

Peace Look, here comes the acolyte!
An acolyte stands, lights his candlelighter from the Christ Candle and heads toward the candles.
CC I hope he's coming to light me!
Love Shhhhhh! There starting to sing. . .

Immediately the Congregation begins singing the Advent Song, "Hark! A Thrilling Voice is Sounding" to the tune of "Jesus Calls Us O'er the Tumult".

Hark! A thrilling voice is sounding!
"Christ is near," we hear the cry.
"Cast away the works of darkness,
all you children of the day!"

The acolyte comes up and "lights" the HOPE candle. . . exactly how, we need to figure out! The acolyte blows out the candlelighter and returns to his seat.

CC Rats! I'm never going to be lit!
Hope Don't give up. Your time will come.
CC Why do they keep lighting you first, anyway?
Hope They light me first because I am the "HOPE" candle. Throughout the ages, humankind has looked forward to the day when God would bring the heavenly kingdom to earth. The Bible is full of stories about faithful, hopeful people who trusted in God and worked toward the establishment of the Kingdom of God here on earth. . . people who looked forward to the coming of the Messiah or Christ. Through them, God has been at work. They light me first to remember the hope of those faithful who have come before us AND to celebrate the hope we have today in Christ.

The lights come up on the stage where the patriarchs come up to the mike (one at a time or paired, as appropriate), introduce themselves and say a single line indicative of their story.

Abraham and Sarah approach the mike. . .

Abraham I am Abraham. God told me, "You will be the father of many nations. Your descendents will be as many as the stars."

Sarah I am Sarah, Abraham's wife. I laughed when I heard this because I was very old and had no children.

Joseph I am Joseph. When I was sold into slavery by my brothers, I could have given up. But I trusted God and God used me to save my family and relatives from famine.

Moses and Miriam approach the mike.

Moses I am Moses. God helped me lead the people out of Egypt and to the Promised Land. At Mt. Sinai, God said. "You will be my people and I will be your God. These 10 commandments will be my covenant with you."

Miriam I am Miriam, Moses' sister. I danced and sang a song when God parted the Reed Sea and saved us from the Egyptians.

Ruth My name is Ruth. I was not a Jew but I came to know God through my mother-in-law Naomi. Because of the hope she gave me and my faithfulness to her, I became an ancestor of Jesus.

King David My name is David. I was king of the 12 tribes of Israel. Throughout it all, the Lord was my shepherd. And I was not in want.

Written by Phil Holck, Lutheran Church of the Cross, Calgary, AB

©Phil Holck

Permission is granted to use for educational purposes if acknowledgement of author and copyright is given.

Other possibilities (if we need to add them) are: Noah, Isaac, Jacob/Israel,

As the Patriarchs and Matriarchs take their seats, the congregation sings stanzas 1 & 2 of “O Come, All Ye Faithful.” (Projected on the wall).

1. **Oh, come, all ye faithful, Joyful and triumphant!**
Oh, come ye, oh, come ye to Bethlehem;
Come and behold him Born the king of angels:

*Refrain: Oh, come, let us adore him, Oh, come, let us adore him,
Oh, come, let us adore him, Christ the Lord!*

2. **The highest, most holy, Light of light eternal,**
Born of a virgin, a mortal he comes;
Son of the Father Now in flesh appearing!
-

During the 2nd stanza, the acolyte lights the PEACE candle.

CC See?! I’m **never** going to be lit!

Hope Don’t give up hope! Your time will come.

Peace Settle down. . . God is at work.

CC That’s easy for you to say. You’ve already been lit.

Peace Yeah, sometimes life seems unfair. There IS injustice. There are wars and violence. But I am the PEACE candle. I represent God’s desire for the world. In Hebrew, my name is “Shalom.” Shalom is the best kind of peace. It not only means that there isn’t any war. It also means that society is healthy and whole. There is respect. There is justice. People work together for the good of all. The relationships between parents and children, friends and neighbors, and even strangers are all life-giving. When the people of Israel forgot that this was God’s desire, God sent prophets to speak for God and to remind the people to be faithful to God and to love one another. They light me to remember that Christ made peace between humankind and God, and that it’s our calling to work toward shalom. . . toward real peace in this world.

The prophets approach the mike one at a time.

Samuel I am the prophet Samuel. Before me, the Jews knew their king to be God, but they wanted a flesh and blood king. God told me to anoint Saul as the first king, and then David.

Isaiah My name is Isaiah. I warned the people of Judah that God’s judgment was coming if they didn’t start trusting God. When the Babylonians destroyed the temple and took the leaders into exile, I reminded them that God had not forgotten them. I also had the privilege to tell the people, that God’s messiah would come in the form of a suffering servant.

Jeremiah I am Jeremiah. When the Jews were giving up hope in Babylon, God told me to tell them that God would do a “new thing” and return them to their land.

Micah I am Micah. “What does the Lord require of you? But to do mercy, love justice and walk humbly with your God.”

The prophets return to their seats.

The congregation sings verses 1 & 4 of “It Came Upon the Midnight Clear” (projected on screen).

During the 4th verse (really the second) the acolyte “lights” the JOY candle.

It came upon the midnight clear, That glorious song of old,

Written by Phil Holck, Lutheran Church of the Cross, Calgary, AB

©Phil Holck

Permission is granted to use for educational purposes if acknowledgement of author and copyright is given.

From angels bending near the earth, to touch their harps of gold:
"Peace on the earth, good will to all, From heav'n's all-gracious king."
The world in solemn stillness lay To hear the angels sing.

For lo! The days are hast'ning on, By prophets seen of old,
When with the ever-circling years Shall come the time foretold,
When peace shall over all the earth Its ancient splendors fling,
And all the world give back the song Which now the angels sing.

CC Oh, so now it's your turn.
Joy I just knew my turn would come. I'm so happy!
CC But you were smiling even before you were lit. What was there to be happy about then?
Joy I know that God created me to be a servant, that there would be a way that I would get to participate in what God was up to. That's why I am the Joy candle. I represent the joy and fulfillment that comes when one uses their gifts and talents and very being in service to God. When they light me, they remember the faithfulness of Mary and the thrill that it is to be the hands and feet of Christ here on earth! It is *so cool* to be an instrument of God!

Zachariah & Elizabeth approach the mike.

Zachariah My name is Zachariah. I prayed every day and followed the commandments. An angel of the Lord told me that we would have a son even though we were both very old. I couldn't believe it.

Elizabeth I am Zachariah's wife, Elizabeth. We both cried with joy when John was born to us. He grew up to be a great prophet.

Mary I am but a lowly handmaiden of the Lord. My name is Mary. God chose me to be the one who brought Jesus into the world. . . my greatest joy!

Joseph I am Joseph of Nazareth. It was an honor and privilege to be the husband of the mother of Jesus.

The relatives of Jesus return to their seats.

The congregation sings "O Little Town of Bethlehem" verses 1, 2 & 3.

O little town of Bethlehem, How still we see thee lie!
Above thy deep and dreamless sleep The silent stars go by;
Yet in thy darkness shineth The everlasting light.
The hopes and fears of all the years Are met in thee tonight.

For Christ is born of Mary, And, gathered all above
While mortals sleep, the angels keep Their watch of wond'ring love.
O morning stars, together Proclaim the holy birth,
And praises sing to God the king, And peace to all the earth!

How silently, how silently The wondrous gift is giv'n!
So God imparts to human hearts The blessings of his heav'n.
No ear may hear his coming; But, in this world of sin,
Where meek souls will receive him, still The dear Christ enters in.

During the 3rd verse the acolyte "lights" the LOVE candle.

Written by Phil Holck, Lutheran Church of the Cross, Calgary, AB

©Phil Holck

Permission is granted to use for educational purposes if acknowledgement of author and copyright is given.

CC First they lit the Hope candle. Then they lit the Peace candle. Then they lit the Joy candle. You must be the Love candle.

Love I **AM** the LOVE candle. . . How did you know?

CC It's clear that y'all represent the best things in life: Hope, Peace and Joy. The best things in life would not be complete . . . without "Love."

Love My how you've grown in wisdom. I know how much you long to fulfill your destiny. I would give you my light if I could, but it is not mine to give.

At the heart of love is a concern for another. During Advent, when the congregation lights me, they remember the example and witness of John the Baptist. He preached and taught so that people would repent and return to God. He was the one who prepared the people to recognize that the real light was coming into the world. . . Jesus the Christ!

John the Baptist takes his place at the mike. . .

John the Baptist My name is John the Baptist. I called people to repent and be baptized. But the one who followed me was greater than me. I was not worthy to tie his sandals. I proclaimed to the world, "Behold the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world!"

John the Baptist returns to his seat.

The congregation sings "Go Tell It on the Mountain" verses 1 & 3.

**Go tell it on the mountain, over the hills and ev'rywhere;
go tell it on the mountain that Jesus Christ is born!**

**Down in a lonely manger the humble Christ was born;
and God sent us salvation that blessed Christmas morn.**

**Go tell it on the mountain, over the hills and ev'rywhere;
go tell it on the mountain that Jesus Christ is born!**

The acolyte DOES NOT light the Christ Candle, yet.

CC I'm still not lit. . . (*matter-of-factly*)

Hope Don't give up. Your time will come.

Peace Settle down. God is at work.

Joy I know you'll get your opportunity to serve God.

CC I know I will, too. I just get impatient sometimes. I want all the answers right now. I want to know how the future goes.

But I've learned so much from y'all.
Hope, you've given me the confidence to look forward to and work toward the kingdom of God.
Peace, you've shown me that no matter what might be going on, I can be at peace knowing that God is at work.
Joy, you've shown me how to be thankful and rejoice that we are a unique creation of God.
And Love, you've reminded me that its not about me after all but about God and my neighbor.

Written by Phil Holck, Lutheran Church of the Cross, Calgary, AB

©Phil Holck

Permission is granted to use for educational purposes if acknowledgement of author and copyright is given.

So, I'm not lit. And that's okay. I know God is at work. And whatever role God wants me to play in bringing God's light into the world is fine with me.

A reader reads the nativity story from Luke 2:1-18

While it is being read, Mary and Joseph carry the baby Jesus to the manger.

The acolyte "follows" Mary and Joseph and goes and lights the Christmas Candle. The CC beams proudly.

Reader **In those days a decree went out from Emperor Augustus that all the world should be registered. This was the first registration and was taken while Quirinius was governor of Syria. All went to their own towns to be registered. Joseph also went from the town of Nazareth in Galilee to Judea, to the city of David called Bethlehem, because he was descended from the house and family of David. He went to be registered with Mary, to whom he was engaged and who was expecting a child. While they were there, the time came for her to deliver her child. And she gave birth to her firstborn son and wrapped him in bands of cloth, and laid him in a manger, because there was no place for them in the inn.**

A spotlight shines on the shepherds over by the lectern. An angel steps up to the lectern as her words are being said. When it is time for a multitude of angels, they stand up from behind the "wall" (maybe waving flashlights around?). They hide again when they "go back to heaven."

In that region there were shepherds living in the fields, keeping watch over their flock by night. Then an angel of the Lord stood before them, and the glory of the Lord shone around them, and they were terrified. But the angel said to them, "Do not be afraid; for see--I am bringing you good news of great joy for all the people: to you is born this day in the city of David a Savior, who is the Messiah, the Lord. This will be a sign for you: you will find a child wrapped in bands of cloth and lying in a manger." And suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host, praising God and saying, "Glory to God in the highest heaven, and on earth peace among those whom he favors!" When the angels had left them and gone into heaven, the shepherds said to one another, "Let us go now to Bethlehem and see this thing that has taken place, which the Lord has made known to us."

So they went with haste and found Mary and Joseph, and the child lying in the manger. When they saw this, they made known what had been told them about this child; and all who heard it were amazed at what the shepherds told them.

The shepherds move over to the manger during the singing of the next song. The angels file around the back of the chancel and emerge behind Mary and Joseph.

All the children sing, "Mary's Boy Child" (the verses could be solos and the chorus everyone).

**1. Long time ago in Bethlehem So the Holy Bible say
Mary's boy child, Jesus Christ, Was born on Christmas Day.**

**Hark now hear the angels sing, a new King born today
That folks may live forever more Because of Christmas Day.**

Written by Phil Holck, Lutheran Church of the Cross, Calgary, AB

©Phil Holck

Permission is granted to use for educational purposes if acknowledgement of author and copyright is given.

**2. Now Joseph and his wife Mary went to Bethlehem that night
And found no place to lay their head Not a single room was in sight.**

**3. While shepherds watched their flocks by night, The heavens began to ring.
They filled the sky with light and sound, singing glory to the King!**

CC I'm lit! I'm lit! I was chosen to be the Christmas Candle!
She begins singing as a solo:

**This little Light of mine, I'm gonna let it shine
This little Light of mine, I'm gonna let it shine
This little Light of mine, I'm gonna let it shine
Let it shine, let it shine, let it shine.**

*The other candles and "groups" stand up and start joining in as we decide. . .
HOPE and the Patriarchs and Matriarchs*

**1. This HOPE that I have, the world didn't give it to me
This HOPE that I have, the world didn't give it to me
This HOPE that I have, the world didn't give it to me
And the world, can't take it away!**

PEACE and the Prophets

**2. This PEACE that I have, the world didn't give it to me. . .
And the world, can't take it away!**

JOY and the Relatives

**3. This JOY that I have, the world didn't give it to me. . .
And the world, can't take it away!**

LOVE and the Angels and shepherds

**4. This LOVE that I have, the world didn't give it to me. . .
And the world, can't take it away!**

**This little Light of mine, I'm gonna let it shine
This little Light of mine, I'm gonna let it shine
This little Light of mine, I'm gonna let it shine
Let it shine, let it shine, let it shine.**

*The congregation is invited to sing "Hark the Herald Angels Sing".
During that carol, the actors go find their families.*

Written by Phil Holck, Lutheran Church of the Cross, Calgary, AB
©Phil Holck

Permission is granted to use for educational purposes if acknowledgement of author and copyright is given.