

NAMES OF JESUS
Immanuel
Advent Worship Series – Week 5
December 28, 2008

WORSHIP SERVICE OUTLINES

Each worship outline contains all elements needed for your worship service. The order of each service presented is only a *suggestion*. No doubt changes will be needed to accommodate the flow and worship style of your corps. The outlines are flexible and allow opportunities to “cut and paste” as needed. If you are blessed with instrumental or vocal music resources, you may find there is more structured material here than needed. It is recommended that the headings of each section of the service be included in the bulletin.

Announcements and Offering

“...and His Name shall be called...Immanuel”

Call to Worship:

The babe of Bethlehem. Immanuel. Remember the promise of the angel? “Behold, the virgin shall be with child, and bear a Son, and they shall call His name Immanuel,’ which is translated, ‘God with us.’” (Matthew 1:23)

For thousands of years, God gave us his voice. Prior to Bethlehem, he gave his messengers, his teachers, his words. But in the manger, God gave us himself. In God’s great gospel, he not only sends, he becomes; he not only looks down, he lives among; he not only talks to us, he lives with us as one of us.

He swims in Mary’s womb.
Wiggles in the itchy manger straw.
Totters as he learns to walk.
Bounces on the back of a donkey.

God with us.

He knows hurt. His siblings called him crazy.
He knows hunger. He made a meal out of wheat-field grains.
He knows exhaustion. So sleepy, he dozed in a storm-tossed boat.
He knows betrayal. He gave Judas three years of love. Judas, in turn, gave Jesus a betrayer’s kiss.
Most of all, he knows sin. Not his own, but he knows yours.
Every lie you’ve told.
Person you’ve hurt.
Dollar you’ve taken.
Promise you’ve broken.
Virtue you’ve abandoned.

Opportunity you've squandered.

Every deed you've committed against God—for all sin is against God—Jesus knows. He knows them better than you do. He knows their price. Because he paid it.

(*Cure for the Common Life*, pages 65-69)

HC#161 – My Great Redeemer's Praise	HC-161	HCD15-T11
Additional Optional Songs		
HC#141 – All Hail the Power	HC-141	HCD13-T11
HC#151 – Fairest Lord Jesus	HC-151	HCD14-T11
HC#121 – Joyful, Joyful	HC-121	HCD11-T11
HC#141 – All Hail the Power	HC-141	HCD13-T11
HC#241 – Crown him with many crowns	HC-241	HCD23-T11

HC#82 – Jesus, Name Above All Names	HC-82	HCD7-T12
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Prayer

Immanuel, you are with me. You became a person and took on flesh. You became a Savior and took on my sin. I accept your gift. I receive you as my Lord, Savior, and friend. Because of you, I'll never be alone again. Amen.

Hallowed Be Thy Name

Responsive Scripture *or* Promises in Scripture:

Leader: Immanuel. God *with* us. Prophets weren't enough. Apostles wouldn't do. Angels won't suffice. God sent more than miracles and messages. He sent himself; he sent his Son. "I am with you always," Jesus said before he ascended to heaven, "to the very end of the age." Search for restrictions on the promise; you'll find none. You won't find "I'll be with you if you behave...or when you believe. I'll just be with you on Sundays in worship..." No, none of that. There's no withholding tax on God's promise. He is *with* us.

All: "*The Word became flesh* and dwelt among us." (John 1:14)

Leader: What does it mean to say that God is with us? Surely it doesn't mean our lives will be easy. It doesn't mean we will be insulated from failure or doubt or that God will take our side in every argument. But it does mean we will never face even a single struggle alone. Here are some promises in scripture:

All: “But Moses said to God, ‘Who am I, that I should go to Pharaoh and bring the Israelites out of Egypt?’ And God said, ***‘I will be with you.’***” (Exodus 3:11-12)

Leader: ***‘I will never leave you nor forsake you...Have I not commanded you? Be strong and courageous. Do not be terrified; do not be discouraged, for the Lord your God will be with you wherever you go.’*** (Joshua 1:5, 9)

All: “When you pass through the waters,
I will be with you;
And when you pass through the rivers,
They will not sweep over you.
When you walk through the fire,
You will not be burned;
The flames will not set you ablaze.
For I am the Lord, your God,
The Holy One of Israel, your Savior.” (Isaiah 43:2-3)

Leader: ***‘Surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age.’*** (Matthew 28:20)

HC#151 – Fairest Lord Jesus	HC-151	HCD14-T11
Additional Optional Songs		
HC#149 – In Christ Alone	HC-149	HCD13-T19
HC#61 – Crown Him King of Kings	HC-61	HCD5-T11
HC#241 – Crown him with many crowns	HC-241	HCD23-T11

Testimonies – “God is with me....”

Drama: For Your Convenience

Message – Immanuel

HC#139 – There is a Message	HC-139	HCD12-T19
Additional Optional Songs		
HC#123 – Shine on Us	HC-123	HCD11-T13
HC#110 – He is Here	HC-110	HCD9-T20
HC#179 – Come to Jesus	HC-179	HCD16-T19
HC#186 – When I look into your holiness	HC-186	HCD17-T16
HC#219 – King of Kings, Majesty	HC-219	HCD20-T19
HC#220 – Incarnate	HC-220	HCD20-T20
HC#226 – I Worship You	HC-226	HCD21-T16

Benediction:

Lord Jesus, we come with praise and thanksgiving for the marvel and miracle of your birth we celebrate this season. Come once again to us this hour that we may rejoice because you have been born in our hearts. We pray that in all our labors, in all our relationships, in all of our life, you will live and love through us, in all our seasons of life, as our Savior and Lord. In your name, we pray. Amen.

(Colonel Henry Gariepy)

HC#180 – Starry Night	HC-180	HCD16-T20
Vocal Benediction Options		
HC#149 – In Christ Alone	HC-149	HCD13-T19
HC#128 – My Tribute	HC-128	HCD11-T18

Week # 5	
DRAMA	
For Your Convenience	
By Martyn Scott Thomas	
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Topic:	God, Humanity
Scripture:	Isaiah 7:14; Matthew 1:18-23
Synopsis:	A convenience store manager gets a surprise visitor.
Characters:	Kevin – the night manager of a convenience store. Josh – the boss’s son.
Props/Costumes:	A polo shirt and khaki pants for Kevin with an optional name tag. Casual dress for Josh. A broom and dust pan for Kevin. A table with a cash register or laptop computer can be used to simulate the check out area of a convenience store. A stack of paper cups could be used at the “back of the store” to represent a Slushee machine.
Setting:	The front register of a convenience store.
Running Time:	3 minutes.

[Kevin is tidying up his store late at night when Josh enters.]

Kevin: Welcome to J. C.’s Mini-mart, we’re always open.

Josh: Good thing for me. Where else could I get a Slushee at 3:00 a.m.?

Kevin: We’re the only place in this neighborhood.

Josh: [walks to “back of store” to get a Slushee] It must get pretty lonely working the overnight shift.

Kevin: It’s not too bad. I kind of enjoy the peace and quiet. And you get to meet some pretty interesting people.

Josh: [walks to register with Slushee] I hope I fit into that category.

Kevin: I can’t tell yet, but last night I got this guy in here wearing a chicken costume. He even tried to pay with eggs.

Josh: I take that back. I definitely don’t want to be in his category.

Kevin: Then, I hope you have cash to pay for that Slushee.

Josh: [pulls some money out of his wallet and hands to Kevin] There you go. [pointing to back of bill] “In God We Trust.”

Kevin: *[takes money from Josh and examines it]* Looks good to me. By the way, I'm Kevin. *[offers hand]*

Josh: *[shaking Kevin's hand]* Josh. It's nice to meet you. *[occasionally sips from his drink]* So how do you fill your nights around here?

Kevin: There's usually not a lot to do, but there's enough to keep me occupied – mostly cleaning up the place. It's a lot easier to do it now rather than during the day when it's busy.

Josh: *[looking around the store]* Well, the store looks pretty clean to me.

Kevin: Thanks. I've worked especially hard tonight.

Josh: *[joking]* Got a surprise inspection coming?

Kevin: Actually, yeah. One of the guys on days tipped me off that the Boss's son was stopping by tonight. I hear he likes to check out each of his stores and see how they're really doing.

Josh: Well, I'm sure he'll be impressed with this one.

Kevin: I hope so. Do you really think everything looks good? It's always nice to have an unbiased opinion.

Josh: *[pointing to the back of the store]* Other than that huge pile of dust in the back of the store . . .

Kevin: *[grabbing his broom and dust pan]* Oh my gosh, I forgot all about that. I was back there before and then you came in and I forgot all about it.

Josh: Don't worry about it. It's really no big deal.

Kevin: To you, maybe, but to the Boss's son – who knows? He's probably a Daddy's boy who's never worked an honest day in his life.

Josh: *[with authority]* Trust me. I speak for my Father. It's no big deal.

Kevin: I'm sure your dad's a real nice guy, but it's not like he owns this store. I mean, that would make you . . . *[realizing what he's saying and who's standing in front of him]* Josh – short for Joshua, Joshua Carpenter, Jack Carpenter's son, owner of J. C.'s Mini-mart. I am so fired.

Josh: Relax, Kevin. I'm here to help.

Kevin: [*defensive*] What? You're from the government, too?

Josh: I know this is hard for you to believe, but my Father sent me here to help you.

Kevin: Why would he do that? You're just here to spy on us and catch employees goofing off.

Josh: My Father wants to make sure that every J. C.'s Mini-mart is an accurate reflection of him and his values. So he sent me to work directly with the employees.

Kevin: [*disbelieving*] And catch them goofing off.

Josh: My job isn't to fire bad employees, it's to make bad employees good.

Kevin: I've never heard of anyone running a business like this before.

Josh: My Father isn't like anyone else.

Kevin: I'm beginning to sense that. But why the secrecy of your visits?

Josh: It's really not a secret. He sent an e-mail out last month outlining the plan.

Kevin: [*remembering*] Oh yeah, Project 3-16, or something like that. I do remember reading that, but I thought it was just some corporate-only thing.

Josh: My Dad's plan is for everyone, so he sent me to make sure everyone knows. And I'll need your help, Kevin.

Kevin: [*unsure*] What can I do? I'm working midnights.

Josh: Keep doing what you're doing – keep the store clean, be friendly and let all your customers know about my Father.

Kevin: Customers? I thought his plan was for his employees?

Josh: I told you, my Father's plan is for everyone.

Kevin: [*confused*] But, how . . .

Josh:

Let me tell you. [*picks up the broom and heads to the back of the store*] But first, grab the dust pan and let's get this place cleaned up.

[*Blackout*]

NAMES OF JESUS
Advent Sermon – Week 5
December 28, 2008

Immanuel
by Jim Black

Text: Matthew 1:18-23

There are many names given to Jesus in the Bible. Each one gives us a fuller and clearer picture of who he is and what he means for us. As we have been unpacking the various names of Jesus throughout Advent, we've been asking ourselves, "Who *is* this man that we have put our hope in?"

The very name Jesus means "God saves!" He is God's promise to deliver us! He is Messiah, the Christ, "the anointed one," our King, and we are his subjects! We have looked at Jesus as our Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father and Prince of Peace, as written by Isaiah so many years ago. This morning, I want us to look at another name of Jesus found in the text read a moment ago: Immanuel.

Any time is a great time to look at the person of Jesus, but it seems especially appropriate this time of year as millions the world over pause to think about the Christ. And yet I wonder, amidst all the "pomp and circumstance" of the season, how many truly understand the importance of the story? We put on those old records of Bing Crosby singing "O Holy Night," or Perry Como's "Away in a Manger," and our mind's eye is filled with the image of the baby Jesus nestled in the manger in that stable in Bethlehem. The shepherds are there adoring the newborn king, and "no crying he makes." But do we really grasp the significance of that event?

In the text, we have Matthew's beautiful account of how the angel of the Lord prepared Joseph and Mary for what was about to take place. Even though we've read this text year after year, I selected it this morning because of the significance Matthew sees in the story.

"All this took place to fulfill what the Lord had said through the prophet: 'The virgin will be with child and will give birth to a son, and they will call him Immanuel'—which means, 'God with us.'" (Matthew 1:22-23)

Do we understand the significance of that? Jesus is "God with us." He is God-in-the-flesh!

A couple of years ago there was a popular song out by Joan Osborne that caused a good deal of stir. The lyrics posed the question: "What if God were one of us?" Okay, while I don't make a habit of listening to Joan Osborne, her question isn't a bad one, and the good news is: It has been answered!

God became one of us! In the person of Jesus Christ, God Almighty left the throne of heaven, wrapped himself up in human flesh and became a man! And he did it in the most unflattering of circumstances. He was born as an infant—a completely dependent child—to a young woman who was pledged to be married to a common carpenter (certainly no royalty); and on that first night, he was placed in an animal’s feeding trough because there was no room for them in the inn. How much more humble of circumstances could God have entered into our world? But that’s what he did, and that’s what is implicit in the name Immanuel.

To understand what Matthew intended by using the name, we’ve got to go back to the Old Testament book of Isaiah to see the original prophecy in its context. The word Matthew interpreted to mean “God with us” appears three times in two Old Testament passages, both in Isaiah. Both are set in the context of God’s promised deliverance of the Kingdom of Judah at a time of great national peril. The Northern Kingdom (Israel) was in league with Syria to capture Judah (Southern Kingdom). Judah’s king at the time was Ahaz, and he was frightened about his prospects against the mighty Northern Kingdom. He was a wicked king, and he knew that he was in no position to claim God’s presence or power for deliverance. Nevertheless, Isaiah was sent by God and gave assurance that God would deliver the people, not for Ahaz’s sake, but for the sake of the Lord’s own faithfulness to his people. So, when Isaiah was sent to Ahaz, God offered the king a “sign” that the message was authentic, in Isaiah 7:13-14:

Then Isaiah said, "Hear now, you house of David! Is it not enough to try the patience of men? Will you try the patience of my God also? Therefore the Lord himself will give you a sign: The virgin will be with child and will give birth to a son, and will call him Immanuel."

In the very next chapter, the name Immanuel occurs twice more. Although the Southern Kingdom would be spared at the hands of the Syria-Israel coalition, it was foretold that Immanuel’s land, Judah, would nevertheless one day be conquered by Assyria (Isaiah 8:8). Then, only two verses later, the name is repeated as an assurance that even so mighty a power as Assyria would not thwart God’s sovereign purposes for Judah. So, the enemies of God were told,

"Devise your strategy, but it will be thwarted; propose your plan, but it will not stand, for God is with us [Immanuel]." (Isaiah 8:10)

So why does Matthew use this Old Testament prophecy to describe Jesus? It’s because he wants us to know that **Jesus is the fulfillment of God’s promise to always be with his people!** Matthew is saying that this child, who is to be named Jesus, is the ultimate fulfillment of that prophecy. Mary is the virgin who will be with child, and the child himself is “God with us.” That was the promise given in Isaiah’s words to King Ahaz, and it has been his promise to his people throughout the Scriptures.

A. Do you remember God’s promise to Moses (Exodus 3:12)? In many ways, Moses

was an unlikely candidate as “Deliverer of God’s people.” Even though he grew up in the household of Pharaoh, he was banished from the kingdom after murdering an Egyptian slave master. After that, he worked as a shepherd for his father-in-law. Not until the age of 80 did God call Moses to: “Go back to Egypt and free my people!” But at first, Moses didn’t want to go! In fact, he offered up excuses why he couldn’t go. Listen to Moses trying to get out of it:

“Who am I, that I should go to Pharaoh and bring the Israelites out of Egypt?’ And God said, ‘I will be with you. And this will be the sign to you that it is I who have sent you: When you have brought the people out of Egypt, you will worship God on this mountain.’” (Exodus 3:11-12)

Moses was afraid, and God answered his fears saying, “I will be with you!” And God was. When Moses faced Pharaoh, he could do so with confidence. God enabled him to perform a number of miracles. And when Pharaoh refused Moses, God brought upon a series of plagues. When Pharaoh finally relented and the people found themselves free, but had to wander around the desert, God was still with them. He led them with a pillar of cloud by day and of fire by night. He even sustained them with manna from Heaven! In fact, God never left them. He is true to his promises!

B. Do you remember God’s promise to Joshua (Joshua 1:5)? When Joshua replaced Moses as Israel’s leader, he had his work cut out for him. Moses was a great and charismatic leader. The people saw miraculous wonders under Moses’ leadership. They were freed from 400 years of bondage; they miraculously escaped Pharaoh’s army; they saw the law delivered unto them. The Promised Land lay before them, but it wasn’t going to be handed to them on a silver platter. There was much work to be done in its conquest. Would the Lord do through Joshua the same mighty things he did through Moses? This is what God said to Joshua:

“No one will be able to stand up against you all the days of your life. As I was with Moses, so I will be with you; I will never leave you nor forsake you. Be strong and courageous, because you will lead these people to inherit the land I swore to their forefathers to give them.” (Joshua 1:5-6)

His word to Joshua was “Be strong and courageous because I will always be with you!” How reassuring that must have been for a young Joshua!

C. Do you remember Jesus’ promise to his disciples (Matthew 28:16-20)? What a roller-coaster ride they had been through! They saw their Lord crucified. They saw his body placed on the slab in the tomb. They wept for him. Some had scattered and some denied him. One who turned on him subsequently took his own life. But then they witnessed the most remarkable thing any of them would *ever* see—Jesus risen! First the tomb was found empty, then they realized why as the risen Jesus appeared to them. Not just once or twice, but on a number of occasions over a period of several days. There was no doubt! Then, on that last occasion just before Jesus was taken up into heaven, he gave them a set of last instructions:

“Go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you.” And one last promise: “And surely I am with you always to the very end of the age.” (Matthew 28:19-20)

The disciples became the Apostles. They faced continued persecution as the teachings about Christ were indeed spread all over the world. Each of them ultimately faced death just like their Teacher had, but with the reassuring promise that each of them carried to their graves, “I will be with you always!”

And that’s the promise of Immanuel to us even today! He is with us! True, he is no longer with us in the flesh as he was ‘with’ his disciples. But, he is ‘with us’ in an even more special way today—through his Spirit! His promise to us in John 14:16-18:

“And I will ask the Father, and he will give you another Counselor to be with you forever—the Spirit of truth. The world cannot accept him, because it neither sees him nor knows him. But you know him, for he lives with you and will be in you. I will not leave you as orphans; I will come to you.”

God/ Jesus/Immanuel continues to be ‘with us’ through the precious Holy Spirit; the counselor, advocate, and comforter. He has come and now lives with us and in us! And God’s promise remains: He will be with us forever! He will never leave us nor forsake us!

And so, Immanuel is God’s promise to always be with you—in the tough times and trials of life. I know that these are tough times for many of us, from job losses and financial difficulties to family turmoil and marital problems. We live in a harsh world and the reality is that trouble and tough times hit us all.

David knew what it was like to face tough times, and he knew what it was like to seek solace in the comforting arms of God. Some of his psalms reflect his awareness of the presence of God in his life:

“The LORD is a refuge for the oppressed, a stronghold in times of trouble. Those who know your name will trust in you, for you, LORD, have never forsaken those who seek you.” (Psalms 9:9-10)

“For in the day of trouble he will keep me safe in his dwelling; he will hide me in the shelter.” (Psalms 27:5)

Immanuel is God’s promise that you are safe in his dwelling/abiding place. He is with you, when everyone around us seems to have gone.

The holidays have been tough for many, possibly celebrating them for the first time without a loved one. You know the pain of separation, be it from death or distance. Is

there someone in your life you miss very much? A child? A parent? Grandparent? A spouse? Maybe you're dealing with the pain of a separation or divorce, and the holidays have been difficult days for you? God is with you in these moments. Immanuel is God's promise that you don't have to be alone in the "ordinary" moments of life. The fact that we feel his presence more at certain times doesn't mean that he isn't with us at other times.

No, he is with us always! When you're driving to work in the mornings, he is there. When you're dropping the kids off at school, he is there. When you're 'vegging out' in front of the TV, he is there. When you and your spouse are in the middle of an argument, he is there. God is with us in the ordinary moments of life because he is *with* us and *within* us! We don't have to face anything in life without him.

Each of us has failed to be 'with him.' None of us are perfect. We all know that we have failed him and the Bible confirms it, "All have sinned and fallen short of the glory of God." But that's why he came in the flesh in the first place! If we had been able to be perfect and get to heaven on our own, there would have been no reason for God to become Immanuel! We aren't perfect, but He is. We can take confidence in the fact that God is with us!

The story of Joseph, Mary, Bethlehem and the baby Jesus is the story of God choosing to come and live with us. Eugene Peterson, in his paraphrase of John 1:14, put it this way: "The Word became flesh and blood, and moved into the neighborhood." While that might be quite an understatement, that's what God did. He chose to move in next door, into our run-down, beat-up, world-weary neighborhood.

The gospel is the story of God, loving us so much that he became one of us. He came to live among us so that we might one day live with him!

Do you know that hope this morning? Does God live within you? As we look forward to a new year, we can know the hope and assurance that Immanuel offers!

Do you need to make a commitment to Christ this morning? Do you need him to live within you?

Do you need help in putting your trust more fully in Immanuel, God with us?

(Resource: Shelly, Rubel "The Names of Jesus" West Monroe, LA: Howard Publishing, 1999.)