

(simplified for fewer singers)

Simplified for fewer singers, this adaptation features solo, duet, and 2-part versions of 7 familiar Christmas songs that your congregation will relish and sing along with. Includes responsive scripture readings for weekly Advent candle lightings or for presentation as a 32-minute service.

[Performance suggestions: This program may be presented in its entirety as a Christmas Eve/Christmas Day candlelight service or broken up and used for individual Advent Sundays. Please feel free to adapt the resources as you see fit—projecting the readings on a screen or including them in your worship bulletin for congregational use.]

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PART 1 (or WEEK 1): THE PROPHECY CANDLE (HOPE)

LEADER:

Welcome to this service of candles and carols.

Light and darkness are powerful metaphors for good and evil...
truth and falsehood...
life and death.

In Genesis, chapter one, verses 2 and 3, we read:

"...the earth was formless and empty,
darkness was over the surface of the deep,
and the Spirit of God was hovering over the waters.

And God said, 'Let there be light,'
and there was light."

[Strike the match/light the lighter]

In the Gospel of John, chapter one, verses 3 through 5 we read:

"Through him [Christ] all things were made;

without him nothing was made that has been made.

In him was life, and that life was the light of all mankind.

The light shines in the darkness,

and the darkness has not overcome it."

[Light the first candle]

(simplified for fewer singers)

PEOPLE:

By lighting this candle,

we proclaim that the light of God's goodness, truth, and life was illuminated in the person of his Son, Jesus.

LEADER:

We light the Prophecy Candle, affirming that the promise God made to Adam and Eve...

Abraham and Sarah...

Moses and Israel...

would be fulfilled in the person of Jesus, the hope of the world.

Reading from the prophet Isaiah, chapter 9, verses 2 and following:

PEOPLE:

The people walking in darkness have seen a great light; on those living in the land of deep darkness a light has dawned.

LEADER:

For to us a child is born,
to us a son is given,
and the government will be on his shoulders.

PEOPLE:

And he will be called
Wonderful, Counselor, Mighty God,
Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace.

LEADER:

Of the greatness of his government and peace there will be no end.

He will reign on David's throne and over his kingdom, establishing and upholding it with justice and righteousness from that time on and forever.

ALL:

The zeal of the Lord Almighty will accomplish this.

CHOIR SINGS: "O Come, O Come, Emmanuel" arranged by Jason Webb

O Come, O Come, Emmanuel

From the Worship Today[®] volume: **Redeemer, Come**

Text: Latin Hymn, Psalteriolum Cantionum Catholicarum, 1710 translated by John M. Neale, stanzas 1 and 2 Henry S. Coffin, stanzas 3 and 4

Music adapted from Plainsong by Thomas Helmore

Arranged by









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PART 2 (or WEEK 2): THE BETHLEHEM CANDLE (LOVE)

LEADER:

Into the darkness of this world, the Son of God was born.

The creator became creation,
pouring himself into the human form
he had fashioned in the garden of Eden.

Reading from the Gospel of Matthew, chapter 2, verses 1 through 6:

PEOPLE:

After Jesus was born in Bethlehem in Judea,
during the time of King Herod,
Magi from the east came to Jerusalem and asked,
"Where is the one who has been born king of the Jews?
We saw his star when it rose and have come to worship him."

LEADER:

When King Herod heard this he was disturbed, and all Jerusalem with him.

When he had called together all the people's chief priests and teachers of the law, he asked them where the Messiah was to be born.

"In Bethlehem in Judea," they replied,

"for this is what the prophet has written:

PEOPLE:

"But you, Bethlehem, in the land of Judah,
are by no means least among the rulers of Judah;
for out of you will come a ruler
who will shepherd my people Israel."

LEADER:

By lighting this Bethlehem Candle,
we proclaim that God demonstrated his infinite love toward us
by sending his Son to be born as a baby
in the City of David, Bethlehem.

[Light the second candle]

(simplified for fewer singers)

PEOPLE:

Like the wise men who followed the star to the place where Christ lay, We come to worship Jesus, the Rose of Heaven.

ALL: Oh, come let us adore him, Christ, the Lord!

CHOIR SINGS: "O Come All Ye Faithful with O Holy Night" arranged by Karen England and Nancy Groeneveld

O Come, All Ye Faithful

with O Holy Night

From DiscoverWorship.com

TRADITIONAL

Arranged by
KAREN ENGLAND and NANCY GROENEVELD







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An Advent Service of Candles & Carols (Simple) - 16



An Advent Service of Candles & Carols (Simple) - 17



An Advent Service of Candles & Carols (Simple) - 18



An Advent Service of Candles & Carols (Simple) - 19



An Advent Service of Candles & Carols (Simple) - 20



An Advent Service of Candles & Carols (Simple) - 21





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PART 3 (or WEEK 3): THE SHEPHERD'S CANDLE (JOY)

<u>LEADER</u>: Reading from the Gospel of Luke, chapter 2, verse 1 and following:

In those days Caesar Augustus issued a decree that a census should be taken of the entire Roman world. And everyone went to their own town to register.

PEOPLE:

So Joseph also went up from the town of Nazareth in Galilee to Judea, to Bethlehem the town of David,
because he belonged to the house and line of David.
He went there to register with Mary,
who was pledged to be married to him and was expecting a child.

LEADER:

While they were there, the time came for the baby to be born, and she gave birth to her firstborn, a son.

She wrapped him in cloths and placed him in a manger, because there was no guest room available for them.

PEOPLE:

And there were shepherds living out in the fields nearby,
keeping watch over their flocks at night.
An angel of the Lord appeared to them,
and the glory of the Lord shone around them,
and they were terrified.

LEADER:

But the angel said to them, "Do not be afraid.

I bring you good news that will cause great joy for all the people.

Today in the town of David a Savior has been born to you;

he is the Messiah, the Lord. This will be a sign to you:

You will find a baby wrapped in cloths and lying in a manger."

(simplified for fewer singers)

PEOPLE:

So they hurried off and found Mary and Joseph, and the baby, who was lying in the manger.

The shepherds returned, glorifying and praising God for all the things they had heard and seen, which were just as they had been told.

LEADER:

The shepherd's terror at meeting God's supernatural messenger was transformed into joy at finding the Christ child just as the angel had promised.

PEOPLE:

By lighting this candle, we proclaim good tidings of great joy to all the peoples of the earth!

[Light the third candle]

ALL:

We light the Shepherd's Candle,
acknowledging that though the night is dark and long—
God's kingdom is coming like the dawn
bringing God's promise of joy in the morning!

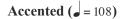
CHOIR SINGS: "Shepherds Medley" arranged by Ed Kee

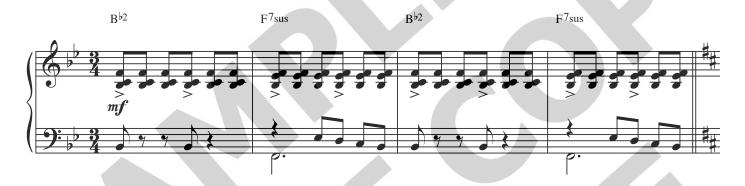
Shepherds Medley

includes The First Noel and Hark! The Herald Angels Sing

From DiscoverWorship.com

Arranged by ED KEE









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An Advent Service of Candles & Carols (Simple) - 28



An Advent Service of Candles & Carols (Simple) - 29



An Advent Service of Candles & Carols (Simple) - 30









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PART 4 (or WEEK 4): THE ANGEL'S CANDLE (PEACE)

LEADER:

The Prophecy Candle celebrates the hope of the promised Messiah.

PEOPLE:

The Bethlehem Candle celebrates the love of God demonstrated that holy night.

LEADER:

The Shepherd's Candle reminds us of the joy that's found in finding Christ.

PEOPLE:

This fourth candle, the Angel's Candle, symbolizes the peace with God that comes through the gift of his Son.

LEADER:

Angels seem to be everywhere in this story...

An angel of the Lord appears to Zechariah, the husband of Mary's cousin, to tell him that he and his barren wife, Elizabeth, will bear a son in their extreme old age.

He will be called "John the Baptist," the prophet who will herald the imminent coming of Jesus, the Messiah.

Then, God sends an angel to a young woman named Mary. Reading from the Gospel of Luke, chapter 1, verse 26 and following:

PEOPLE:

In the sixth month of Elizabeth's pregnancy,
God sent the angel Gabriel to Nazareth,
a town in Galilee, to a virgin pledged to be married to a man named Joseph,
a descendant of David.
The virgin's name was Mary.

(simplified for fewer singers)

LEADER:

...The angel said to her, "Do not be afraid, Mary; you have found favor with God.

You will conceive and give birth to a son, and you are to call him Jesus.

PEOPLE:

He will be great and will be called the Son of the Most High.

The Lord God will give him the throne of his father David,
and he will reign over Jacob's descendants forever;
his kingdom will never end."

LEADER:

Not only did God send an angel to Mary, he sent one to Joseph, as well. Reading from the Gospel of Matthew, chapter 1 and following:

PEOPLE:

This is how the birth of Jesus the Messiah came about:

His mother Mary was pledged to be married to Joseph,

but before they came together,

she was found to be pregnant through the Holy Spirit.

LEADER:

...An angel of the Lord appeared to [Joseph] in a dream and said,

"Joseph son of David, do not be afraid to take Mary home as your wife,
because what is conceived in her is from the Holy Spirit.

PEOPLE:

She will give birth to a son, and you are to give him the name Jesus,
because he will save his people from their sins."

When Joseph woke up, he did what the angel of the Lord had commanded him and took Mary home as his wife.

An Advent Service of Candles & Carols

(simplified for fewer singers)

LEADER:

Even though the time for the baby's birth grew near,
Joseph and Mary had to obey the royal edict
and register for the census in Bethlehem, their ancestral home.

In the hills around that village, shepherds watched their flocks. Reading from the Gospel of Luke, chapter 2, verses 13 and 14:

ALL:

Suddenly a great company of the heavenly host appeared with the angel, praising God and saying,

"Glory to God in the highest heaven,
and on earth peace to those on whom his favor rests."

LEADER:

By lighting this Angel's Candle,
We proclaim that through Christ
We can have peace with God and with one another.

[Light the fourth candle]

CHOIR SINGS: "Angels We Have Heard on High" arranged by Karen England and Nancy Groeneveld

Angels We Have Heard on High

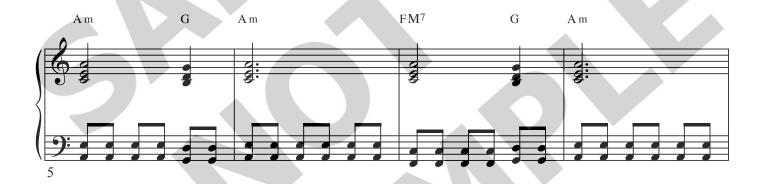
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TRADITIONAL LYRIC
Music by
KAREN ENGLAND and NANCY GROENEVELD

With mystery ($\sqrt{=79}$)















An Advent Service of Candles & Carols (Simple) - 39



An Advent Service of Candles & Carols (Simple) - 40





An Advent Service of Candles & Carols (Simple) - 41







An Advent Service of Candles & Carols (Simple) - 43



An Advent Service of Candles & Carols (Simple) - 44





An Advent Service of Candles & Carols (Simple) - 45

An Advent Service of Candles & Carols

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PART 5 (or CHRISTMAS EVE/DAY): THE CHRIST CANDLE

LEADER:

Each of these Advent candles symbolize a part of the Christmas story, preparing our hearts for the coming of Jesus, the Messiah.

LEADER (cont.):

By lighting this final Christ Candle, we proclaim that Jesus is not only God's Son, but humanity's Savior as well.

[Light the final candle]

Reading from Paul's letter to the Philippians, chapter 2, verses 5 and following:

PEOPLE:

...Christ Jesus, who, being in very nature God,
did not consider equality with God
something to be used to his own advantage;
rather, he made himself nothing
by taking the very nature of a servant,
being made in human likeness.

LEADER:

Jesus was God, is God, and will always be God.

But that first Christmas, he did something amazing and audacious:

To be clear,

his mission wasn't just *to relate to us*; rather, it was *to ransom us* from our sins.

Continuing our reading from Philippians, chapter 2:

he became a man.

PEOPLE:

And being found in appearance as a man, he humbled himself by becoming obedient to death even death on a cross!

An Advent Service of Candles & Carols

(simplified for fewer singers)

LEADER:

God's love—demonstrated so beautifully in a manger in Bethlehem—would later be expressed so extravagantly on a cross outside Jerusalem.

PEOPLE:

Therefore God exalted him to the highest place
and gave him the name that is above every name,
that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow
in heaven and on earth and under the earth,
and every tongue acknowledge that Jesus Christ is Lord,
to the glory of God the Father.

LEADER:

Our response to the love of God, expressed in the person of Jesus Christ, is *worship*. We acknowledge his *worth* by bowing our knee and lifting our voice to proclaim that Jesus Christ is Lord!

ALL: Jesus Christ is Lord!

CHOIR SINGS: "Good Christian Men, Rejoice" arranged by Richard Craig Smith and J. Paul Mills

Good Christian Men, Rejoice

From DiscoverWorship.com

TRADITIONAL Arranged by RICHARD CRAIG SMITH and J. PAUL MILLS





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