

Carol Service 24.12.20

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Date: 24 December 2020

Preacher: Reverend David MacLeod

[0 : 00] Good evening and welcome to our Christmas Eve service. I hope you're all well. It's unfortunate that we are unable to meet together, however we are grateful to God for his provision in allowing us to meet electronically and we pray that he will grant his blessing to us as we listen to a number of readings and carols that take us through the true message of Christmas. We will however begin with a word of prayer from our minister, Reverend David MacLeod.

We'll pray. Lord God, we thank you for this opportunity that you've given us once more to come together as your people to listen to, to meditate upon the message of Christmas, the story of the incarnation, the story of Jesus coming into this world. We thank you, Lord, that he is the one who was promised he was the Messiah. We thank you that he was and is the Savior, the only Savior, the one who came to this world and lived and died and rose so that we would have forgiveness of sin as we believe in him, so that we would have the hope of everlasting life.

We thank you that Jesus is Emmanuel, God with us, and we thank you for the promise that we have, that you are with us wherever we go, that you will never leave us, that you will never forsake us, but you're with us always to the very end of time. And we ask, Lord, that whatever we are just now, that we would know your presence. We thank you that you've given us the desire to be meeting with you and with each other in this way. And we ask, Lord, that as we hear these familiar readings and as we perhaps sing in our own homes these familiar carols, we pray that the message would not be a message that goes over our heads. We pray that this would not be a message that we are so familiar with that we miss.

But we pray that something of the wonder of the Christmas story would make an impact on us once more. So we pray that you would move amongst us in the power of the Holy Spirit, that our eyes would see Jesus, that our ears would hear Jesus, and that our hearts would be stirred, that we may know that we are meeting with the one true and living God. So hear our prayers. Cleanse us from our sin. Take away every distraction, we pray, and lead us and guide us that this may truly be a time where we are in worship of you.

And we pray this in Jesus' name and for Jesus' sake. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Listen to the world's holy.

[3 : 48] Verse 10, 5, 5.

Anonweitem, 11A, 2GO! Whatever new life for us, we pray for you. O come, O come, Emmanuel, and ransom captive Israel, and mourns in lonely exile yet, until the Son of God appear.

Rejoice, rejoice, Emmanuel, shall come to thee, O Israel.

O come, O come, O Lord of Jesse, free, thine own from Satan's tyranny.

From depths of hell thy people see, and give them victory o'er the grave.

[5 : 30] Rejoice, rejoice, Emmanuel, shall come to thee, O Israel.

O come, O come, O day's been calm and sheer, O'er spirit is by thine advent here.

O come, O come, O Israel.

O come, O Israel. O come, O Israel. O come, O Heir, of David, come, and open wide a heavenly home.

Make safe the way that leads on high, and close the path to misery.

[7 : 06] Rejoice, rejoice, Emmanuel shall come to thee, O Israel.

O come, O come, thou Lord of might, who to thy tribes alongside I side.

In ancient times disgave the law, in cloud and majesty and all.

Rejoice, rejoice, Emmanuel shall come to thee, O Israel.

Rejoice, rejoice, Emmanuel shall come to thee, O Israel.

[8 : 20] Rejoice, Emmanuel shall come to thee, O Israel. Rejoice, Emmanuel shall come to thee, O Israel. Joseph, his wife, Jesus Christ came to birth. His mother Mary was pleased to be married to Joseph, but before they came together she was found to be with child to the Holy Spirit.

Because Joseph, her husband, was a righteous man, and did not want to expose her to public disgrace, he had in mind to divorce her quietly. But after he had considered this, the names of the Lord appeared to him in a vision 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.

She will give birth to a son, and you have to give him the name Jesus, because he will save his people from their sins. All this took place to fulfill what the Lord had said to the Prophet.

The Virgin would be with child and would give birth to a son, and they would call him Emmanuel, which means God with us. When Joseph woke up, he did what the angel of the Lord had commanded him and took Mary home as his wife.

But he had no union with her until she gave birth to a son, and he gave him the name Jesus. Father 1,2-Nin, Thank you.

[10 : 16] Thank you.

Thank you.

Thank you. Thank you.

Thank you. Thank you. Thank you. Thank you.

Thank you. Thank you. Thank you. Thank you. Thank you. Thank you.

[12 : 36] Thank you. Thank you. Thank you. Thank you. Thank you. Thank you.

Thank you. Thank you. Thank you. Hallelujah, Hallelujah, Son of God, Servant King, Here with us, You're here with us.

It's still a mystery to me, how his infant eyes have seen the dawn of time, how his ears have heard an angel's symphony.

It's still Mary unto our Lord, your Savior to sleep. Hallelujah, Hallelujah, Heaven's love reaching dead to save the world.

Hallelujah, Hallelujah, Son of God, Servant King, Here with us, You're here with us.

[14 : 15] Hallelujah, Jesus Christ.

Born in Bethlehem. Born to save the world, to save the souls of men.

Hallelujah, Hallelujah, Hallelujah, Heaven's love reaching dead to save the world.

Hallelujah, Hallelujah, Son of God, Servant King, Here with us.

Hallelujah, Hallelujah, Hallelujah, Hallelujah, Hallelujah, Hallelujah, Son of God, Servant King, Here with us.

[15 : 50] You're here with us. You're here with us. You're here with us. After Jesus was born in Bethlehem in Judea during the time of King Herod, Magi from East came to Jerusalem and asked, Where is the one who has been born King of the Jews?

We saw his star in the east and have come to worship him. 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 Christ was to be born.

In Bethlehem in Judea, they replied, For this is what the prophet has written. But you, Bethlehem, in the land of Judea, are by no means least among the rulers of Judea.

For out of you will come a ruler who will be the shepherd of my people Israel. Then Herod called the Magi secretly and found out from them the exact time the star had appeared.

[17 : 17] He sent them to Bethlehem and said, Go and make careful search for the child. As soon as you find him, report to me so that I too may go and worship him.

After they had heard the king, they went on their way, and the star they had seen in the east went ahead of them until it stopped over the place where the child was.

When they saw the star, they were overjoyed. On coming to the house, they saw the child with his mother Mary, and they bowed down and worshipped him. Then they opened their treasures and presented him with gifts of gold, and incense, and of Myrra.

And having been warned in a dream not to go back to Herod, they returned to their country by another route. The night is dark, the winds are still, one star is in the skies.

We fall over field and hill, To where the baby lies, The hope of all men lies.

[18 : 58] There is no glory in the place, Save this who nestles there, And that sweet light on Mary's face, Whose look is like a prayer, A tender mother's prayer.

No palace for a prince's birth, No glad exultant throne, Yet over listening skies and earth, Have heard the angels' song, The glorious angels' song.

O holy babe, Our hearts are torn With woes that will not cease O let us greet thee on this moor, With songs of newborn peace, Of never-ending peace.

Luke chapter 2, verses 1-7 And it came to pass in those days, That there went out a decree from Caesar Augustus, That all the world should be taxed.

And this taxing was first made, When Cyrenius was governor of Syria. And all went to be taxed, Every one into his own city. And Joseph also went up from Galilee, Out of the city of Nazareth into Judea, And to the city of David, Which is called Bethlehem, Because he was of the house and lineage of David.

[21 : 52] To be taxed with Mary, Issy spoused wife, Being great with child. And so it was, That while they were there, The days were accomplished, That she should be delivered.

And she brought forth her first born son, And wrapped him in swaddling clothes, And laid him in a manger, Because there was no room for them in the inn.

Once in royal David's city, Stood a lowly cattle shed, Where a mother laid her baby, In a manger for his bed.

Mary was that mother mile, Jesus Christ, her little child.

He came down to earth from heaven, Who is God and Lord of all, And his shelter was a stable, And his great was a store.

[23 : 17] With the poor and mean and lowly, Lived on earth a Saviour holy.

And through all his wondrous childhood, He would honor and obey, Love and watch the lowly maiden, In whose gentle arms he lay.

Christian children all must be, Mild obedient, good as he.

For he is our childhood's pattern, Day by day like us he grew.

He was little, weak and helpless, Tears and smile like us he knew.

[24 : 29] And he cares when we are sad, And he shares when we are glad.

And our eyes at last shall see him, Through his own redeeming love, For that child so dear and gentle, Is our Lord in heaven above, And he leads his children on, To the place where he is gone.

And his sacred Mmm vocabulary writes late, whom he has fallen, And he says, My cidade the moon above, Isn't one of these of the houses Trueaaaaand lies given up, Who are Sonia tenait, fiescatu.

Child in a manger, infant of Mary. Outcast and stranger, lord of us all.

Child who inherits all our transgressions. All our demerits upon him fall.

[26 : 31] Once the most holy child of salvation. Gentle and lowly lived here below.

Now as our glorious mighty Redeemer. See him victorious over each foe.

Prophets foretold him, infant of wonder. Angels behold him on his throne.

Worthy our Saviour of all our praises. Happy forever are his own.

This reading is taken from Luke chapter 2 verses 8 to 20. And there were shepherds living out in the fields nearby, keeping watch over their flocks at night.

[27 : 56] 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 that will cause great joy for all of the people.

Today in the town of David, a Saviour 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.

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 favour rests.

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

When they had seen him, they spread the word concerning what had been told them about this child, and all who heard it were amazed at what the shepherds said to them. But Mary treasured up all these things and pondered them in her heart.

[29 : 08] The shepherds returned, glorifying and praising God for all the things they had heard and seen, which were just as they had been told. I've heard about this baby boy, who's come to earth to

bring us joy, and I just want to sing this song to you.

It goes like this, the fourth, the fifth, the minor fall, the major lift, with every breath I'm singing hallelujah.

A couple came to Bethlehem, expecting child is gone.

Search the end to find a place for you, they're coming soon. There was no room for them to stay, so when a manger felled with hay, God's only son was born.

Oh, hallelujah. Hallelujah. Hallelujah. Hallelujah. Hallelujah.

[30 : 59] Hallelujah. The shepherds left their flocks by night to see this baby wrapped in life.

A host of angels led them all to you. It was just as the angels said, you'll find him in the manger bed. Emmanuel and Savior. Hallelujah. Alleluia. Alleluia. Alleluia.

Alleluia. Alleluia. Alleluia. Alleluia. Alleluia. Alleluia. The stars shone right up in the east, to Bethlehem the wise men, he came many miles and journeyed home for you.

And to the place at which you were, their frankincense and golden moon, they gave to you and cried out hallelujah.

[32 : 27] Alleluia. Alleluia. Alleluia.

Alleluia. Alleluia. Alleluia. Alleluia.

Alleluia. I know you came to rescue me, this baby boy would grow to be a man and one day die for me and you.

My sins would drive the nails in you, that rugged cross was my cross too, still every breath you do was hallelujah.

Alleluia. Hallelujah Hallelujah, Hallelujah, Hallelujah.

[33 : 45] Hallelujah, Hallelujah. I just want to take three or four minutes to pause to think about the Christmas story as we've heard it sung and as we've followed it, as it's been read.

And I expect for most of us as we've gone through this service, these are familiar stories, these are familiar Bible passages, these are familiar words and tunes that we're hearing sung.

But as we go through them once more, we get several views, several perspectives on the Christmas story. We get Isaiah's view. We saw that in the early part of the service.

Isaiah, 600 years before Jesus is born, he writes on behalf of those who feel like they're living in darkness. But he knows and he is reassured by this promise that's given to him.

And it's the promise of light. And so Isaiah is looking for that child that would be born, that child that would be the light of the world, and that child that we know to be Jesus.

[35 : 13] So there's Isaiah's view. And then we get the view of Joseph. Put yourself in his shoes for a moment. His fiancée is pregnant.

And he knows that that could not be possible because of him. So Joseph seems to be of a mind to walk away from the relationship with Mary.

She must have been unfaithful. There was no other explanation, he thought. And that's how his mind was set until that night when the angel appeared to him in a dream and told him that Mary hadn't been unfaithful.

Mary was not with child through another man. But she was with child through the Holy Spirit. This child that would be born to Mary was the Savior.

This child was Emmanuel, God with us. This child was Jesus. And then we have the Christmas story from the perspective of the Magi, the wise men.

[36 : 21] They see a star. These are learned men who watch the skies. They're professionals in that realm. And they see this star which grips them, which fascinates them.

And this star, as they research it and as they follow it, it leads them to a king. But this king was not found in the splendour of a palace.

This king had been laid in a manger. He would live in the obscurity of a little rural village. He would never in this world sit on any kind of regal throne.

He didn't come to be served. As kings were. But this king, this king came to serve. He was the servant king. He was the one who laid down his life as a ransom for many.

This king was Jesus. And then there were the shepherds. And listen again to the last verse that was read there to us.

[37 : 27] It says, The shepherds returned, glorifying and praising God for all the things they had heard and seen, which were just as they had been told.

So we asked the question, well what did the shepherds hear? Well they heard good news, didn't they? Good news about what? Well good news about a saviour.

And the shepherds, they were men who knew that they needed a saviour. Shepherds were rough characters back in these days.

They didn't go to the temple. They didn't do much in the way of religion. They knew they were sinners. They were under no pretenses otherwise.

They knew they needed a saviour. And so when they heard this good news, they went searching for the saviour. And so when they went searching, having heard this news, what did they see?

[38 : 36] Or rather, who did they see? Well they saw a baby boy who had been laid in a cradle. But this baby boy would grow into a man who would be a man of sorrows.

He would go from the cradle to the cross. To save these shepherds and to save all who would believe in him.

So tonight as we come very close to Christmas morning, what have we heard through these carols and through these stories? What have we heard? Well we've heard the same news, the same good news about a saviour.

A saviour that we need. Just as much as the shepherds needed. And tonight what, or rather who have we seen? As the carols have been sung, as the readings have been read, who have we seen in these messages that have been laid before us?

Well we have seen Jesus. He is the saviour. And the shepherds, what do they do next? Well they, having heard the good news, they believed.

[39 : 54] And the shepherds, having seen Jesus. This was not a one-off encounter that had no impact on their lives. It says that having seen Jesus, they returned to their flocks, their fields, their jobs, their families, glorifying and praising God.

Which tells to us that they trusted Jesus. They were changed men. And so the question for you and for me, as we go from this place or from this hour, is having seen Christ, having heard this good news once more, how will we respond?

Will we believe this story about the coming of God into the world? Will we trust Jesus to be our saviour? And will we glorify him?

And praise him with our lives, as the shepherds did. We'll pray for a moment. Lord God, once more we thank you for the Christmas story.

We thank you for all that happened in history that we remember. And yet, Lord, we recognise that what happened so long ago requires a response from us today.

[41 : 28] Help us, Lord, we pray. Give to us that faith whereby we take hold of the truth of the gospel. Give us that faith, we pray, which enables us to take hold of the promises of a saviour and indeed enables us to take hold of Christ.

to be our saviour and our Lord. Help us not to go from here unchanged. But we pray like the shepherds.

We would be those whose hearts have been touched, whose lives have been changed. Enable us, we pray, to glorify and praise you because you are the God who is worthy of all our praise.

So hear our prayers. Be with those in particular need tonight that as much we look forward to and rejoice in over Christmas, we recognise also there are struggles, there are difficulties, there are pains that people have to deal with over this season.

and we ask, Lord, that they would know the reality, that we would know the reality of God with us in our joys, in our sorrows.

[42 : 43] Enable us, we pray, to receive and to rejoice in this good news that Christ was born. and we pray these things in Jesus' name.

Amen. In the bleak midwinter, frosty wind played moan, Earth stood hard as I am Water like a stone Snow had fallen Snow on snow Snow on snow In the bleak midwinter Long ago Our God, Him, cannot hold Him

Nor earth sustain Heaven and earth shall flee away When He comes to reign In the bleak midwinter A stable place of fire The Lord God Almighty Jesus Christ Angels and archangels May have gathered there Jeddah been mine settles from the air But His mother only

In her maiden race Worship the beloved With a king What can I give Him Good as I am If I were a shepherd I would bring a lamb If I were a wise man I would do my part If what I can I give Him Give my heart

To get my heart To get my heart To get my heart To get my heart O come all you faithful Joyful and triumphant O come now O come now To Bethlehem Come and behold Him Born the King of angels O come let us adore Him O come let us adore Him

[47 : 04] O come let us adore Him Christ the Lord Through God Through God Through God Through God Light of light eternal He who abores not the virgin's womb Son of the Father Begotten not created O come let us adore Him O come let us adore Him O come let us adore Him O come let us adore Him Christ the Lord Sing like the angels Sing in exaltation

Sing with the citizens Sing with the citizens Of heaven above Glory to God Glory to God Glory in the highest O come let us adore Him O come let us adore Him O come let us adore Him O come let us adore Him Christ the Lord Yes Lord we greet you Born this happy morning See you Jesus to you God Jesus to you Be the glory Lord Correctomen

Hosanna Because adored him Christ the Lord.

And now may the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ and the love of God the Father and the fellowship, the comfort of God the Holy Spirit be with us all both now on this Christmas Eve and forevermore. Amen. One last thing, just to wish you all a very Merry Christmas. Every blessing.