Baby’s First Christmas Celebration Kit

Resource by Rev. Kathy Pittenger

This kit includes a sample letter to send to families who have an infant celebrating their first Christmas, script for the blessing during worship, and resources for gifts. The letter and blessing may be adapted to fit your congregation and context.

I have also used this as an opportunity to connect with families who experienced the death of an unborn baby or infant. Most did not want to be acknowledged during the service, but appreciated their child being honored in that way. Please take time to discern how to care for the families in your congregation/community.

You may also discern who to include: just those who are active in your congregation; those who are members (whether or not they are active) and those who are active; persons in your community you are building relationships with who may or may not attend the church; families from a day care/childcare center/preschool in your church (if that applies); etc.

If you have any questions, would like more information, or have ideas for next year, please contact me at:

kpittenger@michiganumc.org

Sample Letter to Families

November 21, 2018

Dear (child’s name),

Your first Christmas is almost here! Your friends at First United Methodist Church would like to celebrate this special time with you. In honor of your First Christmas, we are inviting you to attend the 9:55am service on Sunday, December 18th with your family. You will be presented with a special ornament in honor of your first Christmas and we will say a special blessing over you.

I hope that you and your family will be able to join us. Please remind your parents that your baby noises are welcome during the worship service, but if you need to stretch, you can relax and play in the Lobby behind the sanctuary or in the Nursery.

If you are unable to join us, I would be happy to give you your ornament and bless you or you can send someone to the service on your behalf (like a grandparent).

Parents: please call the church office at 248.123.4567 or email me (kpittenger@michiganumc.org) by December 8th to let me know if you will be at worship on December 18th. Also, please email me a picture of your baby that we can project on the screen during the service. I look forward to seeing you soon!

“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. But the angel said to them, "Do not be afraid. I bring you good news of great joy that will be for all the people. Today in the town of David a Savior has been born to you; he is Christ the Lord. This will be a sign to you: You will find a baby wrapped in cloths and lying in a manger." Luke 2:8-12

Blessings,

Rev. Kathy Pittenger

Pastor of Lifelong Faith Formation

Blessing for Baby’s 1st Christmas

I would like to invite the babies who are celebrating their first Christmas as well as their families to come forward at this time.

One of life’s greatest blessings is the birth of a child. Today, we invited the babies of families connected to our faith community who were born this year, *2017*, for a special Christmas ornament, book, and blessing. As the family of God we rejoice in God’s good gift of life through the miracle of birth. We think about Jesus’ birth as recorded in Luke 2:7 “Mary gave birth to her firstborn child, a son, wrapped him snugly, and laid him in a manger, because there was no place for them in the inn.”

Today, we join with parents, siblings, and grandparents in embracing these children with open arms, just as Jesus welcomed little children with words of blessing in Mark 10:14 and 16 when he said, “’Let the little children come to me, and do not hinder them, for the kingdom of God belongs to such as these… And he took the children in his arms, hugged them and blessed them.”

This year each child will receive an ornament and a Christmas book.

We welcome:

*Names of Children*

We celebrate these precious children as we celebrate the birth of our Savior, Jesus Christ. Let them be a reminder of God’s love to us.

Let us pray:

(*For the Birth of a Child,* *Book of Worship*, page 586)

God of new beginnings, we celebrate new life. We join with babies who are celebrating their first Christmas. We join with families who find new joy during this season. Help us during this season as we celebrate the birth of your Son, to point our children to you. Pour out your Holy Spirit on these children, their families, and all of us who are gathered here. Fill our homes with love, patience, grace and holiness. We pray in the name of

Jesus. Amen.

Gift Ideas:

Here are some ideas for gifts to give to the infants. Be creative and get your congregation involved!

* Christmas board book
	+ [Christmas in the Manger](https://www.amazon.com/Christmas-Manger-Nola-Buck/dp/0694012270/ref%3Dsr_1_5?ie=UTF8&qid=1541616081&sr=8-5&keywords=christmas+board+book)
	+ [Who Is Coming to Our House?](https://www.amazon.com/Who-Coming-House-Joseph-Slate/dp/0399234101/ref%3Dsr_1_26?ie=UTF8&qid=1541616172&sr=8-26&keywords=christmas+board+book)
	+ [Snuggle Time Christmas Stories](https://www.amazon.com/Snuggle-Christmas-Stories-Glenys-Nellist/dp/0310761328/ref%3Dsr_1_3?ie=UTF8&qid=1541616273&sr=8-3&keywords=christmas+glenys+nellist)
	+ [The Story of Christmas](https://www.amazon.com/gp/product/0824918452/ref%3Doh_aui_detailpage_o08_s01?ie=UTF8&psc=1)
* Ornaments
	+ You find inexpensive to moderately priced ornaments in a variety of places.
	+ You may wish to write “Baby’s First Christmas *year*” Blessings from *your church name*
* Other gifts possibilities
	+ Tie blanket (perhaps as a handmade gift from the children of the church)
	+ Prayer blanket
	+ Prayer book
	+ Toddler Bible
	+ $5 gift card for the parents (coffee?!)
	+ Use your imagination!!