

Christmas Sunday At-Home Liturgy

created by the Grantham Church Worship Arts Commission





About the Cover

"I created this drawing originally in 2008, for the poster to promote the choir's Christmas concert, and I was inspired by the art of Chinese artist He Qi because it uses a very non-Western approach to the composition. I reduced it to basic black and white for this version to give Grantham families an opportunity to color it in as they imagine it."

Directions: If you would like, use crayons, markers, colored pencils, or whatever coloring medium you prefer and add some color to the cover of this liturgy. As you color, notice all of the details included in this illustration. What stands out to you the most? Why do you think it caught your eye?

section created by Geoff Isley



Directions: As you prepare to meet God through this time, please take a moment to find a candle that you can safely light for the lighting of the Christ candle later in the liturgy. And if you have an Advent wreath with a Christ candle (and the prior Advent candles of Hope, Peace, Joy, and Love), you may use that.

Welcome:

All: The season of waiting is over. Christ has come! ... to our homes, to our hearts, to our world. We come to this time, pausing from the bustle and activity of this day and this season. We come to make space ... and to listen ... for the whispers of the God who is with us and loves us so much that God came in the form of a vulnerable baby, no armor, just openness and welcome. Let us pray.

Prayer:

All Pray: Gracious God, lover of all people and oppressor of none, we take this time to pause and make room for you and for your whispers in our hearts. We have been waiting for you, needing you, eager for you. Perhaps we have been too busy to even listen to the longings for you in our hearts. And yet here you came nonetheless, graciously, gently, full of safety and in the vulnerability of a baby. As we pause for this time, we thank you that you love us and want to meet us. We rejoice that you are here! You are good and true and full of healing. You know the pains on our hearts. You know the ways we need your care. You know how we feel about this day, whether it be filled with joyous connections ... or pain and distress from broken or lost relationships. You know our grief from the past year and those who are not with us now. You know the ways we need your healing in our bodies, emotions, and relationships. You know the ways our world needs your peace and reconciliation. You know the ways our planet needs your saving transformation and how we must be part of that. You know all of this, and yet you invite us to still tell you, confide in you, lean in to you. In this space of silence and the privacy of our hearts, we speak to you now.

[silently share with God]

All Pray: Help us to tune in and listen so that we can feel you here with us, God with us, Emmanuel! And open our hearts to the celebration and hope because you have now come to us! In the name of Christ we pray. Amen.

The Lighting of the Christ Candle

Through the centuries, followers of Jesus around the world have used candles as part of worship and especially in anticipating Christ's coming through the season of Advent.

Directions: If you have all five Advent candles, light them during the song (in the order of Hope, Peace, Joy (rose colored), Love, and the white Christ candle being the last). And if you have a single candle, light it when directed for the Christ candle.

Let us join together in singing, "A Candle is Burning" (sung to the tune of "Away in a Manger")¹

A Candle is Burning

VERSE 1

A candle is burning, a flame warm and bright,
A candle of **HOPE** in the darkest of night
While angels sing blessings from heaven's starry sky,
Our hearts we prepare now for Jesus is nigh.

VERSE 2

A candle is burning, a candle of **PEACE**,
A candle to signal that conflict must cease,
For Jesus is coming to show us the way
A message of peace humbly laid in the hay.

VERSE 3

A candle is burning, a candle of **JOY**,
A candle to welcome brave Mary's new boy.
Our hearts fill with wonder and eyes light and glow
As joy brightens winter like sunshine on snow.

VERSE 4

A candle is burning, a candle of **LOVE**,
A candle to point us to heaven above.
A baby for Christmas, a wonderful birth,
For Jesus is bringing God's love to our earth.

VERSE 5

We honor Messiah with **Christ's candle** flame.
Our Christmas Day candles glad tidings proclaim.
O Come, all you faithful, rejoice!, gone is night
As God comes among us, the Christian's true light.

¹ Words are a song by Sandra Dean, a former Director of Music at Southminster United Church in Ottawa, Canada. It is used with her permission and blessing.

section created by Elisa Joy Seibert



Scripture Readings

Directions: Read the passages below and then consider the questions. If you would like to listen to this section narrated by Vicki Twigg and Tim Lyne, go to granthamchurch.org/liturgy.

Read Isaiah 9:2-7

This passage contains some vivid, yet very different imagery of what it might look like when God enters into our human story: dawn following a time of great darkness, a harvest celebration, a bar of oppression being shattered, the burning of military clothing, the birth of a child, a king's royal reign and never-ending kingdom of peace. Is there one of these images that captures your attention more than others? Sit with that picture in your imagination for a minute.

Is there a place in your life, your family, your community, or your world that you are longing to see something like this really happening? Describe, draw, journal, or just sit with that picture and let that be your prayer.

Read Luke 2:1–20

Try to remember one of the first times you heard this familiar story. I wonder what was your favorite part about the story then? What is your favorite part today?

Think back on the different scenes and characters in the story: Mary and Joseph on the journey to his hometown, shepherds and angels on a dark hillside outside of town, people who may have been on the streets of Bethlehem that night and met the shepherds on their return from seeing the Christ child...where are you in the story? What scene or characters do you resonate with most?

We're told Mary "treasured up all these things and pondered them in her heart."

I wonder if there's anything from this Christmas that you want to hold onto? Is there anything you need to let go of? What will you ponder in your heart as you continue to move through this day and season of celebration?

section created by Gretta Owen

audio produced by Paul Cohen

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Benediction

All: On this holy day, may our God of salvation grant us the hope of Jesus, the Word made flesh. In the midst of all our brokenness and weariness, may we be filled with the Holy Spirit, so that we might embody the Christmas message to the world. God is with us.

In the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. Amen.

section created by Pastor David Perry

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Postlude

To listen to this organ postlude, *In Dulci Jubilo (Good Christians Friends, Rejoice!)*, please go to granthamchurch.org/liturgy.

section created by Greg Lowther

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Thanks to the Worship Arts Commission!

Paul Cohen

Gretta Owen

Geoff Isley

Elisa Joy Seibert

Greg Lowther

David Perry, *Worship Arts Pastor*

Special thanks to Kyra Yoder, Pastoral Assistant, for her help in designing this booklet.

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