



Order of Worship

December 20, 2017



Christmas

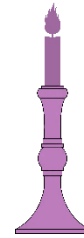
(Journey to Bethlehem Service)

*This liturgy was written by the Rev. Dr. Scotty J. Williams
and was celebrated in St. Gallen, Switzerland at
All Souls Protestant Church which is now dissolved.*

LITURGY

December 20, 2017

Christmas



THE FOURTH ADVENT CANDLE

Lector: We come to light a candle.

People: For Christ Who is the Prince of Peace.

Lector: We come to light a candle.

People: For Christ Who is our greatest Hope.

Lector: We come to light a candle.

People: For Christ Who is our greatest Joy.

Lector: We come to light a candle.

People: For Christ Who is the Light of the world.

(The fourth candle is lit)

Lector: Let us pray....

ALL: Gracious Father, we gather here to celebrate Jesus. And we light this candle not for show, but to celebrate His holy birth. Because Your Son was born, our restless world can know true Peace. Because Your Son was born, the suffering can know true Hope. Because Your Son was born, our broken hearts can know true Joy. And because Your Son was born, all darkness flees for He is Light. To Him, to You, and to the Holy Spirit be all blessing, glory, and honor forever. Amen.

† SONG OF ADORATION

“O Come All Ye Faithful”

words and music by John Frances Wade, 1743

O come, all ye faithful, joyful and triumphant!
 O come ye, O come ye to Bethlehem!
 Come and behold Him, born the King of angels;
O come, let us adore Him,
O come, let us adore Him,
O come, let us adore Him, Christ the Lord!

True God of God, Light from Light eternal,
 Born of the virgin, a mortal He comes.
 Son of the Father, begotten, not created;
O come, let us adore Him,
O come, let us adore Him,
O come, let us adore Him, Christ the Lord!

Sing, choirs of angels, sing in exultation,
 Sing, all ye citizens of heaven above:
 “Glory to God, all glory in the highest!”
O come, let us adore Him,
O come, let us adore Him,
O come, let us adore Him, Christ the Lord!

Yea, Lord, we greet Thee, born this happy morning;
 Jesus, to Thee be all glory given;
 Word of the Father, now in flesh appearing;
O come, let us adore Him,
O come, let us adore Him,
O come, let us adore Him, Christ the Lord!

WELCOME / PRAYER

Pastor: As we come to praise the Light of light, and celebrate
 His holy birth, let us pray to the Lord together saying...

People: Lord have mercy.

Pastor: For the needs of the whole world; and especially for peace and
 good will among all people; that we may love one another in
 truth, and that the world may see and believe in the One Who
 was sent for us. Let us pray to the Lord...

People: Lord have mercy.

Pastor: For the poor and helpless, the cold, the hungry, the
 oppressed, the sick, and them that mourn. For the lonely and
 the unloved, the old and the young, and all who know not
 Jesus Christ. Let us pray to the Lord...

People: Lord have mercy.

Pastor: And for all who are gathered here, to join the throng of
 heaven above, where saints, angels, archangels, and all who
 know and fear our God, gather round His gracious throne,
 lost in wonder, love and praise. Let us pray to the Lord...

People: Lord have mercy.

Pastor: And now let us pray the prayer Jesus taught us saying:

ALL: Our Father, Who art in Heaven,
Hallowed be Thy name.
Thy kingdom come.
Thy will be done on earth, as it is in heaven.
Give us this day our daily bread.
And forgive us our trespasses,
As we forgive those who trespass against us.
And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil:
For Thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory,
Forever and ever. Amen.

FIRST STORY

Genesis 3:8-15;17-19 (ESV)

The Fall

Narrator: Children of God and friends of Christ, we come this night to hear the message of the angels, and to go back to Bethlehem to see the goodness of the Lord. Therefore, let us begin our journey with the story of our foreparents, Adam and Eve in, the garden of Eden, who fell away from light to dust:

⁸ And they heard the sound of the LORD God walking in the garden in the cool of the day, 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 And he said, “I heard the sound of You in the garden, and I was afraid, because I was naked, and I hid myself.” ¹¹ Then the Lord asked, “Who told you that you were naked? Have you eaten of the tree of which I commanded you not to eat?” ¹² Then the man said, “The woman whom You gave to be with me, she gave me fruit of the tree, and I ate.” ¹³ Then the LORD God said to the woman, “What is this that you have done?” And the woman answered, “The serpent deceived me, and I ate.”

¹⁴ Then the LORD God said to the serpent, “Because you have done this, cursed are you above all livestock and above all beasts of the field; on 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 her offspring; He shall bruise your head, and you shall bruise his heel.” ¹⁷ And to Adam He said, “Because you have listened to the voice of your wife and have eaten of the tree of which I commanded you, ‘You shall not eat of it,’ cursed is the ground because of you; in pain you shall eat of it all the days of your life;

+ CONFESSION OF SIN

Pastor: O Christ, we bring our sins to You, not as children of the dust, but as children of the light. Therefore, we confess to You, in Whom there is no darkness:

ALL: Gracious Lord, as we journey back to Bethlehem our steps are Gladness, Grief, and Joy. Gladness, because You left the heavens to bring us hope, peace, and joy. Grief, because You came to us, and we did not receive You. And Joy, because You offer us forgiveness through Your grace and love. Lord, cleanse our hearts and make us whole, and let us shine with faith and truth that come from You, the Light of light.

(Confess in silence)

+ SONG OF CONFESSION

“Come Thou Long Expected Jesus”

words by Charles Wesley, 1744; music by R. H. Prichard, 1831 (Indelible Grace)

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 saints Thou art;
 Dear desire of every nation,
 Joy of every longing heart.

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.

† CONFESSION OF FORGIVENESS

Pastor: And now friends, receive this assurance of pardon and grace:

*If we confess our sins, Christ is faithful and just to
 forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all
 unrighteousness.*

(1 John 1:9)

Therefore, in His name and by His authority, I declare to you
 the entire forgiveness of all of our sins. In name of the Father,
 and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.

**ALL: In Jesus Christ we are forgiven and made righteous!
 Thanks be to God!**

PASSING OF PEACE

Pastor: Friends, the peace of Christ be with you!

People: And also with you!

Pastor: Please take this time to offer the peace of Christ to one
 another.

SECOND STORY

Isaiah 11:1-9 (ESV)

The Righteous Reign of the Branch

Narrator: The road to Bethlehem is paved with promises. Promises like
 that of peace on earth, which Isaiah describes in a beautiful
 vision. A vision of wolves dwelling with lambs, and children
 safe from every harm. Hear this promise and hold fast.
 Cling to it with all your heart.

¹ There shall come forth a shoot from the stump of Jesse, and a branch
 from his roots shall bear fruit. ² And the Spirit of the LORD shall rest
 upon him, the Spirit of wisdom and understanding, the Spirit of counsel
 and might, the Spirit of knowledge and the fear of the LORD. ³ And his
 delight shall be in the fear of the LORD. He shall not judge by what his
 eyes see, or decide disputes by what his ears hear, ⁴ but with righteous-
 ness he shall judge the poor, and decide with equity for the meek of the
 earth; and 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 of his waist, and faithfulness the belt of his loins.

⁶ The wolf shall dwell with the lamb, and the leopard shall lie down with
 the young goat, and the calf and the lion and the fattened calf 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 cobra, and the
 weaned child shall put his hand on the adder's den. ⁹ They shall not hurt
 or destroy in all my holy mountain; for the earth shall be full of the
 knowledge of the LORD as the waters cover the sea.

† SONG OF PEACE

“Comfort, Comfort Now My People”

words by Johan Olearius, 1671; music by Louis Bourgeois, 1551 (Genevan 42)

“Comfort, comfort now my people
Tell of peace”, so says our God.
Comfort those who sit in darkness
Mourning under sorrow’s load.

*To God’s people now proclaim
That God’s pardon waits for them.
Tell them that the war is over;
God will reign in peace forever!*

For the herald’s voice is crying
In the desert far and near,
Calling us to true repentance
Since the Kingdom now is here.

*Oh, that warning cry obey!
Now prepare for God a way!
Let the valleys rise to meet Him,
And the hills bow down to greet Him!*

Straight shall be what long was crooked,
And the rougher places plain!
Let your hearts be true and humble,
As befits His holy reign!

*For the glory of the Lord
Now on earth is shed abroad,
And all flesh shall see the token,
That God’s Word is never broken!*

THIRD STORY

Luke 1:26-35, 38 (ESV)

Birth of Jesus Foretold

Narrator: Along with peace throughout the earth, we also have a promise of hope. Hope is more than expecting good things to happen, it is believing in the goodness of God and His perfect will. The will declared by Gabriel to a girl named Mary in Nazareth. Hear this promise and hold fast. Cling to it with all your heart.

²⁶ In the sixth month the angel Gabriel was sent from God to a city of Galilee named Nazareth, ²⁷ to a virgin betrothed to a man whose name was Joseph, of the house of David. And the virgin's name was Mary. ²⁸ And he came to her and said, “Greetings, O favored one, the Lord is with you!” ²⁹ But she was greatly troubled at the saying, and tried to discern what sort of greeting this might be. ³⁰ And the angel said to her, “Do not be afraid, Mary, for you have found favor with God. ³¹ And behold, you will conceive in your womb and bear a son, and you shall call his name 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 father David, ³³ and he will reign over the house of Jacob forever, and of his kingdom there will be no end.”

³⁴ And Mary said to the angel, “How will this be, since I am a virgin?”

³⁵ And the angel answered 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 called holy—the Son of God.

³⁸ And Mary said, “Behold, I am the servant of the Lord; let it be to me according to your word.” And the angel departed from her.

† SONG OF HOPE

“Once In Royal David’s City”

words and music by Tim Hughs, 2000

Once in royal David's city
 Stood a lowly cattle shed,
 Where a mother laid her Baby
 In a manger for His bed:
 Mary was that mother mild,
 Jesus Christ her little Child.

He came down to earth from heaven,
 Who is God and Lord of all,
 And His shelter was a stable,
 And His cradle was a stall;
 With the poor, and mean, and lowly,
 Lived on earth our Savior holy.

Jesus is our childhood's pattern;
 Day by day, like us He grew;
 He was little, weak and helpless,
 Tears and smiles like us He knew;
 And He feeleth for our sadness,
 And He shareth in our gladness.

And our eyes at last shall see Him,
 Through His own redeeming love;
 For that Child so dear and gentle
 Is our Lord in heaven above,
 And He leads His children on
 To the place where He is gone.

FOURTH STORY

Luke 2:1-7 (ESV)

The Birth of Jesus

Narrator: Brothers and sisters, see God’s promises to us fulfilled.

He has given us freedom through Christ the Lord, Who
 Set us free from sin and death. He has given us peace through
 Christ the Lord, the child Who leads the wolf and lamb.
 He has given us hope through Christ the Lord, Who sits upon
 king David’s throne. And above all, He has given us joy,
 which fills the world with grace and truth. Feel the joy of
 heaven come down, to dwell with us in Bethlehem:

¹In those days a decree went out from Caesar Augustus that all the world should be registered. ²This was the first registration when Quirinius was governor of Syria. ³And all went to be registered, each to his own town. ⁴And Joseph also went up from Galilee, from the town of Nazareth, to Judea, to the city of David, which is called Bethlehem, because he was of the house and lineage of David, ⁵to be registered with Mary, his betrothed, who was with child. ⁶And while they were there, the time came for her to give birth. ⁷And she gave birth to her firstborn son and wrapped him in swaddling cloths and laid him in a manger, because there was no place for them in the inn.

† SONG OF JOY

“Joy to the World!”

words by Isaac Watts, 1719; and music by Lowell Mason, 1848

Joy to the world! the Lord is come:
 Let earth receive her King.
 Let every heart prepare him room,
 And heaven and nature sing,
 And heaven and nature sing,
 And heaven, and heaven and nature sing.

Joy to the earth! the Savior reigns:
 Let all their songs employ,
 While fields and floods, rocks, hills, and plains
 Repeat the sounding joy,
 Repeat the sounding joy,
 Repeat, repeat the sounding joy.

No more let sin and sorrow grow
 Nor thorns infest the ground;
 He comes to make his blessings flow
 Far as the curse is found,
 Far as the curse is found,
 Far as, far as the curse is found.

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 wonders, wonders of his love.

FIFTH STORY

Luke 2:8-16 (ESV)

The Shepherds and the Angels

Narrator: Give thanks to the Lord for He is good! His mercy endures forever! As the armies of heaven sang aloud, He has made His peace with all on earth. Therefore, with confidence, let us join the Shepherds and hear the song:

⁸ And in the same region there were shepherds out in the field, keeping watch over their flock by night. ⁹ And an angel of the Lord appeared to them, and the glory of the Lord shone around them, and they were filled with great fear. ¹⁰ And the angel said to them, “Fear not, for behold, I bring you good news of great joy that will be for all the people. ¹¹ For unto you is born this day in the city of David a Savior, who is Christ the Lord. ¹² And this will be a sign for you: you will find a baby wrapped in swaddling cloths 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, and on earth peace among those with whom he is pleased!”

¹⁵ When the angels went away from them into heaven, the shepherds said to one another, “Let us go over to Bethlehem and see this thing that has happened, which the Lord has made known to us.” ¹⁶ And they went with haste and found Mary and Joseph, and the baby lying in a manger.

INVITATION TO THANKSGIVING (Eucharist)

Pastor: Friends, truly our God is good, for despite our disobedience, He loved us and sent His Son for us. His Son Who gives us peace, which Isaiah foretold. Hope, which the angel foretold. Joy, as Mary found in bearing Him. And love, as the Shepherds found in seeking Him. And what shall we do for all these gifts, given from the Lord above? We shall seek and find the Christ, right here, and offer Him our thanks and Praise.

Friends, the Lord be with you.

People: And also with you.

Pastor: Lift up your hearts.

People: We lift them up to the Lord.

Pastor: Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.

People: It is right to give Him thanks and praise.

Pastor: Let us pray...It is our duty and delight that we should
(chant) everywhere and always offer thanks and praise to You, O God, through Jesus Christ, Who calls us to follow His way of humble service and love. And so with the Church on earth, all creation and the host of heaven, we praise Your name together saying....

ALL: Holy, Holy, Holy! Lord God Almighty!

**(Sung) All Thy works shall praise Thy name,
In earth and sky and sea!**

**Holy, Holy, Holy! Merciful and Mighty!
God in three Persons, Blessed Trinity!**

WORDS OF INSTITUTION AND INSTRUCTION

Pastor: On the night He was betrayed our Lord Jesus took bread, and when He had given thanks, He broke it and said, "Take this and eat of it; this is my body which is given for you. Do this in remembrance of me until I come again."

And in the same way, after supper, He also took the cup, and said, "Take this and drink of it; this cup is the new covenant in my blood, poured out for the forgiveness of sins. Do this, as often as you drink of it, in remembrance of me."

Gracious Father, we thank You for sending Your Son Jesus Christ, Who gave His life for us on the cross and shows us the way to live. Send down Your Holy Spirit upon these Your gifts of bread and wine that they might be for us His body and His blood. Amen.

Friends, in the breaking of His body, Christ received our brokenness and gave us the blessings of heaven. Therefore, let us proclaim the mystery of faith in Him.

ALL: Christ has died! Christ is risen! Christ will come again!

Pastor: Behold the gifts of God for you, the people of God. Let us keep the feast!

DISTRIBUTION

We welcome all baptized Christians and those who wish to follow Jesus to join us at the Table. We take the elements by *intinction* or dipping the bread into the cup, so once you receive the bread please hold on to it that you might dip it into the cup. To ensure that all can partake our bread is gluten-free, and we use grape juice instead of wine.

† SONG OF THANKSGIVING

“Hark! the Herald Angels Sing”

words by Gerard Moultrie, 1864; music by Ralph Vaughan Williams, 1906

Hark! the herald angels sing, “Glory to the new born King;
Peace on earth and mercy mild, God and sinners reconciled!”
Joyful, all ye nations, rise; Join the triumph of the skies;
With the angelic hosts proclaim, “Christ is born in Bethlehem!”
*Hark! the herald angels sing,
“Glory to the newborn King!”*

Christ, by highest heaven adored, Christ, the everlasting Lord!
Late in time behold Him come, Offspring of the virgin's womb.
Veiled in flesh the Godhead see; Hail the incarnate Deity,
Pleased as man with us to dwell, Jesus, our Immanuel.
*Hark! the herald angels sing,
“Glory to the newborn King!”*

Hail the heaven-born Prince of Peace! Hail the Sun of Righteousness!
Light and life to all He brings, Risen with healing in His wings.
Mild, He lays his glory by, Born that we no more may die,
Born to raise us from the earth, Born to give us second birth.
*Hark! the herald angels sing,
“Glory to the newborn King!”*



THE CHRIST CANDLE

Pastor: Give thanks to the Lord, for He is good!

People: His love endures forever!

Pastor: His love which raised us from the dust,

People: And gave us light with endless day!

Pastor: Brothers and sisters, as we light the final candle,
let us stand and hear the words of John, which tell
us that the Light has come:

(The people stand as the Christ candle is lit)

SIXTH LESSON

John 1:1-14 (ESV)

The Word Became Flesh

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 were made through Him, and without Him was not anything made that was made. ⁴ In Him was life, and the life was the Light of men. ⁵ The Light shines in the darkness, and the darkness has not overcome it. ⁶ There was a man sent from God, whose name was John. ⁷ He came as a witness, to bear witness about the Light, that all might believe through him. ⁸ He was not the Light, but came to bear witness about the Light. ⁹ The true Light, which gives light to everyone, was coming into the world. ¹⁰ He was in the world, and the world was made through Him, yet the world did not know Him. ¹¹ He came to His own, and His own people did not receive Him. ¹² But to all who did receive Him, who believed in His name, He gave the right to become children of God, ¹³ who were born, not of blood nor of the will of the flesh nor of the will of man, but of God. ¹⁴ And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, and we have seen his glory, glory as of the only Son from the Father, full of grace and truth.

† SONG OF LIGHT

“Silent Night”

words by Isaac Watts, 1719; and music by Lowell Mason, 1848

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 Savior is born!
 Christ the Savior 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!

Silent night! Holy night!
 Wondrous star, lend thy light;
 With the angels let us sing
 Alleluia to our King:
 “Christ the Savior is born!
 Christ the Savior is born.”

† BENEDICTION

Gaelic Blessing

Pastor: May God the Father, Who made the waves to run,
 the air to flow, the earth to be still, and the stars to shine
 give you the deep peace of God the Son.
 Jesus Christ, the Light of the world,
 Who lives and reigns in us through God the Holy Spirit.
 Amen.

† SUNG BENEDICTION

Gaelic Blessing

words and music by John Rutter, 1978

Cantor: Deep peace of the running wave to you.
 Deep peace of the flowing air to you.
 Deep peace of the quiet earth to you.
 Deep peace of the shining stars to you.
 Deep peace of the gentle night to you.
 Moon and stars pour their healing light on you.
 Deep peace of Christ,
 Of Christ the Light of the world to you.
 Deep peace of Christ to you.