

Christmas Eve 2019

Jeff: Welcome, Opening Prayer, First Lesson

Chris: - **READING: Genesis 3:8-15**

Sing: O Come, O Come, Immanuel

Dale: **READING GENESIS 22:15-18**

Sing: Come, Thou Long Expected Jesus

Angel & Yessica **READING Isaiah 7:14; 9:2, 6-7; 11:1-9; Micah 2-4**

Sing: Oh Little Town of Bethlehem

John & Winnie **READING – Luke 1:26-38; Matthew 1:18-23**

Sing:

- **Away in a Manger**
- **Silent Night**
- **Oh Holy Night**

Kurtz family **READING Luke 2:8-16**

Sing:

- **Hark the Herald Angels Sing**
- **Angels We Have Heard on High**

Don & Rita **READING Matthew 2:1-11**

Sing: What Child is This?

Trip **READING John 1:1-5, 10-14**

Sing: O Come, All Ye Faithful

Jeff – Closing Remarks, prayer

Sing: Joy to the World

I want to welcome you this evening as we celebrate the coming of Christ through our Christmas Eve worship service.

The service will last about an hour. It's filled with readings of Scripture and singing songs that tell the Christmas Story. At various times you will be asked to sit and stand if you are able. And afterwards, we will enjoy some time together with ham and rolls and pie before we head off to our homes. So let us pray.

Heavenly Father,

We're here tonight to remember Christmas. To anchor our minds and souls in eternal truth. To be reminded of your promises and prophecies, to hear the message of the angels and remember the miracle in the manger.

And to give you thanks. Thanks for our Savior. Thanks for the gifts He brings. Thanks for the friends and family we have around us, or who are on their way. Thanks for those who could not make it, and thanks for those who are only a memory to us now.

And we come to ask. We come to ask that you would bring greater peace and joy to the earth, to our nation, and to our community. We pray for the needs of this broken world. We ask for your blessing on the poor, the helpless, the cold, the hungry and the oppressed; for your blessing on those who are sick and on those who mourn. We ask for your blessing on the lonely and the unloved, the elderly and the children, and on all those who do not know you or love you, on those who have not discovered or experienced what you give us in Christ.

And we come to offer ourselves up to you. If there is a role you want us to play, if there is something you want us to do, may we be as available to you as a carpenter or the girl he would marry, as available to you as the shepherds and the wisemen. May we be increasingly available to you and your purposes in the world.

In Jesus' name we pray,
Amen

EXPOSITION:

We celebrate Christmas by giving gifts, but did you know it's a trend started by God?

In the first pages of the Bible we read that God created the whole world and everything in it. The Bible says that everything He made was good, perfect, and wonderful, and He gave it to us to develop and explore.

But, not long after they had received the gift, Adam and Eve broke the only rule God had given them – they ate from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. They sinned by rebelling against God – by doing what they wanted to do instead of what He said. And in the process, they suddenly ruined the perfect gift they had just been given. It was like dropping a beautiful piece of custom-made pottery on a concrete floor - there was no taking it back, no getting another, no fixing it with a little bit of glue. They had just broken their relationship with God and with each other.

Fortunately, God came looking for them; He talked with them about what they had done. He told them there would be consequences for this rebellion – that justice would be served, but He also promised mercy would be shown. One day, He would pay for what we had broken and provide us a way back into relationship with Him.

He promised a Savior would come, as the Christmas Carol says, to 'save us all from Satan's power, when we were gone astray.' A Messiah would come to bring us God's 'rest' and deliver us from 'dismay.'

Reader: Chris

From the Book of Genesis Chapter Three:

8 And they heard the sound of the LORD God walking in the garden in the cool of the day, and Adam and his wife hid themselves from the presence of the LORD God among the trees of the garden.

9 Then the LORD God called to Adam and said to him, "Where *are* you?"

10 So he said, "I heard Your voice in the garden, and I was afraid because I was naked; and I hid myself."

11 And He said, "Who told you that you *were* naked? Have you eaten from the tree of which I commanded you that you should not eat?"

12 Then the man said, "The woman whom You gave *to be* with me, she gave me of the tree, and I ate."

13 And the LORD God said to the woman, "What *is* this you have done?"

The woman said, "The serpent deceived me, and I ate."

14 So the LORD God said to the serpent:

"Because you have done this,
You *are* cursed more than all cattle,
And more than every beast of the field;
On your belly you shall go,
And you shall eat dust
All the days of your life.

15 And I will put enmity
Between you and the woman,
And between your seed and her Seed;
He shall bruise your head,
And you shall bruise His heel."

Reader: Sit down

Song: O Come, O Come, Immanuel

Reader: Dale

Eventually God chose a man named Abraham and promised the Savior would come from his descendants.

We read in Genesis Chapter Twenty Two

15 Then the angel of the LORD called to Abraham a second time from heaven 16 and said, "By myself I have sworn," this is the LORD's declaration: "Because you have done this thing and have not withheld your only son, 17 I will indeed bless you and make your offspring as numerous as the stars of the sky and the sand on the seashore. Your offspring will possess the city gates of their enemies. 18 And all the nations of the earth will be blessed by your offspring because you have obeyed my command."

Reader sits down.

Sing: Come, Thou Long Expected Jesus

Readers: Lugo Family

Abraham became the grandfather of Israel who had twelve sons who eventually formed a nation, and it was to this nation that God sent prophets like Isaiah slowly revealing more and more of His glorious plan

We read in the book of Isaiah

From Chapter 7

14 Therefore the Lord Himself will give you a sign: Behold, the virgin shall conceive and bear a Son, and shall call His name Immanuel.

And From Chapter 9

9:2 The people who walked in darkness
Have seen a great light;
Those who dwelt in the land of the shadow of death,
Upon them a light has shined.

9:6 For unto us a Child is born,
Unto us a Son is given;
And the government will be upon His shoulder.
And His name will be called
Wonderful, Counselor, Mighty God,
Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace.

7 Of the increase of *His* government and peace
There will be no end,
Upon the throne of David and over His kingdom,
To order it and establish it with judgment and justice
From that time forward, even forever.
The zeal of the Lord of hosts will perform this.

That name, Immanuel, means God with us, and it stirred up a hope among the people, that some day God would once again walk among us like He had with Adam and Eve.

We learn more from the prophet Micah in the book of Micah, Chapter Five

2 "But you, Bethlehem Ephrathah,
though you are small among the clans of Judah,
out of you will come for me
one who will be ruler over Israel,
whose origins are from of old,
from ancient times."

3 Therefore Israel will be abandoned
until the time when she who is in labor bears a son,
and the rest of his brothers return
to join the Israelites.

4 He will stand and shepherd his flock
in the strength of the LORD,
in the majesty of the name of the LORD his God.
And they will live securely, for then his greatness
will reach to the ends of the earth.

Reader sits down

Sing: Oh Little Town of Bethlehem

Readers: Boumas

Christmas is a season of expectation – especially for little kids – they look forward to what is coming and all the good stuff they'll get. But the first Christmas kind of took everyone by surprise. No one knew it was coming. It wasn't on the calendar.

God suddenly interrupted the life of a young girl, a virgin, named Mary. He sent an angel that told her she would conceive the Messiah Isaiah had promised. She had some questions, but ultimately surrendered to what God wanted to do and rejoiced in the coming of her Lord.

We learn the story from the Book of Luke's Gospel, Chapter One:

Luke 1:26 Now in the sixth month the angel Gabriel was sent by God to a city of Galilee named Nazareth, 27 to a virgin betrothed to a man whose name was Joseph, of the house of David. The virgin's name was Mary. 28 And having come in, the angel said to her, "Rejoice, highly favored *one*, the Lord *is* with you; blessed *are* you among women!"

29 But when she saw *him*, she was troubled at his saying, and considered what manner of greeting this was. 30 Then the angel said to her, "Do not be afraid, Mary, for you have found favor with God. 31 And behold, you will conceive in your womb and bring forth a Son, and shall call His name JESUS. 32 He will be great, and will be called the Son of the Highest; and the Lord God will give Him the throne of His father David. 33 And He will reign over the house of Jacob forever, and of His kingdom there will be no end."

34 Then Mary said to the angel, "How can this be, since I do not know a man?"

35 And the angel answered and said to her, "*The* Holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the Highest will overshadow you; therefore, also, that Holy One who is to be born will be called the Son of God. 36 Now indeed, Elizabeth your relative has also conceived a son in her old age; and this is now the sixth month for her who was called barren. 37 For with God nothing will be impossible."

38 Then Mary said, "Behold the maidservant of the Lord! Let it be to me according to your word." And the angel departed from her.

The book of Matthew's Gospel tells us more. We read in Chapter One:

18 This is how Jesus the Messiah was born. His mother, Mary, was engaged to be married to Joseph. But before the marriage took place, while she was still a virgin, she became pregnant through the power of the Holy Spirit. 19 Joseph, her fiancé, was a good man and did not want to disgrace her publicly, so he decided to break the engagement quietly.

20 As he considered this, an angel of the Lord appeared to him in a dream. "Joseph, son of David," the angel said, "do not be afraid to take Mary as your wife. For the child within her was conceived by the Holy Spirit. 21 And she will have a son, and you are to name him Jesus, for he will save his people from their sins."

22 All of this occurred to fulfill the Lord's message through his prophet Isaiah:

23 “Look! The virgin will conceive a child!
She will give birth to a son,
and they will call him Immanuel,
which means ‘God is with us.’”

Readers sit down.

Sing

- Away in a Manger
- Silent Night
- Oh Holy Night

Readers: Kurtz family

The Bible says that all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God. None of us is truly good. We're all guilty of doing things we shouldn't have done or not doing things we should have done. And that's why the good news of our salvation is offered to everyone.

When Jesus came, they didn't just brief the President, it wasn't classified, it wasn't a secret someone had to let you in on. No, God sent word to lowly shepherds. Normal people. People without a rank or a title in fact, He let them in on what was happening first.

We read about it in the book of Luke's Gospel Chapter Two:

Luke 2:8 Now there were in the same country shepherds living out in the fields, keeping watch over their flock by night. 9 And behold, an angel of the Lord stood before them, and the glory of the Lord shone around them, and they were greatly afraid. 10 Then the angel said to them, "Do not be afraid, for behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy which will be to all people. 11 For there is born to you this day in the city of David a Savior, who is Christ the Lord. 12 And this *will be* the sign to you: You will find a Babe wrapped in swaddling cloths, lying in a manger." 13 And suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host praising God and saying:

14 "Glory to God in the highest,
And on earth peace, goodwill toward men!"

15 So it was, when the angels had gone away from them into heaven, that the shepherds said to one another, "Let us now go to Bethlehem and see this thing that has come to pass, which the Lord has made known to us." 16 And they came with haste and found Mary and Joseph, and the Babe lying in a manger.

Readers sit down

Sing:

- Hark! The Herald Angels Sing
- Angels We Have Heard on High

Readers: Pattersons

The child we celebrate on Christmas is also a king. No matter what our job or position, our experience or our title, we must all bow our knee before the boy in the manger like the wise men did so long ago.

A reading from the book of Matthew's Gospel, Chapter Two: 

Matthew 2:1 Now after Jesus was born in Bethlehem of Judea in the days of Herod the king, behold, wise men from the East came to Jerusalem, 2 saying, "Where is He who has been born King of the Jews? For we have seen His star in the East and have come to worship Him."

3 When Herod the king heard *this*, he was troubled, and all Jerusalem with him.

4 And when he had gathered all the chief priests and scribes of the people together, he inquired of them where the Christ was to be born.

5 So they said to him, "In Bethlehem of Judea, for thus it is written by the prophet:

*6 'But you, Bethlehem, in the land of Judah,
Are not the least among the rulers of Judah;
For out of you shall come a Ruler
Who will shepherd My people Israel.'"*

7 Then Herod, when he had secretly called the wise men, determined from them what time the star appeared. 8 And he sent them to Bethlehem and said, "Go and search carefully for the young Child, and when you have found *Him*, bring back word to me, that I may come and worship Him also."

9 When they heard the king, they departed; and behold, the star which they had seen in the East went before them, till it came and stood over where the young Child was. 10 When they saw the star, they rejoiced with exceedingly great joy. 11 And when they had come into the house, they saw the young Child with Mary His mother, and fell down and worshiped Him. And when they had opened their treasures, they presented gifts to Him: gold, frankincense, and myrrh.

Readers sit down.

Sing What Child is This?

Reader: Trip

Matthew says wise men followed the light of the star to find Him in the manger, but the Apostle John tells us Jesus was actually the light of men – the light that casts the darkness out of our souls and then shines through us to the rest of the world.

We read in the book of John's Gospel, Chapter One:

1 In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. 2 He was in the beginning with God. 3 All things were made through Him, and without Him nothing was made that was made. 4 In Him was life, and the life was the light of men. 5 And the light shines in the darkness, and the darkness did not overcome it.

...

10 He was in the world, and the world was made through Him, and the world did not know Him. 11 He came to His own, and His own did not receive Him. 12 But as many as received Him, to them He gave the right to become children of God, to those who believe in His name: 13 who were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God.

14 And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, and we beheld His glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth.

Reader sits down

Sing O Come, All Ye Faithful

Jeff Remarks/Closing Prayer

Peace. Goodwill. Glad tidings. Great Joy. This is what God gives us in Jesus.

He was “Born to raise the sons of earth, born to give them second birth.” And this is why Christianity is different from all the world’s religions. There are many religions who say a god or gods came to earth. There are many religions who encourage people to do good deeds and live upright, moral lives. There are many religions that claim to be associated with miraculous events. But only Christianity has a cross.

Only Christianity boldly and exclusively claims - there one, true, living God who “[so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son that whosoever believes in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life. For God did not send His Son into the world to condemn the world, but that the world, through Him, might be saved.](#)” (John 3:16-17)

[Acts 4:12](#) Nor is there salvation in any other, for there is no other name under heaven given among men by which we must be saved."

Yes, [the wages of sin is death, \[but\] the gift of God is eternal life through Christ Jesus](#)" (Rom 6:23).

So if you're interested in the real meaning of Christmas, there's nothing to earn or achieve or buy, there's nowhere to go, nothing special to wear, or say, or chant. The salvation Christians receive through Christ is a gift. It's good news! And although it can't be received *anywhere* else or from *anyone* else, it is for *everyone* who will accept it.

My friends, you need to receive God's Christmas gift to you this year. Receive Jesus, the one who forgives your sins, heals your wounded soul, dries your tears, and makes His blessings flow, far as the curse is found.

Today we remember that there is:
joy to the world, the Lord is come,
let earth receive her king
let every heart prepare Him room

Including yours. Let Him in, then open your mouth and let the joy out.

If you want to do that – if you are ready to give up on living life your way and begin to live it for Him, then simply pray with me right now.

Heavenly Father,

I come to you this Christmas like a child asking for the gift of Jesus. I ask you to forgive me for my sins, for living life my way, and I ask that you would teach me how to live for you from this day forward. Help me receive all that you have for me, and thank you for all you have given.

In Jesus name I pray,

Amen.

And join all of us, as we pray,

Father, thank you for the gift of salvation that You have given to us and for the joy and peace it brings. Thank You for leading us, like the wisemen, to Jesus, and now, as we go out may You help us to be like the shepherds who “[made widely known the saying which was told them concerning this Child.](#)” Use us as Your ambassadors to bring hope and healing to those around us.

In Christ’s name,
Amen.

Sing Joy to the World