

## CHRISTMAS CANDLELIGHTING SERVICE

At the front of the sanctuary or chapel in which the service is to be held place a table large enough to provide for a single candlestick for the Christ candle, a candelabrum or other stand for the twelve red candles that represent the disciples, and a large, shallow tray or trays fill of salt in which the individual white candles are to be placed. The tall white candle should be lighted just before the service begins. A small white candle should be given to each person as he enters. Around each individual candle is rolled a slip of paper on which is printed a blessing.

### OPENING STATEMENT BY MINISTER

“Christ is born anew in me.”  
HYMIN (*to be selected*)

### THE LORD’S PRAYER

### MEDITATION AND SILENCE

### RESPONSIVE READING

**MINISTER:** “Though Christ a thousand times in Bethlehem be born, If He’s not born in thee, Thy soul is all forlorn.”

**CONGREGATION:** We behold in Jesus the Christ an illustration of the eternal Christ principle, the divine sonship of everyone.

**MINISTER:** Christ said, “He that believeth on me, the works that I do shall he do also; and greater *works* than these shall he do.” (John 14:12)

**CONGREGATION:** We consecrate our life to the unfoldment and expression of our divine sonship, so that we may fulfill His life in ours.

**MINISTER:** Jesus said, “I am the light of the world, he that followeth me shall not walk in the darkness, but shall have the light of life.” (John 8:12).

**CONGREGATION:** We turn from the darkness of limitation to the eternal light of the Christ; from the belief in evil and depravity to the truth of the all-enfolding good.

**MINISTER:** Jesus said, “I came that they may have life, and may have *it* abundantly.” (John 10:10)

**CONGREGATION:** My life, my health, my joy, my supply are of God. I am one with Him, and all that He has is mine.

**MINISTER:** “Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, coming down from the Father of lights, with whom can be no variation, neither shadow that is cast by turning.” (James 1:17)

The minister gives his Christmas message and concludes with an explanation of the candle lighting service, in which he invites the congregation to take part.

**MINISTER:** Tonight in seeking to represent that mystical experience by which the Son of God, the Christ ideal, is born in the manger of the human heart, we have recourse to symbols. They are childlike, simple symbols, like those which Jesus used. Their only value is in the response that they quicken in us; and if they give to us a clearer conception of the indwelling presence of Christ, if they throw light on parts of the Christmas story that have been obscure to us, then the purpose of this service will be fulfilled.

The tall lighted candle that stands here before us is to remind us of Him who said: “I the light of the world.” (John 8:12) “Ye are the light of the world.. .Let your light shine.” (Matt. 5:14) “In him was life; and the life was the light of men.” (John 1:4)

The twelve candles that are now to be lighted represent the twelve disciples of Jesus and the attributes of Being that the disciples symbolize. Like attributes exist within each of us, and are to be quickened into service of the Christ as we take on His likeness.

*As the minister stops speaking, twelve persons selected to represent the disciples step forward, and each, taking a red candle from the candelabrum, lights this red candle from the Christ candle and replaces it in the candelabrum. Each person in succession announces as he does so the name of the disciple for whom it is lighted and also the attribute of mind that the disciple represents.*

**FIRST DISCIPLE:** “I light this candle for John, who represents love.”

**SECOND DISCIPLE:** “I light this candle for Peter, who represents faith.”

**THIRD DISCIPLE:** “I light this candle for Andrew, who represents strength.”

**FOURTH DISCIPLE:** “I light this candle for James the son of Zebedee, who represents judgment.”

**FIFTH DISCIPLE:** “I light this candle for Philip, who represents power.”

**SIXTH DISCIPLE:** “I light this candle for Bartholomew, who represents imagination.”

**SEVENTH DISCIPLE:** I light this candle for Thomas, who represents understanding.”

**EIGHTH DISCIPLE:** “I light this candle for Matthew, who represents will.”

**NINTH DISCIPLE:** “I light this candle for James the son of Alphaeus, who represents order.”

**TENTH DISCIPLE:** “I light this candle for Simon the Cananaean, who represents zeal.”

**ELEVENTH DISCIPLE:** “I light this candle for Thaddaeus, who represents renunciation.

**TWELFTH DISCIPLE:** “I light this candle for Judas, who represents life.”  
If preferred the minister may make all of the statements for the disciples as each candle is lighted. For example: “This candle is lighted for John, who represents love.”  
As the last of the twelve places his candle in the candelabrum, the minister resumes his explanation of the symbolism.

**MINISTER:** The small candles that were given to you as you entered this room, are to remind you that you have been entrusted with a gift of God, the Christ within you, and that as Jesus became the light of the world by letting His light shine, so that same Christ light, quickened and glowing in each of us, is to become the light of our world by letting His light shine, so that same Christ light, quickened and glowing in each of us, is to become the light of our world, and is even to reach beyond our own world into the life of others. The candles were given to you unlighted, because you alone can *bring* forth the light that is within you, even though others may *call* it forth by the inspiration that they give you. You are to light them from the light of the universal Christ, for it is in the light of the Christ that we find the light within us and learn how to bring it into expression. You are to place your candle at the foot of the greater one, there to let it shine and add its brightness to “the light of the world.” You will place your candle in a bed of salt, for those who light the light of Christ within themselves are indeed the salt of the earth. So this simple ceremony becomes a prayer of the hand and the heart as well as of the lips so that the Truth which it symbolizes may be speedily manifest for you.

Around your candle is wrapped a special blessing that has been lovingly selected with the prayer that it may reach the person for whom the Spirit intends it.

Row by row the members of the congregation come forward, light their candles from the tall one, place them in the tray of salt before it, and resume their seats.

**HYMN**

**BENEDICTION**