

The Hanging of the Greens and Chrismon Service
Central Presbyterian Church

original by Dr. Norman G. Johnson, modified by Kathi Thomas

Before service, be sure that “flame thrower” and a candle lighter are by the lectern.

6:15 PM: ALL readers and Chrismon groups line up in narthex in order, then file in, to sit, IN ORDER, in the pews on the lectern side of the sanctuary. Do not sit on the front row, but fill in starting row 2. We will already be seated when the choral call to worship is sung. Call to Worship leaders & first readers (Greg, Newmans & Blackburns) should go right up to the chancel area. Call to Worship will start as soon as “People Look East” is over.

6:20 PM- Prelude: Piano music by Nantha Quiring

6:30 PM CHORAL CALL TO WORSHIP (from balcony, a capella) Solo- “O Come, O Come, Emmanuel” (1st verse by _____)

PROCESSIONAL HYMN: **“People Look East” #12 verses 1, 2 & 4*

Processional: **Choir & Childrens’ Choir ONLY** will process down center aisle . **As soon as the music begins, start processing, there are a LOT of people to get seated!!!!** Nathan will play through it once, then we begin singing, but choirs should enter as soon as music starts.

WELCOME AND CALL TO WORSHIP

(*FIRST: Please greet everyone and welcome them, and then do call to Worship.*)

(leader): Tonight we come together to prepare for the birthday of our Savior.

People: Tonight we make ready our welcome for God’s only Son, Jesus

(leader): We have begun the holy season of Advent, the season of preparing for the birth of Christ.

People: As we renew the special meaning of the Advent, a season of reflection and anticipation,

(leader): Let us clear our minds and open our hearts to the coming of the Christ.

People: Let us honor Christ’s birth by adorning our church for the coming of our Savior.

(leader): Let our songs and symbols represent our personal rededication to God’s glory and the incarnation of God’s love in the world.

Together: For God loved us so much that God sent us the Prince of Peace. Now more than ever, we need to follow Christ’s peaceful ways, so that the world may live with justice and in peace. (TURN PAGE)

***HYMN: “Let All Mortal Flesh Keep Silence”**

5, hymnal

Reader 1 (): As we light these candles in the chancel, we symbolize Christ’s coming in the world of sin and evil, war and strife, stress and turmoil, suffering and death. Jesus came to bring hope and help to those who were held captive by oppression, and to guide them to personal peace and joy through the illumination of Christ’s message of the love of God. John 8: 12 quotes Jesus as saying “I am the light of the world”.*

(As I reads, the other pick ups the candlelighter, take a light from the votive candle that will be on the communion table, then light the candles at the chancel table.)*

THE ANNUNCIATION—Reader 2: () The story of the angel’s visit to Mary is told in Luke 1: 26-38. Listen, please, for the gospel: “Now in the sixth month the angel Gabriel was sent from God to a city in Galilee called Nazareth to a virgin engaged to a man whose name was Joseph, of the descendants of David; and the virgin’s name was Mary.”

(Song here about the Annunciation- “To a Maid Engaged to Joseph” or “The Angel Gabriel” both work well

THE ADVENT WREATH

Reader 3 () The season of Advent expresses hope and expectation for both the first and second coming of Christ. We will be serving communion each Sunday of Advent, as a way of remembering what this season is really celebrating and rededicating ourselves to the coming Child of Light.

Any authentic celebration of Advent and Christmas must be experienced as a part of the larger story of Christ’s life, suffering, death, and resurrection. We can approach the Advent & Christmas season with a real sense of excitement once we understand how the whole season initiates us in the manifestation of God in Jesus Christ.

Reader 4 (): Since the early days of the church, God’s people have prepared for their celebration of Christmas. They have established a season of the church year called “Advent,” for this particular reason. Advent begins four Sundays before Christmas and ends on Christmas Eve. During the Advent season, Christians get ready on every level of life to remember the great day on

which we celebrate our Savior's birth.

Advent reminds us that there is still much darkness. It is a darkness made up of sin, evil, ignorance, hate, and pride. To remind ourselves of the growing power of Christ the Light of the world, Christians have long made and used Advent wreaths. The Advent wreath is covered with evergreens, symbolizing eternal life. It is also in the form of a circle, with no beginning or end. Our life with God is everlasting.

Reader 5 () The lighting of candles has been a part of religious worship for centuries. The Hebrews burned candles for eight days as a part of the Festival of Lights, now called Chanukah. Light has also been used by many religious groups to symbolize truth and Christ's life for us.

When Joseph and Mary presented Jesus in the temple, Simon referred to the Christ child as "a light to lighten the Gentiles". From this statement, church leaders have used candles to symbolize the light of Christ shining throughout the world.

Reader 6 (): The candles of the Advent wreath are significant not only in the light they share, but in their color. The three purple candles symbolize the coming of Christ from the royal line of David, through his earthly father, Joseph, and in contemporary days, we use the purple candles to signify hope, love and peace. The single pink candle symbolizes joy and is lit on the third Sunday of Advent. The growing light of these candles stresses the growing power of Christ Jesus over darkness. We lit the first candle this past Sunday and will light it again tonight, and we will continue light one candle each week, culminating with Christmas Eve services when we light the center Christ candle . *(Whichever wants to read this, the other lights one purple candle.!)*

Children's choir comes forward immediately at the end of this reading.

Special Music: "Light One Candle" Children's Choirs

THE HANGING OF THE GREENS

Reader 7 () Evergreens have long been considered a symbol of eternity, like God's everlasting nature. Ancient people viewed evergreen with awe and wonder because of its changeless nature.

Isaiah 60:13 tells us: "The glory of Lebanon shall come unto thee,

the fir tree, the pine tree, and the box together, to beautify the place of my sanctuary.”

Though evergreens have long been viewed with reverence, it has only been in the past four centuries that Christians have used evergreen to decorate their homes and sanctuaries. The evergreen we use reminds us of God’s vastness, God’s abiding love in Jesus Christ, and of our never ending fellowship with God when Christ is our Lord.

Reader 8: () Holly and ivy are also used in our Christmas celebrations. Both are rich in symbolism. Because the holly puts forth bright red berries in the dead of winter, it has been considered a symbol of the endless life. The sharpness of the bush and redness of the berries have associated it with the crown of thorns Christ wore and the blood Christ shed for us with His crucifixion. For generations, Christians have placed holly in their windows as a sign that Christ had entered their homes and was the Lord of their homes. Ivy has been used extensively for Christmas decorating since the Middle Ages. It was considered a symbol of love because of its persistent growth, and of everlasting love and life because it is also an evergreen. Holly and ivy are often associated together in legends because of the holly’s sturdiness and the ivy’s tenacity. Both have the incredible ability to survive and to grow, as our churches have through the years.)

“The Holly and the Ivy”

Note: as this is being sung, garland hangers (**4 Youth and/or children will hang these on front to left of lectern, to right of pulpit.**)

THE ADORNING OF THE CHRISMON TREE

Reader 9 (): A Chrismon tree has been a part of this sanctuary for many years. Chrismon trees are a popular variation of the Christmas tree developed by Frances Kipps Spencer, a member of the Ascension Lutheran Church in Danville, Virginia. She originated the concept in 1957 when she set out to create decorations appropriate for a church's Christmas celebrations. The ornaments she created using leftover supplies used for wrapping Christmas presents quickly became popular, so Spencer began creating additional ornaments and wrote a series of how-to books. After her death in 1990,

Spencer willed the rights to the Chrismons name and patterns to the Ascension church to continue its non-profit ministry.

The Chrismon tree is highly symbolic, conveying the life of Christ and the meaning of Christmas through commonly found items and easily understood symbols borrowed or modified from other sources. The tree is evergreen, representing eternal life, and decorated with traditional and modified ancient Christian symbols, called Chrismons. The word “Chrismon” comes from a combination of “Christ’s Monograms.” Chrismons are usually handmade by members of local congregations in colors of white and gold. Many of our Chrismons have been made and remade over the years by members of our church.

“Come, Thou Long expected Jesus #2 in hymnal
(Congregational hymn)

Once this hymn ends, pianist startst playing Christmas music VERY softly on piano. Play until lights go out after the heart Chrismon)

Reader 10 () The **FISH** is the most ancient symbol for our Lord, and was used as an easily recognized secret sign by early Christians. The Greek word for fish, “ichthus” (pronounced *ik-thoos*), is formed by using the first letter of each of the words in Greek which stand for “Jesus Christ, Son of God, Savior”. Since non-Christians did not suspect its secret meaning, the image of the fish offered protection from persecution. In the catacombs, fish were drawn on the walls to direct worshipers to meeting places. When we see this symbol today, we can remember a time when Christians were routinely persecuted for their beliefs and how they succeeded in spreading the Gospel, despite all these obstacles.

Reader 11 () The **CHRISTMAS ROSE** symbolizes the Nativity of our Lord. Isaiah prophesized that “the dessert would blossom as the rose
The **SCALLOP SHELL** symbolizes baptism into Christianity. In ancient times shells were used to scoop water from the streams to pour over the people being baptized. At Central Presbyterian, we still use a shell to hold the water when we baptize here at our font. In Matthew 28:19, Jesus directs his followers with these words, “Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit.”

Reader 12 () **IHS**, is related to an abbreviation for the Greek word for Jesus. Originally, it was abbreviated I H C, but as knowledge of Greek became rare, the Greek C was changed to a Latin S, so the it became HIS or “In Hoc Signo” meaning “In this sign.” It is a familiar symbol to us even today, as we sometimes see these letters on paraments in our chancel area. It was popularized in the fifteenth century, by Franciscan disciple Bernadine of Sienna as a symbol of peace.

CHI (*pronounced Ki, as in rhymes with tie*) **and RHO** (*pronounced row*) is one of the earliest forms of christogram, and is used by Christians. It is formed by superimposing the first two letters in the Greek spelling of the word *Christ* :

chi = ch and rho = r, in such a way to produce the monogram. Although not technically a cross, the Chi Rho invokes the crucifixion of Jesus as well as symbolizing his status as the Christ.

Reader 13 () The **WINE CUP** represents the sacrifice of Jesus Christ, who poured out His life for the forgiveness of sins.

The **WHEAT AND GRAPES** represents the Body and Blood of Christ.

The **BUTTERFLY** is a symbol of Christ’s resurrection and eternal life because it emerges with a glorified body able to soar into the sky from its time in the cocoon after being a caterpillar. It is as if the caterpillar has died, then is resurrected into this beautiful creature. Such will be our everlasting life with Christ.

Reader 14 () There are many designs for the symbol of the **CROSS**. The cross is always a symbol of Christianity, because Christianity was founded not only on the birth and teachings of Jesus of Christ, but on his death on the cross AND his resurrection.

The most popular form of cross is the **LATIN CROSS**, with the longer upright than crossbar. The cross was glorified in the early church because Jesus’ crucifixion did not end his life. Jesus showed us that he was raised from the dead, and that through belief in God and Jesus, we too, will have everlasting life. Because of this, the cross is one of the most glorious symbols in Christendom

The **CROSS OF TRIUMPH**, also known as the Cross of Victory or the Cross of conquest, is composed of a Latin Cross on a globe, symbolized Christ over the world. “Go ye into all the world” was what Christ told his disciples.

Reader 15 () The **CROSS PATEE** has infinite varieties. It is distinguished from a Maltese Cross by the graceful curves of the lines which come out from the center. The outer edges may be either straight or curved.

Reader 16 () The **BUDDED CROSS**, also known as the Cross Botonee’ (*pronounced bow-to-nay,*) is a very beautiful cross, and is often used to top the Christian flag. It may be either a Latin or Greek cross= Each end is “budded”, to remind us of life anew that is possible with Christ.

The **CROSS THAT ENDS IN AN ANCHOR** symbolizes that Christ is our anchor throughout life, and that if we turn to Him, we won’t be adrift in the sea of life.

Christians of the first century called this the “Cross of Hope.” It is one of the oldest symbols of our faith. Christ is the hope of the world. In the anchor, we see two figures– the cross and the crescent moon. The cross, a representation of our Savior, rises out of the moon, an ancient symbol for the virgin mother of Christ.

Reader 17 () The **CROSS INSIDE THE CIRCLE** reminds us that Christ should be in the center of our world. **The CROSS CROSSLET** reflects this belief. From the central cross four crosses grow outward to the four directions of the compass– north, south, east and west.

Reader 18: () **JERUSALEM CROSS** is composed of four crosses which meet in the center. Four small crosses appear in the four corners. Sometimes the four small crosses in the corners are said to represent the four corners of the earth to which missionaries have carried the gospel.

Reader 19 () The **THE CELTIC CROSS** is sometimes called the Irish Cross, Cross of Iona, wheel Cross or wedding cross. It has a circle signifying eternity around the middle part of the cross. This type of cross is often seen on covers of hymnals and other publications, on headstones in cemeteries, on church steeples, chancels and church doors and on wedding programs.

Reader 20 () The **HEART WITH A CROSS INSIDE IT** reminds us that Christ lives in our hearts.

A cross shaped like the Greek letter T, called “**TAU**”, Old Testament, Advent or Saint Anthony’s cross. This more subtle cross was used by early Christians because they feared being detected and persecuted. Tradition connects this cross to the Exodus and Moses’ lifting the brazen serpent. In Advent, the Child is not yet born; the prophecies are not yet fulfilled, so this cross, often called the Anticipatory Cross is a symbol of Advent. **(PLEASE TURN PAGE)**

Reader 21 () The **CREATOR’S STAR**, also called **The Star of David**, is formed by superimposing two equilateral triangles on one another, and is a symbol of creation. It also doubly emphasizes the Holy Trinity. This star represents our Lord whose family lineage was from King David, through Joseph, who raised Jesus as his own son.

The **EIGHT POINTED STAR** symbolizes regeneration. The Apostle Peter inspired the use of eight-sided or pointed figures as symbolic of our regeneration through baptism.

The **EPIPHANY STAR** has five points and refers to the revelation of Jesus as the Son of God. Peter also speaks of the morning star rising in our hearts. It was this wondrous star that guided the shepherds long ago to the manger in Bethlehem.

Reader 22 () **THE TRIANGLE WITH THE WORLD INSIDE** reminds us that the Holy Trinity is here for the whole world, not just for a few people. The **LAMB** represents our Lord Jesus, as the sacrificial lamb for all our sins. John the Baptist said “Behold the Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world.” John 1:29.

Reader 23 () The **OIL LAMP** symbolizes Christ, who is the light of the world.

The **CROWN** shows that through Christ, God will rule over the world, not through war and hatred, but through love and peace, and that love is stronger than hate. In today’s world, we need to remember that.

Reader 24 () The **TRIANGLE** represents the Trinity– Creator, Christ, and Holy Ghost.

Another symbol of the Trinity is the **SHAMROCK**, or three leafed clover. A legend about St. Patrick and the Holy Trinity states that St. Patrick was near a meadow one day when Irish chieftains asked for an explanation of the Trinity. He saw a shamrock, a yellow flower with three leaves, picked it, and told them that God is like this flower. This flower has three petals, and the three petals form this shamrock. Similarly, God consists of three Persons, and yet is one God.

Reader 25 () The **ASCENDING DOVE** reminds us that our souls go to heaven, as Jesus did when he left earth. It also is a symbol of peace, befitting the “Prince of Peace.”

The **DESCENDING DOVE** represents the Holy Spirit which descended when Christ was baptized by John the Baptist. With the dove came the voice of God from Heaven saying “This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased” as the Holy Spirit descended on the Christ in the form of a dove.

Reader 26 () The **HEART** is the everlasting symbol of love, just as Christ is the very embodiment of God’s love for us. No matter what devastation we see on earth, from wars and terrorism, to firestorms, earthquakes, hurricanes and drought, we know that God’s love is with us always.

The Bible tells us about love in many scriptures.

Jesus said that the greatest commandments were that we love God with all our hearts and with all our souls and with all our might, and that we love our neighbors as ourselves, that upon these two commandments, based on love, hung all the other commandments.

I Corinthians 13 ends with, “but now faith, hope, love abide, these three, but the greatest of these is love.” Colossians 3:14 says “Beyond all these things, put on love, which is the perfect bond of unity.”

() *_(Lights go out after the heart Chrismon is hung– only the cross should be dimly on—the following will read by the little light on lectern.)*

Reader 26 () Small white lights are used on our tree, first to represent each person who makes up the Body of Christ at Central Presbyterian Church, and to remind us that by working together, as do all of these lights, we can shine as brightly in our city as a light of Christ. As Mother Theresa said, “we cannot **all** do **great** things, but we can **all** do **small things** with **great love.**” Matthew quotes Christ as saying “what you do to the least of these, you have done to me.”

As we turn on the lights of this tree, may we be reminded of the love of our church family and the love of God who loves us unconditionally. *(As this is read, the TREE lights are slowly brought up by*)

Reader 27 () The first two chapters of Luke tells the story of the

birth of Christ. This narrative of our Savior's infancy summarizes the whole message of the Gospel, using images and symbols, such as these Chrismons, to remind us of what the birth of this Child meant for the salvation of the world. The longings of the ages were fulfilled in Christ Jesus, yet we still long for Christ to come again and set things right. Now, more than ever, we need the Prince of Peace's message to resound throughout the world.

: bring congregation lights back up enough so they can see the words during the organ intro.

HYMN: (*organ introduction, then a capella*)

“O Come, O Come, Emmanuel”

O Come, thou wisdom from on high,
And order all things, fair and nigh;
To us the path of knowledge show,
And cause us in her ways to go.

(Refrain)

Rejoice! Rejoice! Emmanuel
Shall Come to thee, O Israel!

O come, Thou Day-spring, come and cheer
Our spirits by Thine advent here
Disperse the gloomy clouds of night
And death's dark shadows put to flight.

(Refrain)

O come, desire of nations, bind
All peoples in one heart and mind;
Bid envy, strife and discord cease;
Fill the whole world with heaven's peace.

(Refrain)

BENEDICTION by Joseph Moore

(Please thank people for coming and invite them to attend the Thursday Noonday Concert tomorrow. Musicians of CPC will be presenting Christmas music, remind them of the dessert reception downstairs and then give the benediction.)

Postlude (organ)

MARK: Lights come slowly back up a little more, as organ postlude is played **so that folks can find their way out.**