

IN THOSE DAYS

ADVENT & CHRISTMAS

WORSHIP KIT

**Creative
Communications
Sample**

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IN THOSE DAYS

ADVENT & CHRISTMAS

About the Series

This series of worship services for the Sundays of Advent, Christmas Eve and Christmas Day celebrates the events “in those days,” the time when our Savior was born. As we light the candles on the Advent wreath, we remember an emperor’s decree, a journey to Bethlehem, the search for a home, the birth of a firstborn son, news for shepherds and a sign from God.

IN THOSE DAYS

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Week 1: A Decree Went Out

Newsletter Notice

In our worship for the first week in Advent we will remember the decree of the Roman emperor that sent Mary and Joseph to Bethlehem, which long before had been decreed as the birthplace of the Savior.

Bulletin Notice

Today, as we light the first candle on the Advent wreath, we remember the decree of Caesar Augustus that sent Mary and Joseph on a journey to Bethlehem, where our Savior was born.

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Week 2: To the City of David

Newsletter Notice

In our worship for the second week of Advent, the journey of Mary and Joseph will remind us that God's people have always been on the move. Still today, we walk by faith and not by sight.

Bulletin Notice

As we light the second candle on the Advent wreath, we will celebrate the journey of Mary and Joseph and our journey of faith as we prepare to celebrate Jesus' birth.

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Week 3: No Place for Them

Newsletter Notice

In the third week of Advent we will see that our Savior, for whom no place was found, has gone ahead to prepare an eternal place for us in heaven.

Bulletin Notice

The third candle of the Advent wreath will remind us of our eternal home in heaven. Jesus, who slept in a manger and was buried in a borrowed tomb, is preparing a place for us. He will come again and take us to himself.

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Week 4: Her Firstborn Son

Newsletter Notice

For the fourth week of Advent our worship will focus on firstborn sons: Cain, remembered for his sin, Isaac, the son of promise and sacrifice, and Jesus, God's only Son, who came to be our Savior.

Bulletin Notice

The fourth candle on the Advent wreath will remind us of firstborn sons, especially the firstborn son of Mary, the Son of God who came to give his life as the perfect sacrifice for our sins.

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Christmas Eve: There Were Shepherds

Newsletter Notice

As we gather on Christmas Eve to celebrate our Savior's birth, listening to his Word and singing hymns of praise, we remember the shepherds who were the first to hear the good news of Jesus' birth.

Bulletin Notice

Tonight we will light all of the candles on the Advent wreath and the Christ candle, as we celebrate Jesus' birth. May we be like the shepherds who came to worship the Savior and then spread the joyful news of his birth!

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Christmas Day: This Will Be a Sign

Newsletter Notice

Join us in worship on Christmas Day, as we celebrate the day of Jesus' birth, rejoicing in our Savior, the virgin-born Son. Jesus is the Light shining in the darkness. He is the sign of God's redeeming love!

Bulletin Notice

Our joyful praise today will honor our Savior, who is the Light of the world and the sign of God's redeeming love for us. Jesus is the sign of God's love for us. He is Immanuel, God with us, now and always.

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Week 2: To the City of David

Order of Service

Joseph also went up ... to the city of David, which is called Bethlehem. Luke 2:4

Opening Hymn.....Macht Hoch Die Tür 88 88 88 66

Lift up your heads, ye mighty gates!
Behold, the King of glory waits.
The King of kings is drawing near;
The Savior of the world is here.
Life and salvation he doth bring;
Therefore rejoice and gladly sing.
To God the Father raise
Your joyful songs of praise.

Fling wide the portals of your heart;
Make it a temple set apart
From earthly use for heav'n's employ,
Adorned with prayer and love and joy.
So shall your Sov'reign enter in
And new and nobler life begin.
To God alone be praise
For word and deed and grace!

Redeemer, come and open wide
My heart to thee here, Lord, abide!
O enter with thy grace divine;
Thy face of mercy on me shine.
Thy Holy Spirit guide us on
Until our glorious goal is won.
Eternal praise and fame
We offer to thy name.

Invocation..... Psalm 107:1, 4-7

P In the name of the Father and of the + Son and of the Holy Spirit.

C Amen.

P Oh give thanks to the Lord, for he is good,

C For his steadfast love endures forever!

P Some wandered in desert wastes,

C Finding no way to a city to dwell in;

P Hungry and thirsty, their soul fainted within them.

C Then they cried to the Lord in their trouble,

P And he delivered them from their distress.

C He led them by a straight way till they reached a city to dwell in.

Lighting of the Advent Wreath

- Ⓟ Caesar August decreed that his subjects were to return to their ancestral hometowns to register: “And all went to be registered, each to his own town. And Joseph also went up from Galilee, from the town of Nazareth, to Judea, to the city of David, which is called Bethlehem,
- Ⓒ **“Because he was of the house and lineage of David, to be registered with Mary, his betrothed, who was with child.”**
- Ⓟ We light the second candle on our Advent wreath as we remember the journey of Mary and Joseph to Bethlehem, where the Savior would be born.
- Ⓒ **Lord and Savior, light our journey of faith until we rejoice forever in your presence!**

Confession and Absolution

- Ⓟ Let us confess our sins to God and ask his forgiveness.
- Ⓒ **Almighty God, in our journey of faith we often wander away from your Word and your will. We choose our own paths to follow and satisfy our own desires. We sin against you each day in our thoughts, words and actions. Have mercy on us and forgive us.**
- Ⓟ God has had mercy on us. He sent his Son to be our Savior. Jesus walked the path to the cross, never turning from his purpose, never turning from his Father’s will. He suffered, died and rose from the dead to give us forgiveness and eternal life. I announce to you that your sins are forgiven in the name of the Father and of the + Son and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.
- Ⓒ **Heavenly Father, lead us in the paths of righteousness, following in the footsteps of Jesus our Savior.**

Prayer of the Day

Hymn Nun Komm, Der Heiden Heiland 77 77

Savior of the nations, come,
Virgin’s Son, make here your home!
Marvel now, O heav’n and earth,
That the Lord chose such a birth.

Children’s Message

Hymn Nun Komm, Der Heiden Heiland 77 77

Not by human flesh and blood,
By the Spirit of our God,
Was the Word of God made flesh—
Woman's offspring, pure and fresh.

Old Testament Reading Isaiah 35:8-10

Epistle Reading Romans 6:1-4

Gospel Reading Mark 11:1-10

Sermon Hymn Irby 87 87 77

Once in royal David's city
Stood a lowly cattle shed,
Where a mother laid her baby
In a manger for his bed:
Mary was that mother mild,
Jesus Christ her little child.

He came down to earth from heaven,
Who is God and Lord of all,
And his shelter was a stable,
And his cradle was a stall;
With the poor and mean and lowly
Lived on earth our Savior holy.

Sermon

Hymn of Response Irby 87 87 77

And our eyes at last shall see him,
Through his own redeeming love;
For that child so dear and gentle
Is our Lord in heav'n above;
And he leads his children on
To the place where he is gone.

Not in that poor, lowly stable
With the oxen standing by
Shall we see him, but in heaven,
Set at God's right hand on high.
Then like stars his children, crowned,
All in white, his praise will sound!

Offering

Prayers

Each petition ends with the following response:

P Lord and Savior,

C Travel with us each day.

Lord's Prayer

Benediction (*Romans 6:4; 2 Corinthians 13:14*)

P We were buried therefore with him by baptism into death, in order that, just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father,

C We too might walk in newness of life.

P The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ and the love of God and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with you all.

C Amen.

Closing Hymn Chesterfield CM

Hark the glad sound! The Savior comes,
The Savior promised long;
Let ev'ry heart prepare a throne
And ev'ry voice a song.

He comes the pris'ners to release,
In Satan's bondage held.
The gates of brass before him burst,
The iron fetters yield.

Our glad hosannas, Prince of Peace,
Thy welcome shall proclaim,
And heav'n's eternal arches ring
With thy beloved name.

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Week 2: To the City of David

Complete Script for Worship Leaders

- If desired, an **Environmental Projection** is 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-photo/beautiful-view-on-kasbah-ait-ben-98421338>

- The **Theme Verse** is spoken by the pastor or other worship leader at the start of the service or is read silently by the congregation before the service begins:

Joseph also went up ... to the city of David, which is called Bethlehem. Luke 2:4

- The **Opening Hymn** is sung by the congregation to the tune Macht Hoch Die Tür 88 88 88 66:

Lift up your heads, ye mighty gates!
Behold, the King of glory waits.
The King of kings is drawing near;
The Savior of the world is here.
Life and salvation he doth bring;
Therefore rejoice and gladly sing.
To God the Father raise
Your joyful songs of praise.

Fling wide the portals of your heart;
Make it a temple set apart
From earthly use for heav'n's employ,
Adorned with prayer and love and joy.
So shall your Sov'reign enter in
And new and nobler life begin.
To God alone be praise
For word and deed and grace!

Redeemer, come and open wide
My heart to thee here, Lord, abide!
O enter with thy grace divine,
Thy face of mercy on me shine.
Thy Holy Spirit guide us on
Until our glorious goal is won.
Eternal praise and fame
We offer to thy name.

- The **Invocation** (Psalm 107:1, 4-7) is spoken responsively by the pastor and the congregation:

P In the name of the Father and of the + Son and of the Holy Spirit.

C Amen.

P Oh give thanks to the Lord, for he is good,

C For his steadfast love endures forever!

P Some wandered in desert wastes,

C Finding no way to a city to dwell in;

P Hungry and thirsty, their soul fainted within them.

C Then they cried to the Lord in their trouble,

P And he delivered them from their distress.

C He led them by a straight way till they reached a city to dwell in.

- The **Lighting of the Advent Wreath** is spoken responsively by the pastor and the congregation, while an acolyte lights two purple or blue candles:

P Caesar August decreed that his subjects were to return to their ancestral hometowns to register: “And all went to be registered, each to his own town. And Joseph also went up from Galilee, from the town of Nazareth, to Judea, to the city of David, which is called Bethlehem,

C “Because he was of the house and lineage of David, to be registered with Mary, his betrothed, who was with child.”

P We light the second candle on our Advent wreath as we remember the journey of Mary and Joseph to Bethlehem, where the Savior would be born.

C Lord and Savior, light our journey of faith until we rejoice forever in your presence!

- The **Confession and Absolution** is spoken responsively by the pastor and the congregation:

P Let us confess our sins to God and ask his forgiveness.

C Almighty God, in our journey of faith we often wander away from your Word and your will. We choose our own paths to follow and satisfy our own desires. We sin against you each day in our thoughts, words and actions. Have mercy on us and forgive us.

P God has had mercy on us. He sent his Son to be our Savior. Jesus walked the path to the cross, never turning from his purpose, never turning from his Father’s will. He suffered, died and rose from the dead to give us forgiveness and eternal life. I announce to you that your sins are forgiven in the name of the Father and of the + Son and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.

C Heavenly Father, lead us in the paths of righteousness, following in the footsteps of Jesus our Savior.

- The **Prayer of the Day** is read by the pastor:

☐ Almighty God, as they trusted you to keep your promises, Joseph and Mary journeyed to Bethlehem, where the Savior of the world was to be born. At the time you had appointed, Jesus set out on another journey, taking up his path to the cross for the sake of our salvation. Help us by your Spirit to walk in faith, trusting you and following faithfully in the footsteps of Jesus our Savior. Guide us throughout our earthly journey until we enjoy eternal life in our Savior's presence. Hear our prayer in Jesus' name. Amen.

- A **Hymn** is sung by the congregation to the tune Nun Komm, Der Heiden Heiland 77 77:

Savior of the nations, come,
 Virgin's Son, make here your home!
 Marvel now, O heav'n and earth,
 That the Lord chose such a birth.

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

Needed: a picture of Mary and Joseph traveling to Bethlehem

☐ Many people like to travel at Christmas time as they go to visit family and friends. Maybe you are going to travel for Christmas, or visitors are coming to your house. People were traveling on the first Christmas too. Long before Jesus was born, God said that his Son would be born in Bethlehem. But Joseph and Mary, Jesus' mother, lived in Nazareth! So God led them to follow the emperor's decree and travel from Nazareth to Bethlehem. We don't know how they traveled. Maybe they walked or rode a cart, or maybe Mary rode a donkey. (*Show the picture of Mary and Joseph.*) But they finally arrived in the town of Bethlehem, and there the baby Jesus was born.

Many years later, when he was grown up, Jesus would ride a donkey into a city that was not far from Bethlehem. That city was Jerusalem, and when Jesus rode by, people waved palm branches to welcome him and placed their coats in the street like a red carpet. Do you know the name of that day? (*Let children answer.*) That was the day we call Palm Sunday, and on the Friday after that, Jesus walked on another road, to the cross, where he died for us to take away our sins.

Because Jesus died for us and rose from the dead, our sins are forgiven and we have eternal life. Now we are traveling too; we are traveling through life, on our way to eternal life in heaven! Jesus promised us, "I am with you always." Every day of our lives, wherever we are, Jesus is with us, just as he promised. He walks with us, he stays with us always, so we are never alone. Let's pray:

Lord Jesus, Mary and Joseph walked to Bethlehem, where you were born. You grew up and walked the road to the cross to die for us. Now we know you are walking with us every day. Keep us safe in your care. Amen.

- A **Hymn** is sung by the congregation to the tune Nun Komm, Der Heiden Heiland 77 77:

Not by human flesh and blood,
By the Spirit of our God,
Was the Word of God made flesh—
Woman's offspring, pure and fresh.

- The **Old Testament Reading**, Isaiah 35:8-10, is spoken by the pastor or other worship leader:

Ⓟ And a highway shall be there, and it shall be called the Way of Holiness; the unclean shall not pass over it. It shall belong to those who walk on the way; even if they are fools, they shall not go astray. No lion shall be there, nor shall any ravenous beast come up on it; they shall not be found there, but the redeemed shall walk there. And the ransomed of the Lord shall return and come to Zion with singing; everlasting joy shall be upon their heads; they shall obtain gladness and joy, and sorrow and sighing shall flee away.

- The **Epistle Reading**, Romans 6:1-4, is spoken by the pastor or other worship leader:

Ⓟ What shall we say then? Are we to continue in sin that grace may abound? By no means! How can we who died to sin still live in it? Do you not know that all of us who have been baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into his death? We were buried therefore with him by baptism into death, in order that, just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, we too might walk in newness of life.

- The **Gospel Reading**, Mark 11:1-10, is spoken by the pastor or other worship leader:

Ⓟ Now when they drew near to Jerusalem, to Bethphage and Bethany, at the Mount of Olives, Jesus sent two of his disciples and said to them, "Go into the village in front of you, and immediately as you enter it you will find a colt tied, on which no one has ever sat. Untie it and bring it. If anyone says to you, 'Why are you doing this?' say, 'The Lord has need of it and will send it back here immediately.'" And they went away and found a colt tied at a door outside in the street, and they untied it. And some of those standing there said to them, "What are you doing, untying the colt?" And they told them what Jesus had said, and they let them go. And they brought the colt to Jesus and threw their cloaks on it, and he sat on it. And many

spread their cloaks on the road, and others spread leafy branches that they had cut from the fields. And those who went before and those who followed were shouting, “Hosanna! Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord! Blessed is the coming kingdom of our father David! Hosanna in the highest!”

- A **Sermon Hymn** is sung by the congregation to the tune Irby 87 87 77:

Once in royal David’s city
Stood a lowly cattle shed,
Where a mother laid her baby
In a manger for his bed:
Mary was that mother mild,
Jesus Christ her little child.

He came down to earth from heaven,
Who is God and Lord of all,
And his shelter was a stable,
And his cradle was a stall;
With the poor and mean and lowly
Lived on earth our Savior holy.

- If desired, this **Mini Movie** (purchased by you from Worship House Media: worshiphousemedia.com) is presented on a screen at this time to highlight the theme of the service:

<https://www.worshiphousemedia.com/mini-movies/56152/promised-land-bethlehem>

- The **Sermon: To the City of David** is delivered by the pastor:

¶ Are you traveling for Christmas? Or are you preparing your home to receive visitors for the holiday season? It can be a difficult time to travel, considering the crowds of fellow travelers, the high costs and difficulty getting reservations. Some of those same issues may have been concerns for Mary and Joseph too, the very first Christmas travelers. They may have been worried about the costs of travel and paying taxes, and about the crowds in Bethlehem—apparently they had no reservation at the inn. There was the greatest concern of all—Mary was expecting a child, the holy, long-promised, long-awaited child, the Son of God.

Mary and Joseph, of course, were not the first people in Scripture to set out on a journey. In fact, the people of God always seemed to be on the move, one way or another, right from the beginning. Although they probably did not want to go (or were they anxious to leave “the scene of the crime”?), Adam and Eve were driven away from the garden of Eden, prevented from eating of the tree of life. Their descendant Noah and his family set sail in an ark, saved

at God's command from the flood that destroyed the sin-filled world. God told the patriarch Abraham to leave his homeland and set out towards an as-yet unseen but rich Promised Land that would belong to him and to his descendants.

One of Abraham's descendants, Joseph, was an unwilling traveler, sold into slavery in Egypt by his jealous brothers. That trip to Egypt resulted in a long rest stop on the journey of the people of God. It was a rest stop without rest—four hundred years of slavery—until God set his people on the move again. God sent Moses to lead them, a man who had done some traveling himself, including a Nile River cruise as an infant in a basket. After 40 years of travel, wandering through the wilderness, the people of Israel finally reached the land that God had promised to them. They were home, but it would not last. The Israelites rebelled against the God who had led them home. They disobeyed his laws and worshiped other gods. For their disobedience they would be sent away from the land God had given them.

Other nations were on the move too, and those nations moved right over and through Israel, conquering the people of God, destroying Jerusalem and the temple and taking many of the people captive. That meant another terrible journey for them, from their homeland of Israel into exile in Babylon. But at the right time, God caused a pagan king to release his people from captivity and send them home again. Jerusalem and the temple were rebuilt, but there were more rebellions and more enemies, within and without. Finally, the Roman Empire conquered Israel. The people stayed in their land this time, but they became subjects of a foreign power. It was the ruler of that foreign power, Caesar Augustus, who issued the decree that set Joseph and Mary on the road to Bethlehem, where—according to the prophet—Mary's son must be born. The traveling did not stop there. Sometime after Jesus' birth, wise men traveled from the east, following a star to find the newborn King. Their visit prompted a quick and frightening escape, as Mary and Joseph fled to Egypt to save the infant King from the murderous wrath of King Herod.

When Jesus was about thirty years old, he set out on the road again, traveling throughout Palestine for the three years of his earthly ministry, teaching, feeding and healing the people. Finally the day came for him to begin his final earthly journey. He entered into Jerusalem, riding on a donkey. His excited followers waved palm branches like flags and threw down coats and branches to make a red carpet for the humble King. They shouted "Hosanna!" That shout of praise means, "Save us now!" and that is exactly what Jesus had come to Jerusalem to do—to save them, to save us all by shedding his blood on the cross.

Less than a week later, the Child of Bethlehem—now a King crowned with thorns—would travel again through the streets of Jerusalem, bent beneath the heavy burden of his cross. On the cross he suffered and died, taking onto himself the penalty of death that we had earned for our sins, the penalty we deserved. When that Good Friday was over, Jesus would be carried on his last earthly journey, as friends prepared him for burial and sealed his body in a borrowed tomb. Was that the end of the road?

The image displays a piano score for the hymn 'Macht Hoch Die Tür'. The score is written in 3/4 time and features a key signature of three flats (B-flat, E-flat, and A-flat). It is organized into five systems, each with a treble and bass staff. The first system begins with a measure rest in both staves, followed by the first measure of the melody in the treble and a bass accompaniment. Subsequent systems are marked with measure numbers 7, 13, 19, and 25 at the beginning of the treble staff. The melody consists of quarter and eighth notes, while the bass accompaniment uses chords and single notes. A large, semi-transparent watermark reading 'Creative Communications Sample' is overlaid diagonally across the center of the page.

- The **Opening Hymn** is sung by the congregation to the tune Macht Hoch Die Tür 88 88 88 66:

Lift up your heads, ye mighty gates!
Behold, the King of glory waits.
The King of kings is drawing near;
The Savior of the world is here.
Life and salvation he doth bring;
Therefore rejoice and gladly sing.
To God the Father raise
Your joyful songs of praise.

Fling wide the portals of your heart;
Make it a temple set apart
From earthly use for heav'n's employ,
Adorned with prayer and love and joy.
So shall your Sov'reign enter in
And new and nobler life begin.
To God alone be praise
For word and deed and grace!

Redeemer, come and open wide
My heart to thee here, Lord, abide!
O enter with thy grace divine,
Thy face of mercy on me shine.
Thy Holy Spirit guide us on
Until our glorious goal is won.
Eternal praise and fame
We offer to thy name.

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Week 2: To the City of David

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.

“Bethlehem” by Chris Tomlin and Ed Cash

“King of My Heart” by John Mark McMillian and Sarah McMillian

“Home” by Phil Wickham

“I Am the Bread of Life” by John Michael Talbot

“Even So Come” by Chris Tomlin, Jason Ingram and Jess Cates

“Let Your Kingdom Come” by Bob Kauflin

“A Thousand Generations” by John Poythress, John Lemonis and Tony Wood

“Little Town” by Jeff Jansen and Philips Brooks

“The Family Prayer Song” by Morris Chapman