

December 2020/January 2021 Series: *Incarnation*

Advent/Christmas/Epiphany

Worship Brainstorming:

Monday, November 9, 2020 at 1:00 pm

At the back of the sanctuary

2021 theme: Still Blessed

Still Blessed theme connection: "Incarnation claims that God actually became flesh in Jesus."

Key word: Relationship

Goal of series: We will focus on the meaning behind the names/titles of Jesus and the difference He makes in our lives. We will understand why Christmas (when we celebrate the Incarnation of God) is significant and life-changing.

Why would God come to us in Jesus?

What was the purpose of the Incarnation?

How are we meant to respond to the Incarnation, to God's coming to us in Jesus?

Overview of the series (from Hamilton's book):

His parents gave him the name Jesus. But the prophets, the shepherds, the wise men, and the angels addressed him by other names. They called him Lord, Messiah, Savior, Emmanuel, Light of the World, and Word Made Flesh. In Incarnation: Rediscovering the Significance of Christmas, best-selling author Adam Hamilton examines the names of Christ used by the gospel writers, exploring the historical and personal significance of his birth. This Advent season church families will come together to remember what's important. In the face of uncertainty and conflict, Christians reclaim the Christ child who brings us together, heals our hearts, and calls us to bring light into the darkness. Now more than ever, we invite you to reflect upon the significance of the Christ child for our lives and world today!

Resources:

- [Incarnation: Rediscovering the Significance of Christmas](#) by Adam Hamilton
 - Use prayers at the end of each chapter for worship
- Christmas music: *We Need a Little Christmas, All I Want for Christmas, I Need You Christmas. Where Are You, Christmas?*
- "Incarnation – The Words Made Flesh" recalls the story of the geese.
<http://totustuusfamily.blogspot.com/2007/12/incarnation-word-made-flesh.html>
- "God Can't Be Kept Out" by Rachel Held Evans, Dec. 17, 2012
<https://rachelheldevans.com/blog/god-kept-out>

Ideas for the series:

- **STAR WORDS: MYSTERY**
- Small group learning opportunity - in-person or using Zoom?
- Advent devotional written by congregation - focusing on name/title for Jesus and relationship to Jesus. Potential volunteers: Rose Emmons (Emmanuel), Michael Boersma (Savior)
- Introductory video: "Born This Day." Length: 1:18. Cost: \$19.99. Jesus changed everything. A world in desperate need of a Savior now had one. In this one little child was our King, our Redeemer, our Messiah, and our Lord. God in flesh, love

personified...Born this day.

<https://media.preachingtoday.com/mini-movies/72020/born-this-day>

Visuals:

- Advent candles/wreath
- Lights – on the tree on the north side of church
- Stars (Marcia McFee’s Calm and Bright Pinterest board - <https://www.pinterest.com/worshipstudio/calm-and-bright/> and image collection - <https://unsplash.com/collections/2234360/calm-and-bright>)
- Names of Christ using “music” letters

Music ideas:

- *Come, Thou Long-Expected Jesus* (UMH 196)
- *Love Came Down at Christmas* (UMH 242)
- Doxology sung to tune of *O Come, O Come, Emmanuel* (Advent) and *The First Noel* (Christmas)
- Song by Michael W. Smith

Hands-on items:

- Names of Jesus printable star ornaments (<https://hymnsandversesprintables.s3.us-east-2.amazonaws.com/Names+of+Jesus+Printable+Star+Ornaments+Christmas+Countdown.pdf>)
- Names of Christ printable ornaments <https://www.ldslane.net/2014/12/names-of-christ-ornaments.html>
- Name of God ornaments <http://kojo-designs.com/2011/12/advent-ornaments/>
- Candle for Christmas Eve

Media: There are many videos about the names of Jesus, but few focus solely on the one or two names that we’ll examine in each specific week.

- “Savior.” Length: 1:18. Cost: \$19.99. Jesus changed everything. A world in desperate need of a Savior now had one. In this one little child was our King, our Redeemer, our Messiah, and our Lord. God in flesh, love personified...Born this day. <https://media.preachingtoday.com/mini-movies/72020/born-this-day> **Note from Karen:** May make a good series intro.
- “Receive the King.” Length: 1:42. Cost: \$19.98. The Savior is here! Joy to the World; the Lord has come? Let Earth receive the King! This mini-movie is a perfect call to worship for any Christmas or Christmas Eve service. <https://media.preachingtoday.com/mini-movies/88583/receive-the-king>
- “Advent: Christ.” Length: 2:32. Cost: \$10.00. As we prepare our hearts and souls for the arrival of the Christ child, we focus on the themes of Advent: hope, love, joy, peace, and Christ. <https://media.preachingtoday.com/mini-movies/62980/advent-christ>
- “This is Christ the Lord.” Length: 1:55. Cost: \$19.99. We were lost in darkness, in desperate need of a Savior. Separated from God. But God loved us with an unstoppable love. A love which cost Him dearly. For God so loved the Word, He sent His only son. That night in Bethlehem, grace arrived and changed everything. This is Christ the Lord. <https://media.preachingtoday.com/mini-movies/88803/this-is-christ-the-lord>

- “Christ the Lord.” Length: 1:50. Cost: \$19.99 The Word of God is filled with the story of Christmas. “Christ the Lord” is a powerful, scripture driven intro for any Christmas themes service or event.
<https://media.preachingtoday.com/mini-movies/63276/christ-the-lord->

Scripture ideas: Focus on beginning of each Gospel

Matthew 1: 1, 16-25 (NIV) The Genealogy of Jesus

¹ This is the genealogy of Jesus the Messiah the son of David, the son of Abraham...

¹⁶ and Jacob the father of Joseph, the husband of Mary, and Mary was the mother of Jesus who is called the Messiah.

¹⁷ Thus there were fourteen generations in all from Abraham to David, fourteen from David to the exile to Babylon, and fourteen from the exile to the Messiah.

Joseph Accepts Jesus as His Son

¹⁸ This is how the birth of Jesus the Messiah came about: His mother Mary was pledged to be married to Joseph, but before they came together, she was found to be pregnant through the Holy Spirit. ¹⁹ Because Joseph her husband was faithful to the law, and yet did not want to expose her to public disgrace, he had in mind to divorce her quietly.

²⁰ But after he had considered this, an angel of the Lord appeared to him in a dream and said, “Joseph son of David, do not be afraid to take Mary home as your wife, because what is conceived in her is from the Holy Spirit. ²¹ She will give birth to a son, and you are to give him the name Jesus, because he will save his people from their sins.”

²² All this took place to fulfill what the Lord had said through the prophet: ²³ “The virgin will conceive and give birth to a son, and they will call him Immanuel” (which means “God with us”).

²⁴ When Joseph woke up, he did what the angel of the Lord had commanded him and took Mary home as his wife. ²⁵ But he did not consummate their marriage until she gave birth to a son. And he gave him the name Jesus.

Luke 1: 26-45, 2: 8-12 (NIV) The Birth of Jesus Foretold

²⁶ In the sixth month of Elizabeth’s pregnancy, God sent the angel Gabriel to Nazareth, a town in Galilee, ²⁷ to a virgin pledged to be married to a man named Joseph, a descendant of David. The virgin’s name was Mary. ²⁸ The angel went to her and said, “Greetings, you who are highly favored! The Lord is with you.”

²⁹ Mary was greatly troubled at his words and wondered what kind of greeting this might be. ³⁰ But the angel said to her, “Do not be afraid, Mary; you have found favor with God. ³¹ You will conceive and give birth to a son, and you are to call him Jesus. ³² 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, ³³ and he will reign over Jacob’s descendants forever; his kingdom will never end.”

³⁴ “How will this be,” Mary asked the angel, “since I am a virgin?”

³⁵ 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. ³⁶ 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. ³⁷ For no word from God will ever fail.”

³⁸ “I am the Lord’s servant,” Mary answered. “May your word to me be fulfilled.” Then the angel left her.

Mary Visits Elizabeth

³⁹ At that time Mary got ready and hurried to a town in the hill country of Judea, ⁴⁰ where she entered Zechariah’s home and greeted Elizabeth. ⁴¹ When Elizabeth heard Mary’s greeting, the baby leaped in her womb, and Elizabeth was filled with the Holy Spirit. ⁴² In a loud voice she exclaimed: “Blessed are you among women, and blessed is the child you will bear! ⁴³ But why am I so favored, that the mother of my Lord should come to me? ⁴⁴ As soon as the sound of your

greeting reached my ears, the baby in my womb leaped for joy. ⁴⁵ Blessed is she who has believed that the Lord would fulfill his promises to her!”

⁸ And there were shepherds living out in the fields nearby, keeping watch over their flocks at night. ⁹ An angel of the Lord appeared to them, and the glory of the Lord shone around them, and they were terrified. ¹⁰ But the angel said to them, “Do not be afraid. I bring you good news that will cause great joy for all the people. ¹¹ Today in the town of David a Savior has been born to you; he is the Messiah, the Lord. ¹² This will be a sign to you: You will find a baby wrapped in cloths and lying in a manger.”

There is a possibility that we will return to in-person worship (one service at 10:00 a.m.) in the sanctuary with safety protocols. We’ll continue to livestream worship as we have been doing.

Sunday, November 29, 2020: “CHRIST, MESSIAH, KING (royal titles)”

First Sunday of Advent

Scripture: Micah 5: 2-5a (NIV)

“But you, Bethlehem Ephrathah,
though you are small among the clans of Judah,
out of you will come for me
one who will be ruler over Israel,
whose origins are from of old,
from ancient times.”

³ Therefore Israel will be abandoned
until the time when she who is in labor bears a son,
and the rest of his brothers return
to join the Israelites.

⁴ He will stand and shepherd his flock
in the strength of the LORD,
in the majesty of the name of the LORD his God.
And they will live securely, for then his greatness
will reach to the ends of the earth.

⁵ And he will be our peace
when the Assyrians invade our land
and march through our fortresses.

Scripture: Matthew 1: 1, 16-25 (NIV) See [page 2](#) of this document for the full reading

¹ This is the genealogy of Jesus the Messiah the son of David, the son of Abraham...

¹⁶ and Jacob the father of Joseph, the husband of Mary, and Mary was the mother of Jesus who is called the Messiah.

¹⁷ Thus there were fourteen generations in all from Abraham to David, fourteen from David to the exile to Babylon, and fourteen from the exile to the Messiah.

Synopsis: Jesus is called Christ (or Messiah) and King. What do those titles mean for us as we grapple with those in leadership and authority?

Felt need: To claim Jesus' authority in our lives and find unity in him

Visuals:

Media:

- "New King." Length: 3:20. Cost: \$20.00. A lone figure trudges through a beautiful, but unforgiving winter landscape searching for something, until he comes upon an opportunity to reflect on the real meaning of the Christmas season and worship the new king. <https://media.preachingtoday.com/mini-movies/35305/new-king>
- "In Christ." Length: 1:33. Cost: \$20.00 This video gives a s glimpse of who believers are in Christ. <https://media.preachingtoday.com/mini-movies/43667/in-christ>

Related info: No matter who is president, Jesus is King. *The Crown* series offers insight into Queen Elizabeth's life.

Activity: Anointing with oil

Music: *Hail to the Lord's Anointed* (UMH 203), *What Child Is This* (UMH 219), *There's a Song in the Air* (UMH 249)

Children's Time:

Sunday, December 6, 2020: "SAVIOR"

Second Sunday of Advent

Scripture: Matthew 1: 20-21 (NIV)

²⁰ But after he had considered this, an angel of the Lord appeared to him in a dream and said, "Joseph son of David, do not be afraid to take Mary home as your wife, because what is conceived in her is from the Holy Spirit. ²¹ She will give birth to a son, and you are to give him the name Jesus, because he will save his people from their sins."

Scripture: Luke 1: 26-38, 2: 8-12 (NIV) **The Birth of Jesus Foretold**

⁶ In the sixth month of Elizabeth's pregnancy, God sent the angel Gabriel to Nazareth, a town in Galilee, ²⁷ to a virgin pledged to be married to a man named Joseph, a descendant of David. The virgin's name was Mary. ²⁸ The angel went to her and said, "Greetings, you who are highly favored! The Lord is with you."

²⁹ Mary was greatly troubled at his words and wondered what kind of greeting this might be. ³⁰ But the angel said to her, "Do not be afraid, Mary; you have found favor with God. ³¹ You will conceive and give birth to a son, and you are to call him Jesus. ³² 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, ³³ and he will reign over Jacob's descendants forever; his kingdom will never end."

³⁴ "How will this be," Mary asked the angel, "since I am a virgin?"

³⁵ 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. ³⁶ 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. ³⁷ For no word from God will ever fail."

³⁸ "I am the Lord's servant," Mary answered. "May your word to me be fulfilled." Then the angel left her.

The Birth of Jesus

⁸ And there were shepherds living out in the fields nearby, keeping watch over their flocks at night. ⁹ An angel of the Lord appeared to them, and the glory of the Lord shone around them, and they were terrified. ¹⁰ But the angel said to them, "Do not be afraid. I bring you good news that will cause great joy for all the people. ¹¹ Today in the town of David a Savior has been born

to you; he is the Messiah, the Lord. ¹² This will be a sign to you: You will find a baby wrapped in cloths and lying in a manger.”

Synopsis: Jesus saves us - delivers, rescues, and helps us. His sacrifice saves us from sin, hopelessness, and death and frees us to live with hope, purpose, and love.

Felt need: To understand our need for a Savior and how Jesus saves us from sin and for love and new life.

Visuals:

Media:

Related info: Definitions of sanctification and atonement, story of Helzberg’s Jewelers - “I am loved” button/sticker

Activity: Holy Communion - adapt Communion prayer

Music: *Come, Ye Sinners, Poor and Needy; Come, Thou Fount of Every Blessing* (UMH 400); *A Mighty Fortress Is Our God* (UMH 110); *Lift Up Your Heads, Ye Mighty Gates* (UMH 213); *Good Christian Friends, Rejoice* (UMH 224)

Children’s Time:

Sunday, December 13, 2020: “EMMANUEL”

Third Sunday of Advent

Scripture: Hebrews 1: 1-3 (NIV)

God’s Final Word: His Son

¹ In the past God spoke to our ancestors through the prophets at many times and in various ways, ² but in these last days he has spoken to us by his Son, whom he appointed heir of all things, and through whom also he made the universe. ³ The Son is the radiance of God’s glory and the exact representation of his being, sustaining all things by his powerful word. After he had provided purification for sins, he sat down at the right hand of the Majesty in heaven.

Scripture: Isaiah 7: 14-16 (NIV)

¹⁴ Therefore the Lord himself will give you a sign: The virgin will conceive and give birth to a son, and will call him Immanuel. ¹⁵ He will be eating curds and honey when he knows enough to reject the wrong and choose the right, ¹⁶ for before the boy knows enough to reject the wrong and choose the right, the land of the two kings you dread will be laid waste.

Scripture: Matthew 1: 22-23 (NIV)

²² All this took place to fulfill what the Lord had said through the prophet: ²³ “The virgin will conceive and give birth to a son, and they will call him Immanuel” (which means “God with us”).

Synopsis: *God with us* is a powerful expression, especially in this year when we have faced a pandemic and so much more. In Jesus, God experiences our humanity, reveals himself to humanity, and is truly with us always. Emmanuel also gives us our mission - to “put flesh on” God’s love for each other.

Felt need: To celebrate “God with us” through the presence of one another

Visuals:

Media:

- “Emmanuel.” Length: 1:46. Cost: \$19.99. The Son of God chose not to be born in a luxurious palace with the best the Earth had to offer. Instead, we find the creator of our

universe humbly entering our world; being born in a manger amongst shepherds and animals. He shared in all of our humanity, and through his birth, we can see that he is familiar with the messy and imperfect parts of our lives. This mini-movie is a small reminder that he was, is, and always will be Emmanuel, God with us.

<https://media.preachingtoday.com/mini-movies/72273/emmanuel>

Related info:

Activity:

Music: *Emmanuel, Emmanuel* (UMH 204), *O Come, O Come, Emmanuel* (UMH 211)

Children's Time:

Monday, December 14, 2020: "Blue Christmas"

Scripture: Psalm 46 (NIV)

- ¹ God is our refuge and strength,
an ever-present help in trouble.
- ² Therefore we will not fear, though the earth give way
and the mountains fall into the heart of the sea,
³ though its waters roar and foam
and the mountains quake with their surging.
- ⁴ There is a river whose streams make glad the city of God,
the holy place where the Most High dwells.
- ⁵ God is within her, she will not fall;
God will help her at break of day.
- ⁶ Nations are in uproar, kingdoms fall;
he lifts his voice, the earth melts.
- ⁷ The LORD Almighty is with us;
the God of Jacob is our fortress.
- ⁸ Come and see what the LORD has done,
the desolations he has brought on the earth.
- ⁹ He makes wars cease
to the ends of the earth.
He breaks the bow and shatters the spear;
he burns the shields with fire.
- ¹⁰ He says, "Be still, and know that I am God;
I will be exalted among the nations,
I will be exalted in the earth."
- ¹¹ The LORD Almighty is with us;
the God of Jacob is our fortress.

Scripture: Romans 8: 31-39 (NIV) **More Than Conquerors**

³¹ What, then, shall we say in response to these things? If God is for us, who can be against us? ³² He who did not spare his own Son, but gave him up for us all—how will he not also, along with him, graciously give us all things? ³³ Who will bring any charge against those whom God has chosen? It is God who justifies. ³⁴ Who then is the one who condemns? No one. Christ Jesus who

died—more than that, who was raised to life—is at the right hand of God and is also interceding for us. ³⁵ Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall trouble or hardship or persecution or famine or nakedness or danger or sword? ³⁶ As it is written:

“For your sake we face death all day long;
we are considered as sheep to be slaughtered.”

³⁷ No, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him who loved us. ³⁸ For I am convinced that neither death nor life, neither angels nor demons, neither the present nor the future, nor any powers, ³⁹ neither height nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God that is in Christ Jesus our Lord.

Synopsis: God offers comfort for those who mourn always, and especially when we struggle in what’s supposed to be “the most wonderful time of you the year.”

Felt need: To trust that God is with us and receives us with our personal and collective grief and sadness

Visuals: An empty chair

Media:

Related info:

- 2017 Blue Christmas post from GODSPACE
<https://godspacelight.com/2017/12/21/blue-christmas-2017/>
- 2020 post from GODSPACE “Acknowledging Our Pain”
<https://godspacelight.com/2018/12/10/acknowledging-our-pain-resources-for-a-blue-christmas-service/>

Activity: Lighting candles and offering healing prayer with anointing

Music: *O Come, O Come, Emmanuel* (UMH 211)

Sunday, December 20, 2020: “WORD MADE FLESH, LIGHT OF THE WORLD”

Fourth Sunday of Advent

Scripture: John 1: 1-18 (NIV) **The Word Made Flesh**

¹ In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. ² He was with God in the beginning. ³ Through him all things were made; without him nothing was made that has been made. ⁴ In him was life, and that life was the light of all mankind. ⁵ The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness has not overcome it.

⁶ There was a man sent from God whose name was John. ⁷ He came as a witness to testify concerning that light, so that through him all might believe. ⁸ He himself was not the light; he came only as a witness to the light.

⁹ The true light that gives light to everyone was coming into the world. ¹⁰ He was in the world, and though the world was made through him, the world did not recognize him. ¹¹ He came to that which was his own, but his own did not receive him. ¹² Yet to all who did receive him, to those who believed in his name, he gave the right to become children of God— ¹³ children born not of natural descent, nor of human decision or a husband’s will, but born of God.

¹⁴ 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.

¹⁵ (John testified concerning him. He cried out, saying, “This is the one I spoke about when I said, ‘He who comes after me has surpassed me because he was before me.’”) ¹⁶ Out of his fullness we have all received grace in place of grace already given. ¹⁷ For the law was given through Moses; grace and truth came through Jesus Christ. ¹⁸ No one has ever seen God, but the

one and only Son, who is himself God and is in closest relationship with the Father, has made him known.

Scripture: Matthew 5: 14-16 (NIV)

¹⁴ “You are the light of the world. A town built on a hill cannot be hidden. ¹⁵ Neither do people light a lamp and put it under a bowl. Instead they put it on its stand, and it gives light to everyone in the house. ¹⁶ In the same way, let your light shine before others, that they may see your good deeds and glorify your Father in heaven.

Synopsis: Light is a powerful force that can illumine darkness. Jesus comes to shed light on darkness within us and around us by showing us who God is and how much God loves us. We are bearers of the Light of the World.

Felt need: To know God’s love deeply and claim our role as bearers of Christ’s light that transforms the world

Visuals:

Media: “A Great Light.” Length: 3:46. Cost: We own it. Last used 12/24/16. Three children in dire circumstances prepare for an honored guest. Set to the Text of Isaiah 9, this encourages us to wonder anew at the strange and beautiful arrival of our Savior.
<https://skitguys.com/videos/a-great-light>

Related info:

Activity:

Music: *I Want to Walk as a Child of the Light* (UMH 206)

Children’s Time:

Thursday, December 24, 2020

CHRISTMAS EVE

Scripture: Isaiah 9: 2-7 (NIV)

² The people walking in darkness
have seen a great light;
on those living in the land of deep darkness
a light has dawned.

³ You have enlarged the nation
and increased their joy;
they rejoice before you
as people rejoice at the harvest,
as warriors rejoice
when dividing the plunder.

⁴ 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.

⁵ Every warrior’s boot used in battle
and every garment rolled in blood
will be destined for burning,
will be fuel for the fire.

⁶ 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.

⁷ 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.

Scripture: Luke 2: 1-20 (NIV)

The Birth of Jesus

² In those days Caesar Augustus issued a decree that a census should be taken of the entire Roman world. ² (This was the first census that took place while Quirinius was governor of Syria.)

³ And everyone went to their own town to register.

⁴ 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. ⁵ He went there to register with Mary, who was pledged to be married to him and was expecting a child. ⁶ While they were there, the time came for the baby to be born, ⁷ 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.

⁸ And there were shepherds living out in the fields nearby, keeping watch over their flocks at night. ⁹ An angel of the Lord appeared to them, and the glory of the Lord shone around them, and they were terrified. ¹⁰ But the angel said to them, "Do not be afraid. I bring you good news that will cause great joy for all the people. ¹¹ Today in the town of David a Savior has been born to you; he is the Messiah, the Lord. ¹² This will be a sign to you: You will find a baby wrapped in cloths and lying in a manger."

¹³ Suddenly a great company of the heavenly host appeared with the angel, praising God and saying,

¹⁴ "Glory to God in the highest heaven, and on earth peace to those on whom his favor rests."

¹⁵ 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."

¹⁶ So they hurried off and found Mary and Joseph, and the baby, who was lying in the manger. ¹⁷ When they had seen him, they spread the word concerning what had been told them about this child, ¹⁸ and all who heard it were amazed at what the shepherds said to them. ¹⁹ But Mary treasured up all these things and pondered them in her heart. ²⁰ The shepherds returned, glorifying and praising God for all the things they had heard and seen, which were just as they had been told.

Synopsis: Isaiah's prophecy offers powerful names for Jesus and calls us to allow his Kingdom to rule in our lives as a way of justice and righteousness. Will we accept?

Felt need: To know Jesus as the One who rules and reigns in our hearts and lives

Visuals:

Media:

Related info:

Activity: Holy Communion, Lighting candles

Music: *O Come, All Ye Faithful* (UMH 234), *Silent Night*, *Holy Night* (UMH 239)

Children's Time: Education Team is working on plans for kids and youth

Sunday, December 27, 2020: "REDEEMER"

First Sunday after Christmas

This will be a laity-led service of Scripture, reflections, and music focused on the power of the Incarnation. Pastor Mary will invite members of our congregation (including worship leaders) to share.

Scripture: Psalm 148 (NIV)

¹ Praise the LORD.

Praise the LORD from the heavens;
praise him in the heights above.

² Praise him, all his angels;
praise him, all his heavenly hosts.

³ Praise him, sun and moon;
praise him, all you shining stars.

⁴ Praise him, you highest heavens
and you waters above the skies.

⁵ Let them praise the name of the LORD,
for at his command they were created,
⁶ and he established them for ever and ever—
he issued a decree that will never pass away.

⁷ Praise the LORD from the earth,
you great sea creatures and all ocean depths,

⁸ lightning and hail, snow and clouds,
stormy winds that do his bidding,

⁹ you mountains and all hills,
fruit trees and all cedars,

¹⁰ wild animals and all cattle,
small creatures and flying birds,

¹¹ kings of the earth and all nations,
you princes and all rulers on earth,

¹² young men and women,
old men and children.

¹³ Let them praise the name of the LORD,
for his name alone is exalted;
his splendor is above the earth and the heavens.

¹⁴ And he has raised up for his people a horn,
the praise of all his faithful servants,
of Israel, the people close to his heart.

Praise the LORD.

Scripture: Luke 2: 22-40 (NIV) Jesus Presented in the Temple

²² When the time came for the purification rites required by the Law of Moses, Joseph and Mary took him to Jerusalem to present him to the Lord ²³ (as it is written in the Law of the Lord, “Every firstborn male is to be consecrated to the Lord”), ²⁴ and to offer a sacrifice in keeping with what is said in the Law of the Lord: “a pair of doves or two young pigeons.”

²⁵ Now there was a man in Jerusalem called Simeon, who was righteous and devout. He was waiting for the consolation of Israel, and the Holy Spirit was on him. ²⁶ It had been revealed to him by the Holy Spirit that he would not die before he had seen the Lord’s Messiah. ²⁷ Moved by the Spirit, he went into the temple courts. When the parents brought in the child Jesus to do for him what the custom of the Law required, ²⁸ Simeon took him in his arms and praised God, saying:

²⁹ “Sovereign Lord, as you have promised,
you may now dismiss your servant in peace.

³⁰ For my eyes have seen your salvation,

³¹ which you have prepared in the sight of all nations:
³² a light for revelation to the Gentiles,
and the glory of your people Israel.”

³³ The child’s father and mother marveled at what was said about him. ³⁴ Then Simeon blessed them and said to Mary, his mother: “This child is destined to cause the falling and rising of many in Israel, and to be a sign that will be spoken against, ³⁵ so that the thoughts of many hearts will be revealed. And a sword will pierce your own soul too.”

³⁶ There was also a prophet, Anna, the daughter of Penuel, of the tribe of Asher. She was very old; she had lived with her husband seven years after her marriage, ³⁷ and then was a widow until she was eighty-four. She never left the temple but worshiped night and day, fasting and praying. ³⁸ Coming up to them at that very moment, she gave thanks to God and spoke about the child to all who were looking forward to the redemption of Jerusalem.

³⁹ When Joseph and Mary had done everything required by the Law of the Lord, they returned to Galilee to their own town of Nazareth. ⁴⁰ And the child grew and became strong; he was filled with wisdom, and the grace of God was on him.

Synopsis: Simeon and Anna remind us that the birth of Jesus is the beginning of the story. Jesus’ life, ministry, death, and resurrection are the rest of his story -- and the place where we start our journey of faith.

Felt need: To share the joy of the Incarnation

Visuals:

Media: “Redeemed.” Length: 3:23. Cost: \$19.99. We've all got ghosts from our past.

Whether they're self-inflicted wounds or pain imposed by others, we've all been there. Watch and listen as the Cross of Christ frees us to sing along with Big Daddy Weave that "I am Redeemed."

<https://www.sermonspice.com/sermon-illustrations/37647/redeemed>

Related info:

Activity:

Music: *Hark! The Herald Angels Sing* (UMH 240), *The First Noel* (UMH 245), *Go, Tell It on the Mountain* (UMH 251)

Children’s Time:

Sunday, January 3, 2021: “LORD”

Epiphany

Scripture: Luke 1: 39-45 (NIV) **Mary Visits Elizabeth**

³⁹ At that time Mary got ready and hurried to a town in the hill country of Judea, ⁴⁰ where she entered Zechariah’s home and greeted Elizabeth. ⁴¹ When Elizabeth heard Mary’s greeting, the baby leaped in her womb, and Elizabeth was filled with the Holy Spirit. ⁴² In a loud voice she exclaimed: “Blessed are you among women, and blessed is the child you will bear! ⁴³ But why am I so favored, that the mother of my Lord should come to me? ⁴⁴ As soon as the sound of your greeting reached my ears, the baby in my womb leaped for joy. ⁴⁵ Blessed is she who has believed that the Lord would fulfill his promises to her!”

Scripture: Matthew 2: 1-12 (NIV) **The Magi Visit the Messiah**

2 After Jesus was born in Bethlehem in Judea, during the time of King Herod, Magi from the east came to Jerusalem ² 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.”

³ When King Herod heard this he was disturbed, and all Jerusalem with him. ⁴ 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. ⁵ "In Bethlehem in Judea," they replied, "for this is what the prophet has written:

⁶ "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."

⁷ Then Herod called the Magi secretly and found out from them the exact time the star had appeared. ⁸ 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."

⁹ 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. ¹⁰ When they saw the star, they were overjoyed. ¹¹ 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. ¹² And having been warned in a dream not to go back to Herod, they returned to their country by another route.

Synopsis: Elizabeth is the first person to call Jesus "Lord," and the magi (wise men) are the first Gentiles to worship Jesus as Lord. Though we may not use that title much in our everyday lives, how do we profess it and express it in our words and actions?

Felt need: To re-commit our lives to Jesus as Lord

Visuals:

Media:

- "Away in a Manger: Wise Man." Length: 3:13. Cost: \$16.99. A Wise Man recounts his quest for nobility, only to find a newborn baby in a manger. He remembers how they bowed down in worship to the King of Kings who lay before them.
<https://skitguys.com/videos/away-in-a-manger-wise-man>
- "Worship the Savior." Length: 0:54. Cost: \$20.00 After Jesus was born in Bethlehem in Judea, during the time of King Herod, Magi from 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."
<https://media.preachingtoday.com/mini-movies/62364/worship-the-savior>

Related info:

Activity: Holy Communion, Covenant Prayer

Music: *Infant Holy*, *Infant Lowly* (UMH 229), *Joy to the World* (UMH 246), *We Three Kings* (UMH 254), *Carol of the Epiphany* (FWS 2094) - ***We touched God in a baby's hand.***

Children's Time: