PRAYERS OF INTERCESSION

Leader: Rejoicing in the birth of Christ, let us pray for the church, the world, and all who are in need. For the church in every place, that we may proclaim the good news of Christ in word and deed: God of love, **hear our prayer.**
Leader: For the nations and their leaders, that justice and peace may flourish and those who are vulnerable may be protected: God of love, **hear our prayer.**
Leader: For those who are sick, grieving, lonely, or afraid, and for all who long for shelter, food, and companionship: God of love, **hear our prayer.**
Leader: For this congregation and our neighbors, that our Christmas joy may become acts of welcome and service: God of love, **hear our prayer.**
Leader: Into your hands, gracious God, we commend all for whom we pray, trusting in your mercy through Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

THE LORD'S PRAYER

Leader: Gathered into one by the Holy Spirit, let us pray as Jesus taught us: **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.**

BENEDICTION

Leader: May the God who spoke light into darkness fill your hearts with hope. May Christ, the Word made flesh, dwell among you in love and peace. And may the Holy Spirit guide your steps as you carry the joy of Christmas into the world, today and always. **Amen. May it be so!**

SENDING

Leader: The angels have sung, the shepherds have rejoiced, and the good news of Christ's birth is ours to share. Go in peace. Share the joy of Christmas! **Thanks be to God!**

FIRST SUNDAY OF CHRISTMAS

A Service of

Lessons and Carols

The tradition of Lessons and Carols dates to 19th-century England. In this beloved form of worship, the Christmas story unfolds through nine "lessons," or scripture readings, interwoven with familiar carols. Rather than a traditional sermon, scripture and song together proclaim the good news of Jesus Christ.

CALL TO WORSHIP (THE ASSEMBLY STANDS)

In days to come, the mountain of the Lord's house shall be established as the highest of the mountains, and shall be raised above the hills; **all the nations shall stream to it.**
Many peoples shall come and say,
"Come, let us go up to the mountain of the Lord, to the house of the God of Jacob; that he may teach us his ways and that we may walk in his paths."
For out of Zion shall go forth instruction, and the word of the Lord from Jerusalem.
He shall judge between the nations, and shall arbitrate for many peoples;
they shall beat their swords into plowshares, and their spears into pruning hooks;
nation shall not lift up sword against nation, neither shall they learn war any more.

O house of Jacob, come,
let us walk in the light of the Lord!

Carol: "O Come, All Ye Faithful" ELW #283

During the gathering song, the Advent wreath and Christ candle are lighted as the congregation celebrates the birth of Christ.

OPENING PRAYER

Leader: Let us pray.
God of wonder and promise, you have come among us in Jesus Christ, the Word made flesh. Open our ears to hear the good news, our voices to sing your praise, and our hearts to receive your peace. As we remember the birth of your Son, renew our hope and send us to share your love with the world. Through Jesus Christ our Lord.
All: Amen.
Please be seated.

THE FIRST LESSON: ISAIAH 11: 1-10

CAROL: "A Midnight Clear" ELW #282

THE SECOND LESSON: ISAIAH 35:1-10

CAROL: "Joy to the World" ELW #267

THE THIRD LESSON: MATTHEW 1:1-17

CAROL: "Lo, How a Rose" ELW #272

The genealogy of Jesus reminds us that God's promise unfolds through the generations, culminating in the birth of Christ.

THE FOURTH LESSON: LUKE 1:26-38

CAROL: "Angels, from the Realms" ELW #275

THE FIFTH LESSON: MATTHEW 1:18-25

CAROL: "O Come, Emmanuel" ELW#257

THE SIXTH LESSON: LUKE 1:39-58

CAROL: "When Our Song" ELW #709

Following Mary's song of praise, we sing of God's promise to lift up the lowly, feed the hungry, and bring justice to the world.

THE SEVENTH LESSON: LUKE 2:1-7

CAROL: "O Little Town" ELW #279

THE EIGHTH LESSON: LUKE 2:8-20

CAROL: "Angels We Have Heard" ELW #289

THE NINTH LESSON: MATTHEW 2:1-12

CAROL: "The First Noel" ELW #300

As the magi brought their gifts to honor the Christ child, we offer our gifts in gratitude for God's love made known in Jesus. The offering will be received during the singing of this carol.

OFFERING PRAYER

Leader: Let us pray.
Generous God, you have given us the gift of your Son. Receive these offerings and use them to bring hope, comfort, and joy to our neighbors. Let our gifts and our lives bear witness to your love, through Jesus Christ our Lord.
All: Amen.

AFFIRMATION OF FAITH

(read responsively)

In the beginning was the Word,
and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.
He was in the beginning with God.
All things came into being through him, and without him not one thing came into being.
What has come into being in him was life,
and the life was the light of all people.
The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness did not overtake it.
There was a man sent from God whose name was John. He came as a witness to testify to the light, so that all might believe through him.
He himself was not the light, but he came to testify to the light.
The true light, which enlightens everyone, was coming into the world.
He was in the world, and the world came into being through him, yet the world did not know him.
He came to what was his own, and his own people did not accept him. But to all who received him, who believed in his name, he gave power to become children of God, who were born, not of blood or of the will of the flesh or of the will of man, but of God.
And the Word became flesh and lived among us, and we have seen his glory, the glory as of a father's only son, full of grace and truth.