

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: Shine in me. Shine on me. Shine through me, Christ Child.

As you breathe in, pray, "Shine in me. Shine on me."

As you breathe out, pray, "Shine through me, Christ Child."

* **Opening Praise:**

One: Arise with hope, and shine with love!

Many: Shine forth with the wisdom of God!

One: Arise with mercy, and shine with grace!

Many: Live in righteousness and peace.

One: Arise with justice, and shine with compassion.

Many: Radiate the brightness of Christ!

One: Arise, shine, for the Light of the World has come.

Many: Arise, shine, for the Savior is born.

One: Arise, shine, and bring forth your praise!

Many: Arise, shine, and bring forth your prayer.

ALL: Arise, shine, and bring forth your worship for Christ is born!

* Invitation to Confession

* **Joining in Prayer** (written by Glenn Mitchell):

O Star-flinging God, whole light dances across eternity, dazzle us into your presence this new year. Open our hearts to the mystery of your love. Awaken us to your presence, knit to the ordinary. Reveal to us what is possible, but not yet present. Heal us, that we might be healers. Reconcile us to you, to ourselves, and to each other, that our living might be reconciling. Stop us often, we pray, with news that is good, with hope that holds, with truth that transforms, and with a Word tailored to this trail we're on. May the word of your grace guide our steps like the sun by day and the north star by night as we travel into the gift of a new year. (Please take a moment for silent reflection and confession.)

Through Jesus, the Christ-child, born anew in our hearts each day, we pray.

Amen.

* God's Promise of Grace

* 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 – Matthew 2:1-12 (from the *Common English Bible*, © 2011)

¹ After Jesus was born in Bethlehem in the territory of Judea during the rule of King Herod, magi came from the east to Jerusalem. ² They asked, "Where is the newborn king of the Jews? We've seen his star in the east, and we've come to honor him." ³ When King Herod heard this, he was troubled, and everyone in Jerusalem was troubled with him. ⁴ He gathered all the chief priests and the legal experts and asked them where the Christ was to be born. ⁵ They said, "In Bethlehem of Judea, for this is what the prophet wrote:

⁶ You, Bethlehem, land of Judah,
by no means are you least among the rulers of Judah,
because from you will come one who governs,
who will shepherd my people Israel."

⁷ Then Herod secretly called for the magi and found out from them the time when the star had first appeared. ⁸ He sent them to Bethlehem, saying, "Go and search carefully for the child. When you've found him, report to me so that I too may go and honor him." ⁹ When they heard the king, they went; and look, the star they had seen in the east went ahead of them until it stood over the place where the child was. ¹⁰ When they saw the star, they were filled with joy. ¹¹ They entered the house and saw the child with Mary his mother. Falling to their knees, they honored him. Then they opened their treasure chests and presented him with gifts of gold, frankincense, and myrrh. ¹² Because they were warned in a dream not to return to Herod, they went back to their own country by another route.

Sermon: "Good News: Then, Now, Always" – Rev. Lisa Johnson

Hymn – I Wonder as I Wander (insert)
(from *Chalice Hymnal*, © 1995 Chalice Press)

I wonder as I wander, out under the sky,
How Jesus the Savior did come for to die
For poor ordinary people like you and like I;
I wonder as I wander, out under the sky.

When Mary birthed Jesus, 'twas in a cow's stall,
With wise men and farmers and shepherds and all,
But high from God's heaven a star's light did fall,
The promise of ages it then did recall.

If Jesus had wanted for any wee thing,
A star in the sky or a bird on the wing,
Or all of God's angels in heaven to sing,
He surely could have it, 'cause he was the King.

I wonder as I wander, out under the sky,
How Jesus the Savior did come for to die
For poor ordinary people like you and like I;
I wonder as I wander, out under the sky.

RESPONDING TO GOD'S WORD

Coming Together in Prayer

Pastoral Prayer

Celebrating the Lord's Supper

Our tradition in this congregation is to partake of the bread whenever you feel prepared to do so and to hold the wine/juice until all have been served so that we can all partake together. This gives us the chance to participate in this holy mystery as we participate in our faith – both as individuals and as a community.

Invitation to the Table

Great Thanksgiving

One: God be with you.

Many: And also with you.

One: Lift up your hearts.

Many: We lift them up to God.

One: Let us give thanks to God Most High.

Many: It is right to give our thanks and praise.

Prayer for the Feast

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.**

Words of Institution

Sharing the Bread and the Cup

Prayer of Thanksgiving

Hymn – Star-Child (insert)

(from *Sing the Faith*, © 2003 Geneva Press)

Star-Child, earth-Child, go-between of God,
Love Child, Christ Child, heaven's lightning rod,
This year, this year, let the day arrive
When Christmas comes for everyone,
Everyone alive!

Street child, beat child, no place left to go,
Hurt child, used child, no one wants to know,
This year, this year, let the day arrive
When Christmas comes for everyone,
Everyone alive!

Grown child, old child, memory full of years,
Sad child, lost child, story told in tears,
This year, this year, let the day arrive
When Christmas comes for everyone,
Everyone alive!

Spared child, spoiled child, having, wanting more,
Wise child, faith child, knowing joy in store,
This year, this year, let the day arrive
When Christmas comes for everyone,
Everyone alive!

Hope-for-peace Child, God's stupendous sign,
Down-to-earth Child, Star of stars that shine,
This year, this year, let the day arrive
When Christmas comes for everyone,
Everyone alive!

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.

Distribution of Star Gifts: A Star Gift is a simple, star-shaped piece of paper with a word printed on it. As the first offering plate is passed, please take a Star Gift. Take it home with you and post it someplace where you'll see it every day. You're invited to ponder what significance this word might have in your life and how God might be speaking to you through that simple message. And as we go through the year together, you're invited to share with one another – or with the congregation as a whole – about your thoughts and reflections regarding your Star Gift.

Announcements

BEING SENT OUT IN GOD'S WORD

* Charge & Blessing

Postlude

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