

## **More than a Holiday - A Christmas Worship Service**

**Opening Song: “Hark the Herald Angels Sing” (with congregation)**

**Welcome: Minister** Welcome to ...(your Church).....

(Opening prayer)

Today there will be times when we put up a line for you to read out loud together. You will be prompted as the congregation to state the reasons why we celebrate Christmas. Let's practice.

**Congregation: We celebrate Christmas.** (Project each of these congregation lines on the screen.)

(Minister continues...) Good job. Before we go any further turn to the person behind you and shake his or her hand and tell them “This is going to be good.” Then we will continue.

**Song: “Go, Tell it on the Mountain” (with congregation)**

**Introduction:** (show a picture on the screen of narrator getting out his decorations)

**Narrator 1:** (scrooge-like) Dragging those decorations down from the attic for just a few weeks of the year; buying a Christmas tree and fighting the dry needles and sap; buying gifts for family members and friends; Christmas cards; caroling; endless baking and preparations for the Christmas family dinner.... Have you ever thought, “Why am I doing this?”

(Project a picture of this narrator sitting by her Christmas tree.)

**Narrator 2:** (dreamy-like) Sitting in your living room, gazing upon your beautifully decorated tree; sipping cider; anticipating your family coming to visit; a feeling of delight in preparing that perfect gift for your loved one; the smell of a pie baking in the oven; helping a needy family with money for a special Christmas celebration. You have a sense of peace and joy with the holiday season. But why? Why are you doing this?

(Project a Christmas pic of this narrator with family.)

**Narrator 3:** Whether you approach the holiday season as a “scrooge” or an idealist, Christmas is a holiday that you cannot ignore. Each of us has ways of observing the holiday, but if someone were to look at your

Christmas celebrations from an “outsider-looking-in” perspective... what would he see? What questions would he have? Could you explain that your holiday traditions have meaning and purpose? Or do they? Are you just following the trends of culture? Or are you purposeful in how you celebrate the wonderful holiday? What do YOU see in your Christmas season celebrations and traditions?

**Narrator 1:** 1 Corinthians 10:31 says “Whatever you do, do it all for the glory of God.” No matter if you are elaborate in your celebration or if you strive to keep things simple, in reality it all is supposed to point to Jesus.

**Narrator 2:** The culture tells us that Christmas is a mere holiday that should be filled with snowflakes and parties, with Santa and presents, and with family and warm feelings. But Christmas is more than a commercial holiday. Christmas is the celebration of the birth of Christ.

**Congregation: We celebrate the birth of our Savior!**

**Special Music: “What a Glorious Night” by Sidewalk Prophets** –Choir with Band

(Choir goes down/ Kids Choir goes up. Storyteller moves to chair by a nativity set and a few kids sit around him on the floor. They wait during the narrator’s next part.)

**Narrator 3:** A Christmas scene in a Christian’s home could include a wreath on the front door, a nativity set on a table or shelf, a Christmas tree covered with lights and surrounded with gifts, Christmas carols being played softly in the background, and a family gathered around a table to enjoy a Christmas dinner. These are some common symbols and traditions. Do you see how these things point us to the birth and life of Christ?

### **Element 1: NATIVITY SET**

(Show a picture of the complete nativity set)

**Story Teller:** A very obvious connection to the reason for our celebration is the nativity set.

Baby Jesus is in the manger and is lovingly gazed upon by Mary and Joseph. A shepherd is present with his few sheep. Wisemen are bowing

with gifts in hand. They are small figurines- not little idols to be worshiped, but something physical to tell the greatest story ever. But sometimes, we just see them as decorations, and forget to tell the real story of Christmas.

(Reading or storytelling Luke 2:1-20)

In those days Caesar Augustus issued a decree that a census should be taken of the entire Roman world. <sup>2</sup> (This was the first census that took place while [\[a\]](#)Quirinius was governor of Syria.) <sup>3</sup> And everyone went to their own town to register.

<sup>4</sup> So Joseph also went up from the town of Nazareth in Galilee to Judea, to Bethlehem the town of David, because he belonged to the house and line of David. <sup>5</sup> He went there to register with Mary, who was pledged to be married to him and was expecting a child. <sup>6</sup> While they were there, the time came for the baby to be born, <sup>7</sup> and she gave birth to her firstborn, a son. She wrapped him in cloths and placed him in a manger, because there was no guest room available for them.

<sup>8</sup> And there were shepherds living out in the fields nearby, keeping watch over their flocks at night. <sup>9</sup> An angel of the Lord appeared to them, and the glory of the Lord shone around them, and they were terrified. <sup>10</sup> But the angel said to them, "Do not be afraid. I bring you good news that will cause great joy for all the people.<sup>11</sup> Today in the town of David a Savior has been born to you; he is the Messiah, the Lord. <sup>12</sup> This will be a sign to you: You will find a baby wrapped in cloths and lying in a manger."

<sup>13</sup> Suddenly a great company of the heavenly host appeared with the angel, praising God and saying,

<sup>14</sup> "Glory to God in the highest heaven,  
and on earth peace to those on whom his favor rests."

<sup>15</sup> When the angels had left them and gone into heaven, the shepherds said to one another, "Let's go to Bethlehem and see this thing that has happened, which the Lord has told us about."

<sup>16</sup> So they hurried off and found Mary and Joseph, and the baby, who was lying in the manger. <sup>17</sup> When they had seen him, they spread the word concerning what had been told them about this child, <sup>18</sup> and all who

heard it were amazed at what the shepherds said to them. <sup>19</sup> But Mary treasured up all these things and pondered them in her heart. <sup>20</sup> The shepherds returned, glorifying and praising God for all the things they had heard and seen, which were just as they had been told.

(Reading or storytelling) Matthew 2:1-12

After Jesus was born in Bethlehem in Judea, during the time of King Herod. Magi<sup>[a]</sup> from the east came to Jerusalem <sup>2</sup> and asked, “Where is the one who has been born king of the Jews? We saw his star when it rose and have come to worship him.”

<sup>3</sup> When King Herod heard this he was disturbed, and all Jerusalem with him. <sup>4</sup> When he had called together all the people’s chief priests and teachers of the law, he asked them where the Messiah was to be born. <sup>5</sup> “In Bethlehem in Judea,” they replied, “for this is what the prophet has written:

<sup>6</sup> “‘But you, Bethlehem, in the land of Judah,  
are by no means least among the rulers of Judah;  
for out of you will come a ruler  
who will shepherd my people Israel.’<sup>[b]</sup>”

<sup>7</sup> Then Herod called the Magi secretly and found out from them the exact time the star had appeared. <sup>8</sup> He sent them to Bethlehem and said, “Go and search carefully for the child. As soon as you find him, report to me, so that I too may go and worship him.”

<sup>9</sup> After they had heard the king, they went on their way, and the star they had seen when it rose went ahead of them until it stopped over the place where the child was. <sup>10</sup> When they saw the star, they were overjoyed. <sup>11</sup> On coming to the house, they saw the child with his mother Mary, and they bowed down and worshiped him. Then they opened their treasures and presented him with gifts of gold, frankincense and myrrh. <sup>12</sup> And having been warned in a dream not to go back to Herod, they returned to their country by another route.

**Congregation: We celebrate that God came for us!**

## **Special Music Song s– Kids Choir: “Come to See the Newborn King” and “Hallelujah! He is Born!”**

### **Element 2: CANDLES**

**Narrator 4:** (Hold up a lighted candle) A very common symbol used at Christmas is the candle. In the past, people would burn a candle in the window to welcome someone home or as a sign of good news. (Show a pic of narrator or family looking at a candle) To our Christmas celebrations, they add a visual of warmth and give a feeling of peace in a room. How can these be used to glorify God and to remember Jesus? (Bring all lights down) ‘

John 8:12 - “Jesus said, ‘I am the light of the world. Whoever follows me will not walk in darkness, but will have the light of life.’”

Since the time when man first sinned, mankind has been separated from Holy God. We can try and try to obey God on our own, but we will fail every time. (Cover candle with dark container) Sinners are trapped in the darkness of evil and its consequences. When Jesus was born, the light of God’s glory entered our dark world of sin. (uncover candle)

John 1:9 tells us that Jesus is “The true light that gives light to every man”. He came to overcome the sin that has power over us. He came to be our guide in living a life of hope and peace with God. (lights up)

When you are in a dark room, it only takes one light to drive darkness away. It takes only one light to calm our fears and give direction. We are drawn to the light. Jesus came to draw all men to Himself. In Him, we do not have to fear. He is like a candle in the window that welcomes us home to God with the good news of forgiveness from our sins. And when we come into His light and ask Him to be our Savior, He conquers the sin that clings to us. Darkness cannot stay in the presence of light.

**Congregation: We celebrate! The Light of the World is Jesus!**

**Slide:** Isaiah 42:6-8a (just allow time for it to be read on their own)

**Special Music Song: Tremble (by Mosaic MSC)**

### **Element 3: TREE**

**Video: 24 Christmas Tree Hits in 43 Seconds**

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=tdRYVZtiKg8>

**Narrators 5:** (a family who takes turns with these parts)

Putting up a Christmas tree is a common practice for this season. Our family has the tradition of putting up a live tree. (Narrator Family ...Tell what your family looks for in a Christmas tree. Where do you go to buy one? How do you pick it out? Who pays for it? Ever any trouble getting it into your home? Why is it worth it? Show some pictures about this process. Then add the following narration.)

What my family does for a Christmas tree is what God does for you.

1. God picked you. Ephesians 1:4 says that God chose you before the creation of the world to be holy and blameless in His sight." He chose that through the gift of Jesus, you can belong to Him. He also chose you for a purpose and has placed you right where you are to stand tall and point others to heaven.
2. God purchased you. He redeemed us from sin. Our failures deserve punishment and our sin separates us from God, but Jesus came to earth as a man to die on the cross. That sacrificial act paid for our sins. 1 Corinthians 6:19... You are not your own, you were bought at a price.
3. God has picked you and purchased you, but He has not taken you home to heaven yet. He wants the world to see what God can do with His purchased possession. So, He prunes you. He chops off your sins like prejudice, dishonesty, and pride. He then decorates you with His love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, gentleness, faithfulness and self-control. He crowns you with His righteousness and surrounds you with His grace.

So when you look at your Christmas tree? Stand tall. Celebrate that God picked you, that He came to purchase and prune you. And in His time, He will take you to His home. (note... some of this tree lesson was taken from Max Lucado)

**Congregation: We celebrate that Jesus has redeemed us from sin!**

#### **Element 4: CAROLS**

(Choir members come up aisles singing "O Come All Ye Faithful" and gather on the stage steps at)

Narrator 6: Do you have a favorite Christmas carol? Have you ever wondered about the tradition of Christmas caroling? (Show picture of

carolers at a house.) To me, it seems a bit creepy and awkward for a group of people to sing at me while I stand freezing in my doorway. But the carols themselves are such an effective way to tell the story of Jesus. Verse after verse, Christian carols give details of that glorious night of Christ's birth and tell of the spiritual implications of His coming. Many carols have been arranged in various ways over the years, but their message is still clear- glory to the newborn King.

Christmas carols have become so much a part of our Christmas tradition that even unbelievers enjoy the music and join in. So hum them while you are working, teach them to your family – even go house to house if you dare. Sing out the message of Christ!

**Congregation: We celebrate the Newborn King!**

(Choir sings several carols with congregation)

**The First Noel**

**O Little Town of Bethlehem**

**We Three Kings**

**We Wish You a Merry Christmas**

(Choir moves to risers)

**Element 5: WREATH**

**Narrator 7:**

(Project a pic of narrator hanging a wreath at home.) Wanting our homes to be welcoming, we have the tradition of hanging wreaths on our doors. They lend to a festive atmosphere, but they too can point us to Jesus. The wreath can represent Christ's life and victory. Wreaths made of evergreen branches are twisted into a circle. Evergreen needles are green in a season where other leaves have died. These greens are full of life in the midst of winter's death. Thus, the wreath can remind us of the resurrection of Christ. He is life despite death. And like the circle doesn't have an ending point, we have life that does not end - everlasting life in Him.

In the ancient world, a victorious warrior or athlete would wear a wreath on his head when he was crowned the winner! Jesus wore the crown of thorns and became our victor over sin.

**Congregation: We celebrate victory and life eternal!**

(Still Narrator 7) Sometimes our holiday wreaths are made of holly branches. Have you ever held a holly branch? Quite prickly, aren't they? These evergreen leaves can remind us of the crown of thorns that Jesus wore on the cross. The holly's blossom is white and can symbolize how Christ was pure and sinless. The holly's red berries represent the color of Jesus' blood that He gave as an offering for our sin. The cross was a horrific death. Jesus came to earth, knowing that His life here would lead to the cross. As fully man and fully God, he was falsely accused, beaten, spit upon, pierced by nails, and hung on two beams of wood. Why? Because of his love for you and his hatred of the sin that was destroying us.

**Congregation: We celebrate the love of Christ!**

**Special Music:- The Holly and the Ivy"- Choir**  
(Choir goes down)

#### **Element 6: PRESENTS (Offering)**

Narrator 8: We can't talk about Christmas traditions without talking about presents! (Show pic of narrator's kids with presents.) Turn to the person next to you and tell each other the best present that you have ever received as a child and why. (Wait)

The best present I ever received was \_\_\_\_\_. It was given to me by \_\_\_\_\_.

Gifts are a love language. We are honored when someone gives us a gift. The gift of God's Son, lying in the manger that Christmas night, is the greatest gift of love ever given. John 3:16 says that God loved the world so much that He gave us His only Son, so that whoever believes in Him will have eternal life. Jesus was given in love so that we might know the love of God. Jesus was given so that we might receive salvation.

Christmas presents remind us about OUR giving as well. Turn to the person next to you and share the best present that you have ever given. (Wait)

The best present I ever gave was \_\_\_\_\_. I spent time thinking about that gift and anticipating the reaction of \_\_\_\_\_ when they received it.

The wisemen brought gifts to Jesus. They honored Him with gifts for a King. We also are to honor and bow before God with our offerings. He does not need our gifts. He is the Lord of all. Yet we give because we desire to honor Him as King and Lord. He gave His all for us on the

cross. We give because we are loved and grateful. Let us give today to the Lord in excitement and joy, anticipating HIS pleasure in receiving them.

**Congregation: We celebrate the gift of God's Son!**

Usher prays for Offering

During offering = show **1John 4:9** on the screen

**Then show Video "The Gift of Christmas"** [http://](http://www.sermonspice.com/product/61104/the-gift-of-christmas)

[www.sermonspice.com/product/61104/the-gift-of-christmas](http://www.sermonspice.com/product/61104/the-gift-of-christmas)

**Then show the following scriptures for meditation:**

**2 Corinthians 9:15**

**Colossians 1:21-22**

**1 John 3:1**

### **Element 7: FEAST (Communion)**

Narrator 9:

Gathering with family is a holiday tradition held by some and longed for by others. It's just a good time to catch up and connect. And with these gatherings there is always food. Sometimes it's an elaborate fare with all the trimmings. Sometimes it's a potluck with you aunt's turkey dressing, your cousins' green bean casserole, and your mama's pecan pie. Whatever the menu, families gather around to eat and visit and remember their roots.

(show picture of a family gathered around a table. Change narration to fit the narrator's memories but keep the theme of the table going)...

In my parent's home, my dad always sits at the head of the table, and my mom sits at his right. The rest of us fill in the other chairs.

There is a spot for each of us in the family. We each have a place setting for the meal. Before we eat, we join hands, and thank God for the food and His blessings. In that moment of stillness and prayer, profound feelings sweep over me. I feel unified with my family. I feel loved. I belong. I am home. I am grateful.

Our Christmas gatherings can point us to Christ and give us a glimpse of heaven. This is a beautiful picture of God's family gathered around His table.

You see, God is at the head of the table and Christ belongs at His right hand. There is, however, no place for sinners at His table. Sinners are enemies of God, deserving condemnation and death. So, Christ left His

rightful place and came to earth. He took my place and your place on the cross, so that each of us can now have a place at God's table. When you believe that Jesus is God's gift of salvation for you and when you are united with Him in baptism, your sins are forgiven and you are declared righteous. You are adopted into God's family. You now belong at God's table.

The table of communion is a meal that foreshadows the feast to come, in that we gather united as God's family around His table of provision and blessing. We eat the bread to remember His body broken for us. We drink of the juice to remember His blood spilled for us. We gather to remember where we came from and celebrate His salvation. Believers are members of God's family because of the gift of Christ.

**Congregation: We celebrate being God's children!**

Prayer: Narrator 9

Communion Time/ Special Music- **"Come to the Table"** by Sidewalk Prophets

#### **Element 8: CHRISTMAS LIGHTS**

**Video: Amazing Grace House** (internet video of Christmas lights synced to music) <https://www.google.com/search?q=Christmas+lights%2C+Amazing+grace+house&oq=Christmas+lights%2C+Amazing+grace+house&aqs=chrome..69i57j0l5.8575j0j4&sourceid=chrome&ie=UTF-8>

**Skit "Shine On"** <https://www.skitsandstuff.com/Skits/?NO=114&TYPE=1&CATPRINO=5&CATSECNO=18>

(when finished, put up John 1:9 on screen)

**Congregation: We celebrate God's light shining through us!**

#### **Element 9: PREPARING ROOM FOR GUESTS**

NARRATOR 10: Lights, trees, feasts, and gifts; all of these aspects of our Christmas celebrations take time. We prepare to celebrate the birth of Christ with all the decorating and baking and shopping. But perhaps the one thing you prepare for more than others is welcoming guest into

your home. It requires a preparation all its own. (Show pic of kids helping clean and preparing for guests.) You will likely gather linens and make beds. You may even shuffle the people in your home to other rooms to make space available for your out of town loved ones. Once you have the accommodations in order, you will wait in eager anticipation of their arrival. Our prayer for you this year is that as you take the time to make room for your guests in your home, you would be reminded to take time and make room for Jesus in your heart. The hustle and bustle of the holiday season often leads us to be so busy that we not only miss the opportunity to reflect on the “why” of Christmas, but we also miss taking the time to anticipate His promised return. The innkeeper in the Christmas story missed the mark of allowing the King of kings into his home. May you be encouraged to take a pause in your holiday and let the story of “no room in the inn” urge you to make abundant room in your heart for the Savior, so that when He returns, you will be ready to welcome Him.

(Show pic of the heart ornament give-away.)

We have a heart ornament that we would like to give each family today. When you hang it on your tree, remember to make sure you are ready for this season and allow Jesus to fill your heart and desire His return. There is no time like the present to fully acknowledge His presence. Please join me in praying.

(Prayer)

(Choir and narrators come up during prayer)

### **All Narrators:**

Narrator 1: Christmas is more than a commercial holiday.

Narrator 2: It is a celebration of the birth and work of God on earth!

Narrator 3: Be intentional with how you celebrate Christmas!

Narrator 4: Remember the “why” of your Christmas traditions and symbols.

Narrator 5: If we are not being clear about how we are using them, the intensity of the culture’s influence will overshadow Christmas’ true meaning.

Narrator 6: Traditions on their own are meaningless.

Narrator 7: Choose elements that support the “why” that you intend.

Narrator 8: All things are to point to Christ!

Narrator 9: Whatever you do, do it to the glory of God!

Narrator 10: And share with others the reason for the celebration!

**Congregation: We celebrate the birth of our Savior!**

**Song: "What a Glorious Night"**