

## GATHERING IN GOD'S WORD

Prelude

Sharing Our Lives in Prayer

Prayer Requests

Silent Prayer

Pastoral Prayer

Welcome

Letting God In

*During this time, we invite you to prepare your heart and your mind for worship. We want you to be able to use this quiet time to settle your thoughts, set aside any distractions that may be troubling you, and focus your whole self on God. Open your heart, your mind, and your spirit, and let God into your life.*

*Centering Prayer: **Light your joy in my heart, God-With-Us.***

*As you breathe in, pray, "Light your joy in my heart."*

*As you breathe out, pray, "God-With-Us."*

\* Opening Praise (from *Abingdon Worship Annual*, © 2018):

One: Keep awake.

**Many: Christ is coming.**

One: Wait for the Lord.

**Many: Love is coming.**

One: Prepare the way.

**Many: Hope is coming.**

One: Worship the Lord.

**Many: Christ is coming soon.**

Lighting the Advent Candles

Reading from *The Redemption of Scrooge* by Matt Rawle

Lighting the 3<sup>rd</sup> candle – the candle of JOY

Hymn #91 – Come, Come Emmanuel (sing through three times, last time as a round)

(from *Glory to God*, © 2013 Westminster John Knox Press)

Come, come Emmanuel.

Come, Emmanuel.

\* Invitation to Confession

\* Joining in Prayer (based on *Spill the Beans*, iss. 14, © 2014 Spill the Beans Resources):

**God of love, we come before you this day with praise and thanks: praise for all that your hands have made; praise for all you do in our daily lives; praise and thanks for this day and every day. God of all, we come before you this day with our questions and our fears. We come seeking guidance and comfort. We come seeking a glimpse of your vision. God of forgiveness, we take this time to say sorry for words said out of turn, for actions done before thinking, for harmful thoughts and deeds. God of light, a light which breaks through all forms of darkness, shine upon us this day, light our path this day. Be our beacon, showing us the way this day and every day.** *(Please take a moment for silent reflection and confession.)*

In the name of Jesus Christ, Emmanuel, God-With-Us, we pray.

**Amen.**

\* God's Promise of Grace

\* Sharing the Peace of Christ

\* Song of Peace: "Let There Be Peace on Earth"

(reprinted with permission, © Jan-Lee Music, copyright-protected alternate lyrics)

**Let there be peace on earth and let it begin with me.  
Let there be peace on earth, the peace that was meant to be.  
With God our Creator, we are family.  
Let us walk with each other in perfect harmony.**

**Let peace begin with me, let this be the moment now.  
With every step I take, let this be my solemn vow.  
To take each moment and live each moment in peace eternally.  
Let there be peace on earth, and let it begin with me.**

## HEARING GOD'S WORD

Prayer to Open Minds and Hearts

Scripture reading – Luke 1:39-55 (from the *Common English Bible*, © 2011)

<sup>39</sup> Mary got up and hurried to a city in the Judean highlands. <sup>40</sup> She entered Zechariah's home and greeted Elizabeth. <sup>41</sup> When Elizabeth heard Mary's greeting, the child leaped in her womb, and Elizabeth was filled with the Holy Spirit. <sup>42</sup> With a loud voice she blurted out, "God has blessed you above all women, and he has blessed the child you carry. <sup>43</sup> Why do I have this honor, that the mother of my Lord should come to me? <sup>44</sup> As soon as I heard your greeting, the baby in my womb jumped for joy. <sup>45</sup> Happy is she who believed that the Lord would fulfill the promises he made to her." <sup>46</sup> Mary said, "With all my heart I glorify the Lord! <sup>47</sup> In the depths of who I am I rejoice in God my savior. <sup>48</sup> He has looked with favor on the low status of his servant. Look! From now on, everyone will consider me highly favored <sup>49</sup> because the mighty one has done great things for me. Holy is his name. <sup>50</sup> He shows mercy to everyone, from one generation to the next, who honors him as God. <sup>51</sup> He has shown strength with his arm. He has scattered those with arrogant thoughts and proud inclinations. <sup>52</sup> He has pulled the powerful down from their thrones and lifted up the lowly. <sup>53</sup> He has filled the hungry with good things and sent the rich away empty-handed. <sup>54</sup> He has come to the aid of his servant Israel, remembering his mercy, <sup>55</sup> just as he promised to our ancestors, to Abraham and to Abraham's descendants forever."

Sermon: "The Life of Christmas Present" – Rev. Lisa Johnson

Exploring the Word Together

*This is a time for us to process our faith and our hearing of God's word together – a time to be the word of God for one another. It's also a time to build community with one another – a time to share elements of our faith and our understanding of that faith with each other. Feel free to participate in conversation with those around you or sit and ponder this question on your own.*

## Where have you discovered joy hiding lately?

One: May the words of my mouth,

**Many: And the meditations of all of our hearts**

**ALL: Be acceptable in your sight, O Lord, our rock and our redeemer. Amen.**

Hymn #99 – My Soul Gives Glory to My God

(from *Glory to God*, © 2013 Westminster John Knox Press)

My soul gives glory to my god;

My heart pours out its praise.

God lifted up my lowliness

In many marvelous ways.

My God has done great things for me:

Yes, holy is God's name.

All people will declare me blessed,

And blessings they shall claim.

From age to age to all who fear,  
Such mercy love imparts,  
Dispensing justice far and near,  
Dismissing selfish hearts.

Love casts the mighty from their thrones,  
Promotes the insecure,  
Leaves hungry spirits satisfied;  
The rich seem suddenly poor.

Praise God, whose loving covenant  
Supports those in distress,  
Remembering past promises  
With present faithfulness.

### RESPONDING TO GOD'S WORD

Coming Together in Prayer

Pastoral Prayer

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 sins as we forgive those who sin 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. Amen.**

Hymn #106 – Prepare the Way, O Zion

(from *Glory to God*, © 2013 Westminster John Knox Press)

Prepare the way, O Zion, your Christ is drawing near!  
Let every hill and valley a level way appear.  
Greet One who comes in glory, foretold in sacred story.  
O blest is Christ who came in God's most holy name.

He brings God's rule, O Zion; he comes from heaven above.  
His rule is peace and freedom, and justice, truth, and love.  
Life high your praise resounding, for grace and joy abounding.  
O blest is Christ who came in God's most holy name.

Fling wide your gates, O Zion; your Savior's rule embrace,  
And tidings of salvation proclaim in every place.  
All lands will bow rejoicing, their adoration voicing.  
O blest is Christ who came in God's most holy name.

Prayer of Gratitude and Blessing

*Our offering plates are located at the entrance to the sanctuary. This offering allows us to continue our outreach and mission both here in the community of Oronoco and beyond – in the greater Rochester area, in Minnesota, and even around the world. We are grateful for your willingness to join us in this mission and thank you for your generosity.*

Announcements

### BEING SENT OUT IN GOD'S WORD

\* Blessing

\* Claiming Our Faith Identity

*This is a chance for us to remind one another of both who we are and whose we are before we head back out in the world. The hope is that, as we grow more and more familiar with the words and the claim and call that they place*

*on our hearts, we'll be able to recall them throughout the week in those moments when we need to tap into our faith. The words and phrases are also aimed at helping us connect with our congregation's own mission statement: "We are a community of believers whose mission is to share God's Word, show God's Love, serve God's World, and strive for God's Peace."*

One: We are the Church –

**ALL: God's beloved children today, tomorrow, and always.**

One: Here, in this worship, through prayer, word, and fellowship,

**ALL: God has embraced us yet again, and our spirits have been made new.**

One: Suffused with God's grace,

**ALL: We claim new strength, new purpose, and new hope in our call.**

One: With spirits reaffirmed and renewed,

**ALL: We are called to SHARE God's Word. We are called to SHOW God's Love. We are called to SERVE God's World. We are called to STRIVE for God's Peace.**

One: We are the Church

**ALL: Because God binds us together in sacred companionship and blessed connectedness.**

One: And now, as the Church, God calls us out

**ALL: To do and be God's extravagant love in the world.**

One: This service has ended.

**ALL: Now our service can begin.**

Postlude

*\* indicates please rise in body or spirit as you feel led*