

## **Where Two or Three are Gathered: Worship for Small Assemblies**

Advent through Christmas Year A - Dec 1, 2019 to January 5th 2020

### Planning Notes for Leaders

#### **Season and Lectionary**

The season of Advent begins a new church year and begins again the cycle of telling the story of Jesus' life and ministry. Advent takes on a more subdued tone than one might expect of a new year. Rather than beginning the new year as a race, Advent is about waiting. Waiting along with the people of Israel for the Messiah.

The four Sundays of Advent, regardless of lectionary year, follow the same pattern of readings. The first Sunday focuses on the end of time and God's promise to make a new creation. The second Sunday tells the first half of the story of John the Baptist, preaching the wilderness of the One coming after him. The third Sunday is John the Baptist again and his preaching to the crowds and religious authorities. The fourth Sunday tells the story of the annunciation, the angel visiting Mary (and Joseph) to tell her that she has been chosen by God to bear the Messiah.

The Advent collects or prayers of the day also follow an unusual pattern compared to the rest of the church year. Each prayer begins with 'Stir up...' and implore Christ's coming to God's people. The rest of the year, prayers are addressed to God the Father, rather than to Christ and it is good to make note of these? unique prayers of the day

As we turn to Christmas, the readings shift to the coming of Christ in the incarnation. Each year we hear the family stories from Luke and John. However, the Sundays in Christmas are opportunities to hear some of the lesser known stories that surround the familiar Christmas story. The first Sunday focuses on the Holy Family's flight to Egypt avoiding the slaughter of the Holy Innocents. The second Sunday we hear the expanded incarnation narrative from John 1.

#### **Seasonal visuals and music**

The colour for Advent is normally blue, while sometimes purple is still used. Blue distinguishes Advent from the penitential nature from Lent by turning our focus toward hopeful anticipation of Messiah's coming. Much like the early morning sky just before the sunrise, the blue of Advent evokes the sense that light is about to dawn on the world.

In Advent, the rich canon of Advent hymns gives the assembly the opportunity to sing with the people of Israel in anticipation of Messiah. While tempting to sing Christmas Carols as they blast on the radio and in the malls, hymns like "Light One Candle" (ELW 240) call us to prepare for Messiah's coming. This hymn or others could be used each week to sing along with the lighting of the Advent wreath.

Finally, the Advent wreath symbolizes our growing expectation of the Messiah. As each candle is lit the light increases signifying the coming dawn of the incarnation. Advent isn't merely a

countdown to Christmas, but the practice of waiting. Advent shows us the tension that we live in each day, being people of faith waiting for Messiah who is both here now, and still coming.

### **Seasonal variations on the liturgy**

Consider beginning each liturgy by gathering around the advent wreath. Have someone light the appropriate number of candles, the prayer for lighting the advent wreath is prayed by the presider or leader. ELW 240 Light One Candle to Watch for Messiah can be sung after the wreath is lit, beginning with verse 1 on week 1. Each week another verse is added until all four verses are sung on the fourth week.

Like in Lent, omit the hymn of praise. The Kyrie on its own is heard as an expression of our longing for Messiah.

Unlike in Lent, use the Nicene Creed, as its language speaks to the incarnation which we anticipate during the season.

If any readings are omitted in the liturgy, retain the Old Testament reading and Gospel, in order be reminded of the longing of the people of Israel for the coming of Messiah.

During the season of Christmas, most communities have established and long held traditions when it comes to Christmas Eve and Christmas Day. However, there are some occasions during the 12 days of Christmas, or during the Sundays in Christmas when a simple or alternative for worship is desirable. A service for Lessons and Carols can be an easy order to follow during the season of Christmas, one is provided after the orders for Advent.

## First Sunday in Advent December 1st, 2019

### Lectionary:

Isaiah 2:1-5

Psalms 122

Romans 13:11-14

Matthew 24:36-44

(Blue)

### Hymn Suggestions:

Light One Candle to Watch for Messiah ELW 240 v.1

Come, thou long-expected Jesus ELW 254

Awake, Awake, and greet the new morn ELW 242

Wake, awake, for night is flying ELW 436

Soul, adorn yourself with gladness ELW 488

Rejoice, Rejoice, believers ELW 244

### **Prayer of the Day**

Stir up your power, Lord Christ, and come. By your merciful protection save us from the threatening dangers of our sins, and enlighten our walk in the way of your salvation, for you live and reign with the Father and the Holy Spirit, one God, Now and forever.

**Amen.**

### **Prayer for lighting the Advent Wreath**

First Week of Advent

**Use this blessing when lighting the first candle.**

Blessed are you, God of Jacob, for you promise to transform weapons of war into implements of planting and harvest and to teach us your way of peace; you promise that our night of sin is far gone and that your day of salvation is dawning.

As we light the first candle on this wreath, wake us from our sleep, wrap us in your light, empower us to live honorably, and guide us along your path of peace.

O house of Jacob, come,

**let us walk in the light of the Lord. Amen.**

`(From [SundaysandSeasons.com](http://SundaysandSeasons.com))

### Order for Holy Communion

#### **Gathering**

Gathering around the Wreath

Light the first Candle

Sing ELW 240 v1

Greeting  
Kyrie - ELW 151 repeat 3 times  
Prayer of the Day

## **Word**

First Reading  
Psalm  
Second Reading  
Gospel Acclamation  
    Use ELW 175 Gospel Acclamation, repeat 3 times  
Gospel Readings  
Sermon  
Hymn of the Day  
Nicene Creed  
Prayers of Intercession  
    ELW p. 105 offers helpful guidelines for crafting prayers from the assembly  
Peace  
Offering

## **Meal**

Holy One, the beginning and the end, the giver of life:  
Blessed are you for the birth of creation.  
Blessed are you in the darkness and in the light.  
Blessed are you for your promise to your people.  
Blessed are you in the prophets' hopes and dreams.  
Blessed are you for Mary's openness to your will. Blessed are you for your Son Jesus, the Word made flesh.

In the night in which he was betrayed, our Lord Jesus took bread, and gave thanks; broke it, and gave it to his disciples, saying: Take and eat; this is my body, given for you. Do this in remembrance of me.

Again, after supper, he took the cup, gave thanks, and gave it for all to drink, saying:  
This cup is the new covenant in my blood, shed for you and for all people for the forgiveness of sin. Do this for the remembrance of me.

Let us proclaim the mystery of faith:

**Christ has died. Christ has risen. Christ will come again.**

With this bread and cup we remember your Word dwelling among us, full of grace and truth.  
We remember our new birth in his death and resurrection.  
We look with hope for his coming.

## **Come, Lord Jesus.**

Holy God, we long for your Spirit. Come among us. Bless this meal.  
May your Word take flesh in us. Awaken your people. Fill us with your light.  
Bring the gift of peace on earth.

## **Come, Holy Spirit.**

All praise and glory are yours, Holy One of Israel, Word of God incarnate, Power of the Most High, one God, now and forever.

## **Amen.**

(ELW p. 110 Form III for Advent - Epiphany)

Lord's Prayer

Communion

Prayer after Communion:

Let's us pray,

God, for whom we wait, in this meal you give us a foretaste of that day when the hungry will be fed with good things. Send us forth to make known your deeds and to proclaim the greatness of your name, through Jesus Christ, our Saviour and Lord. Amen. (ELW p. 65 Advent)

## **Sending**

Blessing

May Christ, the Sun of righteousness, shine upon you  
and scatter the darkness from before your path.

Almighty God, Father, ✝ Son, and Holy Spirit,  
bless you now and forever.

(From [SundaysandSeasons.com](http://SundaysandSeasons.com))

Sending Hymn

Dismissal

## Order for Service of the Word

### **Gathering**

Gathering around the Wreath

Light the first Candle

Sing ELW 240 v1

Greeting

Kyrie

Prayer of the Day

### **Word**

First Reading

Psalm

Second Reading

Gospel Acclamation

Use ELW 175 Gospel Acclamation, repeat 3 times

Gospel Readings

Sermon

Hymn of the Day

Nicene Creed

Prayers of Intercession

ELW p. 105 offers helpful guidelines for crafting prayers from the assembly

Peace

Offering

### **Thanksgiving for Word**

Let us pray: Praise and thanks to you, holy God, for by your Word you made all things: You spoke light in to darkness, call forth beauty from chaos, and brought life into being.

For your Word of life, O God,

**we give you thanks and praise.**

By your Word you called your people Israel to tell of your wonderful gifts:

freedom from captivity, water on the desert journey, a pathway home from exile, wisdom for life with you.

For your Word of life, O God,

**we give you thanks and praise.**

Through Jesus, your Word made flesh, you speak to us and call us to witness:

Forgiveness through the cross, life to those entombed by death, the way of your self-giving love.

For your Word of life, O God,

**we give you thanks and praise.**

Send your Spirit of truth, O God; rekindle your gifts within us:

Renew our faith, increase our hope, and deepen our love, for the sake of a world in need.

Faithful to your Word, O God, draw near to all who call on you; through Jesus Christ, our Saviour and Lord, to whom, with you and the Holy Spirit, be honour and glory forever.

**Amen.**

Lord's Prayer

### **Sending**

Blessing

May Christ, the Sun of righteousness, shine upon you  
and scatter the darkness from before your path.

Almighty God, Father, ✙ Son, and Holy Spirit,  
bless you now and forever.

(From [SundaysandSeasons.com](http://SundaysandSeasons.com))

Sending Hymn

Dismissal

## **Second Sunday in Advent December 8th, 2019**

### Lectionary:

Isaiah 11:1-10

Psalm 72:1-7, 18-19

Romans 15:4-13

Matthew 3:1-12

(Blue)

### Hymn Suggestions:

Light One Candle to Watch for Messiah ELW 240 v.1

Blessed Be the God of Israel ELW 250

Comfort, Comfort now my people ELW 256

On Jordan's Banks the Baptist's Cry ELW 249

Come now, O Prince of peace ELW 247

Hark! A trilling voice is sounding! ELW 246

### **Prayer of the Day**

Stir up our hearts, Lord God to prepare the way of our only Son. By his coming nature our growth as people of repentance and peace; through Jesus Christ, our Saviour and Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.

**Amen.**

### **Prayer for lighting the Advent Wreath**

Second Week of Advent

**Use this blessing when lighting the first two candles.**

Blessed are you, God of hope, for you promise to bring forth a shoot from the stump of Jesse who will bring justice to the poor, who will deliver the needy and crush the oppressor, who will stand as a signal of hope for all people.

As we light these candles, turn our wills to bear the fruit of repentance, transform our hearts to live in justice and harmony with one another, and fix our eyes on the root of Jesse, Jesus Christ, the hope of all nations.

O people of hope, come,

**let us rejoice in the faithfulness of the Lord. Amen.**

`(From [SundaysandSeasons.com](http://SundaysandSeasons.com))

## Order for Holy Communion

### **Gathering**

Gathering around the Wreath

Light the first Candle

Sing ELW 240 v1

Greeting

Kyrie - ELW 151 repeat 3 times

Prayer of the Day

### **Word**

First Reading

Psalm

Second Reading

Gospel Acclamation

Use ELW 175 Gospel Acclamation, repeat 3 times

Gospel Readings

Sermon

Hymn of the Day

Nicene Creed

Prayers of Intercession

ELW p. 105 offers helpful guidelines for crafting prayers from the assembly

Peace

Offering

### **Meal**

Holy One, the beginning and the end, the giver of life:

Blessed are you for the birth of creation.

Blessed are you in the darkness and in the light.

Blessed are you for your promise to your people.

Blessed are you in the prophets' hopes and dreams.

Blessed are you for Mary's openness to your will. Blessed are you for your Son Jesus, the Word made flesh.

In the night in which he was betrayed, our Lord Jesus took bread, and gave thanks; broke it, and gave it to his disciples, saying: Take and eat; this is my body, given for you. Do this in remembrance of me.

Again, after supper, he took the cup, gave thanks, and gave it for all to drink, saying: This cup is the new covenant in my blood, shed for you and for all people for the forgiveness of sin. Do this for the remembrance of me.



Let us proclaim the mystery of faith:

**Christ has died. Christ has risen. Christ will come again.**

With this bread and cup we remember your Word dwelling among us, full of grace and truth.

We remember our new birth in his death and resurrection.

We look with hope for his coming.

**Come, Lord Jesus.**

Holy God, we long for your Spirit. Come among us. Bless this meal.

May your Word take flesh in us. Awaken your people. Fill us with your light.

Bring the gift of peace on earth.

**Come, Holy Spirit.**

All praise and glory are yours, Holy One of Israel, Word of God incarnate, Power of the Most High, one God, now and forever.

**Amen.**

(ELW p. 110 Form III for Advent - Epiphany)

Lord's Prayer

Communion

Prayer after Communion:

Let's us pray,

God, for whom we wait, in this meal you give us a foretaste of that day when the hungry will be fed with good things. Send us forth to make known your deeds and to proclaim the greatness of your name, through Jesus Christ, our Saviour and Lord. Amen. (ELW p. 65 Advent)

## **Sending**

Blessing

May Christ, the Sun of righteousness, shine upon you  
and scatter the darkness from before your path.

Almighty God, Father, ✙ Son, and Holy Spirit,  
bless you now and forever.

(From [SundaysandSeasons.com](http://SundaysandSeasons.com))

Sending Hymn

Dismissal

## Order for Service of the Word

### **Gathering**

Gathering around the Wreath

Light the first Candle

Sing ELW 240 v1

Greeting

Kyrie  
Prayer of the Day

## **Word**

First Reading

Psalm

Second Reading

Gospel Acclamation

Use ELW 175 Gospel Acclamation, repeat 3 times

Gospel Readings

Sermon

Hymn of the Day

Nicene Creed

Prayers of Intercession

ELW p. 105 offers helpful guidelines for crafting prayers from the assembly

Peace

Offering

## **Thanksgiving for Word**

Let us pray: Praise and thanks to you, holy God, for by your Word you made all things: You spoke light in to darkness, call forth beauty from chaos, and brought life into being.

For your Word of life, O God,

**we give you thanks and praise.**

By your Word you called your people Israel to tell of your wonderful gifts:

freedom from captivity, water on the desert journey, a pathway home from exile, wisdom for life with you.

For your Word of life, O God,

**we give you thanks and praise.**

Through Jesus, your Word made flesh, you speak to us and call us to witness:

Forgiveness through the cross, life to those entombed by death, the way of your self-giving love.

For your Word of life, O God,

**we give you thanks and praise.**

Send your Spirit of truth, O God; rekindle your gifts within us:

Renew our faith, increase our hope, and deepen our love, for the sake of a world in need.

Faithful to your Word, O God, draw near to all who call on you; through Jesus Christ, our Saviour and Lord, to whom, with you and the Holy Spirit, be honour and glory forever.

**Amen.**

Lord's Prayer

## **Sending**

### Blessing

May Christ, the Sun of righteousness, shine upon you  
and scatter the darkness from before your path.

Almighty God, Father, ✙ Son, and Holy Spirit,  
bless you now and forever.

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### Sending Hymn

### Dismissal

## **Third Sunday in Advent December 15th, 2019**

### Lectionary:

Isaiah 35:1-10

Psalms 146:5-10

Luke 1:46b-55 (alternate)

James 5:7-10

Matthew 11:2-11

(Blue)

### Hymn Suggestions:

Light One Candle to Watch for Messiah ELW 240 v.1

Hark, the glad sound! ELW 239

Prepare the royal highway ELW 264

Light dawns on weary world ELW 726

Lost in the night ELW 243

People, look east ELW 248

## **Prayer of the Day**

Stir up the wills of all who look to you, Lord God, and strengthen our faith in your coming that, transformed by grace, we may walk in your way; through Jesus Christ, our Saviour and Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. **Amen.**

## **Prayer for lighting the Advent Wreath**

Third Week of Advent

**Use this blessing when lighting three candles.**

Blessed are you, God of might and majesty, for you promise to make the desert rejoice and blossom, to watch over the strangers, and to set the prisoners free.

As we light these candles, satisfy our hunger with your good gifts, open our eyes to the great things you have done for us, and fill us with patience until the coming of the Lord Jesus.

O ransomed people of the Lord, come,  
**let us travel on God's holy way  
and enter into Zion with singing. Amen.**  
(From [SundaysandSeasons.com](http://SundaysandSeasons.com))

### Order for Holy Communion

#### **Gathering**

Gathering around the Wreath  
Light the first Candle  
Sing ELW 240 v1

Greeting  
Kyrie - ELW 151 repeat 3 times  
Prayer of the Day

#### **Word**

First Reading  
Psalm  
Second Reading  
Gospel Acclamation  
Use ELW 175 Gospel Acclamation, repeat 3 times  
Gospel Readings  
Sermon  
Hymn of the Day  
Nicene Creed  
Prayers of Intercession  
ELW p. 105 offers helpful guidelines for crafting prayers from the assembly  
Peace  
Offering

#### **Meal**

Holy One, the beginning and the end, the giver of life:  
Blessed are you for the birth of creation.  
Blessed are you in the darkness and in the light.  
Blessed are you for your promise to your people.  
Blessed are you in the prophets' hopes and dreams.  
Blessed are you for Mary's openness to your will. Blessed are you for your Son Jesus, the Word made flesh.

In the night in which he was betrayed, our Lord Jesus took bread, and gave thanks; broke it, and gave it to his disciples, saying: Take and eat; this is my body, given for you. Do this in remembrance of me.

Again, after supper, he took the cup, gave thanks, and gave it for all to drink, saying: This cup is the new covenant in my blood, shed for you and for all people for the forgiveness of sin. Do this for the remembrance of me.

Let us proclaim the mystery of faith:

**Christ has died. Christ has risen. Christ will come again.**

With this bread and cup we remember your Word dwelling among us, full of grace and truth. We remember our new birth in his death and resurrection. We look with hope for his coming.

**Come, Lord Jesus.**

Holy God, we long for your Spirit. Come among us. Bless this meal. May your Word take flesh in us. Awaken your people. Fill us with your light. Bring the gift of peace on earth.

**Come, Holy Spirit.**

All praise and glory are yours, Holy One of Israel, Word of God incarnate, Power of the Most High, one God, now and forever.

**Amen.**

(ELW p. 110 Form III for Advent - Epiphany)

Lord's Prayer  
Communion

Prayer after Communion:

Let's us pray,

God, for whom we wait, in this meal you give us a foretaste of that day when the hungry will be fed with good things. Send us forth to make known your deeds and to proclaim the greatness of your name, through Jesus Christ, our Saviour and Lord. Amen. (ELW p. 65 Advent)

**Sending**

Blessing

May Christ, the Sun of righteousness, shine upon you  
and scatter the darkness from before your path.

Almighty God, Father, ✙ Son, and Holy Spirit,  
bless you now and forever.

(From [SundaysandSeasons.com](http://SundaysandSeasons.com))

Sending Hymn  
Dismissal

### Order for Service of the Word

#### **Gathering**

Gathering around the Wreath  
    Light the first Candle  
    Sing ELW 240 v1

Greeting  
Kyrie  
Prayer of the Day

#### **Word**

First Reading  
Psalm  
Second Reading  
Gospel Acclamation  
    Use ELW 175 Gospel Acclamation, repeat 3 times  
Gospel Readings  
Sermon  
Hymn of the Day  
Nicene Creed  
Prayers of Intercession  
    ELW p. 105 offers helpful guidelines for crafting prayers from the assembly  
Peace  
Offering

#### **Thanksgiving for Word**

Let us pray: Praise and thanks to you, holy God, for by your Word you made all things: You spoke light in to darkness, call forth beauty from chaos, and brought life into being.

For your Word of life, O God,

**we give you thanks and praise.**

By your Word you called your people Israel to tell of your wonderful gifts:  
freedom from captivity, water on the desert journey, a pathway home from exile, wisdom for life with you.

For your Word of life, O God,

**we give you thanks and praise.**

Through Jesus, your Word made flesh, you speak to us and call us to witness:  
Forgiveness through the cross, life to those entombed by death, the way of your self-giving love.

For your Word of life, O God,  
**we give you thanks and praise.**

Send your Spirit of truth, O God; rekindle your gifts within us:  
Renew our faith, increase our hope, and deepen our love, for the sake of a world in need.  
Faithful to your Word, O God, draw near to all who call on you; through Jesus Christ, our Saviour and Lord, to whom, with you and the Holy Spirit, be honour and glory forever.  
**Amen.**

Lord's Prayer

### **Sending**

Blessing

May Christ, the Sun of righteousness, shine upon you  
and scatter the darkness from before your path.

Almighty God, Father, ✙ Son, and Holy Spirit,  
bless you now and forever.

(From [SundaysandSeasons.com](http://SundaysandSeasons.com))

Sending Hymn

Dismissal

## **Fourth Sunday in Advent December 22nd, 2019**

Lectionary:

Isaiah 7:10-16

Psalms 80:1-7, 17-19

Romans 1:1-7

Matthew 1:18-25

(Blue)

Hymn Suggestions:

Light One Candle to Watch for Messiah ELW 240 v.1

O come, O come, Emmanuel ELW 257

Savior of the nations, come ELW 263

The angel Gabriel from heaven came ELW 265

He came down ELW 253

My soul does magnify the Lord ELW 882

### **Prayer of the Day**

Stir up your power, Lord Christ, and come. With your abundant grace and might, free us from the sin that hinders our faith, that eagerly we may receive your promises, for you live and reign with the Father and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.

**Amen.**

### **Prayer for lighting the Advent Wreath**

Fourth Week of Advent

**Use this blessing when lighting all four candles.**

Blessed are you, God of hosts, for you promised to send a son, Emmanuel, who brought your presence among us; and you promise through your Son Jesus to save us from our sin.

As we light these candles, turn again to us in mercy; strengthen our faith in the word spoken by your prophets; restore us and give us life that we may be saved.

O house of David, come,  
**let us rejoice, for the Son of God, Emmanuel,  
comes to be with us. Amen.**

(From [SundaysandSeasons.com](http://SundaysandSeasons.com))

### Order for Holy Communion

#### **Gathering**

Gathering around the Wreath

Light the first Candle

Sing ELW 240 v1

Greeting

Kyrie - ELW 151 repeat 3 times

Prayer of the Day

#### **Word**

First Reading

Psalm

Second Reading

Gospel Acclamation

Use ELW 175 Gospel Acclamation, repeat 3 times

Gospel Readings

Sermon

Hymn of the Day

Nicene Creed

Prayers of Intercession

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Peace

Offering



## **Meal**

Holy One, the beginning and the end, the giver of life:

Blessed are you for the birth of creation.

Blessed are you in the darkness and in the light.

Blessed are you for your promise to your people.

Blessed are you in the prophets' hopes and dreams.

Blessed are you for Mary's openness to your will. Blessed are you for your Son Jesus, the Word made flesh.

In the night in which he was betrayed, our Lord Jesus took bread, and gave thanks; broke it, and gave it to his disciples, saying: Take and eat; this is my body, given for you. Do this in remembrance of me.

Again, after supper, he took the cup, gave thanks, and gave it for all to drink, saying: This cup is the new covenant in my blood, shed for you and for all people for the forgiveness of sin. Do this for the remembrance of me.

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**Come, Lord Jesus.**

Holy God, we long for your Spirit. Come among us. Bless this meal. May your Word take flesh in us. Awaken your people. Fill us with your light. Bring the gift of peace on earth.

**Come, Holy Spirit.**

All praise and glory are yours, Holy One of Israel, Word of God incarnate, Power of the Most High, one God, now and forever.

**Amen.**

(ELW p. 110 Form III for Advent - Epiphany)

Lord's Prayer

Communion

Prayer after Communion:

Let's us pray,

God, for whom we wait, in this meal you give us a foretaste of that day when the hungry will be fed with good things. Send us forth to make known your deeds and to proclaim the greatness of your name, through Jesus Christ, our Saviour and Lord. Amen. (ELW p. 65 Advent)

## **Sending**

Blessing

May Christ, the Sun of righteousness, shine upon you  
and scatter the darkness from before your path.

Almighty God, Father, ✝ Son, and Holy Spirit,  
bless you now and forever.

(From [SundaysandSeasons.com](http://SundaysandSeasons.com))

Sending Hymn

Dismissal

## Order for Service of the Word

### **Gathering**

Gathering around the Wreath

Light the first Candle

Sing ELW 240 v1

Greeting

Kyrie

Prayer of the Day

### **Word**

First Reading

Psalm

Second Reading

Gospel Acclamation

Use ELW 175 Gospel Acclamation, repeat 3 times

Gospel Readings

Sermon

Hymn of the Day

Nicene Creed

Prayers of Intercession

ELW p. 105 offers helpful guidelines for crafting prayers from the assembly

Peace

Offering

### **Thanksgiving for Word**

Let us pray: Praise and thanks to you, holy God, for by your Word you made all things: You spoke light in to darkness, call forth beauty from chaos, and brought life into being.

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**we give you thanks and praise.**

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Forgiveness through the cross, life to those entombed by death, the way of your self-giving love.

For your Word of life, O God,  
**we give you thanks and praise.**

Send your Spirit of truth, O God; rekindle your gifts within us:  
Renew our faith, increase our hope, and deepen our love, for the sake of a world in need.  
Faithful to your Word, O God, draw near to all who call on you; through Jesus Christ, our Saviour and Lord, to whom, with you and the Holy Spirit, be honour and glory forever.  
**Amen.**

Lord's Prayer

### **Sending**

Blessing

May Christ, the Sun of righteousness, shine upon you  
and scatter the darkness from before your path.

Almighty God, Father, ✝ Son, and Holy Spirit,  
bless you now and forever.

(From [SundaysandSeasons.com](http://SundaysandSeasons.com))

Sending Hymn

Dismissal

## Lessons and Carols for Christmas

**Gathering Song:** O Come, All Ye Faithful (ELW 283)

### **Litany of light**

The people who walked in darkness have seen a great light.

**The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness has not overcome it.**

Those who dwelt in the land of deep darkness, on them light has shined.

**We have beheld Christ's glory, glory as of the only Son from the Father.**

For to us a child is born, to us a Son is given.

**In him was life, and the life was the light of all people.**

The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God,

and the communion of the Holy Spirit be with you all.  
**And also with you.**

### **Opening Prayer**

The Lord be with you.

**And also with you.**

Let us pray. Gracious God of heaven and earth,  
you have thrown a lifeline to us in our darkness—  
a beam of light that shines through Jesus.  
Though born in a manger, he is the firstborn of all creation.  
Though crucified on a cross, he is the Lord of life.  
Fill us with the wonder and joy of his presence in the world  
and in our hearts.

**Amen.**

### **First Reading: Genesis 1:1-5, 14-18**

It came upon the Midnight Clear (ELW 282)

### **Second Reading: Micah 5:2-5a**

O little town of Bethlehem ELW 279, LBW 41

### **Third Reading: Luke 1:26-35, 38**

Lo, how a rose e'er blooming ELW 272

### **Fourth Reading: Matthew 1:18-25**

Your Little one, Dear Lord (ELW 286)

### **Fifth Reading: Luke 2:8-20**

Angels, from the Realms of Glory (ELW 275)

### **Sixth Reading: Matthew 2:1-11**

Away in a Manger (ELW 277)

### **Seventh Reading: John 1:1-14**

What Child is This (ELW 296)

### **Responsive Prayer**

It is you, loving God, who lights our path with truth.

**Your Word, Jesus, is truth.**

In his light, draw all to the manger  
**to gather in wonder with the shepherds.**

In his light, draw all to the manger  
**to kneel in reverence with the wise ones.**  
In his light, draw all to the manger  
**to sing for joy with the angels.**  
In the brightness of his life  
**cast away the darkness of injustice, poverty,  
and hunger in the world.**  
It is you, loving God, who meets us on our way.  
**In the light of Jesus, show the world the way of life.**  
**Amen.**

#### **The Lord's Prayer**

**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.**

#### **Blessing**

Almighty God, Father, + Son, and Holy Spirit, bless you now and forever.  
**Amen.**

#### **Sending Song: *Joy to the World* (ELW 267)**

(with some resources adapted from [SundaysAndSeasons.com](http://SundaysAndSeasons.com))