

ADVENT WREATH DEDICATION
AND
TWO SETS OF ADVENT READINGS



**Provided by American Baptist Home Mission Societies as part of
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DEDICATION OF ADVENT WREATH (The Sunday Preceding Advent)

Traditions are not sacred. Their value lies in their capacity to open us up to what is sacred. Traditions can actually become a hindrance if we focus on the traditions themselves and lose sight of that purpose. So in anticipation of the season of Advent during which we light the Advent candles, we pause to visit the origins of common Advent traditions.

O Come, O Come Emmanuel: No one knows the name of the monk who wrote the poem, which is based on the 11th chapter of Isaiah, that became the lyrics to what is the perhaps the most-beloved Advent hymn. We do know that it was written during the “Dark Ages” when—in the absence of Bibles and general literacy—music and artwork the primary vehicles of religious education. We also know that the words were translated into English and the music we are familiar with was added in the 19th century by Anglican priest John Mason Neale.

Advent itself was established in the year 567 as a season of fasting and prayer before Christmas. “Advent,” means arrival or appearance and the Advent season prepares Christians to celebrate the birth of Jesus while anticipating the return of the risen Lord.

The Advent wreath origins lie in the pagan practice of bringing branches into homes and burning candles during the winter months as a sign of hope for spring. Medieval Christians redefined the custom by identifying the candles as symbols of Christ and in the 1500s German Lutherans began to associate the wreaths with the season of Advent. Three hundred years later the modern Advent wreath took shape when Johann Hinrich Wichern, a German theologian who founded a home for poor children, used the wreath as an educational tool. He put in 4 large white candles to represent the 4 Sundays of Advent and small red candles for the days in between. Each day he would light a candle and teach the children about Jesus. Modern day practices use a variety of wreath styles, various candle colors and wide range of themes and Scripture texts. Most common is the use of three purple candles to remind us that Advent is a time of prayer and sacrifice and one pink candle for the third Sunday of Advent, known as “rejoice” Sunday. There is no “right way” of doing the Advent wreath but the goal is always for this tradition—and all our traditions—to open our eyes, our minds, and our hearts to a fuller understanding of the God who became flesh and walked among us. So today we dedicate this wreath to those purposes. [Note: Insert description of the candled colors you use. The readings provided in this resource represent the themes of hope, love, joy and peace. Set One of the readings follows the traditional Hope, Love, Joy, and Peace. Set Two has Peace 2nd and Love the final Sunday of Advent.]

PRAYER

God of life, people have worshiped you at low desert shrines and high upon mountaintops. They have stacked stones by rivers, created traveling tabernacles, and built temples of stone. Today, many of us worship in church buildings that have been passed down to us from previous generations along with their traditions. We seek to reignite the inherited traditions by rededicating them to the unchanging purpose of drawing us closer to you. Make this season of Advent a time of preparation so that we—and others through our witness—might know you more fully. In the name of Jesus, who is ever present with us, we pray. Amen.



SET 1
WEEK 1
HOPE PROCLAIMED
ISAIAH 9:2, 6-7

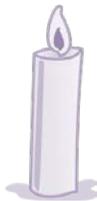
Imagine you are living as a member of one of the last two tribes of Israel. The rest of the tribes have been conquered by Assyria and the people carried off to distant lands. On the outside, your land has been under siege and things look bad. On the inside, the people have turned their backs on God and have run after other gods, and everything is in turmoil. You are waiting, wondering ... Is there hope? Will God act? Then comes the word of the LORD from a man named Isaiah:

The people walking in darkness have seen a great light; on those living in the land of the shadow of death, a light has dawned. For to us a child is born, to us a son is given and the government will be on his shoulders. And he will be called Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace. Of the increase of his government and peace there will be no end. He will reign on David's throne and over his kingdom, establishing and upholding it with justice and righteousness from that time on and forever. The zeal of the LORD Almighty will accomplish this (Isaiah 9:2, 6-7 NIV).

In the midst of darkness, Isaiah proclaims the birth of a child who will grow to be King of Judah and make changes. And so the child Hezekiah did. As King, Hezekiah called the people of Judah to repent. He cleansed the temple, showed respect for Jewish religious rituals and sought justice. God acted in the history of Israel.

Imagine it is 750 years later. Your land is occupied by Rome and your people are habitually brutalized by Roman soldiers. Your own leaders are too busy making deals with the occupying government to look to the needs of the people. You are waiting and wondering . . . Is there hope? Will God act?

Then comes the word of the LORD. From the lips of Gabriel, Mary, and Zechariah, the words of Isaiah are heard anew. There is indeed hope. God is about to act again in human history.



PRAYER

O God, our hope,

Far too often we, members the church called "Christian," have set ourselves up as the judges of others. With our rules and self-righteousness, we have obscured the hope that lies in you. Remind us as we prepare to celebrate your incarnation among us, that you were, are, and always will be a giver of hope. Amen.



SET 1
WEEK 2
THE POWER OF LOVE
LUKE 1:13-17

A childless, elderly couple are about to have their lives dramatically changed. Elizabeth and Zechariah are both descendants of the priestly line of Aaron. Zechariah is a priest and at the time of the story, it is his division that is serving at the temple.

Zechariah, according to the custom of the priesthood, is chosen by lot to go into the temple of the LORD and burn incense while the assembled worshipers pray outside. Inside the temple, an angel of the LORD appears standing at the right side of the altar of incense. Zechariah is startled and gripped with fear. The angel speaks:

Do not be afraid, Zechariah; your prayer has been heard. Your wife Elizabeth will bear you a son, and you are to give him the name John. He will be a joy and delight to you, and many will rejoice because of his birth, for he will be great in the sight of the Lord. He is never to take wine or other fermented drink, and he will be filled with the Holy Spirit even from birth. Many of the people of Israel will he bring back to the Lord their God. And he will go on before the Lord, in the spirit and power of Elijah, to turn the hearts of the fathers to their children and the disobedient to the wisdom of the righteous—to make ready a people prepared for the Lord (Luke 1:13-17 NIV).

An old couple. An ancient priestly line. Sacred rituals and traditions of long ago. God is about to do a new thing and God does so by beginning with what is already in place. The new does not abolish the old. Instead the new comes through the old. In turn, the old will be transformed, transcended, and in some real sense renewed—returned to its heart.

We long for God to act; to touch this sad world with healing love. Yet, don't we also fear the new, wondering what that will mean for our rituals and trappings . . . our favorite hymns and treasured buildings? If we let perfect love cast out our fears and allow God to work through us, new things can happen. The world can hear the message of God's love in new ways as we hear it with rejuvenated senses. The world can be transformed . . . and so can we.

That is the power of love.



PRAYER

God of love,

As Zechariah and Elizabeth tended to the business of their daily lives, they experienced the power of love. Calm our fears and remind us that you work through the ordinary things of life to do extraordinary things. Amen.



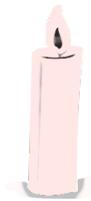
SET 1
WEEK 3
MARY SINGS FOR JOY
LUKE 1:46-55

We've heard the story before. An angel tells a girl, named Mary, that she will have a baby who will be the "son of God." Mary responds with humble acceptance of God's will and heads off to visit her kinswoman, Elizabeth, who is well along in her own miraculous pregnancy. Recognizing that that God is doing something wonderful through Mary, Elizabeth proclaims her blessed. And Mary responds:

My soul glorifies the Lord and my spirit rejoices in God my Savior, for he has been mindful of the humble state of his servant. From now on all generations will call me blessed, for the Mighty One has done great things for me—holy is his name. His mercy extends to those who fear him, from generation to generation. He has performed mighty deeds with his arm; he has scattered those who are proud in their inmost thoughts. He has brought down rulers from their thrones, but has lifted up the humble. He has filled the hungry with good things, but has sent the rich away empty. He has helped his servant Israel, remembering to be merciful to Abraham and his descendants forever, even as he said to our fathers (Luke 1:46-55 NIV).

In light of the circumstances, it is remarkable that Mary would praise God. She is just a child herself and finds herself pregnant and at risk of being sentenced to death for adultery. But her celebration is not focused on her "predicament." In fact she is not focused on herself at all. Mary is focused on what God is doing and on what it will mean for the world.

Listen carefully. Do Mary's words sound familiar? Have we not heard these sentiments before? The proud are brought low, the humble exalted, the poor fed, and the rich left empty-handed. These words echo through history from the lips of the psalmists, of Hannah, and of the prophets. This is the song of God's Kingdom in which the poor, the weak, and the oppressed will at last find justice. This is Mary's song. This is Hannah's song, the psalmists' song, and the prophets' song. It is also our song. The child who grows within Mary's womb is the very presence of the long awaited Kingdom! And along with Mary we wait and wonder . . . Will the world join in Mary's song of joy? Will there be room in human hearts for Christ and his Kingdom?



PRAYER

Our God and King,

As we anticipate the celebration of Jesus' birth, help us follow the example of Mary by setting aside our self-absorption and humbling ourselves before you. Help us to find joy in living your kingdom on this earth by lifting up the poor, liberating the oppressed, and lending our strength to the weak. Amen.



SET 1
WEEK 4
THE REQUIREMENTS OF PEACE
LUKE 1:68-79

Elizabeth and Zechariah dedicated their son and named “John.” And Zechariah found his voice:

Praise be to the Lord, the God of Israel, because he has come and has redeemed his people. He has raised up a horn of salvation for us in the house of his servant David, (as he said through his holy prophets of long ago), salvation from our enemies and from the hand of all who hate us, to show mercy to our fathers and to remember his holy covenant, the oath he swore to our father Abraham: to rescue us from the hand of our enemies, and to enable us to serve him without fear in holiness and righteousness before him all our days. And you, my child, will be called a prophet of the Most High; for you will go on before the Lord to prepare the way for him, to give his people the knowledge of salvation through the forgiveness of their sins, because of the tender mercy of our God, by which the rising sun will come to us from heaven, to shine on those living in darkness and in the shadow of death, to guide our feet into the path of peace (Luke 1:68-79 NIV).

Zechariah’s song tells us that John came to prepare the way for the Lord by calling people to repentance and guiding us into the path of peace. Peace. We hear the word so often this time of year: “Praises be to God and King and peace to men on earth; Hail the newborn Prince of Peace; Sleep in heavenly peace.” But what kind of peace did John come to guide us into?

This long-awaited son left his parents to pursue a lifestyle completely different from theirs. He turned his back on the established Jewish religion of his day to join a radical fringe group. The message John preached was a harsh. He confronted people who were complacent in their religion and ultimately this “prophet of the Most High” was beheaded at the whim of a vindictive woman and a lecherous man. Is this the kind of peace we extol in our hymns and on our Christmas cards? Where is the happy ending?

This is the shalom of God. It is a peace that costs us something, that insists on repentance from sin, that requires justice for the oppressed, help for the poor, protection for the vulnerable and absolute commitment to God’s Kingdom. This is a peace that shakes the very foundations of those who are powerful and comfortable and puts at risk those who proclaim it.

Where is the happy ending? The happy ending depends on our faithfulness and our true commitment to the peace of God.



PRAYER

Jesus, Prince of Peace,

We have two choices this Christmas. We can pretend that all is nice and pretty or we can admit that this world is in desperate need of true peace, repent, and commit ourselves to being operatives of your Kingdom on earth. Help us to hear the call that the baby John was born to bring us. Amen.



SET 1
CHRISTMAS EVE—LIGHTING OF THE CHRIST CANDLE
THE BIRTH OF JESUS
LUKE 2:1-7

A long trip. A crowded city. Modest accommodations. A swaddled infant in a feeding trough. These are the ingredients of the most important story in human history. For all the build-up, the story of Jesus' birth is striking in its simplicity.

Soon the shepherds will come with their tales of messengers and heavenly choirs, but for now it is only Mom and Dad and their newborn son. Wearing by their respective journeys, they sleep. Mary snuggled against Joseph's protective embrace. Their child breathing delicate breaths of baby-sleep—so tiny, he seems insignificant against the backdrop of the world he is destined to save.

The babe will grow. The parents will age.

There are more difficult journeys ahead, but for this brief moment, they are simply a family.

In our celebrations laden with shiny lights, glittering ornaments, and porcelain figurines, we may lose sight of the fact that Joseph, Mary, and Jesus were not only real people, but also a real family. We have decorated their story, but perhaps if we look closely enough, we can see Joseph's blistered feet, the tears of joy and exhaustion on Mary's face, and the pink wrinkles of the newborn's brow. This little family has invited the world to peek in on a most intimate moment—the birth of their firstborn child. Let us proceed respectfully, reverently, and in gratitude for their willingness to let God work through them . . . for us.



PRAYER

Heavenly Father,

Give us a deeper understanding of the world-changing event we call Christmas, so that we might help change the world. Amen.



SET 2
WEEK 1: THE ORIGIN OF HOPE
GENESIS 1:1-3:13
(1st Candle—traditionally purple)

The story Advent begins not with Mary and Joseph, nor with Elizabeth and Zechariah, nor even with the prophets of ancient Israel. The story of Advent begins . . . in the beginning.

Genesis tells us that we, together with all living things, are part of God's good creation. We share the breath of life with all creatures. We are connected and related to everything and everyone everywhere. Once complete, creation is so full and harmonious that the Creator takes a day off just to enjoy it. That image of wholeness and harmony in the presence of God is the essence of the Hebrew concept of *shalom*, which we translate as peace.

Genesis also tells us that everyday humans reflect the image of God. Back in ancient times that would have been a radical concept. Kings and other powerful men alone were seen as the image-bearers of God, but Genesis says that whatever our age, whatever our gender, whatever our ethnicity or nationality, whatever our social or economic status, we all bear God's image. No exceptions.

It is a wonderful thing to be a divine image-bearer, but it is also a huge responsibility. The very first humans had a choice between two trees in the garden where they lived. One tree, the tree of life, represents everything it means to be truly and fully alive. The other, the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, reflects the desire of human beings to judge parts of creation, including other people, as good or bad. We know the choice they made. After eating from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, the man and woman feel a change come over them. They no longer see God as a friend but as judge and threat. They hide in shame and fear. They blame each other and they refuse to admit their bad decision. Soon they find themselves outside the garden facing a life of hardship and pain. Later on, their two sons will repeat the same pattern and one son, Cain, will declare Abel to be not a brother but an enemy, an enemy worthy of death who becomes the first human victim of violence.

God's *shalom* is lost.

The creation stories help us understand what's wrong with our world. Something in us as human beings is broken. We have stopped imitating God's desire to create, bless and give life. The stories remind us also of the choices we constantly face as human beings. We can choose the second tree, so to speak, and live self-centered, competitive and destructive lives willing even to harm or kill those we see as obstacles to our desires. Or, because, even in a fallen world, God's dream of *shalom* is unending, we can choose to participate in that dream by using our intelligence and strength to be creative, compassionate, and generous. We can choose to be image-bearers of the living God by valuing creation and living in solidarity with all human beings.

Throughout Advent, as we look at some of God's actions in human history, we will see over and over again that hope for the world lies in God's undying dream of *shalom*.

PRAYER

Creator God,

You have blessed us with life and with a beautiful world within which to live that life. Deep in our souls we long for the solidarity with others and within creation that makes us whole. As we light this candle, we are reminded of the ongoing hope for the world revealed in Jesus. Help us to make that dream the foundation of our lives and of our churches. Amen.



SET 2
WEEK 2: THE PRICE OF PEACE
MICAH 6:6-8
ISAIAH 4:1-6
(2nd Candle—traditionally purple)

The Advent story continues with the plight of an ancient people who were descendants of escaped slaves of mixed origin. They had been called by God to live a unique way of life; a way that would offer the world a glimpse of God's shalom. The guidelines they were given to live by would create a radically different society, one in which outsiders were welcome, persons at risk were protected, and wealth was shared. They were never able to fulfill their calling. After wandering in the wilderness, they moved into Canaan, separated into 12 tribes, became a single kingdom for a while and then divided into two nations known as Israel and Judah.

We enter their story 600 years after the exodus of their ancestors from Egypt and 700 years before the birth of Jesus. One of the kingdoms, known as Israel, has been conquered by Assyria and the northern 10 tribes that made up the kingdom have disappeared from history. The southern kingdom of Judah, with the last two tribes, is all that remains. They too are embattled. Within a century, that nation will fall to the Babylonians and its inhabitants will be exiled throughout the empire. These are the people who had been entrusted with God's undying dream of shalom. But their religious and political leaders had replaced the institutions that would have ensured shalom in their land with empty religious rituals and fancy buildings. God's hospitality and generosity were replaced with violence, greed and nationalistic pride.

Over the centuries, God raised up prophets to call the people to repentance. What did God want from them, they wondered? Did God desire groveling, lavish gifts, animal sacrifice, or even human sacrifice? No. The prophet Micah stated clearly what God had always desired of them: that they act justly and love mercy and walk prudently under God's guidance. But the reminder went unheeded.

Yet, even as the kingdoms were lost and the people endured the consequences of that failure, God's dream was not lost. God knew their hearts and that many of the regular folk longed to be faithful. The prophets spoke of hope for a day when shalom would be realized; a day when, as the prophet Isaiah described it, all nations, all ethnic groups, all people would learn God's ways and walk God's path. A day when God alone would judge between the nations and settle disputes. A day when people would beat their swords into plowshares and their spears into pruning hooks and nations would never again raise swords against one another, and never again go to war.

700 years later, the descendants of Judah would find themselves living under brutal Roman occupation and barely clinging to that hopeful vision of the prophets. The stage was set for God to act again; for God raise up yet another prophetic voice to remind the people that the foundation of peace is justice, mercy and humility, and price of peace is repentance.

PRAYER

Merciful God,

Help us not to judge our spiritual ancestors too harshly. Many, like us, yearned to be faithful but felt powerless in a fallen world. Remind us that your dream of shalom has never died. As we light this candle, we repent of our complicity in the world's sadness and ask for hearts that are courageous enough to be merciful and humbly seek peace. Amen.



SET 2
WEEK 3: THE SOURCE OF JOY
LUKE 1:13-17; 67-80
(3rd Candle—traditionally pink)

The Advent story finds the Jewish people living under Roman occupation. An elderly couple, Zechariah and Elizabeth, were both from priestly families. They were also childless. The Gospel of Luke points out that they were good people who pleased God, which is the first surprise in the story because in those days, childlessness was seen as a sign of God's disfavor.

When Zechariah was serving at the temple in Jerusalem, he was selected to enter the holy chamber to burn incense. Near the altar was a veil that divided the holy chamber from the holiest chamber, where God was believed to dwell. That innermost chamber was entered only once a year when the high priest made sacrifice for the atonement of Israel. At the place of passage through that veil between the holy chamber and holiest chamber, Zechariah was surprised by a messenger of the LORD, who explained that he and Elizabeth would finally have a son. This son, however, would be not a priest like his father, but a prophet. Another surprise. Historically, prophets and priests were at odds with one another. Prophets often condemned the priests for propping up political systems and religious institutions while ignoring the heart of the faith.

When the promised child was born, Elizabeth surprised everyone by naming him "John" and Zechariah surprised them further by nodding in agreement. Imagine this old man holding his long-awaited son, looking into that tiny face and proclaiming him a *prophet* of the Most High, who would:

Go on before the Lord to prepare the way for him, to give his people the knowledge of salvation through the forgiveness of their sins, because of the tender mercy of our God, by which the rising sun will come to us from heaven, to shine on those living in darkness and in the shadow of death, to guide our feet into the path of peace.

More surprises. Not only a prophet, but a prophet who would offer the knowledge of salvation. That role belonged to priests. And peace. While that word doesn't surprise us, especially this time of year, it would have caught the attention of those present at John's dedication. This was the era of "Pax Romana" or the peace of Rome, which refers to the 200 years during which Rome ruled most of the known world virtually unchallenged. Rome kept what they called "peace" through brutal oppression. Zechariah was speaking of a very different kind of peace, of God's dream for the world. And that mantle of shalom was falling on the shoulders of Zechariah's only child.

It is not surprising that Zechariah praised God for the birth of his son. It may be surprising to the ears of modern-day faith that he didn't say "Praise God for blessing *me* by giving *me* a child." Zechariah's joy is not about what God has done for him. The source of his joy is what God is doing for the world . . . even though it meant that his son would take a dramatically different path from his own; a path that would threaten the political and religious powers of the day and put his life in danger. True joy is about what God does through those who participate in his dream for the world, whatever the risk. And not surprising, there's more to this story.

PRAYER

*God of joyful surprises,
Teach us the true meaning of joy. As we light this candle, we dedicate ourselves to seeking not our desires but yours; to being open to the surprises of our faith even—or especially--when those surprises may challenge us our long-held understandings. Amen.*



SET 2
WEEK 4: THE NATURE OF LOVE
LUKE 1:46-55
MATTHEW 1:18-24
(4th Candle—traditionally purple)

Today we come to the most familiar part of the story. A young woman named Mary is told by a messenger of God that she will bear a son by the power of the Holy Spirit. She humbly accepts her calling and then hurries off to visit her kinswoman, Elizabeth, who is also carrying a special child. The two mothers-to-be celebrate what God is doing for the world through them. When Joseph, Mary's betrothed, hears from God in a dream, he changes his plans for divorce and instead accepts her as his wife.

Because these stories are familiar, we risk missing the radical nature of the people's choices. Easily over-looked details in the Gospels generally offer important information. The Gospel of Luke tells us that Mary set off *in haste* to visit Elizabeth. First century Judaism forbade a woman to leave her home without permission from her father if she was single or her husband if she was married. Also, a pregnant woman was required remain in seclusion for the first five months. Elizabeth was in her 6th month and therefore out of seclusion when Mary arrived. Mary, however, in her haste broke the rules by not going into seclusion and by leaving without permission.

Betrothal was arranged entirely by parents and lasted at least a year. It was a legal relationship with the woman already belonging to the man and could only be broken through divorce, which was solely a man's prerogative. Consummation was required by the 4th day of the marriage feast to allow for legal action in case the woman was found not to be virginal. If a baby was born to an unmarried woman and she identified the father, the two were required to marry immediately without the option of divorce. If no father was identified, it was deemed incest and both the mother and child were banished or stoned. The punishment for adultery was death by stoning for both parties.

The Gospel of Matthew says that Joseph decided to divorce Mary *secretly* because he did not want to expose her to public disgrace and stoning, which was the requirement of the law. The text also refers to Joseph as *diakos*, which is Greek for "righteous" or "just." Choosing to accept Mary as his wife was the same as saying he was responsible for the child and worthy of the penalty of immediate marriage without the option of divorce. The Gospel reports that Joseph further broke the rules by not consummating the marriage until Jesus was born.

The stories of Mary and Joseph remind us that the Bible reveals not only God's will but also the human propensity to interpret God's will in ways that replace a loving relationship with religious rules.

Some have suggested that the God of the Old Testament is a God of anger while the God of the New Testament is a God of love. That claim is not only ridiculous, it is apostasy. It violates the most fundamental tenet of our faith—that there is *One* God whose ultimate revelation is God incarnate; Jesus, the son of God, who demonstrated once and for all that divine love always breaks through human rules.

PRAYER

As our spiritual ancestors proclaimed "Hear oh Israel, the LORD your God, the LORD is One," we too stand on the belief in one God who is loving and merciful. Forgive us for the subtle ways in which we deny that truth. As we light this candle, we dedicate ourselves to seeking and serving divine love rather than human rules. Amen.



SET 2
CHRISTMAS EVE
(Call to Worship and Lighting of the Christ Candle)
THE LIGHT SHINES IN DARKNESS
JOHN 1:1-14

Our Christmas celebrations are bright and shiny. Twinkling lights and glittering ornaments remind us that the light of the world has come. However, by decorating the story, we may lose sight of the fact that the light shines *in darkness*.

The story of Jesus' birth is miraculous and full of wonder. Yet it is a story that unfolds in the real world with real people who are a real family. Not only are Joseph, Mary and Jesus a real family, they are a family in crisis. They exist on the margins of society. They have suffered the consequences of violating the religious rules of their day. They are among the oppressed peoples who live under brutal Roman occupation. They are poor. When they go to the temple as required after Mary's time of purification, they offer a lesser sacrifice, the one that is prescribed in Leviticus for those who can't afford the traditional offering. For at least a year, they are homeless refugees in a foreign land. And once they settle in Nazareth, Joseph works as a *tekton*, a manual laborer, hired by the wealthy elite to work on their building projects.

This is the family into which Jesus was born: outcast, oppressed, poor and landless. And that makes perfect sense. The light shines not in the shiny places of power and wealth, but into the darkness of human sin, and into the experience of human exploitation and suffering. Where else would the light shine? How else could it change the world?

Tonight as we celebrate the light that has entered the darkness of the world, we mustn't forget that the darkness could not grasp that light. So as we worship, we must allow ourselves to be filled with the light of Christ and leave these moments of celebration readied to be light to the world. Because it is joy, not just to me, not just to you, not just to those who gather for worship this holy night, but joy to the *world*.

Invite the congregation to join in singing "Joy to the World."

