



BE BORN IN US
Today

*Bringing
Salvation*



A SERVICE FOR CHRISTMAS DAY



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A SERVICE FOR CHRISTMAS DAY

ABOUT “BE BORN IN US TODAY BRINGING SALVATION”

In this Christmas Day service, we celebrate with joy the birth of our Lord, born to save us from sin, death and the devil forever. We are reborn as his brothers and sisters this day and eagerly anticipate what our new life in him has in store for us. Hymns in the service include “O Come, All Ye Faithful,” “What Child Is This” and “Hark! The Herald Angels Sing.” Use with the Be Born in Us Today series or alone.

Other coordinating resources are available. Call Creative Communications for the Parish at 1-800-325-9414, or visit us on the web at creativecommunications.com for current pricing and availability.

Signature collection BBTSK

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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:

[shutterstock.com/image-photo/traditional-christmas-scenes-sacred-light-shining-1545111173](https://www.shutterstock.com/image-photo/traditional-christmas-scenes-sacred-light-shining-1545111173)

- This **Theme Verse** is read aloud by the pastor at the start of the service or is read silently by the congregation before the service begins:

Show us your steadfast love, O Lord, and grant us your salvation. Psalm 85:7

- The **Opening Hymn** is sung by the congregation to the tune *Adeste Fideles* irregular meter, 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!

Yea, Lord, we greet thee, born this happy morning;
Jesus, to thee be glory giv'n!
Word 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!

- The **Invocation** 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 Today we celebrate the birth of our Savior Jesus Christ. The prophet Zechariah foretold the coming of the promised King, who would bring salvation to his people: “Rejoice greatly, O daughter of Zion! Shout aloud, O daughter of Jerusalem! Behold, your king is coming to you; righteous and having salvation is he” (Zechariah 9:9).

C **Jesus, you are our righteous King. Through your birth, life, death and resurrection, you have brought to us the gift of salvation.**

P The name we love, the name of Jesus, means “God saves” or “salvation.” An angel told Joseph to take Mary as his wife and said, “She will bear a son, and you shall call his name Jesus, for he will save his people from their sins” (Matthew 1:21).

C **Jesus our Lord, you came to save us. Hear our prayers and accept our praise as we rejoice today in your birth.**

P The apostle Peter, on trial for preaching the good news about Jesus, said, “There is salvation in no one else, for there is no other name under heaven given among men by which we must be saved” (Acts 4:12).

C **Jesus, you alone are the way of salvation.**

P The apostle Paul wrote about Jesus’ saving work: “And being found in human form, he humbled himself by becoming obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross. Therefore God has highly exalted him and bestowed on him the name that is above every name,

C **So that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, in heaven and on earth and under the earth, and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father”** (Philippians 2:8-11).

- 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, we confess that we do not always live according to your Word and will. We do not walk in love as Jesus did. Even though we have received your gracious gift of salvation, we often hesitate to share the good news of Jesus with others. Forgive our sins and lead us by your Spirit to walk in your ways.**

P Today we celebrate the grace of God, revealed in the gift of his Son, our Savior Jesus Christ. The Holy Child of Bethlehem was born among us to suffer, die and rise to bring us forgiveness of sins 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 **We rejoice in the birth of Jesus our Lord! There is no other name by which we can be saved.**

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

P Almighty God, on this joyful day we offer our thanks and praise for the gift of your Son, our Savior Jesus Christ. The Holy Child of Bethlehem was born among us to bring us salvation through his humble birth, his perfect life and his suffering, death and resurrection. We confess Jesus as Lord and we love his holy name, the name by which we are saved. As we celebrate his birth, help us to walk in love as our Lord walked and, in the power of the Holy Spirit, to share with others the good news of salvation through faith in Jesus. Hear our prayers and accept our praise in his holy name. Amen.

- The **Hymn** is sung by the congregation to the tune Greensleeves 87 87 68 67, or a selection from the contemporary music song suggestions list at the end of the music guide for this service can be sung instead:

What child is this, who laid to rest,
 On Mary's lap is sleeping?
 Whom angels greet with anthems sweet
 While shepherds watch are keeping?
 This, this is Christ the king,
 Whom shepherds guard and angels sing;
 Haste, haste to bring him laud,
 The babe, the son of Mary!

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

Needed: a few opened Christmas gifts (toys, a book, sweater, etc.)

- P** How many of you have already opened your Christmas presents? Raise your hand if you have already opened those presents under the tree! I brought a few gifts to show you. (*Show the gifts to the children.*) We give gifts to friends and family members at Christmas and we love to receive presents from others. But Christmas is really Jesus' birthday! Maybe we should be giving gifts to him! Imagine that you were in Bethlehem on the very first Christmas, the day Jesus was born. What gift would you give to Baby Jesus? (*Let children share gift ideas.*) There are so many things we could give to Jesus. Even today, we bring our offerings to church so that people everywhere can learn about the Savior. We share our love for Jesus by showing love and kindness to others.

But even though Christmas is Jesus' birthday, and we should be giving him presents, Jesus came to bring gifts to us! Jesus was born in Bethlehem. When he was grown up, he taught people about God's love. Jesus healed people who were sick and made blind people see again. When the right time came, Jesus died on the cross to take away our sins. He rose from the dead on the first Easter morning. Everyone who believes in Jesus receives the gifts of forgiveness and eternal life. Jesus was born to save us. He is the best gift of all!

Let's pray: Jesus, we love you and we are thankful for the gifts of forgiveness and eternal life that you have given to us. Happy birthday, dear Savior! Amen.

- The **Hymn** is sung by the congregation to the tune Greensleeves 87 87 68 67, or a selection from the contemporary music song suggestions list at the end of the music guide for this service can be sung instead:

Why lies he in such mean estate
 Where ox and ass are feeding?
 Good Christian, fear; for sinners here
 The silent Word is pleading,
 Nails, spear shall pierce him through,
 The cross be borne for me, for you;
 Hail, hail, the Word made flesh,
 The babe, the son of Mary!

So bring him incense, gold, and myrrh;
 Come, peasant, king, to own him.
 The King of kings salvation brings;
 Let loving hearts enthrone him.
 Raise, raise the song on high,
 The virgin sings her lullaby;
 Joy, joy, for Christ is born,
 The babe, the son of Mary!

- The **Old Testament Reading**, Isaiah 12:2-4, is spoken by the pastor or other worship leader:

☐ Behold, God is my salvation; I will trust, and will not be afraid; for the LORD GOD is my strength and my song, and he has become my salvation. With joy you will draw water from the wells of salvation. And you will say in that day: “Give thanks to the LORD, call upon his name, make known his deeds among the peoples, proclaim that his name is exalted.

- The **Epistle Reading**, 1 Thessalonians 5:8-11, is spoken by the pastor or other worship leader:

☐ But since we belong to the day, let us be sober, having put on the breastplate of faith and love, and for a helmet the hope of salvation. For God has not destined us for wrath, but to obtain salvation through our Lord Jesus Christ, who died for us so that whether we are awake or asleep we might live with him. Therefore encourage one another and build one another up, just as you are doing.

- The **Gospel Reading**, John 1:1-14, is spoken by the pastor or other worship leader:

Ⓟ In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was in the beginning with God. All things were made through him, and without him was not any thing made that was made. In him was life, and the life was the light of men. The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness has not overcome it. There was a man sent from God, whose name was John. He came as a witness, to bear witness about the light, that all might believe through him. He was not the light, but came to bear witness about the light. The true light, which gives light to everyone, was coming into the world. He was in the world, and the world was made through him, yet the world did not know him. He came to his own, and his own people did not receive him. But to all who did receive him, who believed in his name, he gave the right to become children of God, who were born, not of blood nor of the will of the flesh nor of the will of man, but of God. And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, and we have seen his glory, glory as of the only Son from the Father, full of grace and truth.

- The **Sermon Hymn** is sung by the congregation to the tune Mendelssohn 77 77 D 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:

Hark! The herald angels sing,
 “Glory to the newborn King;
 Peace on earth and mercy mild,
 God and sinners reconciled!”
 Joyful, all ye nations, rise,
 Join the triumph of the skies;
 With the angelic host proclaim,
 “Christ is born in Bethlehem!”
 Hark! The herald angels sing,
 “Glory to the newborn King!”

Christ, by highest heav’n adored,
 Christ the everlasting Lord,
 Late in time behold him come,
 Offspring of a virgin’s womb.
 Veiled in flesh the Godhead see,
 Hail the incarnate Deity!
 Pleased as Man with man to dwell,
 Jesus, our Immanuel!
 Hark! The herald angels sing,
 “Glory to the newborn King!”

- The **Sermon** is delivered by the pastor:

Theme verses:

Lord, you were favorable to your land;
 you restored the fortunes of Jacob.
 You forgave the iniquity of your people;
 you covered all their sin.
 You withdrew all your wrath;
 you turned from your hot anger.
 Restore us again, O God of our salvation,
 and put away your indignation toward us!
 Will you be angry with us forever?
 Will you prolong your anger to all generations?
 Will you not revive us again,
 that your people may rejoice in you?
**Show us your steadfast love, O Lord,
 and grant us your salvation.** (Psalm 85:1-7, especially v. 7)

- Ⓟ Walking with God is not always an easy stroll on level ground, nor is it always progress and pleasure. We'd like to think of it that way—forever peace and alleluias, always God for us and with something good to say about us.

In one of Charles Schultz's *Peanuts* cartoons, Lucy admits to Charlie Brown that she gets discouraged at times. Charlie makes the mistake of responding by saying, "Well, Lucy, life does have its ups and downs, you know." This sends Lucy into one of her tirades. "But why?" she asks. "Why can't my life be all ups? If I want all ups, why can't I have them? Why can't I move from one up to another up? Why can't I just go from an up to an upper-up?" She finally proclaims, "I don't want any downs. I just want ups, and ups, and ups!" Charlie, of course, responds, "I can't stand it!" Poor Lucy. She wants a mountain with no valley, a mansion with no basement, a winter without cold. She wants all wins and no losses, no ups and downs, just "ups and upper-ups."

Well, Lucy, life doesn't work that way. Life with God doesn't work that way. Life with God has its ups and downs not because God is wishy-washy or finds it hard to maintain a healthy relationship. Life with God has its ups and downs because we are wishy-washy and because we have a hard time maintaining our relationship with God. The truth is, left to ourselves, our relationship with God would have been over a long time ago. This is true for individuals and for whole nations. Psalm 85 provides the evidence.

Psalm, 85 is a psalm that begs for Christmas, and, as we will see, a psalm that gives us a description of what Christmas means for us. Even though we'll never sing it as a Christmas

carol, it takes us to Christmas beautifully. The writer of the psalm moves through three sets of feelings as he moves through the three tenses of past, present and future.

In verses 1-3, he remembers a time when God turned from anger, forgave Israel its sins, and prospered her land and fortunes. It was an up time for Israel after a down time. We can all remember times in our walk with God that have been strong and rich. That's how the psalm starts, nostalgically remembering good days with God that were simply beautiful, even idyllic. It was a Psalm 23 time, with green pastures, a "thou art with me" confidence and a banquet table prepared before our enemies.

Then in verses 4-7, we discover that things have taken a downturn in the present. Some students of the Bible think the psalm may have been first written soon after the Jewish exiles had returned to their homeland after 70 years of captivity in Babylon. Their land was desolate, their walls and their temple were still in ruins, and the inhabitants in the land did not welcome them with open arms.

So the psalm writer in verse 4 prays for God to restore his people and not be angry with them. When he asks the rhetorical question in verse 5, "Will you be angry with us forever?" one senses that he knows the answer, "No!" And when he asks a second rhetorical question in verse 6, "Will you not revive us again so that we may rejoice in you?" one senses that he knows this answer, too, "Yes!" The psalm writer's past experience has shown that God's love repeatedly trumps his anger and that God is always willing to revive us.

Then in verse 7 the psalm writer prays what could be our Christmas prayer today: "Show us your steadfast love, O LORD, and grant us your salvation." In other words, give us a sign. Make it clear beyond a doubt that you love us and will save us.

For the psalm writer, God's response to Israel's repeated moral failures as a nation and his own personal sin was all too predictable. It's the same cycle we know. For every recurring sin, there is recurring grace. For every repeated moral failure, there is repeated forgiveness. Downs and ups and ups and downs and rough and smooth! How difficult it must have been to live in that repeating cycle of judgment and grace, spiritual death and revival. I read recently about an Ohio man addicted to opioids who has been resuscitated by Ohio police officers no less than 20 times. The same man! That's a messy life, asking for one revival after another, restoration after restoration. Israel's holy history read that way. Our life with God can look that way, too.

Then in the final verses of the psalm, (vv. 8-13), the psalm writer takes a listening posture in prayer: "Let me hear what God the LORD will speak, for he will speak peace to his people, to his saints; but let them not turn back to folly" (v. 8). The psalmist sees God's preferred future, what Christmas offers us today. We may not always look for Messianic prophecy in the psalms, but here it is in verses 9-13: