

Sunday School Christmas Worship 2007
 December 16, 2007 10:30 am service
 St Andrew's Lutheran Church in Oshkosh, WI
 Focussed upon the Chrismon tree and its meaning

Welcome

Narrator 1: Today in our worship we will tell the story of Christmas with the help of the beautiful ornaments from our Chrismon tree. The name "Chrismon" comes from two words: **Christ** and **Monogram**. They were first called Chrismons in the 1940s when Mrs. Frances Spencer began making them for her church in Danville, Virginia.

Some of the ornaments are letters from the Greek alphabet, and are put together in the way a family monogram might be embroidered on linen.

Other Chrismons use shapes that remind us of moments in Jesus life, or are symbols the early Christians used to secretly reveal themselves to other Christians.

All Chrismons are made in white and gold (or silver) – using the liturgical colors of Christmas. These colors convey the purity and the majesty of Jesus Christ.

Now we invite you to worship with us.

Christmas Greeting (Leader 1 and Leader 2)

L1: The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ,

L2: who came to us as a baby,

L1: the love of God

L2: who sent him to rescue us,

L1: and the communion of the Holy Spirit,

L2: who gathers us here

L1 & L2 (*together*): be with you all.

C: and also with you.

Prayer of the Day

L3: Let us pray. Blessed are you, God of our salvation;
 you promised to take away judgment, to cast out fear,
 and to turn the shame of the outcast into praise.

As we light these candles, kindle in us the fire of your Holy Spirit
 to make known your deeds among the nations
 and to sing for joy when you are in our midst;
 let your face shine on us and bless us that we may be saved.

C: Amen.

Light the first, second and third candles.

(The Advent Wreath is lit – it can be in a safe place away from the children)

Processional carol: ELW 283: O Come All Ye Faithful

(Sunday school enters the Sanctuary)

Reader 1: Luke 1:26-35, 38

Dove (Holy Spirit) ornament

Narrator 2: The first symbol that we share with you is a symbol for God's presence and peace. The Dove represents the Holy Spirit, which descended from heaven to rest on Jesus at his baptism. That is why the dove is shown flying downward in the Chrismon.

Reader 2: Matthew 1:18-24

Reader 3: Luke 2:1-7

(Mary and Joseph go to the manger)

Manger or crib ornament

Narrator 3: The manger was the place where the animals would eat in a stable – and in Jesus' day it was very likely a hollowed out stone. The manger Chrismon is sometimes combined with a cross to point to Jesus' life and death for us.

(Sheep, cow, donkey join the manger scene)

Carol: ELW 277 *Away in a Manger*

(with tone chimes)

Reader 4: Luke 2:8-14

Angel ornament

Narrator 4: Angels are very important. They are messengers of God. In the Christmas story they foretold the birth of both John the Baptist and Jesus, announced Jesus' birth to the shepherds, and warned Joseph to take his family and escape from King Herod. We especially remember the joy of the angels' song on the night of Jesus' birth.

Congregational carol: ELW 289 *Angels We Have Heard on High*

(Angels join the manger scene)

Reader 5: Luke 2:15-20

Shepherd's Crook ornament

Narrator 5: The shepherd's crook connects us to the Christmas story that tells of the shepherds who run to Bethlehem to see the newborn baby the angels had announced to them. It also reminds us of the one who is the Good Shepherd, whom we trust to watch over us forever, and whose love we long to share with others.

Carol: ELW 290 *Go Tell it on the Mountain*

(The shepherds join the manger scene)

Reader 6: Matthew 2:1-12

Star Ornament

Narrator 6: There are many stars that we use in our Christmas decorations – the four-pointed star that reminds us of the Cross, the five-pointed star that is called the Star of Bethlehem, and the six-pointed Star of David. Each of them is a wonderful light that dispels the darkness, shows us the way, and gives us hope!

Carol: ELW 300 *The First Nowell (verses 1 & 2)*

(The Three Kings join the manger scene)

Reader 7: Isaiah 9:2, 6-7

Ornaments that tell the names of Jesus: NIKA, INRI, IHS

Narrator 7: Jesus is given many names, and some of them appear on our Chrismons. NIKA is Greek for Victor – Jesus, who is victorious over sin and death. INRI appeared on the Cross above Jesus’ head – a Latin inscription for Jesus of Nazareth, King of the Jews. And IHS are actually the first three letters in Greek for Jesus – you can see them carved into the processional cross. Each name of Jesus turns us once again to see the Lord God who came to be with us as a human being and show us that nothing can come between God’s love and you and me.

Carol: ELW 281 Silent Night (with tone chimes)

The Prayers of the Sunday School: (written by the students in each grade)

Pre-School and Kindergarten: We pray for our pets, parents, sisters and brothers, friends, families, and grandparents. We pray for people who have passed away, the sick, God, soldiers and their families, and service workers.

Lord in your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

First and Second Grade: Dear God, thank you for giving us food, and for giving us Jesus, born a King on Christmas Day.

Lord in your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

Third and Fourth Grade: God, we pray from my cousin; that my grandparents will be safe in heaven; our dead pets Tabby and Daisy; our pets that are with us; and the my dog Garlic will be safe with his new owner; our families; friends we have yet to meet; and all animals that you have given to us.

Lord in your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

Fifth Grade: We pray for our parents and grandparents, for our friendships, for World Peace, and for California fires and fire victims.

Lord in your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

L: Into your hands, O Lord, we commend all for whom we pray, trusting in your mercy through Jesus Christ our Lord.

C: **Amen.**

Recessional Carol: ELW 267 Joy to the World
(*Sunday School marches out*)

Offertory: *Where Shepherds Lately knelt* (**Renewing Worship 120**)

The Lord’s Prayer

L: Lord Jesus, remember us in your kingdom and teach us to pray:

**All: Our Father, who art in heaven,
hallowed be thy name,
thy kingdom come, thy will be done,
on earth as it is in heaven.**

**Give us this day our daily bread;
and forgive us our trespasses,
as we forgive those who trespass against us;
and lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil.
For thine is the kingdom, and the power,
and the glory, forever and ever. Amen.**

Benediction

P: May your celebration of the birth of Jesus Christ draw you ever deeper into the meaning and delight of God's love. May the light of Jesus Christ shine in our hearts, that God's peace is shed abroad to all the world. And may the blessing of Almighty God, Father, Son + , and Holy Spirit, be among you and remain with you always. Amen.

Final carol: ELW 271 *I am so glad each Christmas Eve*

Postlude

Total speaking parts available:

Narrators: 7

Readers: 7

Leaders (liturgy, prayers) 4, plus students may offer the Sunday School prayer petitions.