



## INTRODUCTION

This document provides ready-made Scripture suggestions, liturgical prayers, candlelighting words, and short reflections for use in Christmas Eve worship services of any style. All language is written with inclusivity, accessibility, and clarity in mind. You may copy, adapt, or expand these materials for your congregation.

## SUGGESTED CHRISTMAS EVE SCRIPTURES

### Core Gospel Readings

- Luke 2:1-20 — The birth of Jesus; shepherds and angels
- Matthew 1:18-25 — Joseph receives the angel's message
- Matthew 2:1-12 — The Magi visit (optional)

### Prophetic Readings

- Isaiah 9:2-7 — “The people who walked in darkness have seen a great light.”
- Micah 5:2-5a — A ruler to come from Bethlehem
- Isaiah 11:1-9 — The peaceable kingdom

### Prologue Reading

John 1:1-5, 9-14 — The Word becomes flesh

### Inclusive Paraphrase Option

“Do not be afraid, for I bring you good news of great joy for all people. Today in Bethlehem, Love has taken on flesh and come to dwell with us.”



## OPENING PRAYERS

### Opening Prayer (Traditional, Inclusive Language)

Holy God of starlight and straw,  
we gather on this night in wonder and gratitude.  
You come to us not in power but in vulnerability;  
not in a palace, but in a place where animals sleep.

Quiet our hearts.  
Open our ears.  
Soften our expectations.

As we sing, pray, listen, and light candles,  
may we recognize your presence among us.  
Be born in us again this night.  
Amen.

### Opening Prayer (Short & Kid-Friendly)

Loving God,  
thank you for Christmas Eve.  
For candles and carols,  
for stories and surprises,  
for the joy we share tonight.

Help us see Jesus in kindness,  
in generosity,  
and in the light we pass from one another.  
Amen.



## CANDLE LIGHTING LITURGY

Leader:

Tonight we remember that the light of Christ meets us in the very real darkness of the world.

People:

The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness did not overcome it.

Leader:

From this Christ candle, we share the flame—a sign of love that grows as it is given away, a reminder that every person here carries the light of God.

Leader:

As the flame is passed, we remember that no one's candle is diminished when they light another's. Light shared is love multiplied.

People:

We welcome the Light of the World.

(Begin singing "Silent Night" as the flame spreads.)



## PRAYER OF THE PEOPLE

God of every manger and every border crossing,  
on this holy night we pray for your children around the world—  
those who are sheltered and those without shelter,  
those in places of peace and those surrounded by conflict,  
those who gather with family and those who feel alone.

We remember people giving birth tonight,  
those working overnight shifts to keep others safe,  
and communities living through war, disaster, and displacement.

May your peace take on flesh in us:  
in the choices we make,  
the policies we support,  
the neighbors we welcome.

Come, Emmanuel.  
Be God-with-us  
in ways that transform us  
for the healing of the world you so love.  
Amen.



## COMMUNION LITURGY (SHORT FORM)

### Invitation

This table does not belong to a church, a denomination, or a pastor.  
It is Christ's table, and Christ welcomes all:  
the certain and the seeking,  
the joyful and the weary,  
the long-time member and the first-time guest.

### Words of Institution (Condensed)

On the night before he gave himself to us,  
Jesus shared a meal with his friends.  
He took bread, gave thanks, broke it, and said:  
"This is my body, given for you."

Then he took the cup and said:  
"This cup is the new covenant in my blood.  
As often as you drink it, remember me."

### Prayer

Pour out your Spirit on these gifts  
and on all who gather tonight.  
Make this bread and cup for us  
a sign of Emmanuel—  
God with us, God for us, God in us.  
Amen.

### Distribution

(Insert distribution instructions appropriate for your congregation.)



## SHORT READINGS & REFLECTIONS

### Reflection 1 — “When the Songs Are Stilled” (Inspired by Howard Thurman)

When the songs of the angels are stilled,  
when the star in the sky is gone,  
when the shepherds have returned to their flocks  
and the magi to their villages—  
then the work of Christmas begins:  
to welcome the stranger,  
to feed the hungry,  
to bring good news to the poor,  
to rebuild communities,  
to make peace where there is conflict,  
to recognize Christ in every person we meet.

### Reflection 2 — Original Toolkit Meditation

Tonight we remember that God shows up in unexpected places:  
not in halls of power,  
but in the quiet breath of a newborn.

May this story open our eyes  
to the quiet miracles happening around us—  
in small acts of courage,  
simple gestures of kindness,  
and the light that refuses to go out  
even in the darkest night.

### Reflection 3 — For a Family-Friendly Service

Christmas tells us that God chooses to come close—  
close enough to hear our questions,  
close enough to see our tears,  
close enough to laugh with us and love us.

As we celebrate tonight,  
may we remember that every act of kindness  
is a way of shining Christ’s light into the world.