

A SERIES OF SPECIAL SERVICES FOR ADVENT

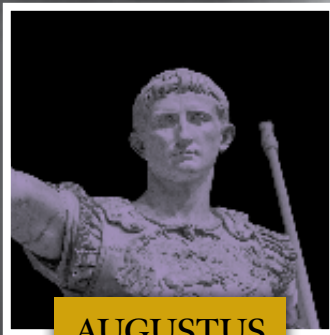
WE THREE KINGS



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DAVID



AUGUSTUS



HEROD

WE THREE KINGS

A SERIES OF SPECIAL SERVICES FOR ADVENT

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By Arden W. Mead, with children's sermons and prayers by Mark Zimmermann. Images: Adobe Stock. © 1992/2006/2022 Creative Communications for the Parish, a division of Bayard, Inc., 1564 Fencorp Dr., Fenton, MO 63026. 800-325-9414. www.creativecommunications.com. All rights reserved. Purchase of this series 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.

WE THREE KINGS

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ABOUT “WE THREE KINGS”

We Three Kings is a series of three services for Advent which features dramatic “interviews” not with the Wise Men but with three ancient monarchs whose reigns impacted directly on the coming of Christ • David, a direct ancestor of our Lord • Augustus, in whose reign Jesus was born • Herod, who sought to kill the infant Savior.

The services may be offered in any order. Each service in the series contains digital files in .rtf (rich text format) of the order of service • a sermon • a children’s sermon • prayers • newsletter/bulletin notices • hymns • visual media recommendations • contemporary music song suggestions • a pdf of the service with music for the accompanist and PowerPoint documents of the service with images and text (along with a copyright release) for use on screens.

WE THREE KINGS

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WEEK 1: DAVID

NEWSLETTER NOTICE

We invite you to our Advent worship series We Three Kings, which takes a look at three ancient monarchs whose reigns impacted directly on the coming of Christ. In this week's service, we ponder the life of King David, who served as a forerunner of the Messiah—a child born in the little town of Bethlehem, a ruler strong in battle and a shepherd who sang over his sheep. We are reminded in the life of David that Jesus is our King come to earth, our Defeater of all opponents and our Protector who watches over us.

BULLETIN NOTICE

Today we welcome you to our Advent worship series We Three Kings, which takes a look at three ancient monarchs whose reigns impacted directly on the coming of Christ. In this service we ponder the life of King David, who served as a forerunner of the Messiah—a child born in the little town of Bethlehem, a ruler strong in battle and a shepherd who sang over his sheep. We are reminded in the life of David that Jesus is our King come to earth, our Defeater of all opponents and our Protector who watches over us.

WE THREE KINGS

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WEEK 1: 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:

[shutterstock.com/image-photo/low-key-image-beautiful-queenking-crown-1576329703](https://www.shutterstock.com/image-photo/low-key-image-beautiful-queenking-crown-1576329703)

- The **Opening 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.

For he is our childhood's pattern; day by day, like us, he grew;
He was little, weak, and helpless, tears and smiles, like us he knew;
And he cares when we are sad, and he shares when we are glad.

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!

- The **Advent Approach** is spoken responsively by the leader and the congregation from Luke 1:26-33:

ℓ In the sixth month the angel Gabriel was sent by God to a town in Galilee called Nazareth, to a virgin engaged to a man whose name was Joseph, of the house of David. The virgin's name was Mary.

☪ **“Hail, O favored one! The Lord is with you. Blessed are you among women.”**

ℓ But Mary was much perplexed by the words and pondered what sort of greeting this might be.

☪ **“Do not be afraid, Mary, for you have found favor with God. Behold, you will conceive in your womb and bear a son, and you will name him Jesus.**

ℓ “He will be great, and will be called the Son of the Most High.

☪ **“And the Lord God will give to him the throne of his ancestor David.**

ℓ “He will reign over the house of Jacob forever, and of his kingdom there will be no end.”

- The **Hymn** is sung by the congregation to the tune Freut Euch, Ihr Lieben 76 76 D, or a selection from the contemporary music song suggestions list at the end of the music guide for this service can be sung instead:

Hail to the Lord's anointed, great David's greater Son!
Hail, in the time appointed, his reign on earth begun!
To take away transgression and rule in equity.

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

ℒ Stir up, O Lord, your people to pray to you and prepare for you to usher in your kingdom through your birth in the same town of King David's birth. O Son of David and Son of God, reign in our hearts with your love. Guide us as a good shepherd would, and lead us to the pastures of your paradise in heaven. Rule over us with your mighty power until we find our rest in you. Amen.

- The **Hymn** is sung by the congregation to the tune Freut Euch, Ihr Lieben 76 76 D, or a selection from the contemporary music song suggestions list at the end of the music guide for this service can be sung instead:

Kings shall fall down before him, and gold and incense bring;
All nations shall adore him, his praise all people sing.
To him shall prayer unceasing and daily vows ascend;
His kingdom still increasing, a kingdom without end.

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

ℒ Hello, boys and girls. Welcome to the season of Advent. We are looking at King David in our worship for today. You probably know King David mostly from when he was a little kid like you. You see, when he was a young boy, there was a giant named Goliath who said he could not be defeated. But David put a tiny stone into a slingshot and flung it at the giant's head, knocking him down and killing him. The people were amazed, but David said it was because the Lord was on his side.

Then when David was a little older, he played the harp while herding sheep and wrote songs (which we call psalms) to God, thanking him for his goodness and love toward him and also asking for forgiveness, protection and guidance. David was a man of prayer who kept in touch with God.

David was the youngest of all his brothers, but God anointed him to be king over God's people. As king, David was mighty in battle, made Jerusalem the capital of the nation and worshiped God until the day he died.

So what do we learn from David? We learn that God is always on our side and even little kids like you can do great things. We learn that it is important to stay close to God through prayer and song that we might learn to love him more and more. And we learn that God has a purpose and a plan for each one of us. All we need to do is trust in God and God will do the rest.

This Advent we remember that Jesus was born in the town of King David's birth, and he is descended from King David. So Jesus reminds us of what King David did and helps us to see that he will be for us a Good Shepherd and a Mighty King forevermore. Let us pray:

O Jesus Christ, connect us to the line of David through your birth among us, that we, too, might be blessed by the same love, care and grace our heavenly Father showed to King David. Amen.

- The **Scripture Reading**, 1 Samuel 17:19-23, 32-37, is spoken by the worship leader:

ℓ Now Saul and they and all the men of Israel were in the Valley of Elah, fighting with the Philistines. And David rose early in the morning and left the sheep with a keeper and took the provisions and went, as Jesse had commanded him. And he came to the encampment as the host was going out to the battle line, shouting the war cry. And Israel and the Philistines drew up for battle, army against army. And David left the things in charge of the keeper of the baggage and ran to the ranks and went and greeted his brothers. As he talked with them, behold, the champion, the Philistine of Gath, Goliath by name, came up out of the ranks of the Philistines and spoke the same words as before. And David heard him. And David said to Saul, "Let no man's heart fail because of him. Your servant will go and fight with this Philistine." And Saul said to David, "You are not able to go against this Philistine to fight with him, for you are but a youth, and he has been a man of war from his youth." But David said to Saul, "Your servant used to keep sheep for his father. And when there came a lion, or a bear, and took a lamb from the flock, I went after him and struck him and delivered it out of his mouth. And if he arose against me, I caught him by his beard and struck him and killed him. Your servant has struck down both lions and bears, and this uncircumcised Philistine shall be like one of them, for he has defied the armies of the living God." And David said, "The LORD who delivered me from the paw of the lion and from the paw of the bear will deliver me from the hand of this Philistine." And Saul said to David, "Go, and the LORD be with you!"

- The **Psalmody**, Psalm 93, is spoken responsively by the worship leader and the congregation:

ℓ The Lord is King, he is robed in majesty.

☪ **The Lord is robed, he is girded with strength.**

ℓ He has established the world; it shall never be moved.

☪ **Your throne is established from of old; you are from everlasting.**

ℓ The floods have lifted up, O Lord, the floods have lifted up their voice; the floods lift up their roaring.

☪ **More majestic than the thunders of mighty waters, more majestic than the waves of the sea, majestic on high is the Lord!**

ℓ Your decrees are very sure.

C Holiness befits your house, O Lord, forevermore.

- The **Scripture Reading**, Acts 2:22-36, is spoken by the worship leader:

Ⓛ “Men of Israel, hear these words: Jesus of Nazareth, a man attested to you by God with mighty works and wonders and signs that God did through him in your midst, as you yourselves know—this Jesus, delivered up according to the definite plan and foreknowledge of God, you crucified and killed by the hands of lawless men. God raised him up, loosing the pangs of death, because it was not possible for him to be held by it. For David says concerning him, ‘I saw the Lord always before me, for he is at my right hand that I may not be shaken; therefore my heart was glad, and my tongue rejoiced; my flesh also will dwell in hope. For you will not abandon my soul to Hades, or let your Holy One see corruption. You have made known to me the paths of life; you will make me full of gladness with your presence.’ Brothers, I may say to you with confidence about the patriarch David that he both died and was buried, and his tomb is with us to this day. Being therefore a prophet, and knowing that God had sworn with an oath to him that he would set one of his descendants on his throne, he foresaw and spoke about the resurrection of the Christ, that he was not abandoned to Hades, nor did his flesh see corruption. This Jesus God raised up, and of that we all are witnesses. Being therefore exalted at the right hand of God, and having received from the Father the promise of the Holy Spirit, he has poured out this that you yourselves are seeing and hearing. For David did not ascend into the heavens, but he himself says, ‘The Lord said to my Lord, “Sit at my right hand, until I make your enemies your footstool.”’ Let all the house of Israel therefore know for certain that God has made him both Lord and Christ, this Jesus whom you crucified.”

- The **Theme Hymn** is sung by the congregation to the tune Kings of Orient 88 86 and refrain:

We three kings of antiquity humbly bow, the Savior to see.
King forever, failing never, Ruler of all is he!
Oh-oh, Christ the Savior, Christ the Lord, Christ by heav’n and earth adored!
Come and praise him, anthems raise him—praise the King with one accord!

Son of David, shepherd of old, bearer of God’s promise foretold,
God’s anointed King appointed comes now to tend the fold.
Oh-oh, Christ the Savior, Christ the King, Christ whose birth the angels sing!
Bow before him, kneel, adore him; let the world its tribute bring!

- The **Dramatic Sermon** is delivered:

Note: This sermon is scripted for two readers. The narrator's parts are in regular type and extend to the left margin. The king's lines are in boldface and indented. If a third reader is desired, those narrator lines printed in italics may be read from the balcony, the rear of the church, or a separate lectern.

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"Hosanna to the Son of David!" they cried on Palm Sunday.

"Hosanna to the Son of David!" the Church continues to cry, down through the centuries.

You must be honored, David.

Indeed I am. It was through me that the Lord God provided both a human bloodline and even royal ancestry for the Son of God. Jesus Christ would be forever hailed as "the son of David."

Our Lord has many human ancestors, of course, generation upon generation of them—including some very famous ones, Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, Judah, Sarah, Rebekah, Rachel and Ruth. But of all of them you are the one who is most frequently named.

That is especially true as Christmas approaches.

Interesting. Why do you suppose that is the case?

Perhaps because in a unique way I represent the fulfillment of promise—

God's promise to sinful human beings of a Savior who would redeem them from their sinfulness.

God's good word that goes back as far as Adam and Eve, repeated to Abraham and the patriarchs—through Moses too—long before I was born ...

Not to mention those who would come after you—

Isaiah and Zechariah, Micah and Malachi—God's promise of One who would be sent into the midst of humankind as one of us ...

The son of David.

And the Son of God, to effect our redemption.

You said that Christmas—the birth of our Lord—was a time when the memory of David seemed especially important in the fulfilling of God’s ancient promises.

In announcing the Savior’s birth to the virgin Mary, the angel of the Lord invoked my name specifically and the promise God had made to me centuries before:

“The son whom you conceive in your womb will be great, and will be called the Son of the Most High, and the Lord God will give to him the throne of his ancestor David.”

Over and over again Mary’s husband Joseph is identified as being “of the house and lineage of David”:

“Joseph, son of David, do not be afraid to take Mary as your wife, for the child conceived in her is from the Holy Spirit.”

Old Zechariah mentioned me in his prayer of thanksgiving at the birth of John the Baptist:

“The Lord God of Israel has raised up for us a mighty savior in the house of his servant David as he spoke through the mouth of his holy prophets of old.”

And, of course, the Christmas angels used my name—and my memory—to identify the birthplace:

“For unto you is born this day in the city of David a Savior, which is Christ, the Lord.” — Your observation is correct, David: your memory, and the proud history and promise it brings to mind, seems to fill the Christmas story at every turn.

I would like to think, however, that I am remembered as more than just a human ancestor of our Lord—honorable as that is—but that I serve also as a kind of “role model” for the Messiah.

What do you mean, “role model”?—the fact that you were a king, and so is he?

Not only that. There are a number of things about my life and career that seem to foreshadow the life of Christ and help to give it meaning.

Besides the fact that you were Israel’s greatest and most beloved king.

Like the fact that I came from humble beginnings, born in Bethlehem, a kind of out-of-the-way location, not the sort of place you’d imagine as the birthplace of a king. When Samuel came to anoint me, no one seemed to believe I would become what he foretold of me.

I wonder how many people, looking into the Christmas manger, could see in Jesus all that was foretold of him?

Here's another instance: Like the Messiah to come, I was a conquering hero.

But—also like the Messiah—in some ways a deceptive hero.

That's true. Goliath didn't think I was much of an adversary. He regarded my trust in the Lord as foolishness, my lack of armor as a sign of weakness.

Just as the cross of Christ appeared to be a sign of weakness and foolishness, in the face of enemies as formidable as sin and death and Satan himself.

I also bring to the ancestry of Jesus the concept of having been anointed—

That is what the title “Christ” means, of course—“the anointed One.”

As well as the obvious dimension of royalty, of kingship.

And we all know how often the Lord Jesus spoke of “the kingdom of God.”

But I like to think that my greatest contribution as a “role model” for the Savior, if you will, is in the picture of the Good Shepherd, the strong protector who is also the caring provider. How many people down through the centuries have derived comfort and strength from the example and the images which I provided—

The good shepherd “leaves the ninety-nine in the wilderness and goes after the one that is lost until he finds it. And when he has found it, he lays it on his shoulders and rejoices.”

The Lord is my shepherd, I shall not want. He makes me lie down in green pastures, he leads me beside still waters. He restores my soul; he leads me in paths of righteousness for his name's sake.

“He will feed his flock like a shepherd; he will gather the lambs in his arms, and carry them in his bosom, and gently lead those that are with young.”

Even though I walk through the darkest valley, I fear no evil; for you are with me; your rod and your staff—they comfort me.

“The good shepherd lays down his life for the sheep ... I lay it down in order that I may take it up again.”

Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life, and I will dwell in the house of the Lord forever.

“My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me. And I give them eternal life, and they shall never perish; neither shall anyone pluck them out of my hand.”

Perhaps it is significant that the birth of the Good Shepherd was first proclaimed to shepherds of Bethlehem.

People like you, weren't they?

With a message for people like you—the message of God's promises fulfilled in Jesus Christ, the good shepherd ...

Son of God and son of David.

The greatest King of all.

- The **Confession** is spoken by the worship leaders with responses sung by the congregation to the tune Coronation 86 86 86:

- ℒ At the name of Jesus every knee should bend, in heaven and on earth and under the earth, and every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.

All hail the pow'r of Jesus' name! Let angels prostrate fall.
Bring forth the royal diadem and crown him Lord of all.
Bring forth the royal diadem and crown him Lord of all.

- ℒ The days are surely coming, says the Lord, when I will raise up for David a righteous Branch, and he shall reign as king and deal wisely, and shall execute justice and righteousness in the land. And this is the name by which he will be called: “The Lord is our righteousness.”

Hail him, you heirs of David's line, whom David Lord did call—
The God incarnate, man divine—and crown him Lord of all.
The God incarnate, man divine—and crown him Lord of all.

- ℒ Then the king will say to those at his right hand, “Come, you that are blessed by my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world.”

O seed of Israel's chosen race, now ransomed from the fall,
Hail him who saves you by his grace and crown him Lord of all.
Hail him who saves you by his grace and crown him Lord of all.

- ℒ The kingdom of the world has become the kingdom of our Lord and of his Christ, and he will reign forever and ever.

Let ev'ry kindred, ev'ry tribe on this terrestrial ball
To him all majesty ascribe and crown him Lord of all.
To him all majesty ascribe and crown him Lord of all.

- The **Offering** is collected at this time. If desired, this **Motion Background** (purchased by you from Worship House Media: worshiphousemedia.com) is presented on a screen at this time for reflection on the theme of the service:

worshiphousemedia.com/motion-backgrounds/96858/david

- The **Prayers** are spoken by the worship leader:

ℓ O Son of David, Son of God, restore to us the joy of your salvation in your birth in Bethlehem, the hometown of King David. Enliven us to live with glad devotion to you.

O Son of David, Son of God, embolden us to fight the many giants we face in our lives, and win against them by your great power. Let us never live in fear but find our strength in you.

O Son of David, Son of God, lift up our voices in prayer and songs of praise to you. Let our love for you overflow in word and deed as we serve those around us with gentleness and care.

O Son of David, Son of God, enthrone yourself within our souls, and fill us to everlasting with the gifts of your kingdom. May we dwell faithfully to the end and gain the crown of life. Amen.

- The **Benediction** (from Revelation 1: 4-6) is spoken responsively by the worship leader and the congregation:

ℓ Grace to you and peace from him who is and who was and who is to come, and from the seven spirits who are before his throne, and from Jesus Christ, the faithful witness, the firstborn of the dead, and the ruler of the kings of the earth.

☞ **To him who loves us and freed us from our sins by his blood, and made us to be a kingdom, priests serving his God and Father, to him be glory and dominion forever and ever. Amen.**

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

The advent of our King our prayers must now employ,
And we must hymns of welcome sing in strains of holy joy.

The everlasting Son incarnate deigns to be;
Himself a servant's form puts on to set his servants free.

O Zion's daughter, rise to meet your lowly King,
Nor let your faithless heart despise the peace he comes to bring.

As Judge, on clouds of light, he soon will come again,
And his true members all unite with him in heav'n to reign.

Before the dawning day let sin's dark deeds be gone;
The sinful self be put away, the new self now put on.

All glory to the Son, who comes to set us free,
With Father, Spirit, ever One, through all eternity.