

Christmas Candlelight Service

When: The Sunday before Christmas

Atmosphere: Want to switch from the normal joyous mood of a New Thought service to a sacred mood. When people enter, have lights dim. I put other candles around the sanctuary to help accentuate the candlelight ceremony. Hildegard's music plays softly in the background during the ceremony.

Setup: Have table in front of pulpit, with lovely tablecloth. Have a circle of 7 unlit candles with a pillar candle in the middle already lit as it will represent the Christ Candle. Have any decorations around the candles that are appropriate to the season. I assign 7 people to each light one candle. I give them a long fireproof match with a mailing label on it with the name of the candle they are supposed to light. As each section is read (example - The Candle of Life) the person assigned to that candle puts the match to the Christ candle to light it, then uses that fire to light one candle. Have a place to put the spent matches.

Candlelight Service

The Christ candle is in the center of the candles as the Christ is in the center of our being. Although this candle is visible to our human eyes, the Christ light is invisible to our eyes. It is from the Christ light that the gifts of the spirit come, so we will use the Christ candle to light all the other candles.

The Candle of Life

As we light the candle of life, we recognize that in the whispering manger of our heart lies the immense gift of God's life that is expressing uniquely in all of us.

Can there be any greater gift on this blessed Christmas than to know the closeness of God's gift of life?

As we feel ourselves part of the Creator's life, we're reminded of the shepherds of old who journeyed to Bethlehem to kneel before the Christ Child Jesus lying in resplendent perfection in a lowly manger.

Let us today, in this moment know that manger of Christ life indwelling us: let us feel our world draw in silent wholeness and holiness to the glorious life that unites each of us to one another in a grand mysterious statement of God's handiwork...

Let Us Pray: "Father, your gift of life... how great it is to us. That in our wisdom you would place your perfection, your glory within us, so that in being, living and sharing with each other, we might experience you... we are grateful, dear God, for this gift of life that takes newness with every breath we draw.

The Candle of Light

And lo, the star of the East went before them... till it stood over the place where the child lay. Our second candle is the candle of Light. Light symbolizes illumination, understanding, perception, awareness, recognition and insight.

The wise men followed the Bethlehem star perhaps little dreaming what they would feel, perceive and experience, upon reaching their destination was greater than any knowledge which they had previously possessed...

and yet, they were willing to journey to leave everything... their comfortable surroundings to travel across desert, wasteland... in search of that to which the star might reveal to them.

Sometimes we too must cross places... through difficult times... if we are to follow our Christed star, by being true to the highest and best within us. But when we follow the star of our inner Light of the living Christ, we give up doubting, questioning, ... we're willing to follow because we have the true light in us.

Each of us has his own star... each of us his own enlightenment... his own inner teacher... and so today; we would be wise men and women that we might follow the inner light with courage and steadfastness, knowing that Light is the highest and best of us, knowing in discovering that light we discover the Father's presence.

Let us Pray: We are grateful for the Truth that illumines our pathway. Your light lights our life... bringing understanding where before there was darkness... your presence radiates and permeates all things... Ye are the Light which lights every man's life.

The Candle of Love

We light the candle of love from the Christ candle recalling the words of Love from 1st Corinthians 13:

If I speak in the tongues of men and of angels but have not love, I am a noisy gong or a clanging cymbal.

Love is patient and kind, love is not jealous or boastful, it is not arrogant or rude. Love does not insist on its own way: it does not rejoice at wrong but rejoices in the right. Love bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things.

When I was a child I spoke like a child, I acted like a child, I reasoned like a child; when I became a man, I gave up childish ways. (For now we see in a mirror dimly, but then face to face. Now I know in part; then I shall understand fully, even as I am fully understood... so Faith, hope, love abide but the greatest of these is love.

Let Us Pray: It is your love which is the mortar of our life in you. We accept your precious love, the expression of that love you brought to us through your son... our hearts are quickened knowing that we each have a divine inheritance in that gift of your love that is perfect and complete in itself.

The Candle of Peace

We have accepted the abundant life, we have walked into the abundant light of the Father, we have known the Divine Love.

And out of this is born the most wonderful sense of God's peace... As we light the candle of peace from the Christ candle, we remember the words of our scripture: "Glory to God in the Highest, Peace and Goodwill towards men."

We recognize too, that when we are in spiritual peace, all of the parts of our being, every cell of our body is in harmony, and that inner peace must result in an outer peace... in our affairs, in our relationships, in the world in which we move. We remember, too, the words of the Master "My peace I leave with you, my peace I give unto you, not as the world giveth, give I to you.

This is the peace which passeth understanding. It is the peace that defies description or analyzing. It simply is. And it is the result of accepting God's peace in us.

Let Us Pray: Thank you for the gift of peace... the quiet inner knowing.. that all is well because we are in your abiding presence. Thank you for the quiet gentle voice that speaks to us, just as the shepherds in the fields listened to your stilling peace... Be Still...

The Candle of Power

We light the candle of power from the Christ candle.

The Lord God omnipotent reigneth (Rev. 19:6)

As our Jesus Christ thought finds resolve and growing certainly, we take dominion over our world. We discover the power of our word... to bring forth harmony. We discover the power of our actions... to help others clarify their actions.

We discover the power of acceptance... acceptance of the Truth that God's plan of renewal and salvation is at work in the seeming difficulties and concerns of our community, our nation and world.

We discover the power of Truth... dispelling darkness... and providing renewed hope to shattered lives.

Let Us Pray: Our Father, your power is all pervading... like a gentle river, you move persistently in the every action of man. Let us be mindful of that power... that it can only bring forth good because that is your nature.

The Candle of Beauty

And they shall call his name Emanuel... God with us... When we fell the life, the light and the love of the Father, the peace, the power of the presence in our life... our lives take on a transparent radiant beauty... a wondrous new glow.

And so our next candle is the candle of beauty, lighted from the Christ candle. Beauty may be understood as balance and order, the balance among the mental, the physical, the spiritual dimension of our life.. the balance seen in our work and in play... in rest and worship. When we look through the inner eye of beauty we see, with new appreciation.. somehow everything in our world seems fresher, more alive, more precious than before.

Emerson described such an awareness when he wrote: "Beauty is God's handwriting.. a wayside sacrament... welcome it in every fair face, in every fair sky, in every fair flower, and thank God for it as a cup of blessing.

Let Us Pray: Thank you for the beauty, for the beauty that floods our world. We are joint heirs with you, Father, in expressing beauty in our world... Let it come forward... as a natural expression of our relationship with you.

The Candle of Joy

As we light the candle of Joy from the Christ candle... the inexplicable peels of joy rings from the heart and soul of every man, woman and child of good will

Joy to the world, Joy to a world that has been given a great charge by its Creator. The Charge to let our Light shine before all men... and all nations.

These words that the Master gave us... "That my joy might remain in you and that you might be full."

The fullness to which we are drawn is measured by trusting belief that truly every breath we take, every thought we hold, every action expressed ... is a manifestation of the workings of the great Spirit of life in us.

And, so Joy to your world. The savior within you lives. The Messiah call you nearer.

Hymn - Silent Night

The Lord blesses us and keep us, the Lord makes his face to shine upon us and is gracious to us. May the Lord of Light, Life, Love, Peace, Power, Beauty and Joy lift up his holy countenance upon us this Christmas and give us peace.