

**Christmas Day 2022**  
**Suggested Worship for Lake Toxaway UMC Family**

**OPENING CALL TO WORSHIP**

*In this season of waiting, of longing,  
of looking for you to come into our world*

*We are seeking light.*

*[Light one candle or candles in the room where you are gathered.]*

*In our own lives*

***We are seeking light***

*In our neighborhoods*

***We are seeking light***

*In our families*

***We are seeking light***

*In our work*

***We are seeking light***

*In Grace*

***We are seeking light***

*In our nation*

***We are seeking light***

*In our world*

***We are seeking light***

*Seek and you shall find*

*Knock and the door will be opened*

*Ask and it will be given to you*

***Jesus Christ you are the light of the world***

***May we have eyes to see you***

***And ears to hear you***

***Come into our world today***

***Amen***

**PRAYER**

***Loving God,  
help us remember the birth of Jesus,  
that we may share in the song of the angels,  
the gladness of the shepherds,  
and worship of the wise men.***

***Close the door of hate  
and open the door of love all over the world.***

*Let kindness come with every gift  
and good desires with every greeting.*

*Deliver us from evil by the blessing which Christ brings,  
and teach us to be merry with clear hearts.  
May the Christmas morning make us happy to be thy children,  
and Christmas evening bring us to our beds with grateful thoughts, forgiving  
and forgiven, for Jesus' sake. Amen.*

## **PLAY A CHRISTMAS HYMN (MULTIPLE WAYS TO DO THIS IN OUR WORLD OF TECHNOLOGY) OR SING ONE**

**SCRIPUTRE LESSONS** (Select which ones you might want to read in your home: all or one.)

### **Isaiah 52:7-10**

52:7 How beautiful upon the mountains are the feet of the messenger who announces peace, who brings good news, who announces salvation, who says to Zion, "Your God reigns."

52:8 Listen! Your sentinels lift up their voices, together they sing for joy; for in plain sight they see the return of the LORD to Zion.

52:9 Break forth together into singing, you ruins of Jerusalem; for the LORD has comforted his people, he has redeemed Jerusalem.

52:10 The LORD has bared his holy arm before the eyes of all the nations; and all the ends of the earth shall see the salvation of our God.

### **Psalms 98**

98:1 O sing to the LORD a new song, for he has done marvelous things. His right hand and his holy arm have gotten him victory.

98:2 The LORD has made known his victory; he has revealed his vindication in the sight of the nations.

98:3 He has remembered his steadfast love and faithfulness to the house of Israel. All the ends of the earth have seen the victory of our God.

98:4 Make a joyful noise to the LORD, all the earth; break forth into joyous song and sing praises.

98:5 Sing praises to the LORD with the lyre, with the lyre and the sound of melody.

98:6 With trumpets and the sound of the horn make a joyful noise before the King, the LORD.

98:7 Let the sea roar, and all that fills it; the world and those who live in it.

98:8 Let the floods clap their hands; let the hills sing together for joy

98:9 at the presence of the LORD, for he is coming to judge the earth. He will judge the world with righteousness, and the peoples with equity.

### **Hebrews 1:1-4, (5-12)**

1:1 Long ago God spoke to our ancestors in many and various ways by the prophets,  
1:2 but in these last days he has spoken to us by a Son, whom he appointed heir of all things, through whom he also created the worlds.

1:3 He is the reflection of God's glory and the exact imprint of God's very being, and he sustains all things by his powerful word. When he had made purification for sins, he sat down at the right hand of the Majesty on high,

1:4 having become as much superior to angels as the name he has inherited is more excellent than theirs.

1:5 For to which of the angels did God ever say, "You are my Son; today I have begotten you"? Or again, "I will be his Father, and he will be my Son"?

1:6 And again, when he brings the firstborn into the world, he says, "Let all God's angels worship him."

1:7 Of the angels he says, "He makes his angels winds, and his servants flames of fire."

1:8 But of the Son he says, "Your throne, O God, is forever and ever, and the righteous scepter is the scepter of your kingdom.

1:9 You have loved righteousness and hated wickedness; therefore God, your God, has anointed you with the oil of gladness beyond your companions."

1:10 And, "In the beginning, Lord, you founded the earth, and the heavens are the work of your hands;

1:11 they will perish, but you remain; they will all wear out like clothing;

1:12 like a cloak you will roll them up, and like clothing they will be changed. But you are the same, and your years will never end."

### **John 1:1-14**

1:1 In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.

1:2 He was in the beginning with God.

1:3 All things came into being through him, and without him not one thing came into being. What has come into being

1:4 in him was life, and the life was the light of all people.

1:5 The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness did not overcome it.

1:6 There was a man sent from God, whose name was John.

1:7 He came as a witness to testify to the light, so that all might believe through him.

1:8 He himself was not the light, but he came to testify to the light.

1:9 The true light, which enlightens everyone, was coming into the world.

1:10 He was in the world, and the world came into being through him; yet the world did not know him.

1:11 He came to what was his own, and his own people did not accept him.

1:12 But to all who received him, who believed in his name, he gave power to become children of God,

1:13 who were born, not of blood or of the will of the flesh or of the will of man, but of God.

1:14 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.

## **HOMILY**

It is Christmas Day on Sunday. How appropriate! I hope this helps to heighten the real meaning of Christmas rather than the frenzy of presents under a tree. I hope it helps us all to begin the day with worship in our individual families as a reminder we are all connected as the family of God.

It is strange not to be in church this morning; some of you may feel I have "slacked" in my pastoral responsibilities. Others are thankful you were not pushed to feel like you had to get up and dress for a worship service at church.

I want to remind you this is not really our individual family's day. This day is about Jesus. First and foremost, this is the day when the distance between heaven and earth was removed and God set up camp among us; God moved into the neighborhood or "tented among," which is what the Gospel of John says (John 1:14 - lived among us literally is tented in our midst). It is about the close-ness of the living presence of God, incarnate in the one we know as Jesus.

So, this is a day of praise. If part two of a two-day celebration (as we celebrated Christmas Eve last night), then now is when the trumpets sound and the shouts go up. This is "Joy to the Word" time; this is "Hark the Herald Angels" time. It is hard to be too loud or too happy today. It is hard to be too exuberant or overly playful today. Let it out as we sing and listen to holy music, as you pray, as you greet one another in your homes and by phone calls and opening gifts on this glorious Christmas morning.

Let us also remember those who are struggling today - those who are grieving and feel the loss of a loved one most keenly today. Accept their sadness, even as we welcome them with joy. Let us not expect to replace what they are missing but let us remind them in tangible ways that they are not alone. Let us remember those who are sick and embrace them and remind them of how deeply we love them. Remember those who are dealing with extreme weather conditions and a lack of the basic necessities of living. Accept we cannot fix every social challenge, but we give generously to assist them and share as God leads us in stewardship of that which he has entrusted to us.

Let us remember families separated because of a variety of reasons (divisions over past hurts, physical distance). We remember those who serve in the military and recognize how great a sacrifice they make. We remember those required who work in hospitals, law enforcement, EMS and firefighters. Let us send embraces of love and appreciation to these women and men.

May we remember with grace today is a witness to what is repeated every time we gather as a community of faith for worship and fellowship. We celebrate Christ among us and take his light to the world. Let us remember, **Christ takes center place today and every day!**

### **AN AFFIRMATION OF FAITH**

*Jesus Christ, brother of Light,  
I believe.*

*I believe that in the beginning was the Promise  
and the Promise was with God and the Promise was God.*

*I believe in the infinite, nurturing creativity of God,  
in the incarnate, crucified humility of God,  
in the intimate, inspiring liberality of God.*

*Jesus Christ, brother of Light,  
I believe.*

### **HYMN**

### **FAMILY PRAYER WITH THE LORD'S PRAYER**

### **BENEDCITION**

Come and see!

**The light of God has come into our world  
to proclaim God's justice and love;  
It has overcome the darkness and brought new life.**

Come and follow!

**Christ our companion has redeemed our world  
He draws us into a loving family  
From every tribe and family and culture.**

Go and tell!

**The Spirit has equipped us for service  
To love our neighbors as we do ourselves  
To bring God's salvation to the ends of the earth.**

Come and see, come and follow, go and tell!

**In God's Love the nations of the earth will put their hope.**