



SILENT NIGHT

Christmas Eve

LEADER'S GUIDE

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Sample



THE *Glad Sound*

CHRISTMAS EVE WORSHIP SERVICE

LEADER'S GUIDE



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CHRISTMAS EVE WORSHIP SERVICE

INDEX

About the Service.....	5
Bulletin/Newsletter Notices.....	6
Order of Service.....	7-10
Complete Script For Worship Leaders.....	11-18
Scripture Readings.....	19-20
Children's Sermon.....	21
Sermon.....	22-23
Prayers.....	24
Music Guide.....	25-33

By Vern Gundermann. Original hymn text and children's sermon by Carol Geisler. Art and design by Lindsay Galvin. © 2015 Creative Communications for the Parish, 1564 Fencorp Dr., Fenton, MO 63026. 800-325-9414. www.creativecommunications.com. All rights reserved. Printed in the USA. Purchase of this kit gives the purchaser the copyright release to use the material in any format for use in worship.



THE *Glad Sound*

CHRISTMAS EVE WORSHIP SERVICE

ABOUT THE SERVICE

The rich meaning behind the soothing tones of the beloved hymn "Silent Night" are captured throughout this candlelight service for Christmas Eve to celebrate the birth of the Holy Infant, so tender and mild. Other hymns in the service include "Angels We Have Heard on High," "O Little Town of Bethlehem" and "What Child Is This." Written by Rev. Vern Gundermann. Use with the Hark the Glad Sound Advent series or alone.

Kit includes prayers, a monolog homily, Bible readings, a children's sermon, a candlelighting ceremony, newsletter/bulletin notices and music as well as a CD-ROM (Mac/PC) with the text of the entire kit in .rtf (rich text format), and a PowerPoint document of the entire service with images and text (along with a copyright release) for use on screens.

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CHRISTMAS EVE WORSHIP SERVICE

NEWSLETTER/BULLETIN NOTICES

Newsletter Notice

Celebrate the birth of the Savior on Christmas Eve in this very special service that ponders the beauty and meaning behind the beloved hymn "Silent Night." Through the traditional Scripture readings, prayers, litany, homily, children's sermon and classic carols of this unique worship experience, join with the shepherds, the angels and Mary and Joseph in singing the praises of the Holy Infant, so tender and mild, on that silent night.

Bulletin Notice

Welcome to this very special service for Christmas Eve that ponders the beauty and meaning behind the beloved hymn "Silent Night." Through the traditional Scripture readings, prayers, litany, homily, children's sermon and classic carols of this unique worship experience, join with the shepherds, the angels and Mary and Joseph in singing the praises of the Holy Infant, so tender and mild, who is born for us this silent night.



THE *Glad Sound*

CHRISTMAS EVE WORSHIP SERVICE

COMPLETE SCRIPT FOR WORSHIP LEADERS

- The **Opening Hymn** is sung by the congregation to the tune Chesterfield CM:

Hark the glad sound! The Savior comes, the Savior promised long;
Let ev'ry heart prepare a throne and ev'ry voice a song.

"Fear not," we hear the angel say, "Glad news to you I bring.
The holy Child of Bethlehem is Christ your Lord and King!"

This Child who in the manger lies, so helpless and so small,
Is he who came from heav'n to earth to give his life for all.

All glory to the Father give, with glory to the Son,
And glory to the Spirit sing, th'eternal Three in One!

- The **Litany** is spoken responsively by the pastor and the congregation:

P We gather on this silent, holy night to worship our Christ,

C the promised Immanuel, to be born to a virgin named Mary.

P We gather on this silent, holy night to worship our Savior,

C who is Christ, our Lord!

P We gather on this silent, holy night to worship Jesus,

C promised through Isaiah and the prophets, announced to the shepherds, and worshipped this night around the world!

- The **Lighting of the Advent Wreath** is spoken responsively by the pastor and the congregation:

P Let us light four candles and the Christ Candle this night. The first candle is the candle of repentance. The second, the candle of remembrance. The third, the candle of rejoicing. The fourth candle, the candle of reconciliation.

C The Christ Candle represents the true light that came into the world.

(All four candles of the Advent Wreath and the Christ Candle are lit at this time.)

P On this silent night, we light the Christ Candle

C that penetrates the darkness of our world and powerfully symbolizes for us Immanuel, God with us!

- The **Confession and Absolution** is read responsively by the pastor and the congregation:

P On this silent night when we gather in this place to celebrate the birth of our Immanuel, we acknowledge that we have too often made much noise that drowns out the wonderful melody of his redeeming love. On this silent night, we confess our sins:

C Almighty God, I confess to you all my sins by which I have offended you. I deserve to suffer for my sins both now and eternally. I am sorry for all my sins, and I pray that you will look on me in mercy and forgive me for the sake of Jesus, who suffered the punishment for my sins when he died on the cross.

P We rejoice with the whole Christian Church this night that God is with us—in every gathering around the world, and in this place. He is Immanuel! So with great confidence, I share with you that through the suffering, death and resurrection of this Promised One, you are forgiven all of your sins, in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit.

C Amen.

- A **Hymn of Praise** is sung by the congregation to the tune Greensleeves 87 87 68 67:

What child is this, who, laid to rest, on Mary's lap is sleeping?
 Whom angels greet with anthems sweet, while shepherds watch are keeping?
 This, this is Christ the King, whom shepherds guard and angels sing:
 Haste, haste to bring him laud, the babe, the son of Mary!

Why lies he in such mean estate, where ox and ass are feeding?
 Good Christian, fear, for sinners here the silent Word is pleading.
 Nails, spear shall pierce him through, the cross be borne for me, for you.
 Hail, hail the Word made flesh, the Babe, the son of Mary!

So bring him incense, gold, and myrrh; come, peasant, king, to own him.
 The King of kings salvation brings; let loving hearts enthrone him.
 Raise, raise the song on high, the virgin sings her lullaby;
 Joy, joy for Christ is born, the babe, the son of Mary!

- The **Prayer of the Day** is read by the pastor:
 - Ⓟ O Heavenly Father, we are so grateful for this silent night. Bless us as we rest in the stillness that you provide. Protect us from distractions that would break the silence in unacceptable ways. Allow us to focus on what the glorious gift of your coming into our world means for us. Bless all who have gathered with us that this may be for all a glorious, silent night. We pray in the name of your gift to us, our Savior, Jesus. Amen.
- The **Children's Sermon** is delivered by the pastor or other worship leader:
 - Ⓟ Merry Christmas! I am so glad that all of you are here tonight. Later in our worship service we are going to sing the hymn "Silent Night." What does the word *silent* mean? Does anyone know? (*Let children respond.*) The word *silent* means quiet, very, very quiet. Sometimes things around us are not at all quiet. Sometimes things happen that are noisy and scary. But the hymn tells us that the first Christmas night when Jesus was born was a silent night. It was also a holy night. What does the word *holy* mean? (*Let children respond.*) If something is holy, it is special and perfect. Sometimes things happen to us that are not perfect. Things go wrong or we do things we should not do. But the first Christmas when Jesus was born was a holy night.

The very first Christmas Eve was a silent, holy night. It was a quiet, perfect, special night. It was the night when Jesus our Savior was born! When we are afraid of scary things that happen in our world, we remember that Jesus was born on this silent

night. Jesus loves us and takes care of us. When we have done things we should not do, we remember that Jesus was born on this holy night. Jesus grew up to die on the cross and rise up from death. Jesus forgives our sins.

You will probably get many presents this Christmas, but the very best Christmas present is Jesus! On this silent, holy night—on this quiet, perfect, special night—we have good news to share! Jesus our Savior is born!

- The **Old Testament Reading, Isaiah 7:10-14**, is spoken by the pastor or other worship leader:
 - Ⓟ Again the Lord spoke to Ahaz, “Ask a sign of the Lord your God; let it be deep as Sheol or high as heaven.” But Ahaz said, “I will not ask, and I will not put the Lord to the test.” And he said, “Hear then, O house of David! Is it too little for you to weary men, that you weary my God also? Therefore the Lord himself will give you a sign. Behold, the virgin shall conceive and bear a son, and shall call his name Immanuel.”
- The **Epistle Reading, Galatians 3:11-14**, is spoken by the pastor or other worship leader:
 - Ⓟ Now it is evident that no one is justified before God by the law, for “The righteous shall live by faith.” But the law is not of faith, rather “The one who does them shall live by them.” Christ redeemed us from the curse of the law by becoming a curse for us—for it is written, “Cursed is everyone who is hanged on a tree”—so that in Christ Jesus the blessing of Abraham might come to the Gentiles, so that we might receive the promised Spirit through faith.
- The **Gospel Reading, Luke 2:1-20**, is spoken by the pastor or other worship leader:
 - Ⓟ And it came to pass in those days, that there went out a decree from Caesar Augustus that all the world should be taxed. (And this taxing was first made when Cyrenius was governor of Syria.) And all went to be taxed, every one into his own city. And Joseph also went up from Galilee, out of the city of Nazareth, into Judaea, unto the city of David, which is called Bethlehem; (because he was of the house and lineage of David:) To be taxed with Mary his espoused wife, being great with child. And so it was, that, while they were there, the days were accomplished that she should be delivered. And she brought forth her firstborn son, and wrapped him in swaddling clothes, and laid him in a manger; because there was no room for them in the inn. And there were in the same country shepherds abiding in the field, keeping watch over their flock by night. And, lo, the angel of the Lord came upon them, and the glory of the Lord shone round about them: and they were sore afraid. And the angel said unto them, “Fear not:

for, behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy, which shall be to all people. For unto you is born this day in the city of David a Saviour, which is Christ the Lord. And this shall be a sign unto you; Ye shall find the babe wrapped in swaddling clothes, lying in a manger." And suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host praising God, and saying, "Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good will toward men." And it came to pass, as the angels were gone away from them into heaven, the shepherds said one to another, "Let us now go even unto Bethlehem, and see this thing which is come to pass, which the Lord hath made known unto us." And they came with haste, and found Mary, and Joseph, and the babe lying in a manger. And when they had seen it, they made known abroad the saying which was told them concerning this child. And all they that heard it wondered at those things which were told them by the shepherds. But Mary kept all these things, and pondered them in her heart. And the shepherds returned, glorifying and praising God for all the things that they had heard and seen, as it was told unto them.

- The **Sermon Hymn** is sung by the congregation to the tune St. Louis 86 86 76 86:

O little town of Bethlehem, how still we see thee lie!
Above thy deep and dreamless sleep the silent stars go by;
Yet in thy dark streets shineth the everlasting Light.
The hopes and fears of all the years are met in thee tonight.

For Christ is born of Mary, and gathered all above
While mortals sleep, the angels keep their watch of wond'ring love.
O morning stars, together proclaim the holy birth,
And praises sing to God the king, and peace to all the earth!

How silently, how silently the wondrous gift is giv'n!
So God imparts to human hearts the blessings of his heav'n.
No ear may hear his coming, but in this world of sin,
Where meek souls will receive him, still the dear Christ enters in.

O holy Child of Bethlehem, descend to us, we pray;
Cast out our sin and enter in, be born to us today.
We hear the Christmas angels the great glad tidings tell;
O come to us, abide with us, our Lord Emmanuel!

- The **Sermon** is delivered by the pastor:

▣ Grace be unto you, and peace, from our Great God on this silent night.

It is easy to imagine it was, for the most part, a silent night the night when our Savior was born. We picture the cattle in the shed softly making their cattle sounds. We picture the weather as very nice—a soft gentle breeze, a cloudless sky, with the stars clearly visible, with the moon providing gentle light. We picture a silent night, at least in Bethlehem.

It wasn't so silent out in the fields where the shepherds "were keeping watch over their flocks by night." It might have been a silent night, but then the angels came with their message about the birth of a Savior, who is Christ the Lord! Suddenly the fields are alive with music—with the heavenly chorus giving glory to God—and proclaiming that there would be peace on those upon whom God's favor rests!

It probably didn't remain a silent night when the shepherds arrived at the stable. They were so excited about what they had seen and heard that if Joseph and Mary had been resting, near sleep, they changed that in a hurry! We are left with the impression that they disturbed the rest of many in Bethlehem! They were telling everyone they could what they had seen and heard! The Savior had been born! He was Christ the Lord!

That is the noisy good news that came that night that was silent for all people. It came for those whose night was silent because of their loneliness. It came for all whose night was silent because they were bent on doing mischief. It came that night for those whose night was silent because they were filled with guilt and regret. It came that night for those whose night was silent because they were determined to get even with someone, to settle an old score. It came that night for those whose whole night was silent because they had betrayed their spouse, or had done harm to their children.

Born this silent night in Bethlehem was the Savior—the one who would silence all their cries of agony and regret. While he would know a lot of silent nights in his ministry, nights spent in prayer, in teaching, in moving from town to town so people would hear his message and experience his healing, his life would end in anything but a "silent night."

His suffering would end and he would die with all sorts of noise. There would be the noise of religious leaders blaspheming him, the disciples abandoning him, the Roman military mocking him, the crowd being as cruel as possible, the earth quaking, rocks being split apart, great thunder. It was anything but a silent night!

Tune..... Stille Nacht irregular

The first system of music consists of two staves. The upper staff is in treble clef with a 6/4 time signature. It begins with a first-measure rest, followed by a series of chords and eighth notes. The lower staff is in bass clef, also with a 6/4 time signature, and contains a first-measure rest followed by a series of chords and eighth notes.

The second system of music consists of two staves. The upper staff is in treble clef with a 6/4 time signature. It begins with a fifth-measure rest, followed by a series of chords and eighth notes. The lower staff is in bass clef, also with a 6/4 time signature, and contains a fifth-measure rest followed by a series of chords and eighth notes.

The third system of music consists of two staves. The upper staff is in treble clef with a 6/4 time signature. It begins with a ninth-measure rest, followed by a series of chords and eighth notes. The lower staff is in bass clef, also with a 6/4 time signature, and contains a ninth-measure rest followed by a series of chords and eighth notes. The system concludes with a double bar line and the number 8: below the staff.

- The **Closing Hymn** is sung by the congregation to the tune Stille Nacht irregular. [If desired, candlelighting may take place during this hymn, at which time individual candles are lit from the Christ Candle and the lights in the church are dimmed. Parishioners should be cautioned not to tip lighted candles. Candles are extinguished once the hymn ends.]:

Silent night, holy night! All is calm, all is bright
Round yon virgin, mother and child, Holy Infant, so tender and mild,
Sleep in heavenly peace, sleep in heavenly peace.

Silent night, holy night! Son of God, love's pure light
Radiant beams from thy holy face with the dawn of redeeming grace,
Jesus, Lord, at thy birth, Jesus, Lord, at thy birth.

Silent night, holy night! Shepherds quake at the sight;
Glories stream from heaven afar, heav'nly hosts sing, Alleluia!
Christ, the Savior, is born, Christ the Savior is born.

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