

# Christmas Eve 2025: Christ Candle & Scripture Liturgy

“Love Came to Stay, Joy Broke In”

Isaiah 9:2, 6–7; Luke 2:1–7, 8–14; John 1:1–5, 9, 14.

## Roles

- **Leader (L):** Paul
- **Worship (W):** Kiva
- **Reader 1 (R1):** Isaiah 9:2, 6–7 (Lisa W.)
- **Reader 2 (R2):** Luke 2:1–7 (Kassie)
- **Reader 3 (R3):** Luke 2:8–14 (Bette B.)
- **Christ Candle Lighter (CL):** (Pick then)
- **Reader 4 (R4):** John 1:1–5, 9, 14 (Alex or Angies)
- **All:** congregation

## Opening & Re-Lighting the Advent Candles

### Leader:

Tonight we gather in the glow of the Christ Candle to remember and rejoice:

- Love came to stay.
- Joy broke in.
- Hope took root.
- Peace moved in—and isn’t going anywhere.

Over these past Sundays, we’ve watched the light grow. Now, on Christmas Eve, we remember the story that kindled these flames.

*(As the Leader speaks the following lines, designated family members re-light each Advent candle.)*

### Leader:

We re-light the Candle of **Love**, remembering that in Jesus, God came near and refused to leave us.

*(\_\_\_Lisa W.\_\_\_ Lights the Love candle)*

We re-light the Candle of **Joy**, remembering the good news that still breaks into ordinary nights.

*(\_\_\_Kassie L.\_\_\_ Lights Joy candle)*

We re-light the Candle of **Hope**, remembering that in Christ, hope has taken root in the darkest places.

*(\_\_\_Bette B.\_\_\_ Lights Hope candle)*

We re-light the Candle of **Peace**, remembering that the Prince of Peace has moved in, and His presence is our holy resistance to fear.

*(\_\_\_Alex or Angie\_\_\_ Lights Peace candle)*

Tonight, we will hear again the promise, the birth, and the mystery of the Word made flesh. And in the center of it all, we will light the Christ Candle.

# Reading 1 — The Promise of a Peace-Shaped King

*(Isaiah 9:2, 6–7)*

**Leader:**

First, we hear a promise spoken into deep darkness; a word of light, and of a Child who will be called Prince of Peace.

**Reader 1:**

A reading from the prophet Isaiah, chapter 9, verses 2 and 6–7.

*[R1 reads Isaiah 9:2, 6–7 (NIV) from the Bible.]*

**Leader:**

This is the promise of a peace-shaped King, whose government and peace will never end.

**All:**

Thanks be to God.

## Hymn-Intro 1

**Worship:**

We don't sing because the world is calm; we sing because God has spoken peace into darkness. Let's respond to the promise with worship.

## Hymn/Carol:

- *O Come, O Come, Emmanuel* (promise/waiting tone)

# Reading 2 — The Birth in Bethlehem

*(Luke 2:1–7)*

**Leader:**

Centuries later, God's promise comes wrapped not in royal robes but in swaddling clothes.

In a busy town, under Roman rule, with a census, a journey, and no room in the inn—Love comes to stay in the most ordinary of places.

**Reader 2:**

A reading from the Gospel according to Luke, chapter 2, verses 1–7.

*[R2 reads Luke 2:1–7 (NIV) from the Bible.]*

**Leader:**

No palace... no spotlight... just a manger, a mother, and the quiet cry of the Love who has moved into our world for good.

## Hymn Set 2

### **Worship:**

Bethlehem reminds us that God is not allergic to the ordinary. He enters it. He sanctifies it. Let's sing the story.

### **Hymn:**

- *O Little Town of Bethlehem*

## Reading 3 — Joy Breaks In

*(Luke 2:8–14)*

### **Leader:**

But heaven will not keep quiet. Into an ordinary work night, into the lives of forgotten shepherds: Joy breaks in.

### **Reader 3:**

A reading from the Gospel according to Luke, chapter 2, verses 8–14.

*[R3 reads Luke 2:8–14 (NIV) from the Bible.]*

### **Leader:**

“Good news that will cause great joy for all the people... To you is born this day a Savior... Glory to God in the highest heaven, and on earth peace to those on whom his favor rests.”

The Child has come... the song has begun... Love and joy have shattered the silence.

## Hymn Set 3

### **Worship:**

The angels preached the first Christmas sermon as a song. Let's join their chorus.

### **Hymn**

- *Hark! The Herald Angels Sing*

## Lighting the Christ Candle

### **Leader:**

All through Advent, these four candles have pointed us forward to Love, Joy, Hope, and Peace... Tonight, we come to the center. We light the Christ Candle to confess that all the light we've seen comes from Jesus Christ: the true Light of the world.

**Christ Candle Lighter:**

As this candle is lit, let it be more than a ceremony.

Let it be our prayer: “Jesus, Light of the world, live at the center of our lives, our homes, and this church.”

**Christ Candle Lighter:** (*Lights the Christ Candle...*)

(*Leader pause—8 to 10 seconds of silence.*)

**Leader:**

And now, with the Christ Candle burning before us, we hear the mystery behind the manger—who this Child truly is.

## Reading 4 — The Word Became Flesh

(*John 1:1–5, 9, 14*)

**Leader:**

Luke gives us mangers and angels. John pulls back the curtain and gives us the cosmic view.

He tells us who this Child really is: the eternal Word, the true Light, the very presence of God come near.

**Reader 4:**

A reading from the Gospel according to John, chapter 1, verses 1–5, 9, and 14.

[*R4 reads John 1:1–5, 9, 14 (NIV) from the Bible.*]

**Leader:**

“The true light that gives light to everyone was coming into the world...”

“The Word became flesh and made his dwelling among us...”

This is the heart of Christmas:

God with us... Love with us... Joy with us... Hope with us... Peace with us.

Not far away. Not once upon a time. **Here. Now. In Christ.**

**All:**

Thanks be to God.

## Hymn Set 4

**Worship:**

If Jesus is the Light of the world, we don’t just admire the Light—we receive it. Let’s respond.

## Hymn:

- *What Child Is This?* (fits beautifully after John 1)

# Congregational Candle Lighting & “Silent Night”

*(CL takes the Christ candle and lights the first candle of the first row; they, in turn, will light the next, and they the next...)*

## **Leader:**

In a moment, we'll share the Light—because Christ's Light is never meant to stop at one candle.

As the Light comes down your row, receive it as a prayer: “Lord Jesus, make me a bearer of Your peace.”

**Worship:** *(softly begins once candles are spreading)*

## **Candlelight Hymn:**

- Silent Night

## **Closing Response & Prayer**

### **Leader:**

Let's pray.

Lord Jesus Christ, true Light of the world, Word made flesh, Prince of Peace—tonight, we stand in the light of Your coming.

Where there is fear, shine Your love.

Where there is sorrow, kindle Your joy.

Where there is despair, plant Your hope.

Where there is conflict, bring Your peace.

Make our hearts, our homes, and this Meeting a place where Your light is seen, and Your love is known.

We celebrate You: Love who came to stay and Joy who broke in.

In Your holy Name we pray. Amen.

## **Sending Hymn**

- *Joy to the World* (strong dismissal energy)