

**A BIBLE WORD PRAISE CELEBRATION
FORETELL IMMANUEL CHRISTMAS SERVICE**

This is used for a Carols by Candlelight or morning service at Christmas time. The minister/pastor/priest/worship leader does the narration of each reading as set out, the readings are best done by representatives of the congregation. Carols should be chosen appropriately so as not to clash with other Christmas services, and also to fit with the reading they follow after. The service can be used with traditional, choir-based or contemporary music/band group format, with Traditional and Contemporary Service Orders provided at the end. God's people need to hear our relationship with the Bible in Christmas worship, or lose faith balance. Items for soloists, music/band group/choirs should number 2 to 4 of the carol/song items for good quality gifted ministry input. Any non-expanded good Bible version can be used for the readings. It is recommended that readers from childrens' church be included for all ages ministry.

Entry of the Bible/Welcome/Notices

Introduction: The minister/service leader states the purpose of the service in words such as these:

The fullness of time had come. God sent forth his Son, born of a woman, born the seed of Abraham, born under the law to redeem those under the law, that we might receive the adoption of God's children. In his Word and by his Spirit, God reveals to us the unfolding of his plan to bless the nations with salvation through Abraham's offspring. We receive his Word, and celebrate the birth of Jesus our Savior with praise and prayer.

Let us worship God.

Opening Christmas Carol/Song

Blessed be God the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us with all the spiritual blessings of heaven in Christ. Before the world was made, he chose us in Christ, to be holy and spotless, and to live through love in his presence. He determined that we should be his adopted children, through Jesus Christ, for his own kind purposes, to make us praise the glory of his grace, his free gift to us in his own beloved Son.

Let us pray.

Almighty and Future-opening God,
give us grace to be part of your blessing to the nations
through the one who is the light to the nations.
Sin and death abound in our mortal life, so how good it is
that your Son Jesus Christ came to save us in great humility.
Heavenly Father, we are in your holy presence.
We know our sin and the world's sin
from which your Son came to redeem us.
We pray in his name for your gracious forgiveness,
and that You fulfil in every faithful heart the promise of grace.
As the nations waited for the coming of your divine light,
Let us take up our salvation,

and pass on your blessing to the nations.
On the last day, when Jesus comes again
in his glory to judge the living and the dead,
help us to share in His resurrection to the life immortal -
through Him who is alive and reigns with you and the holy Spirit, one God, now and
for ever.
Grant us in this world your presence and help,
and in the world to come eternal life;
through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

Reading 1: Let us hear, from the Book of Genesis, how God promised to Abraham that through his offspring all nations of the earth should be blessed.
GENESIS 22.15-18 is read.

Christmas Carol/Song

Reading 2: Let us hear, from the Book of Samuel, how God promised King David that through his offspring the blessing to the nations would bring forth God's chosen Son.
2 SAMUEL 7.11b-14a is read.

Christmas Carol/Song

Reading 3: Despite the failure of the royal house of David, God promised a new righteous branch of the line of David. The prophet Jeremiah foretold that the blessing to the nations would be re-opened through him.
JEREMIAH 33.14-16 is read.

Christmas Carol/Song

Reading 4: Let us hear how God foretold the identity and mission of the special one who was to come, this by his prophet Daniel.
DANIEL 2.44, 7.13-14 is read.

Christmas Carol/Song

Reading 5: Let us hear the Christmas prophecy from Isaiah of how God announced the coming of the Christ, the Immanuel child.
ISAIAH 7.13-14 is read.

Christmas Carol/Song

We should not be amazed when we find out that Old Testament Bible prophets foretold events of the coming Christmas long before they happened. God organises history his way, not ours. The New Testament tells of the fulfilment of these prophecies.

Reading 6: In the fullness of time, as foretold in the Scriptures, Jesus Christ was born in Bethlehem. Immanuel had come to save.
MATTHEW 1.18-21 is read.

Christmas Carol/Song

Reading 7: Let us hear how the prophecies of the coming of God's chosen one were declared fulfilled through the Christ child, as recounted by Luke.
LUKE 2. 25-35 is read.

Christmas Carol/Song

Reading 8: The prophet Isaiah foretold that when God's light of salvation dawned, the nations would bring precious gifts to praise God and celebrate the coming of the blessing to the nations..
ISAIAH 60.1-6 is read.

Christmas Carol/Song

Let us worship God with our gifts and offerings: your offerings for the work of the Lord will now be received.

The offerings are collected and then brought forward by the office-bearers/duty stewards, who remain standing for the prayers following:

Let us pray: God our Heavenly Father,
at Christmas time you entrusted your Son to us, your greatest gift.
Accept our gifts, we pray, and use them in Your service
to Jesus' kingdom and grow His Church.

Holy Father, Almighty and Everlasting God,
it is also correct, our discipleship and our joy to praise you
at all times and in all places.
You created the heaven and the earth and all that is in them.
You made man in your own image
and by the mystery of Jesus the Word made flesh,
the coming of the Immanuel offspring of grace is fulfilled.
The light of your glory has dawned in love
upon us and we are the blessing of the nations.
Thank you for the day of our deliverance.
By the power of the Holy Spirit Jesus took our nature upon himself,
and was born of Mary the virgin, so that, being himself without sin,
He might make us clean from all sin.
So through Jesus' death and resurrection you make all things new,
for He gives us to be born again at repentance,
and He comes in power to judge the world for resurrection.

*[Optional traditional inclusion:
Therefore with angels, archangels and all the company of heaven
we praise the greatness of your glory, now and for ever saying:
**Holy, holy, holy Lord,
God of power and might.
Heaven and earth are full of your glory;
Hosanna in the highest.]***

Almighty God, we're glad for Christmas.
We remember the birth of your Son Jesus.
Grant that, as we joyfully receive him as our redeemer,
we may with sure confidence behold him
when he shall come to be our judge.
He is alive and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit,
one God, now and for ever.

[Traditional option: The Lord's Prayer may be said.]

Final Reading 9: Let us hear how the eternal meaning of all these things of God's chosen messiah, the blessing to the nations, is set forth by Paul the apostle.

COLOSSIANS 1. 15—22 is read.

May the Lord bless to us these readings from his holy Word. May God's blessing to the nations by Abraham's offspring, Jesus the Immanuel, be ours and fill us with all peace and joy. Amen.

Closing Christmas Carol/Song

Benediction and Benediction Song

**BIBLE WORD PRAISE CELEBRATION
FORETELL IMMANUEL CHRISTMAS SERVICE**
*(CONTEMPORARY FORM – Songs are suggestions only. For user
friendliness with children, note grouping of readings and songs into blocks.
Recommendations: Band/Music Group sings in place of two or more carols)*

Entry of the Word
Welcome and Notices

Service Introduction

Opening Carol: Long time ago in Bethlehem
Opening Prayer

Reading 1: Genesis 22.15-18
Reading 2: 2 Samuel 7.11b-14a
Reading 3: Jeremiah 33.14-16

Christmas Carol: A Baby was born in Bethlehem
Christmas Carol: Welcome the Christ-child
Christmas Carol: A ray of hope

Reading 4: Daniel 2.44, 7.13-14
Reading 5: Isaiah 7.13-14

Christmas Carol: Joy to the World
Christmas Carol: Long ago and far away

Reading 6: Matthew 1.18-21

Christmas Carol: See him lying on a bed of straw
(Alternatives - Away in a manger/Silent Night)

Reading 7: Luke 2.25-35

Christmas Carol: Come and join the celebration

Reading 8: Isaiah 60.1-6

Christmas Carol: We three kings of orient are

Offering with Offering Song:
Prayer of Intercession

Reading 9: Colossians 1.15-22

Closing Christmas Carol: Go tell it on the mountain

Benediction and Benediction Song

BIBLE WORD PRAISE CELEBRATION
FORETELL IMMANUEL CHRISTMAS SERVICE
(TRADITIONAL FORM – Hymns are suggestions only.
Recommendations: Choir sings anthems in place of two or more carols)

Entry of the Word
Welcome and Notices

Service Introduction
Opening Carol:
Opening Prayer

Hark the herald angels sing/

Reading 1: Genesis 22.15-18

Christmas Carol: **It came upon the midnight clear**

Reading 2: 2 Samuel 7.11b-14a

Christmas Carol: **What child is this?**

Reading 3: Jeremiah 33.14-16

Christmas Carol: **O come, o come, Immanuel**

Reading 4: Daniel 2.44, 7.13-14

Christmas Carol: **Joy to the world**

Reading 5: Isaiah 7.13-14

Christmas Carol: **Child in the manger**

Reading 6: Matthew 1.18-21

Christmas Carol: **See in yonder manger low**

Reading 7: Luke 2.25-35

Christmas Carol: **Once in royal David's city or Silent Night**

Reading 8: Isaiah 60.1-6

Christmas Carol: **The first nowell**

Offering with Offering Song:
Prayer of Intercession and Lord's Prayer

Reading 9: Colossians 1.15-22

Closing Christmas Carol: **O Come all ye faithful**

Benediction and Benediction Song