

Christmas Day Worship for the Home

December 25, 2020



This service is written for two speakers. Ideally, family members can speak and declare God's grace to one another following this format. For those who live alone, this worship outline can be followed with a brother or sister in Christ over the phone. You may call on a friend to fill this role, or your elder or pastor can worship with you by phone.

There is an "offering prayer" included in this outline. As we shelter in place, please continue to worship through giving. You can mail offering envelopes and checks to Calvary or visit www.calvaryslz.org to give online.

Invocation

Reader 1: Merry Christmas! Our God is with us.

Reader 2: Our God is Immanuel. Merry Christmas!

Reader 1: We invite our God to lead our worship.

Reader 2: The Father, who gave his only begotten Son;

Reader 1: The Son, born as a human baby on Christmas;

Reader 2: The Spirit, by whom we cry, "Abba! Father!"

Together: Amen. Merry Christmas!

Lighting of the Advent Wreath

We light all the candles on the Advent wreath today. The center candle is the Christ candle, signifying the presence of our Savior among us! If you have a wreath at home, this is an appropriate time to light it. Following is a traditional prayer for Christmas Day.

Almighty God, grant that the new birth of your only Son in the flesh may set us free from our old slavery under sin; through Jesus Christ our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. Amen.

Psalm 2

¹ Why do the nations rage

and the peoples plot in vain?

² The kings of the earth set themselves,

and the rulers take counsel together,

against the Lord and against his Anointed, saying,

³ “Let us burst their bonds apart

and cast away their cords from us.”

⁴ He who sits in the heavens laughs;

the Lord holds them in derision.

⁵ Then he will speak to them in his wrath,

and terrify them in his fury, saying,

⁶ “As for me, I have set my King

on Zion, my holy hill.”

⁷ I will tell of the decree:

The Lord said to me, “You are my Son;

today I have begotten you.

⁸ Ask of me, and I will make the nations your heritage,

and the ends of the earth your possession.

⁹ You shall break them with a rod of iron

and dash them in pieces like a potter's vessel.”

¹⁰ Now therefore, O kings, be wise;

be warned, O rulers of the earth.

¹¹ Serve the Lord with fear,

and rejoice with trembling.

¹² Kiss the Son,

lest he be angry, and you perish in the way,

for his wrath is quickly kindled.

Blessed are all who take refuge in him.

Confession & Absolution

Make sure each person present has opportunity to confess to a brother or sister in faith. Go through both parts as many times as needed to accommodate all who are gathered.

Christian Confessing: Jesus, you came as light into darkness. I have to admit there's a lot of darkness in me. I know your light drives out the darkness, but sometimes I hide the dark secrets because I'm embarrassed. Other times, I keep some corners of my life in the dark because I secretly want to go back to them. Forgive me. Shine your light in me and drive the darkness away.

Christian Responding: The darkness always gives way to the light. Jesus is the light of the world, and he shines his light in your life. He's heard your prayer, and he answers with a resounding, "Yes!" You have received the gift of Jesus this Christmas, and you are born new by the work of God. You are a forgiven child of the Light.

Together: Amen.

John 1:1-14

¹In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. ²He was in the beginning with God. ³All things were made through him, and without him was not any thing made that was made. ⁴In him was life, and the life was the light of men. ⁵The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness has not overcome it.

⁶There was a man sent from God, whose name was John. ⁷He came as a witness, to bear witness about the light, that all might believe through him. ⁸He was not the light, but came to bear witness about the light.

⁹The true light, which gives light to everyone, was coming into the world. ¹⁰He was in the world, and the world was made through him, yet the world did not know him. ¹¹He came to his own, and his own people did not receive him. ¹²But to all who did receive him, who believed in his name, he gave the right to become children of God,¹³ who were born, not of blood nor of the will of the flesh nor of the will of man, but of God.

¹⁴ 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.

Apostles' Creed

I believe in God, the Father Almighty, maker of heaven and earth.

And in Jesus Christ, His only Son, our Lord, who was conceived by the Holy Spirit, born of the virgin Mary, suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, died and was buried. He descended into hell. The third day He rose again from the dead. He ascended into heaven and sits at the right hand of God the Father Almighty. From thence He will come to judge the living and the dead.

I believe in the Holy Spirit, the holy Christian Church, the communion of saints, the forgiveness of sins, the resurrection of the body, and the life everlasting. Amen.

Hebrews 1:1-6

¹ Long ago, at many times and in many ways, God spoke to our fathers by the prophets, ² but in these last days he has spoken to us by his Son, whom he appointed the heir of all things, through whom also he created the world. ³ He is the radiance of the glory of God and the exact imprint of his nature, and he upholds the universe by the word of his power. After making purification for sins, he sat down at the right hand of the Majesty on high, ⁴ having become as much superior to angels as the name he has inherited is more excellent than theirs.

⁵ For to which of the angels did God ever say,
“You are my Son,
today I have begotten you”?

Or again,
“I will be to him a father,
and he shall be to me a son”?

⁶ And again, when he brings the firstborn into the world, he says,
“Let all God's angels worship him.”

Message

The Wonders of His Love

When my kids were younger, we had a very small Christmas tree. For several years we didn't hang any of our breakable ornaments either. All those shiny balls and painted figures on the tree would have been too attractive for to a toddler to keep from grabbing. Once an ornament was in a child's hand, they would naturally want to put it in their mouth. Chalk it up to irresistible temptation.

Instead, my wife made ornaments out of cookie dough and our young kids were able to help decorate. This way, our kids got to explore the Christmas tree without mom and dad worrying about anything breaking.

I saw a picture a few days ago from a friend's house. They have young kids at home this Christmas, so they apparently faced the same challenge. How do we put up a Christmas tree with a toddler in the house? Their solution was a barricade. In their picture, the kids were in front of a beautifully decorated tree with a fence creating an impassable partition between the children and the tree.

Like it or not, you and I have a lot in common with little kids and Christmas trees. We make a mess out of God's good plans. In fact, there's a story in the Bible about a tree we found irresistible, even though it wasn't for us.

The story of Adam and Eve taking fruit from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil isn't a story about somebody else in a far off time and place. It's a story about us. We're connected to that story because it's a story about our family. It's not as if Adam and Eve represent just one side of our family tree, and we can hope the other side of the family brought something better into our heritage. They are us.

If you think about it, maybe Adam and Eve were like God the Father's toddler children. They just couldn't overcome the urge to touch the fruit, and once it was in their hands they naturally wanted to put it in their mouth. Chalk it up to irresistible temptation.

Regardless, after that God put up a barrier. There was another tree in the garden, and God was afraid Adam and Eve would eat from that tree too. I guess it's like that fence my friends put around their Christmas tree. God made it impossible for Adam and Eve to access the Tree of Life.

Was the fence there to protect the tree or the children? In our case, it's the children. Your heavenly Father wouldn't allow you to live in this broken world forever. You see, when we took the fruit we disobeyed God. We brought something new into his good creation. We brought the first thing which was not good. We brought sin, with its disobedience and brokenness.

Sin immediately began to spread through creation like an infection. This was not good. God couldn't bear the thought of his children living in a setting like this forever. To live forever in a dying world separated from our God and his good plans would be hell on earth.

Instead, our Father protected us from that fate. He set plans in motion to change this world, and to change us. A barrier was placed between us and our God. He erected it to keep us safe, but that barrier also kept us apart from Him. So, God promised to send a Savior, someone who could cross that barrier. God himself was going to cross the barrier and enter his broken world. This morning we celebrate the God who left his position of power and authority in his perfect home in order to become a weak and frail baby boy born into this dangerous, broken world.

In Galatians, the Apostle Paul says it this way:

*But when the fullness of time had come, God sent forth his Son, born of woman, born under the law, to redeem those who were under the law, so that we might receive adoption as sons.
(Galatians 4:4-5)*

That baby boy born in Bethlehem some 2000 years ago is God incarnate. The Son of God took on human flesh in order to cross the barrier which divided us from our heavenly Father. He came to us because we could not go to him. He came to die, so that we would have no more fear of death. He rose to new life, so that we could receive new life as well.

The barrier between us and God would never keep God apart from his children. Nothing will keep him from the children he loves. There is no barrier which can stop God's love.

As the Apostle Paul wrote in Romans 8:

For I am sure that neither death nor life, nor angels nor rulers, nor things present nor things to come, nor powers, nor height

nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord. (Romans 8:38-39)

This is the wonder of his love!

As your Savior, Jesus went back across the barrier, proving that the way is now open. He will return again, but not as a little baby. He will return in glory, and he will bring the glory of heaven to earth. He will make the earth new, and he will make us new as well.

Remember the tree? God put a barrier between us and the Tree of Life in order to protect us from an eternity of ever-increasing brokenness. But Jesus came to bring healing. Jesus was born to correct what had gone wrong. Jesus was born to save us from our sin. Because of Jesus, the barrier will finally be removed.

The Apostle John wrote about this in the vision God gave him of events to come.

Then the angel showed me the river of the water of life, bright as crystal, flowing from the throne of God and of the Lamb through the middle of the street of the city; also, on either side of the river, the tree of life with its twelve kinds of fruit, yielding its fruit each month. The leaves of the tree were for the healing of the nations. (Revelation 22:1-2)

There's no more fence around the tree. The barrier is removed because God came to us. Jesus is the Son of God, born in Bethlehem as your Savior! This is wonderful! It's the wonder of his love...for you!

Merry Christmas!
Amen.

Prayers and the Lord's Prayer

Share prayer requests with one another. Pray over the requests shared, then pray the Lord's Prayer together.

Our Father who art in heaven, hallowed be thy name,
thy kingdom come, thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven.
Give us this day our daily bread;
and forgive us our trespasses as we forgive those who trespass against us;
and lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil.
For thine is the kingdom and the power and the glory forever and ever. Amen.

Offering Prayer

If you have an offering present as you worship, you may place your hands over it during the offering prayer.

Reader 1: With thankful hearts we receive from you, O Lord.

Reader 2: With thankful hearts we respond.

Reader 1: Receive our thanks and praise.

Reader 2: Receive our offerings.

Together: Receive us as your own.

Blessing *(Isaiah 9:2)*

Reader 1: The people who walked in darkness have seen a great light

Reader 2: Those who dwelt in a land of deep darkness, on them a light has shone.

Reader 1: Jesus is the Light of the world!

Reader 2: The Light has come into our world.

Reader 1: Now, Jesus goes with us into this world.

Reader 2: Walk in his presence. Walk in the Light.

Together: Merry Christmas and amen!

As applicable, please share this resource with others who would benefit. An electronic version is available at www.calvaryslz.org. We can also add friends to our mailing list if that is preferred.

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