

Behold the Lamb
Advent Worship Series – Week 1
Don't Miss Christmas

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.

Don't Miss Christmas

Announcements & Offering

Call to Worship:

We want our Father to step out of the impersonal picture and meet us as a person. The human heart is personal and wants a personal response.

“Why do we need a personal God?” someone asks. Well, suppose you go to a child crying for its mother and say, “Don't cry, little child: I'm giving to you the principle of motherhood.” Would the tears dry and the face light up? Hardly. The child would brush aside your principle of motherhood and cry for its mother. We all want, not a principle nor a picture, but a person.

The Father has stepped out of the picture. The Word has become flesh. That is the meaning of Christmas. Jesus is Immanuel—God with us.

(Praise and Worship Bible, page 1374)

SB#113 – Joy to the World!	TB-87 – Joy to the world!	D4-T9
Additional Optional Songs		
SB#100 – Angels, from the realms of glory	TB-398 – Come and Worship (Regent Sq.)	HTD4-T12 (4 vs.)
SB#112 – It was on a starry night HC#180	TB-535 – same HC-280	HCD16-T20
SB#113 – Joy to the world!	TB-87 – Joy to the World!	HTD4-T9 (3 vs.)
SB#114 – Light of the world HC#146 – Here I am to Worship	TB-653 – Here I am to Worship HC-146	HCD13-T16
SB#106 – Go, tell it on the mountain, HC260 – Go, tell it on the mountain	TB-631 – same HC-260	HTD11-T4 (2 vs., start with chorus) HCD24-T20

SB#133 – Wonderful counselor	TB-859 – The Light Has Come	HCD1-T10
HC#10 – The Light Has Come	HC-10	

Drama: Room for One More

Message – Part 1 – Don't Miss Christmas

Lighting of Advent Candle

Reader 1: Each year, the world has less and less room for Christ in Christmas. How can we make more room for you, Lord?

Reader 1: While we are waiting, come;
Jesus, our Lord, Emmanuel,
While we are waiting, come.

Reader 2: Lord, we are waiting for you. We look around at a world that has less and less room for you and we wait. Help us to make room for you this Christmas.

Reader 1: With power and glory, come;
Jesus, our Lord, Emmanuel,
While we are waiting, come.

Reader 2: May your power and glory be evident in us each day. As others look at us may they see your glory and sense your power. Help us to make room for you this Christmas.

Reader 1: Come, Savior quickly come;
Jesus, our Lord, Emmanuel,
While we are waiting come.

(Piano begins intro to *While We Are Waiting, Come*)

Reader 2: Come quickly, Lord. We need you now more than ever. Help us to make room for you this Christmas.

[A person lights the candle during song]

HC#45 – While We are Waiting, Come	HC-45	HCD3-T15
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Prayer:

[Piano continues to play chorus]

Dear Jesus...Though there was no room for you in the inn, grant this day that I might make abundant room for you in my heart. Though your own did not receive you, grant this hour that I may embrace you with open arms. You...whose only palace was a stable, whose only throne was

a feeding trough, whose only robes were swaddling clothes.

On my knees I confess that I am too conditioned to this world's pomp and pageantry to recognize God cooing in a manger.

And for those times when you yearn for my fellowship and stand at the door and knock, grant me a special sensitivity to the sound of that knock so I may be quick to my feet. Keep me from letting you stand out in the cold or from ever sending you away to some stable. May my heart always be warm and inviting, so that when you do knock, a worthy place will always be waiting...

(Moments With the Savior, page 32)

Message – Part 2 – Observing Christmas

HC#120 – In the Manger	HC-120	HCD10 – T20
Additional Optional Songs		
SB#108 – Hark the herald angels sing;	TB-270 – Hark! the herald angels sing	D4- T5
HC#105 – How Marvelous!	HC-105	HCD9- T15
SB#118 – O little town of Bethlehem	TB-136 – O little town of Bethlehem	none
HC#123 – Shine on Us	HC-123	HCD11–T13
HC#127 – How Deep the Father’s Love for us	HC-127	HCD11-T17
HC#136 – We All Bow Down	HC-136	HCD12-T16
HC#139 – There is a Message	HC-139	HCD12-T19
HC#156 – Enter In	HC-156	HCD14-T16
HC#169 – Hallelujah	HC-169	HCD15-T19
HC#179 – Come to Jesus	HC-179	HCD16-T19
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
SB#153 – Thou didst leave thy throne and thy kingly crown	TB-94 – Margaret	HTD10 –T6 (4 vs.)
SB#158 – Who is he in yonder stall	TB-287 – Who is he?	HTD10-T19 (6 vs.)

Benediction:

Across the centuries, throughout all recorded history, you have called out to us in your gracious love. You have offered yourself to us, and pleaded with us to come to you. You have invited us to come when we are thirsty; come when we are wounded; come when we are lost in sin; come when we are poor, alone and without hope. And we have come, Lord, in faith, in humility and in gratitude. Now we join our voices and invite you to come to us. Return to us, Lord Jesus, and make your dwelling place among us. We pray that you will come soon and come quickly, for above all else we long to see your face. Amen.

(Praise & Worship Bible, page 1684)

Vocal Benediction – HC#140 – O Come, All Ye Faithful SB#85 – O come, all ye faithful	HC-140 TB-552 – Adeste Fideles	HCD12-T20 HTD3-T1 (3 vs.)
Additional Optional Songs		
HC#128 – My Tribute	HC-128	HCD11-T18
HC#149 – In Christ Alone	HC-149	HCD13-T19
HC#151 – Fairest Lord Jesus	HC-151	HCD14-T11
SB#112 – It was on a starry night HC#180	TB-535 – same HC-280	HCD16-T20
HC#260 – Go, Tell it on the Mountain	HC-260	HCD24-T20

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Candle Lighting

Reader 1: Each year, the world has less and less room for Christ in Christmas. How can we make more room for you, Lord?

Reader 2: While we are waiting, come;
Jesus, our Lord, Emmanuel,
While we are waiting, come.

Reader 1: Lord, we are waiting for you. We look around at a world that has less and less room for you and we wait. Help us to make room for you this Christmas.

Reader 2: With power and glory, come;
Jesus, our Lord, Emmanuel,
While we are waiting, come.

Reader 1: May your power and glory be evident in us each day. As others look at us may they see your glory and sense your power. Help us to make room for you this Christmas.

Reader 2: Come, Savior quickly come;
Jesus, our Lord, Emmanuel,
While we are waiting come.

Reader 1: Come quickly, Lord. We need you now more than ever. Help us to make room for you this Christmas.

Week #1	
DRAMA Room for One More By Martyn Scott Thomas © 2003 by Martyn Scott Thomas. All rights reserved. Used by permission.	
Scripture:	Luke 2:1-7
Synopsis:	The owner of the Bethlehem Inn tries to find room for just one more couple.
Characters:	Simon – the owner of the Bethlehem Inn. Priscilla – Simon’s Wife.
Props/Costumes:	A table with a lamp and two chairs. Biblical costumes.
Setting:	The eating area of the Bethlehem Inn.
Running Time:	3:00 minutes.

[Priscilla is sitting at the table with her head in her hands, obviously exhausted. Simon enters.]

Simon: Can you believe the business tonight? I knew we’d be packed when the Romans called for this census, but never in my wildest dreams did I ever . . .

Priscilla: Can we go to bed now? If we still have a bed to sleep in.

Simon: We have a bed. For now.

Priscilla: What do you mean, “For now?”

Simon: Priscilla, I have a proposition for you.

Priscilla: Simon, I don’t like the sound of your voice. The last time you had a proposition for me, I ended up running an Inn in a small town with five children.

Simon: Didn’t I promise you that you would see the world?

Priscilla: Yes, but I expected to go to the world, not have the world come through my home.

Simon: But this time it’s a “can’t lose” proposition.

Priscilla: I’ve heard that before.

Simon: Yes, but what if I told you this was of Kingly origins.

Priscilla: Simon, what are you talking about?

Simon: The Messiah.

Priscilla: The Messiah?

Simon: Yes, the Messiah. He's here.

Priscilla: I don't know who gave you that wine you were drinking, but I will not hesitate to throw them out on the street.

Simon: Nobody gave me any wine. I'm telling you, the Messiah is here, in our Inn. Or at least he could be.

Priscilla: If we give up our bed.

Simon: Exactly.

Priscilla: No way.

Simon: But, this is a once in a lifetime opportunity.

Priscilla: Or three times in a week.

Simon: What are you talking about?

Priscilla: We already have three different Messiahs staying in our Inn. Everybody knows the Messiah is to come from Bethlehem. And everybody and their mother is taking advantage of that fact to get a room.

Simon: But this is a young couple...

Priscilla: ...who can't find a room anywhere else in town to stay, so they are claiming that he is the Messiah so we'll give up our bed.

Simon: Actually, *he's* not claiming to be the Messiah.

Priscilla: [*disbelieving*] *She* is? I told you, everybody and their mother.

Simon: No, not her either. It's their child.

Priscilla: Their child?

Simon: A baby.

Priscilla: A baby Messiah?

Simon: Pretty incredible, huh? So where do we keep the extra blankets?

Priscilla: Simon, you don't know these people from Adam. How do you know that their baby is the Messiah?

Simon: You should see him. He looks heavenly.

Priscilla: The baby looks heavenly?

Simon: Well, at least what I could see of him. He was all wrapped up in blankets. But his parents look really important.

Priscilla: You giving our bed to a "heavenly" looking baby and important looking parents?

Simon: I'm glad you agree.

Priscilla: Haven't you forgotten something?

Simon: You're right. I should see if they need extra pillows.

Priscilla: That's not what I'm talking about. What about the other couple?

Simon: What other couple?

Priscilla: The ones that are about to have a baby – on our front step if you don't hurry and find them a room. Who knows, maybe their baby will be the Messiah, too. That will bring us to a total of five.

Simon: Do you think they'd sleep in here?

Priscilla: On the table?

Simon: You're right. Where would the other guests eat breakfast? What do you think they'd pay for the stable?

Priscilla: You can't be serious. With the animals?

Simon: It's warm. It's dry.

Priscilla: It smells like animals.

Simon: Well, it's all we have left.

Priscilla: You would do anything to make a denarius.

Simon: And we're making plenty this week. Now, before I attend to the Messiah and

his family, I'd better get this other couple to the stable. What did you say their names were?

Priscilla: Joseph and Mary.

Simon: (exiting, talking to himself) I can't believe the Messiah is staying at my Inn.

[*Blackout*]

Behold the Lamb
Don't Miss Christmas
Advent Sermon – Week 1

By Colonel Henry Gariepy

Part I

*She wrapped him in cloths and placed him in a manger,
because there was no room for them in the inn (Luke 2:7).*

One year, passengers sailing on an ocean liner to Australia in late December missed out on Christmas completely. The ship crossed the International Date Line on December 24 that moved the calendar from the 24th to the 26th. Those on board that ship missed Christmas in a unique way.

Imagine, missing Christmas? Missing the grand event of the ages? Missing its great celebration, and its marvelous meaning? No other birthday caused such revolutionary changes in the history of man, nor has had such benefit and blessing upon countless lives.

Indeed, our world and our lives would be unspeakably impoverished if there were no Christmas, if Christ had not come, if the King of Glory had not been born in that lowly manger in Bethlehem. On a personal level, we can ill afford to miss Christmas in its deeper meaning, to lose the treasure of Christmas behind its tinsel, trimmings and trappings.

THE FIRST CHRISTMAS

We feel sorry for those on board that ship who missed Christmas. But there were those on that very first Christmas who missed it in a more serious manner. The great marvel of God becoming incarnate, taking upon himself our humanity, was at their doorstep; but it passed them by. They missed Christmas

Herod

There was Herod whom history ironically calls 'Herod the Great.' The wise men came and told him of the remarkable star that heralded the birth of a king. Did Herod rejoice? Did he pay homage to the King of kings? The account reads, "When Herod the king heard these things, he was troubled."

Today there are still those to whom Christmas is trouble rather than triumph, a bother rather than a blessing, a problem rather than a promise, a frustration rather than fulfillment. Therapists are sometimes engaged to help people cope with seasonal stresses.

"I'm glad Christmas comes but once a year!" is a common lament we will hear again this season. "Gee, another one of those holidays we have to put up with!" complained Charlie Brown.

Once again many will get caught up in the rush and crush, the hurry and worry, the hustle and bustle, and miss the true meaning of Christmas. They, like Herod of old, will be ‘troubled’ by Christmas.

The Religious People, the Church

What about the religious people of that day? Surely they would rejoice at our Lord’s coming. The Chief Priests and Scribes were students of Scripture, schooled in the hope of Israel. They knew well Isaiah’s classic text that prophesied of the Messiah who would come as the Lamb of God, to be “led like a lamb to the slaughter” (Isa. 53:7a) for the redemption of God’s people. .

They led in the functions of religion and were waiting expectantly for God to fulfill His centuries old promise. They heard of the strange vision and happenings to the priest Zacharias. There echoed through their corridors the story of Simeon and Anna who identified the baby Jesus as the hope of Israel. They knew of the visit of the Magi and were able, from Scripture, to give explicit directions to where Christ was born. But they themselves did not make the journey.

It is still possible for the religious people, the church, to miss Christmas. There is the danger of getting caught up in the ritual instead of the reality, of good works instead of God’s Word, of celebrating Christmas instead of Christ.

Jerusalem the Holy City

What about Jerusalem? It was the Holy City, the center of religion. Surely its temples and streets would resound with a jubilee of joy and paeans of praise at the coming of the Messiah.

But the Gospel chronicler records that ‘all Jerusalem was troubled’ at the stirring events surrounding our Lord’s birth. Bethlehem was only 12 miles away yet there was no pilgrimage to the manger.

The Innkeeper

The innkeeper has been portrayed as the Mr. Scrooge of Bethlehem. Those who arrived first and were able to pay the fare, received his hospitality. His was not an intentional rejection. He was just caught up with the busyness and the commercial aspects of his work. He had no room for the One who could have blessed his hostel with the birth of the King of the universe.

It is still possible to exclude Christ in such a casual way. The clamor and claim of the crowd, the busyness of life comes upon us. And when Christ would come with His infinite gift of enrichment for our souls, there is no room in the inn of our lives.

An anonymous poet has captured something of this saga of the Innkeeper:

What could be done? The inn was full of folks
As Bethlehem had never seen before.
Of course, if I had known them, who they were,

And who was He that should be born that night
I would have turned the whole inn upside down,
And sent all the rest to stables.
And if He comes again, tell him,
That all my inn is his to make amends.
Alas, alas! To miss a chance like that!
This inn might be chief among them all –
The birthplace of the Messiah -- Had I but known!

Today Christ comes and seeks admission into our lives, to make our hearts his abiding place. Let not our hearts be as the crowded inn with no time or room for the One who would bring his rich bounty of blessing. We cannot afford “to miss a chance like that!”

Yes, it happened back at that very first Christmas — those close to its event allowed it to pass them by. They missed Christmas.

And it still happens every new Christmas season. People push and pull their way through milling mobs, spending and being spent, building up to a climax of weariness and nervous exhaustion. Perhaps we need to pray the prayer of the child in kindergarten, who may be forgiven for her error for the truth she expressed, ‘Forgive us our Christmases as we forgive those who Christmas against us.’

Part II

OBSERVING CHRISTMAS

May we, as the shepherds of old, say, “Let us now go to Bethlehem and see this thing that has come to pass, which the Lord has made known to us.” And then our hearts will overflow as theirs who ‘returned, glorifying and praising God for all the things that they had heard and seen.’

Let us this Christmas make our own pilgrimage to the manger and there find Christ, and in Him the purpose, the peace and the abiding presence that is the true treasure of this season.

*For it isn't very far to Bethlehem's town,
It's any place where Christ comes down
And finds in someone's smiling face
A welcome and abiding place.*

Jesus did not stay in the manger. He grew to manhood, healed the sick, lifted the fallen, took His mighty Gospel to the busy marketplace and thoroughfares.

He was flung on a cross. He rose from the dead. He gave His Spirit to the church. He is at work in the world today.

A manger faith is not enough. We must have a cross faith, a resurrection faith, a Pentecost faith. We only truly observe Christmas when Christ has moved from the stable of Bethlehem to the throne room of our life.

OUR GOLDEN OPPORTUNITY

You say this morning, “If I were there I would have welcomed Christ.” Well, the good news is He is coming again! Jesus says on the last page of God’s Word, “Yes, I am coming soon!” These are the very last words of Jesus recorded in the Bible (Rev. 22:20), followed by the final prayer that closes and culminates the Word of God, “Amen. Come, Lord Jesus” (22:20).

During the First World War, a soldier in the trenches saw his friend wounded out in no-man’s land – that ground between his trench and that of the enemy. The man asked his officer, “May I go and bring him back? The officer refused, “If you go I would lose you as well. I have to say no.” But disobeying the officer, he went out to save his friend. He managed to bring him back, only to fall mortally wounded as he staggered to his trench.

The officer was angry, “I told you not to go. Now I have lost two good men. It was not worth it.” With his dying breath the man said, “But it was worth it sir, because when I got to him he said, ‘Jim, I knew you’d come.’”

Infinite love brought Christ from Heaven to earth and led him to go to the “no-man’s land” of Calvary, there to be wounded to the death that He might bring us back from death to life. The glorious message of the Bible is that in the midst of the world’s greatest battle Jesus will come again, to bring us safely to himself.

May we not miss our Lord’s even greater Advent, his Second Coming, to then be able to look up into his face, and knowing him as Savior and Friend, say, “I knew You’d come!”

Prayer

Christ of Christmas,

Let not our hearts be as busy inns with no room or time for you,
but let them be where you will find a warm and open welcome.

Help us this season that the busyness and the hustle and bustle of these days
will not eclipse the real meaning of Christmas for us.

Help us not to miss Christmas,
but to look beyond the tinsel, trimmings and trappings,
and discover the true treasure of Christmas – Christ our Savior
who is coming again to receive us unto himself.

Help us to celebrate your Advent
in the humble obedience that was Joseph,
in the reverent pondering of the heart that was Mary,
with the song of the angels,
the rejoicing of the shepherds,
and the worship of the wise men.

In our Lord’s name we pray. Amen.