *On Jordan's bank*

LESSON *John the Baptism proclaims the One who is to come*
Mark 1:1-15

PRAYER God of promise and covenant,
In a world parched by bitterness you are compassion. In a vague and obscure world you are a voice of clarity calling in the wilderness. By your Spirit confirm in our hearts the claim you have made upon us to speak good news to the poor, to proclaim release to the captives, to restore sight to the blind, and to seek the freedom of the oppressed.

HYMN **154** *Silent Night*

LESSON *The birth of Jesus is foretold*
Luke 1:26-38

PRAYER O God of possibility;
You give us the fresh air of new beginnings and unexpected opportunities, but we often turn away. Help us to see that you shine a light to guide our path, and that the light will illuminate the strange, winding roads we travel. Give us strength to embrace the changes of this world, knowing that you will lead us to a place more glorious than we could ever hope for or imagine.

HYMN **149** *Away in a manger*

LESSON *Jesus is born in Bethlehem*
Luke 2:1-14

PRAYER God of love and wonder,
As you came at night in humility and vulnerability when all was still, so enter our lives this night and always strengthen us so that we may show loving care to those around us, especially those who dwell quietly on the margins where Jesus was born and lived.

HYMN **139** *Hark! The herald angels sing*

LESSON *The shepherds go to see this thing that has happened*
Luke 2:15-20

PRAYER God of loving kindness,
you are above all, beneath all, around all, and within all; before we ever went in search of you, you were here to meet us. Give us the grace to ponder with Mary the mystery of your light come into the world and to treasure the mystery of your love in our hearts.

HYMN 166 *Once in royal David's city*

OFFERING and ANTHEM

LESSON *John unfolds the mystery of the incarnation*
John 1:1-16

HYMN 153 *Joy to the world*

BENEDICTION