**THE ORDER OF SERVICE OF CHRISTMAS**

**FOR SCHOOLS**

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*Hymns suggested in the service are from the following hymnals:*

*Hymns of Universal Praise* 普天頌讚 *(HUP)*

*Sounds of Grace* 恩頌聖歌 *(SC)*

*If a priest is present, let her or him be the Officiant.*

*If no priest be invited to officiate at the Service, a Christian teacher may perform the role of the Officiant.*

**PROCESSION**

*All stand.*

*The Officiating party will process to the hall accompanied by instrumental music.*

**CALL TO WORSHIP** *Luke 2:10-11*

Officiant Behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy, which shall be to all people.

For unto you is born this day a Saviour, which is Christ the Lord.

***People Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good will toward all people.***

**EXHORTATION**

Officiant While increasing numbers of people marginalize Christmas and the ‘Christmas spirit’ seems to have become diseased, the Church still celebrates each year in this Season the Nativity of God’s Son with wonder, simplicity, and with a flare for making Bethlehem ‘present’ in school and each locality.

Let us celebrate together this wonderful Christian season and makes this day one of good cheer, joy, and generosity.

**LIGHTING OF THE CANDLE**

*The Christmas candle stands at the centre of the Advent wreath symbolizing the birth of Christ shall be lit.*

Officiant People of God: shout and sing!

Tell the good news of peace on earth.

Lord, bring us today into Christ’s peace.

*At this point, the Officiant lights the candle,*

Lord, bring us today into Christ’s light.

All God’s people, shout and sing!

***People Amen.***

**HYMN**

*All stand.*

*Hymns suggested: O Come, O Come, Emmanuel (HUP 93);*

*O Come, All Ye Faithful, Joyful and Triumphant (HUP 109);*

*Once in Royal David’s City (HUP 113)*

**COLLECT**

*All remain standing.*

Officiant May the Creator God be with you.

***People And also with you.***

Officiant Let us pray.

*Silence*

O God, who wonderfully created, and yet more wonderfully restored, the dignity of human nature: Grant that we may share the divine life of him who humbled himself to share our humanity, your Son Jesus Christ; who lives and reigns with you, in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God, for ever and ever.

***People Amen.***

*All sit for the reading.*

**READING(S)**

*The readings provided are set thematically.*

*It is suggested that at least three passages to be read in the Service followed by a hymn to be sung by all or by school choir.*

*For the theme of “The Prophecy,” choose either one of the following biblical passages:*

***The prophecy: The future Messiah***

A reading from Isaiah 9:2-7

The people walking in darkness have seen a great light; on those living in the land of deep darkness a light has dawned. You have enlarged the nation and increased their joy; as people rejoice at the harvest, as warriors rejoice when dividing the plunder. For as in the day of Midian’s defeat, you have shattered the yoke that burdens them, the bar across their shoulders, the rod of their oppressor.Every warrior’s boot used in battle and every garment rolled in blood will be destined for burning, will be fuel for the fire. 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 greatness 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.

*or*

***The prophecy: God will bring peace to the world***

A reading from Isaiah 11:1-9

A shoot will come up from the stump of Jesse; from his roots a Branch will bear fruit. The Spirit of the Lord will rest on him—the Spirit of wisdom and of understanding, the Spirit of counsel and of might, the Spirit of the knowledge and fear of the Lord—and he will delight in the fear of the Lord. He will not judge by what he sees with his eyes, or decide by what he hears with his ears; but with righteousness he will judge the needy, with justice he will give decisions for the poor of the earth. He will strike the earth with the rod of his mouth; with the breath of his lips he will slay the wicked. Righteousness will be his belt and faithfulness the sash around his waist. The wolf will live with the lamb, the leopard will lie down with the goat, the calf and the lion and the yearling together; and a little child will lead them. The cow will feed with the bear, their young will lie down together, and the lion will eat straw like the ox. The infant will play near the cobra’s den, and the young child will put its hand into the viper’s nest. They will neither harm nor destroy on all my holy mountain, for the earth will be filled with the knowledge of the Lord as the waters cover the sea.

*After the reading,*

Lector The Word of the Lord.

***People Thanks be to God.***

*Hymn suggested: O Come, O Come, Emmanuel (HUP 93);*

*Lo! He Comes with Clouds Descending (SC 202)*

*Lo, How a Rose E’er Blooming (HUP 94)*

***The Annunciation: the prophecy to be fulfilled***

A reading from Luke 1:26-38

In the sixth month of Elizabeth’s pregnancy, God sent the angel Gabriel to Nazareth, a town in Galilee, to a virgin pledged to be married to a man named Joseph, a descendant of David. The virgin’s name was Mary. The angel went to her and said, “Greetings, you who are highly favored! The Lord is with you.” Mary was greatly troubled at his words and wondered what kind of greeting this might be. But the angel said to her, “Do not be afraid, Mary; you have found favor with God. You will conceive and give birth to a son, and you are to call him Jesus. He will be great and will be called the Son of the Most High. The Lord God will give him the throne of his father David, and he will reign over Jacob’s descendants forever; his kingdom will never end.” “How will this be,” Mary asked the angel, “since I am a virgin?” The angel answered, “The Holy Spirit will come on you, and the power of the Most High will overshadow you. So the holy one to be born will be called the Son of God. Even Elizabeth your relative is going to have a child in her old age, and she who was said to be unable to conceive is in her sixth month. For no word from God will ever fail.” “I am the Lord’s servant,” Mary answered. “May your word to me be fulfilled.” Then the angel left her.

*After the reading,*

Lector The Word of the Lord.

***People Thanks be to God.***

*Hymn suggested: O Come, O Come, Emmanuel (HUP 93)*

*Lift Up Your Heads (HUP 92)*

*Let All Mortal Flesh Keep Silence (HUP 91)*

***The Birth***

A reading from Luke 2:1-7

In those days Caesar Augustus issued a decree that a census should be taken of the entire Roman world. And everyone went to their own town to register. So Joseph also went up from the town of Nazareth in Galilee to Judea, to Bethlehem the town of David, because he belonged to the house and line of David. He went there to register with Mary, who was pledged to be married to him and was expecting a child. While they were there, the time came for the baby to be born, and she gave birth to her firstborn, a son. She wrapped him in cloths and placed him in a manger, because there was no guest room available for them.

*After the reading,*

Lector The Word of the Lord.

***People Thanks be to God.***

*Hymn suggested: Silent Night, Holy Night (HUP 100)*

*O Little Town of Bethlehem (HUP 112)*

*What Child is This (HUP 123)*

***The shepherds go to the manger***

A reading from Luke 2:8-16

And there were shepherds living out in the fields nearby, keeping watch over their flocks at night. An angel of the Lord appeared to them, and the glory of the Lord shone around them, and they were terrified. But the angel said to them, “Do not be afraid. I bring you good news that will cause great joy for all the people. Today in the town of David a Savior has been born to you; he is the Messiah, the Lord. This will be a sign to you: You will find a baby wrapped in cloths and lying in a manger.” Suddenly a great company of the heavenly host appeared with the angel, praising God and saying, “Glory to God in the highest heaven, and on earth peace to those on whom his favor rests.” When the angels had left them and gone into heaven, the shepherds said to one another, “Let’s go to Bethlehem and see this thing that has happened, which the Lord has told us about.” So they hurried off and found Mary and Joseph, and the baby, who was lying in the manger.

*After the reading,*

Lector The Word of the Lord.

***People Thanks be to God.***

*Hymn suggested: The First Noel The Angel Did Say (HUP 101)*

*Angels We Have Heard on High (HUP 103)*

*Away in a Manger (HUP 116)*

***The wise men are led by the star***

A reading from Matthew 2:1-11

After Jesus was born in Bethlehem in Judea, during the time of King Herod, Magifrom the east came to Jerusalem and asked, “Where is the one who has been born king of the Jews? We saw his star when it rose and have come to worship him.” When King Herod heard this he was disturbed, and all Jerusalem with him. When he had called together all the people’s chief priests and teachers of the law, he asked them where the Messiah was to be born. “In Bethlehem in Judea,” they replied, “for this is what the prophet has written: “ ‘But you, Bethlehem, in the land of Judah, are by no means least among the rulers of Judah; for out of you will come a ruler who will shepherd my people Israel.’” Then Herod called the Magi secretly and found out from them the exact time the star had appeared. He sent them to Bethlehem and said, “Go and search carefully for the child. As soon as you find him, report to me, so that I too may go and worship him.” After they had heard the king, they went on their way, and the star they had seen when it rose went ahead of them until it stopped over the place where the child was. When they saw the star, they were overjoyed. On coming to the house, they saw the child with his mother Mary, and they bowed down and worshiped him. Then they opened their treasures and presented him with gifts of gold, frankincense and myrrh.

*After the reading,*

Lector The Word of the Lord.

***People Thanks be to God.***

*Hymn suggested: What Star is This, With Beams so Bright (HUP 106)*

*Unto Us a Boy is Born (HUP 124)*

*We Three Kings of Orient Are (HUP 137)*

***The Incarnation: the great mystery unfolded***

A reading from John 1:1-14

In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was with God in the beginning. Through him all things were made; without him nothing was made that has been made. In him was life, and that life was the light of all mankind. The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness has not overcome it. There was a man sent from God whose name was John. He came as a witness to testify concerning that light, so that through him all might believe. He himself was not the light; he came only as a witness to the light. The true light that gives light to everyone was coming into the world. He was in the world, and though the world was made through him, the world did not recognize him. He came to that which was his own, but his own did not receive him. Yet to all who did receive him, to those who believed in his name, he gave the right to become children of God — children born not of natural descent, nor of human decision or a husband’s will, but born of God. The Word became flesh and made his dwelling among us. We have seen his glory, the glory of the one and only Son, who came from the Father, full of grace and truth.

*After the reading,*

Lector The Word of the Lord.

***People Thanks be to God.***

*Hymn suggested: Joy to the World (HUP 111)*

*O Come, All Ye Faithful, Joyful and Triumphant (HUP 109)*

*Hark! The Herald Angels Sing (HUP 105)*

*Thou Didst Leave Thy Throne and Thy Kingly Crown (HUP 95)*

**HOMILY**

*All keep a moment of silence after the homily.*

**THE LORD’S PRAYER**

*All stand.*

Officiant As Christ has taught us, we now pray:

**All *Our father in heaven, hallowed be your Name, your kingdom come, your will be done, in earth as in heaven. Give us today our daily bread. Forgive us our sins as we forgive those who sin against us. Lead us not into temptation but deliver us from evil. For the kingdom, the power, and the glory are yours, now and for ever. Amen.***

**INTERCESSIONS**

*Choose one of the following intercessory prayers.*

*It is advisable that a student or a teacher be invited to be leader of the Prayers.*

***Form I***

Leader Christ, who was born in a stable, give courage to all who are homeless;

*Silence.*

in your mercy:

***People hear our prayer.***

Leader Christ, who fled into Egypt, give comfort to all refugees;

*Silence.*

in your mercy:

***People hear our prayer.***

Leader Christ, who fasted in the desert, give relief to all who are starving;

*Silence.*

in your mercy:

***People hear our prayer.***

Leader Christ, who hung in agony on the cross, give strength to all who suffer;

*Silence.*

in your mercy:

***People hear our prayer.***

Leader Christ, who died to save us, give peace to all who seek pardon

*Silence.*

in your mercy:

***People hear our prayer.***

Leader God of mercy, you know us and love us and hear our prayer: keep us in the eternal fellowship of Jesus Christ our Saviour.

***People Amen.***

***Form II***

Leader To us a child is born, to us a son is given.

Wonderful Counsellor, give your wisdom to the rulers of the nations.

*Silence.*

Lord, in your mercy:

***People hear our prayer.***

Leader Mighty God,

make the whole world know that the government is on your shoulders.

*Silence.*

Lord, in your mercy:

***People hear our prayer.***

Leader Everlasting God,

establish your reign of justice and righteousness.

*Silence.*

Lord, in your mercy:

***People hear our prayer.***

Leader Prince of peace,

bring in the endless kingdom of your peace.

*Silence.*

Lord, in your mercy:

***People hear our prayer.***

Leader Almighty Lord,

hear our prayer, and fulfil your purposes in us, as you accomplished your will in our Lord Jesus Christ.

***People Amen.***

*All may sing a hymn or chorus singing after the Intercessions.*

*Hymn suggested: Go, Tell It on the Mountain (HUP 104)*

*Joy to the World (HUP 111)*

*Good Christian Men, Rejoice (HUP 126)*

**BLESSING**

*All remain standing.*

*This is to be said by a priest.*

Officiant God sent his angels from glory to bring to shepherds the good news of our Saviour’s birth.

***People Amen.***

Officiant You have seen his glory, the glory of the Father’s only Son.

***People Amen.***

Officiant May God fill you with joy and send you out from his glory to bring this good news to others today.

***People Amen.***

Officiant And the blessing of God Almighty, the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit, be upon you and remain with you always.

***People Amen.***

*If there is no priest present to say the Blessing, the following sentence may be used to conclude the service.*

Officiant The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit, be with us all evermore.

***People Amen.***

**DISMISSAL**

Officiant Lord Jesus, Light of light, you have come among us.

***People Help us who live by your light, to shine as lights in your world.***

Officiant Glory to God in the highest.

***People Amen. Alleluia!***

*The officiating party will recede from the hall accompanied by instrumental music.*