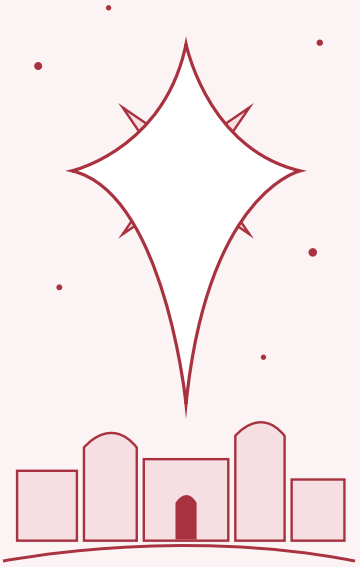
ORDER OF SERVICE

A Christmas Eve candlelight service

The order of service with every reading, response and instruction, for about 60 minutes.



IN THIS ORDER

Welcome and call to worship *About 13 minutes* 2

The promise *About 6 minutes* 2

The birth *About 5 minutes* 3

The shepherds *About 7 minutes* 3

Sermon and offering *About 18 minutes* 4

Lighting the Christ candle *About 3 minutes* 4

Silent Night by candlelight *About 6 minutes* 5

Joy to the World and the blessing *About 4 minutes* 5

The leader reads the lines in regular type. The people answer with the lines in bold. Instructions are in red italic and are not read aloud.

Scripture from the Berean Standard Bible, dedicated to the public domain. Responses and prayers by Church Posting. Any church may copy them.

churchposting.com/resources/worship/christmas-eve-order-of-service/

ABOUT 13 MINUTES

Welcome and call to worship

An instrumental prelude plays as people find their seats. Ushers hand each person an unlit candle with a paper drip guard. A pastor welcomes the room in two or three sentences, then leads the call to worship from Psalm 96.

LEADER Sing to the LORD a new song;

PEOPLE **sing to the LORD, all the earth.**

LEADER Sing to the LORD, bless His name;

PEOPLE **proclaim His salvation day after day.**

LEADER Declare His glory among the nations,

ALL **His wonders among all peoples.**

SING O Come, All Ye Faithful

PRAYER Father, we have come tonight to remember the night your Son was born. Open our ears to your Word and our mouths to your praise, and let every person here see the glory of Christ. In his name we pray. Amen.

ABOUT 6 MINUTES

The promise

READ ISAIAH 9:2, 6-7

> 2 The people walking in darkness have seen a great light; on those living in the land of the shadow of death, a light has dawned. 6 For unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given, and the government will be upon His shoulders. And He will be called Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace. 7 Of the increase of His government and peace there will be no end. He will reign on the throne of David and over his kingdom, to establish and sustain

> it with justice and righteousness from that time and forevermore. The zeal of the LORD of Hosts will accomplish this.

SING O Little Town of Bethlehem

ABOUT 5 MINUTES

The birth

READ LUKE 2:1-7

> [1]Now in those days a decree went out from Caesar Augustus that a census should be taken of the whole empire. [2]This was the first census to take place while Quirinius was governor of Syria. [3]And everyone went to his own town to register. [4]So Joseph also went up from Nazareth in Galilee to Judea, to the city of David called Bethlehem, since he was from the house and line of David. [5]He went there to register with Mary, who was pledged to him in marriage and was expecting a child. [6]While they were there, the time came for her Child to be born. [7]And she gave birth to her firstborn, a Son. She wrapped Him in swaddling cloths and laid Him in a manger, because there was no room for them in the inn.

SING Away in a Manger

ABOUT 7 MINUTES

The shepherds

READ LUKE 2:8-20

> [8]And there were shepherds residing in the fields nearby, keeping watch over their flocks by night. [9]Just then an angel of the Lord stood before them, and the glory of the Lord shone around them, and they were terrified. [10]But the angel said to them, “Do not be afraid! For behold, I bring you good news of great joy that will be for all the people: [11]Today in the city of David a Savior has been born to you. He is Christ the Lord! [12]And this will be a sign to you: You will find a baby wrapped in swaddling cloths and lying in a manger.” [13]And suddenly there appeared with the angel a great multitude of the heavenly host, praising God

> and saying: [14] “Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace to men on whom
> His favor rests!” [15] When the angels had left them and gone into heaven, the
> shepherds said to one another, “Let us go to Bethlehem and see this thing that
> has happened, which the Lord has made known to us.” [16] So they hurried off and
> found Mary and Joseph and the Baby, who was lying in the manger. [17] After they
> had seen the Child, they spread the message they had received about Him. [18] And
> all who heard it were amazed at what the shepherds said to them. [19] But Mary
> treasured up all these things and pondered them in her heart. [20] The shepherds
> returned, glorifying and praising God for all they had heard and seen, which
> was just as the angel had told them.

SING Hark! the Herald Angels Sing

ABOUT 18 MINUTES

Sermon and offering

A short sermon of 12 to 15 minutes on one of the readings. Many guests come only on Christmas Eve, so say plainly who Jesus is and why he came, and tell them when the church meets on Sunday.

The offering. Name where it goes before the plates move, such as a mission the church supports.

ABOUT 3 MINUTES

Lighting the Christ candle

The reader comes to the Advent wreath. The house lights stay up.

LEADER In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.

PEOPLE **The Light shines in the darkness, and the darkness has not overcome it.**

LEADER The Word became flesh and made His dwelling among us.

PEOPLE **We have seen His glory, full of grace and truth.**

Light the four Advent candles, then the white Christ candle.

ABOUT 6 MINUTES

Silent Night by candlelight

The pianist plays the first line of Silent Night and keeps playing. Ushers light their candles from the Christ candle, walk to the front of each section and light the candle of the person on the aisle. The flame passes down each row, person to person. The house lights go down as the rows fill.

ON SCREEN Tip your unlit candle to the lit one

ON SCREEN Keep your lit candle upright

SING **Silent Night** *All verses, by candlelight. Hold the candles up on the last verse.*

At the end of the last verse, the pastor asks everyone to blow out their candles. The house lights come up.

ABOUT 4 MINUTES

Joy to the World and the blessing

SING **Joy to the World**

The pastor faces the people and gives the blessing.

NUMBERS 6:24-26

> 24 May the LORD bless you and keep you; 25 may the LORD cause His face to
> shine upon you and be gracious to you; 26 may the LORD lift up His countenance
> toward you and give you peace.

A postlude plays. Ushers stand at the doors with buckets for the used candles.