

Service Transcript
Sunday 13th December 2020
The Nativity Service

Leader: Ian Battiste

Speaker: Mark Reid

Prayer 1

Heavenly Father, In this time of advent draw us together in unity, may our praise and worship this morning be for your glory. During this time help us to come together in mission, that the hope and joy within might be the song we sing, and the melody of our lives. And in this time of Advent expectation draw us together in-service Lord so that the path we follow might lead us from that lowly stable to a glimpse of eternity with you - A-men.

Luke 2: 10

Luke 2:10 says this: But the angel said to them, "Do not be afraid. I bring you good news that will cause great joy for all the people.

- 1. *Lighting of Candle*** As we light the candles lets respond together with: "*We light a candle for joy. May it light the way*"

- 2.** The candle we light on the 3rd Sunday in advent is also known as the candle of Joy, recognising the third of the elements hope, love, joy and peace, which are key expressions of God's gift of salvation. The baby born in Bethlehem was born to die in our place. He went to the cross and received the wrath we deserved for our sin. He died to purchase the joy the angels announced at his birth. And three days later, he rose from the dead, the firstborn of all who would follow him. He appeared to his disciples and showed them how all of the Bible was pointing to him — the baby born in a manger, the preacher of good news, the Son of God crucified on the cross, the King who conquered the grave, the Joy to the world.

Response for call to Worship – Including into worship song

Do not be anxious about anything. Instead, lift up your hearts to God

Come, child of joy!

When Christ arrives, grief and sadness will flee away.

Come, child of joy!

Let us give joyfully, because our God is so good.

Come, child of joy!

Worship Song –Angels from the Realms Glory

Prayer 2

Lets come together again in prayer; *Heavenly Father, we come before you acknowledging you are Christ the King who came to set us free and break the chains of Sin. We give thanks for all the ways you work for wholeness and right relationships in our own lives and throughout the world. Even when we feel the world is suffering, let our hearts find joy in you. During this time of advent fill us with courage to bear witness to what we have seen and heard. May our lives always testify to the good news of your love, and may we lift up those who are bowed down so that we can make way for your Joy and love to spread throughout the whole earth. Amen.*

Worship Song – Make Way, Make Way

Poem by Deborah Ann

May the joy of CHRISTmas,
ring in your ears
may the hope it brings
rid you of your fears.

For unto this day,
a Child was born
a Saviour to the world
one glorious morn.

May the joy of CHRISTmas,
fill you with cheer
may the peace it brings
last all throughout the year.

For unto us this day,
God sent us His Son
loved and begotten
to bring joy to everyone.

May the joy of CHRISTmas,
ring loud and clear
may the love that it brings
draw Jesus to you near!

Worship Song – Joyful, Joyful we Adore Thee

Object Lesson – Joy to the World

Have any of you ever played the piano before or taken piano lessons? I don't know a lot about the piano, but I do know that it can tell us the greatest story in the whole world! Did you know that?

It's true! All I need to do is play a simple C scale and it will tell us an amazing story. That is a C scale, but I didn't hear the story yet, did you? Maybe I did not do it quite right, maybe I should try playing the scale backwards?, Did that sound like an amazing story to you? I didn't hear a very good story yet either! This time I will try to play that C scale backwards and put a few pauses in it.

Did you hear that? What was it? Joy to the world, the Lord has come! That is a great story isn't it? In fact, that is the greatest story in the world! In Luke 2 vs10-11 The Angel Gabriel talks about a child being born that will be our Saviour and who will bring great Joy for all the people! Do you know who the Angel Gabriel was talking about?.....That's right Jesus! See, hidden in this simple C scale is the most amazing story! The story about Jesus who came to earth thousands of years ago so that He could save us from our sins and offer us Salvation and a new life! Let us always remember that the greatest gift we have ever been given is when God sent His Son Jesus to save us!

Worship Song – Joy to the World

Nativity Play Script - "God is with us – everywhere!"

Scene 1 – At Mary's Home

Welcome to our Christmas story,
we re-tell it every year:
How God came from heaven's glory,
came to make his home right here.

Jesus, lying in a manger,
born in all our mess and fuss,
made us friends who once were strangers,
Son of God who lives with us.

Soon we'll meet the shepherds, wise men,
all the usual Christmas crew
and, perhaps, another story –
one that's now involving you.

In our world of joy and darkness,
in our laughter, pain and care,
Jesus came so we could know that
God Is With Us – Everywhere! [*spreading arms wide*]

So our story starts as always
with an angel, Gabriel,
visiting the home of Mary.
Was she busy? Who can tell? [*shrugging shoulders*]

Mary *[Sweeping busily]* All today I'm cooking, sweeping,
feed the chickens, knead the dough. *[miming jobs]*
Honestly, it's never-ending!
Time to sit down for a mo. *[sitting down, looking tired]*

But as soon as Mary rested
someone knocked upon her door. *[make knocking sound]*
Grumpily she went to answer,
Not expecting what she saw.

Gabriel *[looking impressive, with loud voice]* Greetings, Mary, highly favoured.
I have come to you from God
with a message straight from heaven.
[in a normal voice] Oh! You look a little odd.

Yes, I realise you're frightened,
seems to happen quite a lot.
People see the wings and halo –
gives them all a nasty shock!

[concerned and caring] Would you like a glass of water?
Do sit down dear, there's a love.
That's much better. Here's the message
I have brought from God above. *[clearing throat, ready to start again]*

Gabriel explained to Mary
God had chosen her to be
mother of a special baby –
God's gift for humanity!

Mary *[looking confused]* Ummn, don't want to seem ungrateful.
but there's just one tiny thing
I should mention, just in passing.
See my hand? No wedding ring! *[show both sides of left hand, like the song 'Single Ladies']*

Gabriel Mary, don't get all Beyoncé!
It's OK, the child will be
not the son of your fiancé
but of God, the one in three. *[fingers showing 1 then 3]*

Father God will send his Sprit
and become the Holy Son.

So the child you'll bear will be the
Son of God, the three in one. *[fingers showing 3 then 1]*

Mary Wow! That's quite a thing you're asking,
God himself will come to stay?
But I am the Lord God's servant
Let it happen as you say. *[bowing slightly, hands in prayer shape]*

So the angel bowed and left her.
Mary sat drank some tea, *[miming drinking tea]*
called up her fiancé, Joseph.
What would his reaction be? *[shrugging shoulders]*

Scene 2 – Joseph and the Angel

Right across the town from Mary
Joseph had a wood-work shop.
He was busy making benches
when a phone call made him stop.

Joseph *[answering phone]* Joseph here, all tables mended,
doors and windows, fences too. *[looking proud]*
Carpenter to all of Naz' reth.
Who's there? Mary? Oh, it's you!

Mary *[talking on phone]* Joseph dear, I've news to tell you:
we are going to have a child.
God's own son, an angel told me. *[looking worried]*
Now, please Joseph, don't get riled.

Joseph *[looking shocked and sad]* Mary, this is disappointing.
Not that I am mad or cross,
but I must do what it righteous. *[shaking head]*
Sorry, but the wedding's off. *[putting phone down and sighing]*

Joseph planned to do this quietly,
caring still for Mary's plight.
Gabriel had news for Joseph
in a dream, that very night!

Gabriel *[hands round mouth, calling]* Joseph, son of David, listen!
You are frightened. That's OK. *[thumbs up]*
It's alright to marry Mary.
You'll still have your wedding day.

Mary said the babe she's bearing
is from God, and that is right.
Call him Jesus (which means saviour).
He will be this dark world's light.

Joseph made it up with Mary,
and they set a wedding day,
but before they picked the bridesmaids
something happened – Ah! Oy Vey! [*'Oy Vey!' is a Jewish phrase like 'Oh no!'*]

Joseph [*waving letter*] Mary, I've just got this letter.
Not good news, cos it's from Them
(you know, Romans), 'bout our taxes.
Time to pay – in Bethlehem!

Mary [*looking shocked*] What? You mean we've got to travel!
while I'm pregnant? That's too hard.
Can't we pay by direct debit,
Visa Pay or Mastercard. [*waving wallet*]

Joseph [*shrugging shoulders*] Sorry sweetie, not invented.
It is Bethlehem or bust.
I'll start packing. Put your feet up.
Comfy footwear – that's a must.

Scene 3 – By the Manger

So to Bethlehem they travelled,
(‘cos of Joseph's family tree)
walked for days and days to get there.
Were they tired? Guess we'll see. [*shrugging shoulders*]

Joseph [*walking on the spot*] Nearly there now, Mary darling,
won't be long till supper time.
We can stay with Bob, my uncle,
in his guest-room, you'll be fine.

Mary [*walking on the spot, leaning backwards*] Really hope so, Joseph dearest.
Baby's nearly on his way.
When we get there, call the midwife.
Think you'll be a dad today! [*patting tummy*]

Uncle Bob had made it lovely

but the room was very small.
Mary much preferred it downstairs,
just beside the donkey's stall.

So that night, as stars were twinkling
Mary's tiny babe was born.
Joseph filled the donkey's trough with
Hay and blankets, soft and warm.

Joseph *[picking up baby Jesus doll]* can I hold him? Will he like me?
Do you think he'll call me 'Dad'? *[eew!]*
God's own son just wet his nappy.
Mary, dear, you're looking sad. *[noticing Mary]*

Mary *[looking at baby Jesus doll]* I was thinking, will he be a
carpenter like you, you reckon?
Making chairs and tables, or does
something very diff'rent beckon?

[wondering] Will he grow to be like you, or
will he take his Father's job?
Nestling in your arm I see the
face of human, soul of God.

As they gazed in awe and wonder
at their baby, sleeping sound, *[looking around and above]*
silently, beyond their vision,
all of heaven gathered round.

God no longer just in glory,
but right there where humans dwell. *[opening arms wide to include everybody]*
God made flesh to be God With Us,
Jesus, our Emmanuel. *[bringing hands together to present baby]*

Scene 4 – Shepherd and Angels

Meanwhile, on a distant hillside
shepherds sat there, tending sheep
Amos, Seth and apprentice Colin
round the campfire, half asleep. *[yawning]*

[suddenly awake] All at once they heard some singing,
saw a brilliant shining light.

Gabriel arrived in glory. *[looking scared]*
What a terrifying sight!

Amos *[looking up, scared]* What the flippin' 'eck is 'happenin'?
Seth and Colin, wake up now!
Aliens, I think, or Martians!
Don't look at 'em! Hit the ground! *[lying flat on face]*

Gabriel *[apologetic]* Sorry, didn't mean to scare you
(it's the halo, I suppose),
but I have some information.
'Scuse me while I strike a pose.

[in 'hero' pose] Do not fear, I bring glad tidings!
News of joy for all the earth.
News about a special baby.
News about a new king's birth.

Seth Get up off the ground there Amos!
There's no need to hide your face *[doing 'face-palm']*
Martians? It's a bloomin' angel,
not some dude from outer space!.

Colin *[pointing upwards, amazed]* Look, there's loads now, singing "Glory,
glory be to God on high.
Peace on earth to everybody."
Angels filling all the sky.

Gabriel *[pointing sideways]* Hurry now to David's city,
Bethlehem, and you will see
wrapped in cloth and in a manger,
Lord of all eternity.

[slight pause – in a normal voice, not in rhythm]
Get a move on then!
Don't just stand there gawping.

So the shepherds left the hillside,
and, just off the city square,
found the house with Mary, Joseph
and the baby lying there.

Amos *[beaming]* Ain't he lovely? Who'd have thought it?
Me, old Amos, standing here,

right before the Lord of Glory!
Makes me knees come over queer. *[wobbling knees]*

Seth *[scratching head]* Feel I should have brought a present.
Could not think of what to bring.
What could shepherds give a baby
Lord of lords and King of kings?

Amos *[showing sheep]* I brought wool for him to sleep on,
comfier than straw and hay. *[sniffing sheep]*
Smells of sheep I know, but this is
from the heart. Is that OK? *[offering sheep]*

So the shepherds knelt and worshipped, *[looking down then looking up]*
feet on Earth and eyes on heaven.
Jesus slept and snuggled softly
on the wool that they had given.

Sure, it had no fancy wrapping. *[shaking head]*
Ribbons? None, nor sparkley bow.
But the gift they gave to Jesus *[nodding]*
Came with love instead of show.

So, as Colin, Seth and Amos
went back to their dozing sheep,
Jesus somehow went there with them,
giving presence they could keep.

Scene 5 – Wise Men Visit

Later on, a group of wise men
travelled in from lands afar.
Scientists, we'd call them these days,
following a bright new star. *[pointing and looking upwards to star]*

Mel *[pretend to ride a camel]* Are we nearly there yet, Gaspar?
We've been travelling for weeks.
Can you just remind me why we've
come, and what it is we seek?

Gas Melchior, have you forgotten?
Honestly, you noodle-brain! *[showing gift]*
We bring gifts to greet and welcome,

celebrate a new king's reign.

Bal *[pointing to book or chart]* All our books and all our wisdom,
told us that this star so bright
means that king and God and saviour
will be born this very night.

When the wise men stopped their journey
what they found was quite a shock:
Mary, Joseph, babe in manger,
shepherds outside with their flock.

Mel Can I check, this is the right place?
I brought gold to crown a king, *[presenting gift]*
but I wonder, where's the palace?
Is this manager quite the thing?

Gas I brought incense, pure and holy,
Made to worship God on high, *[presenting gift]*
Is this baby, weak and helpless
Mighty God with human cry?

Bal I brought myrrh, which symbolises
one who dies to save us all. *[presenting gift]*
Seems a strange gift for a baby,
Job too big for one so small.

So the wise men gave their presents
though they did not understand
how the child who lay before them
would, one day, give this command:

"Follow me!", he'd call to many,
preach Good News in all he said,
heal the sick and free the captives!
Would they follow where he led?

Gave his life to pay our ransom,
bought us all at costly price.
Righteous king and God and saviour.
Perfect lamb as sacrifice.

Raised to life to raise us with him,
Victor, Christ and Living Word.
All this lay before the baby

sleeping soundly, undisturbed.

So the wise men knelt around him,
gave their costly presents, then
suddenly, they knew that they'd be
taking treasure home with them.

Richer than the purest incense,
costlier than gold or myrrh,
wise men took home truest Wisdom,
Prince of Peace and Comforter.

Scene 6 – God Is With Us

Now our story's almost ended.
Everyone has met him here.
Will you take the Christmas baby
home with you throughout the year?

Let us hear from all the people
who have met with God today.
How will this affect their stories?
Will this change them? Who can say? [*shrugging shoulders*]

Mary Strangest night, but stranger morning.
 Joy and sadness like a sword.
 When I kiss my baby's forehead
 I believe I kiss my Lord. [*Hold up Jesus doll*]

Joseph Though I'm his adopted father
 I will raise him as my son,
 teach him all I know and love him,
 serve my King 'til kingdom come. [*Hold up Jesus doll*]

Amos I don't really understand it,
 all the stuff the angels said,
 but I know I knelt and worshipped
 by the Lord Almighty's bed. [*Hold up Jesus doll*]

Seth Why would God come down to shepherds,
 poorest folk of all the poor?
 Live with us and make us worthy
 I don't know, but I adore. [*Hold up Jesus doll*]

Colin What have I to give to Jesus?
Nothing, but yet everything.
All my heart and soul and worship,
for the baby, God and king. *[Hold up Jesus doll]*

Mel Gold I brought, expecting royals,
Majesty I found instead.
Higher King than all kings ever,
lying in a manger bed. *[Hold up Jesus doll]*

Gas I brought incense, made for worship,
rising as a prayer to heaven.
Prayers now answered by the baby,
God's own gift to me is given. *[Hold up Jesus doll]*

Bal Myrrh I brought, not understanding
how this babe would die and live,
bringing life in all its fullness –
gifts that only he could give. *[Hold up Jesus doll]*

Gabriel So God's plan before creation,
Earth in heaven and heaven on Earth,
came in form of gentle baby,
Mighty God in human birth. *[Hold up Jesus doll]*

Now Emmanuel is with us,
Christmas is forever true.
In your home if you'll invite him,
God with you and you and you. *[Hold up Jesus doll]*

God on Earth and God in heaven,
God with every human heart.
Greatest gift that e'er was given:
We and God no more apart.

Shout with us the Christmas story.
Let all heaven and Earth declare:
Jesus came to Earth from glory,
[all shout together]
God is with us – everywhere!

Reading

Matthew 1:18-25 (NIV)

¹⁸ This is how the birth of Jesus the Messiah came about^[a]: 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. ¹⁹ Because Joseph her husband was faithful to the law, and yet^[b] did not want to expose her to public disgrace, he had in mind to divorce her quietly.

²⁰ But after he had considered this, an angel of the Lord appeared to him 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. ²¹ She will give birth to a son, and you are to give him the name Jesus,^[c] because he will save his people from their sins.'

²² All this took place to fulfil what the Lord had said through the prophet: ²³ 'The virgin will conceive and give birth to a son, and they will call him Immanuel' (which means 'God with us').

²⁴ When Joseph woke up, he did what the angel of the Lord had commanded him and took Mary home as his wife. ²⁵ But he did not consummate their marriage until she gave birth to a son. And he gave him the name Jesus.

Mark's Talk

GOD WITH US

Immanuel or Emmanuel – it's a word in Hebrew that means "God with us." That was the title of the play this morning- God is with us – everywhere!

What does that *really* mean; for God to be with us? In Bethlehem the baby born of the virgin Mary was Emmanuel – God with us – that was in our reading: *The angel said to Joseph, do not be afraid to take Mary home as your wife, because what is conceived in her is from the Holy Spirit.* God Himself was responsible for Mary becoming pregnant, because God Himself was becoming a human being. He was literally becoming God with us! Wow! Big stuff!

WHY WOULD GOD WANT TO BECOME A HUMAN BEING

Question! If God came to this world as a person, why on earth would He want to? It seems crazy doesn't it? The angel gave us the reason in Matthew's Gospel too. *21 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.'* The New Testament was written in Greek, so the baby is referred to as Jesus, but in Aramaic and Hebrew, the local languages of that time, his name was pronounced Yeshua or Joshua. It is a name that means *God saves!*

THE RESCUE MISSION

The whole reason for Jesus being born was to mount a rescue mission to save people from their sins. What does that mean? Sins are the wrong things that we do, or think, or say and it means as a result that we can't ever know God, know His presence or blessings.

God didn't want that for us, and mounted a rescue mission and that mission was Jesus and He went on to die on the cross for us and after he rose from the dead He offered all who would trust and follow Him, forgiveness, hope and eternal life.

LIFEBELT AND LIFELINE

He wants to save us, rescue us, rather like someone who helps someone drowning. If you see someone in difficulty in the sea, what do you do – you throw them a lifebelt, they grab it and you haul them in with the lifeline.

In Jesus, God has thrown us a lifeline, all we have to do is accept it and allow Him to complete the rescue. And He presents you with that option today. Will you take it? Some of you already have, others haven't, some are perhaps thinking about it.

Have you ever heard of a drowning person who has refused a lifeline? I doubt anyone saved ever asked the question of whether they should accept it or not. Yet, thousands, millions of people when presented with God's lifeline haven't yet accepted it. Yet everyone is drowning in life and drowning in death.

MANGER, CROSS AND VERSE

If you haven't accepted Jesus into your life yet. God gives you the opportunity today, now to accept Him. But there's more.

God is still with us To everyone who receives Jesus, God gives the gift of His Holy Spirit. Being a Christian isn't just about what happens at the end of our life, but about life now. Jesus said "I have come that *you* may have life, and have it to the full."

And God is with us now, willing able to make a difference in our lives, in our families, in our homes if only we would accept the invitation to follow Jesus.

And we don't need any special place or special circumstances to accept Jesus. God is with us everywhere – and that's in your living room or wherever you are right now. Will you trust Him, will you follow Him? If you want to do that, why not pray this prayer with me now.

SLIDE

Prayer of faith

Lord Jesus, thank you that you were willing to come to this earth as a baby to rescue me. Thank you that you died on the cross, thank you that you rose from the dead in order to give me new life, life to the full, life that's eternal. Thank you that you died to save me from my sins, please forgive me and accept me into your family; I want to follow you, I want to serve you. Fill me with your Spirit and walk with me each day I pray.

I ask this in Your name. Amen

Worship Song – O Come O Come Emmanuel

Prayer

Lets Pray Heavenly Father help us to remember the birth of Jesus, that we may share in the song of the angels, the gladness of the shepherds, and worship of the wise men. Close the door of hate and open the door of love & joy all over the world. Let kindness come with every gift and good desires with every greeting. Draw us close to our Saviour and king as we bring not Gold, Myrrh or Frankincense but the gift of our lives and in return we give thanks for your everlasting love, Joy, enduring patience, and for the greatest gift of all, the possibility of Salvation through Jesus Christ our Lord - Amen

Blessing

May the God of hope fill you all with peace & joy as you walk and trust in him and may the power of the Holy Spirit overflow you with hope as you enter a new week – Amen

Play Script by Fay Rowland

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