



# Yet in thy Dark Streets *Shineth*

A SERIES OF SPECIAL SERVICES  
FOR ADVENT

**JERUSALEM | NAZARETH | BETHLEHEM**

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## ABOUT “YET IN THY DARK STREETS SHINETH”

The three services of the Advent series “Yet in Thy Dark Streets Shineth” invite those who participate and lead worship on an Advent journey to three significant locations in ancient Israel.

• **Jerusalem**, site of sacrifice and forgiveness, where an aged priest entering the temple will confront the angel Gabriel • **Nazareth**, where a humble maiden will be told her part in the family of God, a family of which we all are a part • **Bethlehem**, where a young couple are just now being directed to a nearby stable, even as we prepare to worship and rejoice.

Orders of service include responsive litanies and psalms, Scripture citations, hymn stanzas specially adapted to the themes of this series (including new settings of the *Benedictus*, *Magnificat* and *Gloria in Excelsis* to familiar hymn tunes and a fresh rendering of the traditional “O Antiphons” of Advent as the Prayers of the Church). Each service also includes a children’s sermon, newsletter/bulletin notices, 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.

Appropriate for mid-week Advent services or for Sunday worship during the season, the services feature three Dramatic Sermons in which one narrator or a trio of narrators (usually representing past, present and future insights) lead listeners to the dark streets of ancient Jerusalem, Nazareth and Bethlehem. The narrators point out items of interest (objects, conversations, events) highlighting their importance in terms of the coming of the Lord. The mood is one of knowing anticipation.

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## WEEK 1: JERUSALEM

### 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/view-jerusalem-old-city-sunset-israel-1080937451](https://www.shutterstock.com/image-photo/view-jerusalem-old-city-sunset-israel-1080937451)

- The **Advent Approach** includes hymn verses sung by the congregation to the tune Milwaukee 88 88 88 66, interspersed with lines spoken responsively by the worship leader and the congregation:

Lift up your heads, you mighty gates! Behold, the King of glory waits.  
The King of kings is drawing near; the Savior of the world is here.  
His coming rends the dark of night where shines the everlasting Light.  
God send the Light divine in our dark streets to shine!

ℒ Now in Jerusalem there was a man named Simeon.

**C** God's Spirit came to him and told him that he would not die until he had seen Christ the Lord.

**L** When Mary and Joseph brought Jesus to the temple, Simeon took the baby Jesus in his arms and praised God:

**C** "Now, Lord, you have kept your promise, and you may let your servant go in peace."

**L** The aged prophet Anna was also there in the temple; day and night she worshiped God, fasting and praying.

**C** She praised God, and spoke about the child Jesus to all who were looking for the redemption of Jerusalem.

O blest the land, the city blest, where Christ the Savior is confessed!  
O happy hearts and happy homes to whom this King in mercy comes!  
As to Jerusalem he came with palms to praise his holy name,  
God send the Light divine in our dark streets to shine!

**L** Stir up your power, O Lord, and come. Protect us from the threatening dangers of our sin, and save us by your mighty deliverance; for you live and reign with the Father and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.

**C** Amen.

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

**L** Hello, boys and girls. In these Advent worship services, we are going down the streets of several different cities on the way to Jesus' birth. Today we find ourselves on the streets of Jerusalem. Imagine, if you will, a big and bustling city. Jerusalem was the capital city, and it was the place where kings ruled from palaces. It was a center for worship as well. People came from far and wide to sacrifice animals to the Lord in the temple. Jerusalem was a destination town. It was a place where young and old, rich and poor, famous and not-so-famous rubbed shoulders and existed together. You might say it was the New York City of its day.

What can we learn from Jerusalem, boys and girls? We can learn that we need to remember Jesus is our King and he rules over everyone, no matter who they are. We can learn that it is important to worship Jesus. We should offer our time, talents and treasures to him, because Jesus came to this earth as a little baby to sacrifice himself for us on the cross. We learn that we should reach out in love to all those we meet and rub shoulders with. It doesn't matter to Jesus if you are young or old, rich or poor, famous or not-so-famous. Everyone needs to know about the love of God and the salvation we have in Jesus.

The next time you are on a street with a lot of people, think about Jerusalem, and thank God for sending Jesus to save all people through his birth, life, death and resurrection. Jesus came to bring his love to every street and road and way. That's what we celebrate and prepare for this Advent. Let us pray:

Dear Jesus, thank you for delivering all people on earth in every city and town. Help us to spread your Good News to those we see on every street. Amen.

- The **Old Testament Reading**, 1 Chronicles 11:1-9, is spoken by the worship leader:

**L** Then all Israel gathered together to David at Hebron and said, "Behold, we are your bone and flesh. In times past, even when Saul was king, it was you who led out and brought in Israel. And the Lord your God said to you, 'You shall be shepherd of my people Israel, and you shall be prince over my people Israel.'" So all the elders of Israel came to the king at Hebron, and David made a covenant with them at Hebron before the Lord. And they anointed David king over Israel, according to the word of the Lord by Samuel. And David and all Israel went to Jerusalem, that is, Jebus, where the Jebusites were, the inhabitants of the land. The inhabitants of Jebus said to David, "You will not come in here." Nevertheless, David took the stronghold of Zion, that is, the city of David. David said, "Whoever strikes the Jebusites first shall be chief and commander." And Joab the son of Zeruiah went up first, so he became chief. And David lived in the stronghold; therefore it was called the city of David. And he built the city all around from the Millo in complete circuit, and Joab repaired the rest of the city. And David became greater and greater, for the Lord of hosts was with him.

- A **Responsive Psalm** (from Psalm 68) is spoken responsively by the worship leader and the congregation:

**L** Your solemn processions are seen, O God,

**C** the processions of God my King into the sanctuary.

**L** The singers are in front, the musicians last, between them girls playing tambourines:

**C** "Bless God in the great congregation; praise the Lord, all you descendants of Jacob!"

**L** Summon your might, O God.

**C** Show your strength, O God, as you have done for us before.

**L** Because of your temple at Jerusalem kings bear gifts to you.

**C** Let bronze be brought from Egypt; let Ethiopia hasten to stretch out its hands to God.

ℒ Awesome is God in his sanctuary, the God of Israel.

☐ **He gives power and strength to his people. Blessed be God!**

- The **Holy Gospel**, Luke 1:5-17, is spoken by the worship leader:

ℒ In the days of Herod, king of Judea, there was a priest named Zechariah, of the division of Abijah. And he had a wife from the daughters of Aaron, and her name was Elizabeth. And they were both righteous before God, walking blamelessly in all the commandments and statutes of the Lord. But they had no child, because Elizabeth was barren, and both were advanced in years. Now while he was serving as priest before God when his division was on duty, according to the custom of the priesthood, he was chosen by lot to enter the temple of the Lord and burn incense. And the whole multitude of the people were praying outside at the hour of incense. And there appeared to him an angel of the Lord standing on the right side of the altar of incense. And Zechariah was troubled when he saw him, and fear fell upon him. But the angel said to him, “Do not be afraid, Zechariah, for your prayer has been heard, and your wife Elizabeth will bear you a son, and you shall call his name John. And you will have joy and gladness, and many will rejoice at his birth, for he will be great before the Lord. And he must not drink wine or strong drink, and he will be filled with the Holy Spirit, even from his mother's womb. And he will turn many of the children of Israel to the Lord their God, and he will go before him in the spirit and power of Elijah, to turn the hearts of the fathers to the children, and the disobedient to the wisdom of the just, to make ready for the Lord a people prepared.”

- The **Theme 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 city of Jerusalem, thou royal citadel  
Where pilgrims throng with festal song the praise of God to tell:  
Here, at God's time appointed, the Lamb of sacrifice,  
The heav'nly King whose birth we sing, will pay redemption's price.

- The **Sermon** can be delivered by one reader or three readers:

Note: The sermon is structured in such a way that it may be delivered by three persons, usually representing past, present and future insights.

The lines for the chief speaker, the person representing the PRESENT, are in regular type.

**The lines for the person representing the PAST are in boldface type.**

*The lines for the person representing the FUTURE are in italics.*

LINES PRINTED IN ALL CAPITAL LETTERS ARE READ BY ALL THREE SPEAKERS IN UNISON.

The sermon may, of course, be presented instead by a single preacher speaking everything, ignoring the typefaces.

+

The season of Advent calls us to a journey. We stand at a juncture here

**where we may look back to the past and what the Lord has done for his people there to make this present possible.**

*We look also to the future, to the time of fulfillment, when the Lord will come again.*

Advent is a time of increasing light.

**Watch it begin to glow, even in these dark streets.**

*Let us begin today's journey in a valley—the valley named Kidron. To one side the mountain called Olivette slopes back away from us, its olive trees and presses and walls, remnants from an even more ancient time, still dark in the morning shadows. Ahead of us, to the west, illumined by the amber light of the morning sun, our chosen path winds its serpentine way up Zion's holy mountain to the City of the Lord—*

JERUSALEM!

The road is busy—nothing new for so ancient a road to so noble a place.

**On this very road Melchizedek, the priest-king of God Most High, greeted the victorious Abraham, leading him into the city to partake of a festive meal. King David trod upon these stones to conquer this city of the Jebusites and moved his capital here from Hebron. Stripped to his tunic, he danced before the Ark of the Covenant, taken up in the religious fervor felt when the city of the king became the City of the Lord. Quarried stones were brought by this path, and gold and jewels and cedars of Lebanon—once by Solomon, once by Nehemiah, and once by Herod—to build the great Temple of Abraham's God.**

There, you can see the masons now, hauling another great stone through the gates to continue work on Solomon's Colonnade.

*Years from now the first Christians will listen to Peter and James and John in that Colonnade,*

but for now, what with Herod still alive, and Zebedee just now learning to mend his father's nets on the shores of Lake Galilee, the building here goes on.

**Work was begun here by Herod over twenty-six years ago,**

and will not stop for nearly another sixty-five.

*Six years after that, not a stone of it will remain upon another.*

**The queen of Sheba, bedecked in silk and reeking of perfume, was carried upon a litter to visit Solomon by this way. One of her litter carriers tripped on a peacock just over this hill, almost spilling his precious cargo. You should have heard her carry on.**

Upon this road Babylonian hordes marched into the city, and slaves marched out to Babylon.

**Ptolemy, general under the great Alexander, approached Jerusalem by this road and claimed the city as his own. Antiochus IV of Syria and Judas Maccabeus,**

Herod of Israel and Titus of Rome,

*Godfrey of Bouillon and Saladin the Muslim in years to come, Suleiman the Magnificent of Turkey and Richard the Lionheart of Britain,*

Hasmonean,

**Jebusite,**

*Crusader,*

Jew,

*Arab,*

**Persian,**

Idumean,

**Babylonian,**

*Egyptian,*

**Sumerian,**

Roman,

*Palestinian and Israeli,*

**and Magi**

—through the gates which we now enter, have passed and will pass the leaders of the ages.

**Within these walls kingdoms have risen and toppled;**

*dreams have been dreamt*

**and hopes have been dashed.**

Our small crowd therefore is joined by the rabble of the ages

**—the royal entries, the military sieges, the returning armies weighed down with the spoils of battle.**

All of these are keeping beat to the steady rhythm, the endless tide of the common folk

*—farmers, merchants, soldiers, carpenters, fishermen.*

And the pilgrims

*—surging through the gates in tempo with the seasons and the religious festivals.*

The pilgrims

*—crowding the streets, jamming the gates, flowing steadily through the years, waxing with the great religious festivals, waning when persecution is strong and faith is weak*

*—like corpuscles,*

*flowing through the gates from the extremities of the earth, this lifeblood of pilgrims flows here to its heart.*

Release your senses now. Allow the tide of Jerusalem to wash over them. Open your eyes as we travel this ancient road. Capture the sights, file them away.

**Open your ears.**

*Hear*

the brass bells adorning the camel caravans;

*listen*

to the clip-clop of the burros and the flip-flap of the sandals hitting the worn limestone cobbles;

*hear*

the melodic trickle of water—a commodity so precious that it is hoarded in cisterns, guided through aqueducts, and channeled from springs to pools.

**Then block out the noise, close your eyes and simply**

... breathe.

*Inhale,*

and drink in the odors—the savory fragrances of Jerusalem.

*Smell them*

—the heady scent of wine and fig;

**the strong odor of people and beast;**

*the cacophony of fragrances wafting on the air from the open air markets*

—incense from Babylon,

*spices from Persia,*

**oils from Rome,**

*grains from Egypt.*

And above it all, growing steadily stronger as we near the place, smell the odor that distinguishes Jerusalem from any other city—that strange and pungent mixture of incense

**and blood**

*and smoke*

**and roasting meat**

that has haunted this mountain for more than a millennium.

Smell the sacrifice.

This is, after all, a city constantly in the shadow of death.

**Here the prophets prophesied ... and here the messengers of God were slain for their words.  
And here the sacrifices were made**

... and are made

*... and will be made.*

That man ahead of us, do you see him, mopping the sweat of the climb off his brow, and now leaning over to gently stroke the ram at his side?

**For seven years he has been raising that sheep—feeding it, leading it from pasture to pasture, guarding it from predators, checking to see that no harm comes to it, that no blemish develops. Seven years.**

And now he comes to slaughter it—to sacrifice it in accordance with the law.

*The blood of that ram will cover the sins of his family. The sacrifice of that ram will buy back from God the life of that shepherd's newly born son.*

**Ages ago another man, mopping his brow after the climb up this very hill, stopped to stroke the head of his sacrifice, gently calming the young boy and saying, “Fear not, my son—God will provide a lamb.” And the altar was built, and the sacrifice was bound up, and the knife was raised ... and the thicket shook and the voice boomed,**

and Abraham's prayers were answered.

**Here the sacrifices have been offered. Here the incense has been burned. Here the smoke has risen with the prayers of the children of God. Here Simeon has waited. Here Anna has prayed. The blood has been spilled, the atonements have been made, the corpses have been burned, and the smoke, rising into heaven, has been the only point of contact between a people and their God.**

But things are happening. See that man there, coming from the marketplace, having traded half of the year's barley crop for a stubborn young donkey?

*Years from now that man's son will question two young men whom he takes to be thieves trying to pilfer the great-great-grandchild of that burro. “The Master has need of it,” he will be told. An hour later he will be trying to give a logical explanation to his angry wife. But by then the young colt will be bearing another sacrifice over these stones ... to his death. And in that death the kingdom of death itself will be toppled, and a new Kingdom shall rise.*

But for now, at this significant juncture in God's great journey toward the world's salvation, God's people wait. Out in the court of women, Anna prays. Near her, a young boy, together with his sisters Mary and Martha—Martha so gently mothering them—waits for his father to return with their dinner. Closer to the sanctuary, in the court of the men, old Simeon dons his prayer shawl and looks to heaven with hopeful eyes.

And look! Look there, for this is what we came to see—an old priest, heart heavy with the prayers

of his people and his own prayers as well, turns to enter the holy place and burn his incense, as he has so many times before,

*little knowing that hovering behind the curtain an angel waits, with news that will silence his tongue, and lighten his heart, and answer his prayers.*

It is beginning!

We stand in a valley—the valley named Advent.

**To one side the mountain called Christmas slopes back away from us—its temple and cities and trappings, remnants from an ancient time, are now dark in the evening shadows.**

*And ahead of us, to the east, illumined by the amber light of the morning sun, our chosen path leads to the gates of ...*

Jerusalem.

*And the thicket shakes ... and the Lamb emerges, the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world ... and the voice booms ... and our prayers are answered.*

LIGHT!

In these dark streets it now begins to shine.

- The **Canticle**, Zechariah's Benedictus, is sung by the congregation to the tune Nun Danket Alle Gott 67 67 66 66:

Blest be the Lord our God, who grants his favored nation  
The blessing long foretold, redemption and salvation!  
From all who mean us ill he comes to set us free  
That we may serve him still in peace and purity.

You, messenger of God, prepare the way before him—  
Forgiveness of all sins to those who thus implore him.  
God's strong and saving Light will dawn and still increase,  
Drive back the shades of night and guide our feet in peace.

- The **Lord's Prayer** is spoken in unison.

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

[worshiphousemedia.com/motion-backgrounds/44251/jerusalem-street](http://worshiphousemedia.com/motion-backgrounds/44251/jerusalem-street)

- The **Advent Prayers**, the Traditional “O Antiphons” of Advent, are spoken responsively by the worship leader and the congregation:

**L** O WISDOM, come!

**C** You govern all creation with your strong yet tender care.

**L** O holy Word of God:

**C** Come; teach us; make us wise!

**L** O SACRED LORD, come!

**C** You showed yourself to Moses in the burning bush and gave him the Law on Mount Sinai.

**L** O Ruler of the house of Israel:

**C** Stretch out your arm and save us!

**L** O BRANCH OF JESSE, come!

**C** Kings are silent in your presence and nations bow before you.

**L** O Sign for all peoples:

**C** Come quickly to deliver us!

**L** O KEY OF DAVID, come!

**C** You open and no one can close; you close and no one can open.

**L** O Royal Power of Israel:

**C** Break down the walls of prison death!

**L** O RADIANT DAWN, come!

**C** Shine on those who dwell in deadly darkness.

**L** O Splendor of Eternal Light:

**C** Arise and come, O Sun of Righteousness!

**L** O KING OF THE NATIONS, come!

**C** You are the only joy of every human heart; you bring together peoples long apart.

**L** O Cornerstone:

**C** Save us, whom you fashioned from the dust!

**L** O EMMANUEL, come!

**C** You are the King of creation, the Hope of all nations, the Savior of all.

**L** O King and Lord:

**C** God-with-us, come!

- The **Benediction** is spoken by the worship leader:

**L** The Lord bless you and keep you. The Lord make his face shineth upon you in every dark street and be gracious unto you. The Lord look upon you with the brightness of his everlasting light, and grant you his peace. Amen.

- The **Closing 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:

Thou who didst in Jerusalem thy precious blood outpour,  
Who on the cross didst suffer loss, then rise to life once more:  
Prepare us for thy coming that, in this world of sin,  
Thy faithful will receive thee still: Redeemer, enter in!