



BE BORN IN US  
*Today*

*Bringing  
Light*

A SERVICE FOR CHRISTMAS EVE



---

A SERVICE FOR CHRISTMAS EVE

---

## INDEX

Notes/Ordering Information .....	5
Newsletter/Bulletin Notices .....	6
Order of Service.....	7-13
Complete Script For Leaders.....	14-26
Scripture Readings .....	27-29
Children's Sermon .....	30
Sermon.....	31-34
Prayers.....	35-36
Music Guide .....	37-52

Sermon by Dean Nadasdy. Service by Carol Geisler. Art and design: Jamie Wyatt. © 2022 Creative Communications for the Parish, a division of Bayard, Inc., 1564 Fencorp Dr., Fenton, MO 63026. 800-325-9414. [www.creativecommunications.com](http://www.creativecommunications.com). All rights reserved. Printed in the USA. Purchase of this service gives the purchaser the copyright release to use the material in any format for use in worship. Creative Communications is not responsible for the change or removal of any links listed from other sites.



---

A SERVICE FOR CHRISTMAS EVE

---

## ABOUT “BE BORN IN US TODAY BRINGING LIGHT”

Welcome the Lord with this worship service for Christmas Eve. Jesus is born for us all on this silent night in the little town of Bethlehem. His first cry announces to the world that the darkness of sin is done away with by the shining light of his amazing love. Hymns in the service include “Gentle Mary Laid Her Child,” “O Little Town of Bethlehem,” “Silent Night” and “Joy to the World.” 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](http://creativecommunications.com) for current pricing and availability.

Signature collection BBTSK

Complete collection BBTKC



---

A SERVICE FOR CHRISTMAS EVE

---

## 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-illustration/nativity-jesus-bethlehem-concept-design-background-1711691158](https://www.shutterstock.com/image-illustration/nativity-jesus-bethlehem-concept-design-background-1711691158)

- 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:

*For unto you is born this day in the city of David a Savior, who is Christ the Lord. Luke 2:11*

- The **Opening Hymn** is sung by the congregation to the tune Antioch CM 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:

Joy to the world, the Lord is come!  
Let earth receive her King;  
Let ev'ry heart prepare him room  
And heav'n and nature sing,  
And heav'n and nature sing,  
And heav'n, and heav'n and nature sing.

Joy to the earth, the Savior reigns!  
Let men their songs employ,  
While fields and floods,  
Rocks, hills, and plains  
Repeat the sounding joy,  
Repeat the sounding joy,  
Repeat, repeat the sounding joy.

No more let sins and sorrows grow  
Nor thorns infest the ground;  
He comes to make his blessings flow  
Far as the curse is found,  
Far as the curse is found,  
Far as, far as the curse is found.

He rules the world with truth and grace  
And makes the nations prove  
The glories of his righteousness  
And wonders of his love,  
And wonders of his love,  
And wonders, wonders of his love.

- The **Invocation and Lighting of the Advent Wreath** are 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.

*(The three blue or purple candles, the pink or rose candle and the Christ candle are lit.)*

**P** On this holy night, we light the Christ candle on the Advent wreath as we celebrate the birth of Jesus, the Light of the world. The apostle John writes, “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” (John 1:4-5).

**C** **Holy Child of Bethlehem, be born in us today. Fill our lives with your life and light.**

**P** Jesus said, “I am the light of the world. Whoever follows me will not walk in darkness, but will have the light of life” (John 8:12).

**C** **Holy Child of Bethlehem, be born in us today. Help us by your Spirit to reflect your light and love in our lives.**

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

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

Ⓒ **Almighty God, we live in the light of our Savior, but we are still tempted by the darkness of sin. We follow our selfish desires. We turn from your Word to listen to the temptations of the world. We fail to love others as we should because we do not let Jesus' light shine through our lives. Have mercy on us. Forgive our sins and turn our hearts and minds to the light of Jesus.**

Ⓟ God has had mercy on us. By his death and resurrection, Jesus, the Light of the world, has overcome the darkness of sin, death and Satan. 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.

Ⓒ **Lord, lead us to live as children of light!**

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

Ⓟ Almighty God, at creation you spoke your Word and light shattered the darkness. On this holy night, we rejoice in the birth of Jesus, the Word made flesh. In him, the light once again broke into the world made dark by sin. By his death and resurrection, Jesus brought to us life and light. Lead us, tonight and always, to walk by faith as children of light. We pray that Jesus' love will shine in our words and actions so that through our witness, others will come to know and worship Jesus as Lord. On this night when we celebrate his birth, hear our prayers and accept our praise in Jesus' name. Amen.

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

“From heav’n above to earth I come  
To bear good news to ev’ry home;  
Glad tidings of great joy I bring,  
Whereof I now will say and sing:

“To you this night is born a child  
Of Mary chosen virgin mild;  
This little child of lowly birth  
Shall be the joy of all the earth.

“This is the Christ, our God Most High,  
Who hears your sad and bitter cry;  
He will himself your Savior be  
From all your sins to set you free.”

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

*Needed: candles and a string of Christmas lights*

**P** We use lights all the time. We have lights in our homes and in church. There are even candles burning here in church. Even though lights are all around us all the time, we see even more lights and candles at Christmas. Where do you see lights and candles like these at Christmas time? (*Show the lights and candles. Let children share places they have seen special lights at Christmas.*) We use candles to decorate our homes and sometimes we use more candles in church during Advent and Christmas, like the candles on our Advent wreath. Many people put up bright lights outside of their homes and Christmas trees are usually wrapped in lights. Why do we use so many extra lights at Christmas? (*Let children suggest answers.*) The lights we use at Christmas remind us that Jesus is the Light of the world.

Tonight we are celebrating Jesus’ birth in Bethlehem. When Jesus grew up, he taught people about God and healed people. He died on the cross to take our sins away and rose from the dead. Jesus said, “I am the Light of the world.” Jesus brings the light of his love and forgiveness to people lost in the darkness of sin. We want to let Jesus’ love shine in our lives. We pray that other people will learn about Jesus’ love and join us as we walk in his light.

Let’s pray: Jesus, you are the Light of world. Help us to shine with your light and love so that other people will want to walk in your light. Amen.

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

Ah, dearest Jesus, holy Child,  
Prepare a bed, soft, undefiled,  
A quiet chamber set apart  
For you to dwell within my heart.

My heart for very joy must leap;  
My lips no more can silence keep.  
I, too, must sing with joyful tongue  
That sweetest ancient cradlesong:

Glory to God in highest heav'n,  
Who unto us his Son has giv'n!  
While angels sing with pious mirth  
A glad new year to all the earth.

- **The Old Testament Reading**, Genesis 15:1-6, is spoken by the pastor or other worship leader:

¶ After these things the word of the LORD came to Abram in a vision: “Fear not, Abram, I am your shield; your reward shall be very great.” But Abram said, “O Lord GOD, what will you give me, for I continue childless, and the heir of my house is Eliezer of Damascus?” And Abram said, “Behold, you have given me no offspring, and a member of my household will be my heir.” And behold, the word of the LORD came to him: “This man shall not be your heir; your very own son shall be your heir.” And he brought him outside and said, “Look toward heaven, and number the stars, if you are able to number them.” Then he said to him, “So shall your offspring be.” And he believed the LORD, and he counted it to him as righteousness.

- **The Epistle Reading**, 2 Corinthians 4:1-6, is spoken by the pastor or other worship leader:

¶ Therefore, having this ministry by the mercy of God, we do not lose heart. But we have renounced disgraceful, underhanded ways. We refuse to practice cunning or to tamper with God’s word, but by the open statement of the truth we would commend ourselves to everyone’s conscience in the sight of God. And even if our gospel is veiled, it is veiled to those who are perishing. In their case the god of this world has blinded the minds of the unbelievers, to keep them from seeing the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ, who is the image of God. For what we proclaim is not ourselves, but Jesus Christ as Lord, with ourselves as your servants for Jesus' sake. For God, who said, “Let light shine out of darkness,” has shone in our hearts to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ.

- **The Gospel Reading**, Luke 2:1-7, is spoken by the pastor or other worship leader:

¶ In those days a decree went out from Caesar Augustus that all the world should be registered. This was the first registration when Quirinius was governor of Syria. 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. And while they were there, the time came for her to give birth. And she gave birth to her firstborn son and wrapped him in swaddling cloths and laid him in a manger, because there was no place for them in the inn.



- The **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.

For Christ is born of Mary, and, gathered all above  
 While mortals sleep, the angels keep their watch of wond'ring love.  
 O morning stars, together proclaim the holy birth.  
 And praises sing to God the king and peace to all the earth.

- The **Gospel Reading**, Luke 2:8-14, continues, spoken by the pastor or other worship leader:

¶ And in the same region there were shepherds out in the field, keeping watch over their flock by night. And an angel of the Lord appeared to them, and the glory of the Lord shone around them, and they were filled with great fear. And the angel said to them, “Fear not, for behold, I bring you good news of great joy that will be for all the people. For unto you is born this day in the city of David a Savior, who is Christ the Lord. And this will be a sign for you: you will find a baby wrapped in swaddling cloths and 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 among those with whom he is pleased!”

- The **Hymn** 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.

Shepherd, why this jubilee?  
Why your joyous strains prolong?  
What the gladsome tidings be  
Which inspire your heav'nly 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 **Gospel Reading**, Luke 2:15-20, continues, spoken by the pastor or other worship leader:
  - Ⓟ When the angels went away from them into heaven, the shepherds said to one another, “Let us go over to Bethlehem and see this thing that has happened, which the Lord has made known to us.” And they went with haste and found Mary and Joseph, and the baby lying in a manger. And when they saw it, they made known the saying that had been told them concerning this child. And all who heard it wondered at what the shepherds told them. But Mary treasured up all these things, pondering them in her heart. And the shepherds returned, glorifying and praising God for all they had heard and seen, as it had been told them.
- The **Sermon Hymn** is sung by the congregation to the tune *Stille Nacht* 66 88 66, or a selection from the contemporary music song suggestions list at the end of the music guide for this service can be sung instead. If desired, individual candles can be lit during this time with overhead lights dimmed or turned off:

Silent night, holy night!  
All is calm, all is bright  
Round yon virgin mother and child,  
Holy Infant, so tender and mild,  
Sleep in heavenly peace,  
Sleep in heavenly peace.

Silent night, holy night!  
Shepherds quake at the sight;  
Glories stream from heaven afar,  
Heav'nly hosts sing, Alleluia!  
Christ the Savior is born!  
Christ the Savior is born!

Silent night, holy night!  
Son of God, love's pure light  
Radiant beams from thy holy face  
With the dawn of redeeming grace,  
Jesus, Lord, at thy birth,  
Jesus, Lord, at thy birth.

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

Theme verses: And in the same region there were shepherds out in the field, keeping watch over their flock by night. And an angel of the Lord appeared to them, and the glory of the Lord shone around them, and they were filled with great fear. And the angel said to them, “Fear not, for behold, I bring you good news of great joy that will be for all the people. **For unto you is born this day in the city of David a Savior, who is Christ the Lord.**” (Luke 2:8-11, especially v. 11)

- Ⓟ On this Christmas Eve I am haunted by a painting titled *Nativity with St. Francis and St. Lawrence*. The artist was Michelangelo da Merisi, whom we know as Caravaggio, the name of his hometown in Italy. (*The painting may be projected on a screen, printed in the service folder, or simply described by the preacher.*) Caravaggio includes two anachronistic figures, St. Francis and St. Lawrence, clearly not alive at the time of Christ's birth. This can be explained by the fact that the piece was painted as an altarpiece for the Oratory (Prayer Chapel) of St. Lawrence near the Basilica of St. Francis in Palermo, Italy.

Caravaggio costumes the Nativity figures in the period dress of the 1600s. Were that done today they might be dressed in jeans and T-shirts. The realism is stark. He depicts Mary as a weary young woman, slouching, disheveled and exhausted from travel and giving birth. The Christ Child rests on a pile of hay at her feet.

What haunts me, though, is the darkness that permeates the scene. I do sometimes forget that the announcement of Jesus' birth came first to shepherds “keeping watch over their flock *by night*” (Luke 2:8). Contrasting the night sky over those Judean hills was not only an “angel of the Lord” but also the bright “glory of the Lord” shining all around them (Luke 2:9). Against the dark, night sky came the message, “For unto you is born this day in the city of David a Savior, who is Christ the Lord” (Luke 2:11). Night and day, darkness and light!

The darkness of night is all over this painting. Out of the darkness, an almost unnatural light falls on the figures in Caravaggio's painting. He would become known for his avid use of chiaroscuro (kee-aa-ruh-sky-ur-ow), the technique of painting darkness and shadows and importing light on the figures he wants us to see. To the extreme this often-copied style was called Tenebrism (from the Latin, *tenebrae*, for darkness), accenting light shining in darkness. Another name for it is “night light.” The use of darkness and light makes this painting so