

“Merry Christmas!”

Christmas Eve Carols and Scripture Readings

December 24, 2020 – St. Columba Presbyterian Church, Belleville

Hymns for Worship Video – December 24, 2020

“Joy to the World” #153 in the Book of Praise

George Frideric Handel / Isaac Watts

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Joy to the world the Lord is come
Let earth receive her King
Let ev'ry heart prepare Him room
And heav'n and nature sing
And heav'n and nature sing
And heav'n and heav'n and nature sing

Joy to the earth the Saviour reigns
Let us our songs employ
While fields and floods
Rocks hills and plains
Repeat the sounding joy
Repeat the sounding joy
Repeat repeat the sounding joy

No more let sins and sorrows grow
Nor thorns infest the ground
He comes to make His blessings flow
Far as the curse is found
Far as the curse is found
Far as far as the curse is found

He rules the world with truth and grace
And makes the nations prove
The glories of His righteousness
And wonders of His love
And wonders of His love
And wonders wonders of His love

“Angels We Have Heard on High” #147 in the Book of Praise

Edward Shippen Barnes / James Chadwick

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Angels we have heard on high
Sweetly singing o'er the plains
And the mountains in reply
Echoing their joyous strains

Chorus

Gloria; In excelsis Deo

Gloria; In excelsis Deo

Shepherds why this jubilee
Why your joyous strains prolong
What the gladsome tidings be
Which inspire your heav'nly song
Chorus

Come to Bethlehem and see
Christ whose birth the angels sing
Come adore on bended knee
Christ the Lord the newborn King
Chorus

See Him in a manger laid
Whom the choirs of angels praise
Mary Joseph lend your aid
While our hearts in love we raise
Chorus

“Hark! The Herald Angels Sing” #139 in the Book of Praise

Charles Wesley / Felix Mendelssohn-Bartholdy

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Hark the herald angels sing
Glory to the newborn King
Peace on earth and mercy mild
God and sinners reconciled
Joyful all ye nations rise
Join the triumph of the skies
With th'angelic hosts proclaim
Christ is born in Bethlehem
Hark the herald angels sing
Glory to the newborn King

Christ by highest heav'n adored
Christ the everlasting Lord
Late in time behold Him come
Offspring of the Virgin's womb
Veiled in flesh the Godhead see
Hail th'incarnate Deity
Pleased on earth with us to dwell
Jesus our Emmanuel
Hark the herald angels sing
Glory to the newborn King

Hail the heav'n-born Prince of Peace
Hail the Sun of Righteousness
Light and life to all He brings
Ris'n with healing in His wings

Mild He lays His glory by
Born that we no more may die
Born to raise the lost of earth
Born to give them second birth
Hark the herald angels sing
Glory to the newborn King

“O Little Town of Bethlehem” #165 in the Book of Praise

Lewis Henry Redner / Phillips Brooks

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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 wondering love
O morning stars together
Proclaim the holy birth
And praises sing to God the King
And peace to all on earth

How silently how silently
The wondrous gift is given
So God imparts to human hearts
The blessings of His heaven
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 in us today
We hear the Christmas angels
The great glad tidings tell
O come to us abide with us
Our Lord Emmanuel

“Go, Tell it on the Mountain” #133 in the Book of Praise

John W. Work Jr.

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Chorus

Go tell it on the mountain
Over the hills and ev'rywhere
Go tell it on the mountain
That Jesus Christ is born

While shepherds kept their watching
O'er silent flocks by night
Behold throughout the heavens
There shone a holy light

Chorus

The shepherds feared and trembled
When lo above the earth
Rang out the angel chorus
That hailed the Saviour's birth

Chorus

Down in a lowly manger
The humble Christ was born
And God sent us salvation
That blessed Christmas morn

Chorus

Scripture Texts: Luke 1:26–38

²⁶ In the sixth month of Elizabeth's pregnancy, God sent the angel Gabriel to Nazareth, a town in Galilee, ²⁷ to a virgin pledged to be married to a man named Joseph, a descendant of David. The virgin's name was Mary. ²⁸ The angel went to her and said, "Greetings, you who are highly favored! The Lord is with you."

²⁹ Mary was greatly troubled at his words and wondered what kind of greeting this might be. ³⁰ But the angel said to her, "Do not be afraid, Mary; you have found favor with God. ³¹ You will conceive and give birth to a son, and you are to call him Jesus. ³² 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, ³³ and he will reign over Jacob's descendants forever; his kingdom will never end."

³⁴ "How will this be," Mary asked the angel, "since I am a virgin?"

³⁵ The angel answered, "The Holy Spirit will come on you, and the power of the Most High will overshadow you. So the holy one to be born will be called the Son of God. ³⁶ Even Elizabeth your relative is going to have a child in her old age, and she who was said to be unable to conceive is in her sixth month. ³⁷ For no word from God will ever fail."

³⁸ "I am the Lord's servant," Mary answered. "May your word to me be fulfilled." Then the angel left her.

Luke 2:1-7

In those days Caesar Augustus issued a decree that a census should be taken of the entire Roman world. ² (This was the first census that took place while Quirinius was governor of Syria.) ³ And everyone went to their own town to register.

⁴ 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. ⁵ He went there to register with Mary, who was pledged to be married to him and was expecting a child. ⁶ While they were there, the time came for the baby to be born, ⁷ 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.

Luke 2:8–20

⁸ And there were shepherds living out in the fields nearby, keeping watch over their flocks at night. ⁹ An angel of the Lord appeared to them, and the glory of the Lord shone around them, and they were terrified. ¹⁰ But the angel said to them, "Do not be afraid. I bring you good news that will cause great joy for all the people. ¹¹ Today in the town of David a Savior has been born to you; he is the Messiah, the Lord. ¹² This will be a sign to you: You will find a baby wrapped in cloths and lying in a manger."

¹³ Suddenly a great company of the heavenly host appeared with the angel, praising God and saying,

¹⁴ "Glory to God in the highest heaven,
and on earth peace to those on whom his favor rests."

¹⁵ When the angels had left them and gone into heaven, the shepherds said to one another, "Let's go to Bethlehem and see this thing that has happened, which the Lord has told us about."

¹⁶ So they hurried off and found Mary and Joseph, and the baby, who was lying in the manger. ¹⁷ When they had seen him, they spread the word concerning what had been told them about this child, ¹⁸ and all who heard it were amazed at what the shepherds said to them. ¹⁹ But Mary treasured up all these things and pondered them in her heart. ²⁰ The shepherds returned, glorifying and praising God for all the things they had heard and seen, which were just as they had been told.

Reflection

This evening, we are gathered together in the beauty of the story, the warmth of song, and the gifts of hope, peace, love and joy – gifts that come with the arrival of the Christ Child, Emmanuel: God with us. We may not be gathered in person, but we are gathered as the family of God, with each other, and with God's people all over the world.

We are connected through faith in Christ the Saviour.

We are bound by the love of God.

We are kept in the fold of God's grace by the Holy Spirit.

How amazing to be joined by our hearts, and our shared love for the baby in the manger, the baby that grew to be the Saviour of the world.

Christmas is celebrated a little bit differently by everyone. This year, we are all doing things a bit differently, and yet we all have our traditions that will stand no matter what. We all have our precious moments and practices that make Christmas special each year. This year, to remind us of that special blend of traditions that make each household's celebrations unique, some of the ColumbaKids have shared what makes Christmas special for them. I hope you enjoy what some of the younger members of our church family have to say in this Columbakids Christmas Surprise! Merry Christmas!

[ColumbaKids video]