

Be
the Light

CHRISTMAS EVE

A SERVICE FOR CHRISTMAS EVE

Be the Light

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Be the Light

A SERVICE FOR CHRISTMAS EVE

ABOUT THE SERVICE

Christ, the Light of All, was born into this dark world on Christmas Eve, and now we are called to be light in the world, pointing people to him. The theme of divine light shining in deep darkness is captured in this candlelight service for Christmas Eve that celebrates that the true Light has come. Hymns in the service include “O Come, All Ye Faithful,” “Angels We Have Heard on High,” “O Little Town of Bethlehem,” “What Child Is This” and “Silent Night.”

Be the Light

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NEWSLETTER/BULLETIN NOTICES

NEWSLETTER NOTICE

Join us for a very special Christmas Eve service called “Be the Light.” Christ, the Light of All, was born into this dark world on Christmas Eve, and now we are called to be light in the world, pointing people to him. The theme of divine light shining in deep darkness is captured in this candlelight service that welcomes the true Light, born for us. The beloved Christmas carols, classic Scripture readings, inspiring words of the homily and the original prayers will be sure to brighten your Christmas Eve.

Bulletin Notice

Welcome to this very special Christmas Eve service called “Be the Light.” Christ, the Light of All, was born into this dark world on Christmas Eve, and now we are called to be light in the world, pointing people to him. The theme of divine light shining in deep darkness is captured in this candlelight service that welcomes the true Light, born for us. Let the beloved Christmas carols, classic Scripture readings, inspiring words of the homily and the original prayers brighten this holy night of Christmas Eve.

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COMPLETE SCRIPT FOR WORSHIP LEADERS

- If desired, an **Environmental Projection** of the following image (purchased by you from shutterstock.com) can be shown on a screen or on the walls of your worship space to set the tone for the service before the service begins or throughout the service at various points:

<https://www.shutterstock.com/image-illustration/white-snowflakes-spruce-on-blue-christmas-218915275>

- The **Call to Worship**, based on Isaiah 9:2-3, 6-7, is spoken responsively by the pastor and the congregation:

P We gather on the eve of Christmas to relive the story of our Savior's birth and celebrate the gift of life that we receive through Christ. Hear then the Word of the Lord: "The people walking in darkness have seen a great light;

C On those living in the land of the shadow of death a light has dawned.

P You have enlarged the nation and increased their joy;

C They rejoice before you as people rejoice at the harvest.

P For to us a child is born, to us a son is given, and the government will be on his shoulders.

C And he will be called Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace.

P Of the increase 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.

C The zeal of the Lord Almighty will accomplish this." O come, let us adore him.

- The **Opening Hymn** is sung by the congregation to the tune Adeste Fideles irregular, or a selection from the contemporary music song suggestions list at the end of the music guide for this service can be sung instead:

O come, all ye faithful, joyful and triumphant
O come, ye, O come, ye, to Bethlehem;
Come and behold him, born the king of angels:
O come, let us adore him, O come, let us adore him,
O come, let us adore him, Christ the Lord!

Highest, most holy, Light of Light eternal,
Born of a virgin, a mortal he comes;
Son of the Father now in flesh appearing:
O come, let us adore him, O come, let us adore him,
O come, let us adore him, Christ the Lord!

Sing, choirs of angels, sing in exultation,
Sing, all ye citizens of heaven above!
Glory to God in the highest:
O come, let us adore him, O come, let us adore him,
O come, let us adore him, Christ the Lord!

- The **First Reading**, 1 John 1:5-9, is spoken responsively by the pastor and the congregation:

P This is the message we have heard from him and declare to you.

C God is light; in him there is no darkness at all.

P If we claim to have fellowship with him and yet walk in the darkness,

C We lie and do not live out the truth.

P But if we walk in the light, as he is in the light,

C We have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus, his Son, purifies us from all sin.

P If we claim to be without sin,

C We deceive ourselves and the truth is not in us.

P If we confess our sins,

C He is faithful and just and will forgive us our sins and purify us from all unrighteousness.

• The **Prayer of the Day** is spoken by the pastor or other worship leader:

P On this holy night, we welcome with joy the light of your life among us, Baby Jesus. Thank you for being the light of our lives every day. Shatter the darkness of sin and death. Break through the shadows of sadness. Reveal the warmth of your love. Let your brilliance shine through each one of us tonight that we may show the world the power of your bright presence in and around us wherever we are. Help us to always glow with your greatness and shimmer with your grace that more may come to your Light and be blessed by you. Amen.

• The **Children's Message** is delivered by the pastor or other worship leader:

Needed: a battery-operated candle

P Merry Christmas, boys and girls. *(Turn on your battery-operated candle.)* What do I have here? *(Allow the children to respond.)* Candles tell us a lot about Christmas, don't they? Tonight we light the Christ Candle in the middle of the Advent wreath to remind us that the Light of Christ has come. Thinking about that Christ Candle makes me think about candles in general. Why do we use candles? *(Allow children to respond.)*

We use candles when the power goes out and we need to see to get around the house. Candles help guide our way, just as Christ the Light helps guide us through life.

We use candles to celebrate birthdays on a cake. Candles help us rejoice in the remembrance of a birth, just as the we look at candles tonight and rejoice in Christ's birth.

We use candles to keep warm sometimes when it is cold outside. Candles bring us comfort, just like Christ the Light who comforts us with his love and forgiveness.

We use candles in our windows to tell the neighborhood that it is Christmas time. Candles help us announce that something special is happening, just like Christ the Light announces to us that he is bringing something special to us through his birth: life and forgiveness and salvation to all.

I have a special song for us to sing tonight. It's called "This Little Jesus Light of Mine." Here's how it goes. You can sing it with me, if you want:

This little Jesus Light of mine, I'm going to let it shine. This little Jesus light of mine, I'm going to let it shine. This little Jesus light of mine, I'm going to let it shine. Let it shine, all the time, let it shine.

Be a little Jesus light this Christmas and always. Amen.

- The **Christmas Song of Praise** is sung by the congregation to the tune Gloria 77 77 and refrain, or a selection from the contemporary music song suggestions list at the end of the music guide for this service can be sung instead:

Angels we have heard on high, sweetly singing o'er the plains
And the mountains in reply, echoing their joyous strains.
Gloria in excelsis Deo. Gloria in excelsis Deo.

Shepherds, why this jubilee? Why your joyous strains prolong?
What the gladsome tidings be, which inspire your heavenly song?
Gloria in excelsis Deo. Gloria in excelsis Deo.

Come to Bethlehem and see him whose birth the angels sing;
Come adore on bended knee, Christ, the Lord, the newborn King.
Gloria in excelsis Deo. Gloria in excelsis Deo.

- The **Christmas Gospel Reading**, Luke 2:1-20, is spoken by the pastor or other worship leader:

¶ And it came to pass in those days, that there went out a decree from Caesar Augustus that all the world should be taxed. (And this taxing was first made when Cyrenius was governor of Syria.) And all went to be taxed, every one into his own city. And Joseph also went up from Galilee, out of the city of Nazareth, into Judaea, unto the city of David, which is called Bethlehem; (because he was of the house and lineage of David:) To be taxed with Mary his espoused wife, being great with child. And so it was, that, while they were there, the days were accomplished that she should be delivered. And she brought forth her firstborn son, and wrapped him in swaddling clothes, and laid him in a manger; because there was no room for them in the inn. And there were in the same country shepherds abiding in the field, keeping watch over their flock by night. And, lo, the angel of the Lord came upon them, and the glory of the Lord shone round about them: and they were sore afraid. And the angel said unto them, Fear not: for, behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy, which shall be to all people. For unto you is born this day in the city of David a Saviour, which is Christ the Lord. And this shall be a sign unto you; Ye shall find the babe wrapped in swaddling clothes, 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, and on earth peace, good will toward men. And it came to pass, as the angels were gone away from them into heaven, the shepherds said one to another, Let us now go even unto Bethlehem, and see this thing which is come to pass, which the Lord hath made known unto us. And they came with haste, and found Mary, and Joseph, and the babe lying in a manger. And when they had seen it, they made known abroad the saying which was told them concerning this child. And all they that heard it wondered at those things which were told them by the shepherds. But Mary kept all these things, and pondered them in her heart. And the shepherds returned, glorifying and praising God for all the things that they had heard and seen, as it was told unto them.

- The **Sermon Hymn** is sung by the congregation to the tune St. Louis 86 86 76 86, or a selection from the contemporary music song suggestions list at the end of the music guide for this service can be sung instead:

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 dark streets shineth the everlasting light.
The hopes and fears of all the years are met in thee tonight.

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 dark streets shineth the everlasting light.
The hopes and fears of all the years are met in thee tonight.

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.

- Show the **Video: Be the Light.mov**, found on the kit CD or digital download, if desired, or have someone read the following text:

Ⓟ It's one of my favorite memories. It always happened sometime between school letting out and Christmas Eve. We'd pile in the minivan and explore a new part of the city. My father must have gotten advanced notice somehow, but we'd end up in areas with the most phenomenal light displays.

There was so much togetherness in those nighttime explorations. My big sister, my little brother and I could be totally getting on each other's nerves, but when we turned the corner and saw the glow of what seemed like millions of tiny bulbs doing their holiday best, all our bickering ceased and our faces lit up to mirror the dazzling display before us. In some of the

neighborhoods, we had to roll down the windows so we could hear the music and bask in the glow of all things Christmas.

But this year, everything changed. I finished college and I landed my first post-graduate job, but in doing so, I had to move across the country and found out I wouldn't be able to go back home in December. So here I am, almost 2000 miles away from everything I remember about Christmas. Sure, there are plenty of houses decorated, but why would I want to see them alone? It just isn't the same.

But the other day, this guy from work invited me over to a pre-Christmas get-together at his place. While we were hanging out, he told me how he'd been where I am now. His move out here was even further than mine, and the first year really got to him.

That led into this whole list of things we missed from Christmas back home. He talked about family meals and this amazing fudge his mom makes. I, of course, talked about our yearly mission to find the best light displays, and that's when he told me something I don't think I'll ever forget. He said, "If you can go out and see the lights, maybe you can be the light for someone."

I'm not sure why, but I can't shake that thought. I know he's on to something. I feel like there's a new journey to take.

- **The Sermon: From See the Lights to Be the Light** is delivered by the pastor:

☐ So many of us like to go out and look at lights during this time of year. But think for a minute about the first Christmas when the first and best holiday light display ever happened. It was just another night in the fields near Bethlehem when the star-filled sky was interrupted:

"An angel of the Lord appeared to them, and the glory of the Lord shone around them, and they were terrified" (Luke 2:9).

Christmas came as a surprise, and the light of God's glory had to outdo the best display we've ever beheld. But it wasn't just lights. There was a message that only added to the illumination of the spirit:

"Do not be afraid. I bring you good news that will cause great joy for all the people. Today in the town of David a Savior has been born to you; He is Christ, the Lord. This will be a sign to you: You will find a baby wrapped in cloths and lying in a manger" (2:10-12).

And with that the light show grew even brighter as the gathering of a heavenly host multiplied as they sang: "Glory to God in the highest ..."

Having seen the lights of Christmas, the shepherds took the next step saying to each other:

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MUSIC GUIDE

Adeste Fideles irregular.....	32-33
Gloria 77 77 and refrain	34-35
St. Louis 86 86 76 86.....	36-37
Greensleeves 87 87 68 67.....	38-39
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Tune..... Adeste Fideles irregular

Musical notation for measures 1-5. The piece is in G major (one sharp) and common time. Measure 1 starts with a whole rest in both staves. The melody in the treble clef begins in measure 2 with a quarter note G4, followed by quarter notes A4, B4, C5, and D5. The bass line in the bass clef provides a harmonic accompaniment with chords and moving lines.

Musical notation for measures 6-10. The melody continues with quarter notes E5, D5, C5, and B4. The bass line features a steady accompaniment with chords and eighth notes.

Musical notation for measures 11-16. The melody includes quarter notes A4, G4, F4, and E4. The bass line continues with a consistent accompaniment pattern.

Musical notation for measures 17-21. The melody concludes with quarter notes D4, C4, B3, and A3. The bass line provides a final accompaniment with chords and a whole rest in the final measure.

- The **Opening Hymn** is sung by the congregation to the tune *Adeste Fideles* irregular, or a selection from the contemporary music song suggestions list at the end of the music guide for this service can be sung instead:

O come, all ye faithful, joyful and triumphant
O come, ye, O come, ye, to Bethlehem;
Come and behold him, born the king of angels:
O come, let us adore him, O come, let us adore him,
O come, let us adore him, Christ the Lord!

Highest, most holy, Light of Light eternal,
Born of a virgin, a mortal he comes;
Son of the Father now in flesh appearing!
O come, let us adore him, O come, let us adore him,
O come, let us adore him, Christ the Lord!

Sing, choirs of angels, sing in exultation,
Sing, all ye citizens of heaven above!
Glory to God in the highest
O come, let us adore him, O come, let us adore him,
O come, let us adore him, Christ the Lord!

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CONTEMPORARY MUSIC SONG SUGGESTIONS

- The following song suggestions can be used for a more contemporary worship service in place of the more traditional hymns included in this kit. Rights to use these songs in the service must be purchased by your parish through CCLI or other copyright licensing agencies.

“O Come All Ye Faithful” by Chris Tomlin

“Angels We Have Heard on High” by Chris Tomlin

“Noel” by Lauren Daigle and Chris Tomlin

“What Child Is This” by Third Day or Casting Crowns

“Silent Night” by Third Day or Casting Crowns

“Offering (Christmas Version)” by Paul Baloche

“Joy to the World (Unspeakable Joy)” by Chris Tomlin, Ed Cash, George Frideric Handel, Isaac Watts and Matt Gilder