

GENERAL WORSHIP

**Please note that this is a general format and may be adapted to your specific situation and needs. All numbers listed after hymns are from Evangelical Lutheran Worship (cranberry hymnal, published by Augsburg Fortress in 2006)*

ORDER OF WORSHIP

GATHERING

Leader addresses the congregation: *Let us prepare our hearts and minds for worship*
(Brief silence)

L: *O God, you have brought us together in this space. We come with open hearts and open minds, ready to receive your word, your healing, and your peace. We welcome your Spirit here, in this space – may you move in us, around us, and through us. In your holy name we pray. Amen.*

Gathering Song: Come Thou Fount (807)

WORD

Reading: Matthew 5:3-16 (Salt & Light)

Message Discussion/Activity:

In this passage we hear that we are the salt of the earth. How many of you like salt?

Salt provides flavor to our food, and it can enhance other flavors in food. It can be used as a preservative, an exfoliant for our skin, or to melt ice in the winter months. With all this in mind, take a few minutes to talk with the folks around you: Jesus says “You are the salt of the earth.” How do you see yourself as salt? What do you bring to this community of faith, and to the wider world?

(Allow discussion)

Jesus also talks about light. We live in a part of the world that is filled with light constantly. We have natural sources of light, of course: the sun, the moon, stars, fire; we also have electric light - lamps in our homes, flashlights, blue light from technology like computers and phones, even interior lamps and headlights in our cars. Light makes it possible for us to be out and about even at the darkest hours of the night. Light can bring comfort in the form of a campfire or soft candlelight. It can banish fear, illuminating the dark unknown. With all this in mind, take a few minutes to talk again with those around you: How do you see yourself as light to the world?

(Allow discussion)

Let us pray: God, we thank you for bringing us here today. We thank you for gifting us with the blessings of living in community. We thank you for the individual gifts that you have blessed each of us with - the gifts which allow us to be a community which is rich with flavor. Help us, Lord, to be unafraid - to let our lights shine always, and to encourage each other to shine bright wherever there is darkness. We pray in Jesus' name. Amen.

Hymn of the Day: Christ Be Our Light (715)/This Little Light of Mine (677)/Light of the World/another song around this theme

Prayers of the People

L: *We now enter into a time of prayer. Each petition will end with "Hear us, O God," to which the congregation may respond "Your mercy is great."*

Let us pray...

Creator God, we thank you for the beautiful gift that is your creation. Help us to see you in the natural world around us, and to care for your creation as you so call us to do. Hear us, O God...

All-powerful God, we pray for peace and justice. Be with victims of violence and abuse. Provide the healing and peace that only you can provide. Hear us, O God...

Healing God, we pray for all who are sick in body, mind, and spirit (especially...). Be with loved ones and medical professionals as they provide comfort and care. Hear us, O God...

(Other petitions may be added as appropriate)

Ever-present God, we are grateful for the gift of this community and the opportunity to gather together in this space. Send us on our way rejoicing, filled with your peace and love. Hear us, O God...

God, we lift our prayers to you in the name of your son, Jesus Christ. Amen.

Passing of the Peace

L: *The peace of Christ be with you all!*

C: And also with you!

L: *Let us share a sign of peace with one another...*

MEAL

(Use guidance from a rostered minister in serving communion, or you may omit the meal portion of worship...alternatively, you could actually share a full meal together here, if appropriate for your group)

SENDING

L: *Oh God, you have called us, your servants, to ventures of which we cannot see the ending, by paths as yet untrodden, through perils unknown. Give us faith to go out with good courage, not knowing where we go, but only that your hand is leading us and your love supporting us, through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.*

L: *Almighty God, Creator, Son, and Holy Spirit, bless you now and forever. Amen.*

Sending Song: Canticle of the Turning (723)/We Are Called (720)

L: *Go in peace, to love and serve the Lord!*

C: Thanks be to God! And we will!