

Prelude

Welcome

***Call to Worship (Unison)**

Merciful God, you sent your messengers to the prophets to preach repentance and prepare the way for our salvation.

Give us grace to heed their warnings and forsake our sins, that we may celebrate properly the commemoration of the nativity, and may await with joy the coming in glory of Jesus Christ our Redeemer; who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, One God, for ever and ever. AMEN.

Lighting of a Candle (Purple)

We light the candle of Hope. Like the prophets, we hope for the Savior.

Scripture: Isaiah 64:1-9

***Opening Hymn** "Light the Advent Candle" (vs 1)
TFWS #2090

Sharing Our Joy's and Concerns

Pastoral Prayer

Hangings of the Greens

Liturgist: In the days to come the mountains of the LORD'S house shall be established as the highest of the mountains, and . . . all the nations shall stream to it. Many nations shall come and say:

ALL: "Come, let us go up to the mountain of the LORD . . .; that God may teach us God's ways and that we may walk in God's paths."
--Isaiah 2:2-3 alt.

Pastor: With what shall we come to God's house?

Liturgist: Bring branches of cedar and holly, bring evergreens and a pine tree, hang wreaths and garlands.

ALL: Make the church fragrant with the smell of living things. In acts of hanging greens and listening to the words of prophets ... let us

make our hearts and this space a place of inward and outward preparation for the One who comes to give us second birth.

Prayer

Good Lord, by your mercy guide our outward actions in such ways that our inward being is formed in faith, hope, and love. May the decorations we offer engage our senses during the days of Advent and enliven our praise and worship, in the name of the child of Bethlehem, our risen and coming Savior, Jesus Christ. Amen

***Hymn** *Lo, How a Rose E'er Blooming* #216

Liturgist: People of God, we stand at the entrance of the church and at the doorway to the Christian year. Let us mark the entrance to the church building and our hearts and minds as portals for Christ to enter.

ALL: Come, Lord Jesus! Come, Lord Jesus!

RESPONSIVE READING

Lift up your heads, O gates! And be lifted up, O ancient doors! That the Ruler of glory may come in.

ALL: Who is the Ruler of Glory?

The Lord, strong and mighty, the Lord, mighty in battle!

ALL: Lift up your heads, O gates! And be lifted up, O ancient doors! That the Ruler of glory may come in.

Who is this Ruler of glory?

ALL: The Lord of hosts, the Lord is the Ruler of glory!
--Psalm 24:7-10

***Hymn** *Lift Up Your Heads* #213

Liturgist: How shall we make this place a reminder of our need of repentance, faithfulness and integrity that comes from God our Maker and Redeemer?

Liturgist: God, the Holy One of Israel, dispenses comfort and compassion. With the Christmas tree we remember God's everlasting promises to the poor and needy. Isaiah spoke of God making of the wilderness a place of blessing where water and plants, even pine trees, would manifest God's loving action to save and provide.

ALL: Light the tree as we hear God's word.

Liturgist: A reading from the prophet Isaiah, chapter 41: *When the poor and needy seek water, and there is none, and their tongue is parched with thirst, the LORD will answer them, I the God of Israel will not forsake them.*

I will open rivers on the bare heights, and fountains in the midst of the valleys; I will make the wilderness a pool of water, and the dry land springs of water.

I will put in the wilderness the cedar, the acacia, the myrtle, and the olive; I will set in the desert the cypress, the juniper and the pine together, so that all may see and know, all may consider and understand, that the hand of the LORD has done this, the Holy One of Israel has created it. The word of the Lord.
--Isaiah 41:17-20

Hymn (seated) *O Come, O Come, Emmanuel* #211
(vs. 2, 5, 6 & 7)

Pastor: Here in this place we prepare for the coming of the Lord. Here we will remember his Advent, his birth in Bethlehem, weak and helpless as an infant. And here we rekindle our prayer, "Come, Lord Jesus" as we celebrate his coming as the bright and morning star.

ALL: Hang symbols and signs of Christ – ruler, prophet, priest. Hang stars, crosses, triangles, the "alpha" and the "omega" to remind us of his identity, his story, and of the holy Trinity: One God who reveals in three ways—Father, Son and Holy Spirit.

Hangings of the Chrismons

Pastor: Reading from the book of Revelation, chapter 22: *"See, I am coming soon ... I am the Alpha and the Omega, the first and the last, the beginning and the end."*

The Spirit and the bride say, "Come." And let everyone who hears say, "Come." The word of the Lord
-- Revelation 22:12-13, 17a

***Hymn of Commitment** # 89
Joyful, Joyful We Adore You

***Sending Forth**

***Dismissal**

***Postlude**

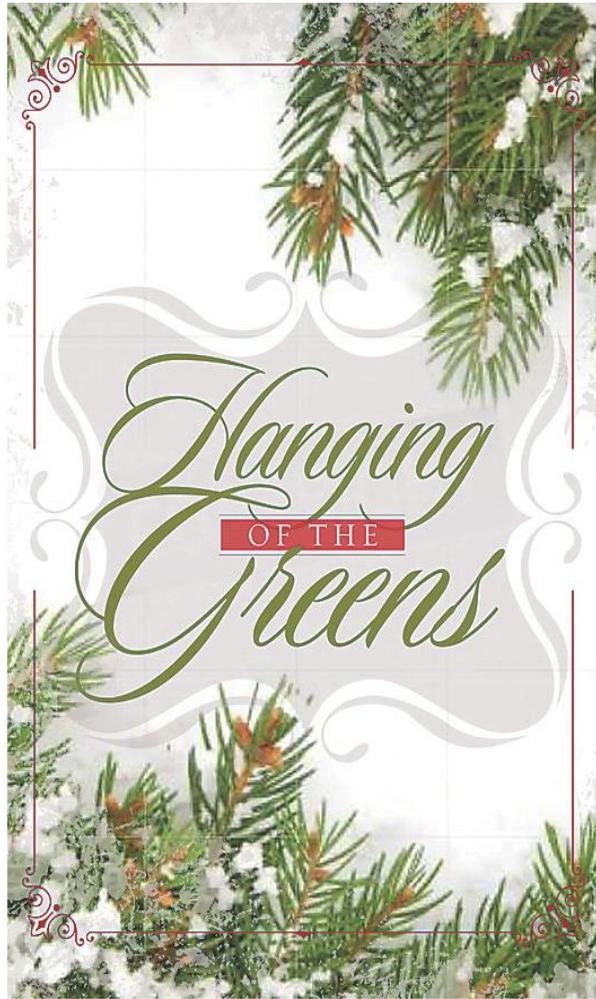
What Are Chrismons?

Did you know that the ornaments on our tree in the Sanctuary are called Chrismons?

The word Chrismon is made from two other words: Christ (Chris) and Monogram (mon). They were mostly symbols used by early Christians as a symbol of faith. Also, in days when it was dangerous to be a Christian, followers of Jesus used secret signs and symbols to communicate with other Christians. In those times, Christians had to worship in secret.

In the back of the sanctuary, you will find a list of all the Chrismons and their meanings. When you take your children up to see the Nativity scene, take a copy of the Chrismon list and help your child find the symbol while reading the description and meaning to them.





THE ADVENT WREATH is a tradition in our Advent Worship each year. It is a “wreath” with five candles, surrounded by evergreens.

The wreath reminds us of God Himself, His eternity and endless mercy, which has no beginning or end. The green of the wreath speaks of the hope that we have in God, the hope of newness, of renewal, of eternal life.

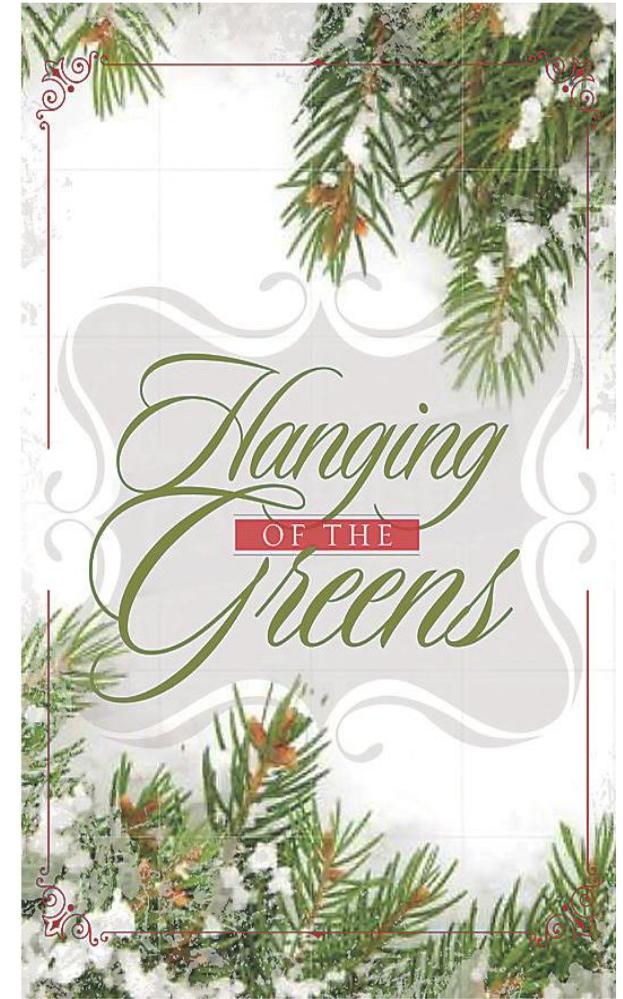
While the Advent wreath with its four candles did bring light to churches, it was not to illuminate the interior as much as to symbolize the coming of Christ. The Advent wreath began in the time of the Protestant reformer Martin Luther.

Candles symbolize the light of God coming into the world through the birth of His son. The four colored candles represent the period of waiting during the four Sundays of Advent, which themselves symbolize the four centuries of waiting between the prophet Malachi & the birth of Christ.

In some churches, four purple candles, one for each week in Advent, are used with one larger white candle in the middle. Other churches prefer three purple with one candle being rose or pink, to represent joy. The center candle is white and is called the Christ Candle. The central location of the Christ Candle reminds us that God’s incarnation is the heart of the season, giving light to the world.

During each Sunday of the Advent season, we focus on one of the four virtues Jesus brings us: Hope, Love, Joy and Peace. Others consider the lighting of the first candle to symbolize expectation, while the second symbolizes hope, the third joy and the fourth purity. The Christ candle is lit on Christmas Eve or Christmas Day reminding Christians that Jesus is the light of the world.

The order and exact wording vary among churches, but the wreath continually reminds us of who we are, called to be as followers of Jesus.



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