

Midweek Service for December 2025

Intro:

Today we are going to look at the birth of Jesus from the shepherds' view on what happened! Our Reading will be from The Book of Luke in The Message Bible and we will sing traditional carols from Hymns and Psalms.

1st carol:

112 - Silent night, holy night
Sleeps the world; hid from sight,
Mary and Joseph in stable bare
Watch o'er the child beloved and fair
Sleeping in heavenly rest.

Silent night, holy night:
Shepherds first saw the light,
Heard resounding clear and long,
Far and near, the angel-song:
'Christ the Redeemer is here!'

Silent night, holy night,
Son of God, O how bright
Love is smiling from thy face!
Strikes for us now the hour of grace,
Saviour since thou art born!

Prayer

2nd carol:

108 - It came upon the midnight clear,
That glorious song of old,
From angels bending near the earth
To touch their harps of gold:
'Peace on the earth, goodwill to men,
From heaven's all-gracious King!'
The world in solemn stillness lay
To hear the angels sing.

Still through the cloven skies they come,
With peaceful wings unfurled;
And still their heavenly music floats
O'er all the weary world;
Above it's sad and lowly plains
They bend on hovering wing;
And ever o'er its Babel sounds
The blessed angels sing.

Yet with the woes of sin and strife
The world has suffered long;

Beneath the angel strain have rolled
Two thousand years of wrong;
And man, at war with man, hears not
The love song which they bring.
O hush the noise, ye men of strife,
And hear the angels sing.

For lo, the days are hastening on,
To prophets shown of old,
When with the ever-circling years
Shall come the time foretold,
When the new heaven and earth shall own
The Prince of Peace their King,
And all the world repeat the song
Which now the angels sing.

Reading: Luke 2:1-20

2 1-5 About that time Caesar Augustus ordered a census to be taken throughout the Empire. This was the first census when Quirinius was governor of Syria. Everyone had to travel to his own ancestral hometown to be accounted for. So, Joseph went from the Galilean town of Nazareth up to Bethlehem in Judah, David's town, for the census. As a descendant of David, he had to go there. He went with Mary, his fiancée, who was pregnant.

6-7 While they were there, the time came for her to give birth. She gave birth to a son, her firstborn. She wrapped him in a blanket and laid him in a manger, because there was no room in the hostel.

8-12 There were shepherds camping in the neighbourhood. They had set night watches over their sheep. Suddenly, God's angel stood among them and God's glory blazed around them. They were terrified. The angel said, "Don't be afraid. I'm here to announce a great and joyful event that is meant for everybody, worldwide: A Savior has just been born in David's town, a Savior who is Messiah and Master. This is what you're to look for: a baby wrapped in a blanket and lying in a manger."

13-14 At once the angel was joined by a huge angelic choir singing God's praises:

Glory to God in the heavenly heights,
Peace to all men and women on earth who please him.

15-18 As the angel choir withdrew into heaven, the shepherds talked it over. "Let's get over to Bethlehem as fast as we can and see for ourselves what God has revealed to us." They left, running, and found Mary and Joseph, and the baby lying in the manger. Seeing was believing. They told everyone they met what the angels had said about this child. All who heard the shepherds were impressed.

19-20 Mary kept all these things to herself, holding them dear, deep within herself. The shepherds returned and let loose, glorifying and praising God for everything they had heard and seen. It turned out exactly the way they'd been told!

3rd carol

120 - While shepherds watched their flocks by night,
All seated on the ground,
The angel of the Lord came down
And glory shone around.

'Fear not' said he (for mighty dread
Had seized their troubled mind),
'Glad tidings of great joy I bring
To you and all mankind.

'To you in David's town this day
Is born of David's line
A Saviour who is Christ the Lord;
And this shall be the sign:

'The heavenly babe you there shall find
To human view displayed,
All meanly wrapped in swaddling bands,
And in a manger laid.'

'Thus spake the seraph; and forthwith
Appeared a shining throng
Of angels praising God, and thus
Addressed their joyful song:

'All glory be to God on high,
And to the earth be peace;
Goodwill henceforth from heaven to men
Begin and never cease.'

THE MESSAGE

Just imagine for a little time that you were one of those shepherds. The Bible doesn't tell us how many there were, but let's just say there were 5 shepherds and a shepherd's boy. They were all camping out on the hills keeping a watch over the flocks of sheep in shifts, some were sleeping while the others were watching the sheep. So, they weren't all actually in their tents, but some were sitting around on the hillside having a good chat about everything that was happening. After all, there was the Census and all the extra people in town, the shops were full, the pubs were full and you couldn't move around easily with all the travellers who had come for the census. You can almost hear them saying, "I shall be glad when they've registered and gone home. Then life will resume some sort of normality!"

"Suddenly, God's angel stood among them and God's glory blazed around them. They were terrified. The angel said, "Don't be afraid. I'm here to announce a great and joyful event that is meant for everybody, worldwide: A Saviour has just been born in David's town, a Saviour who is Messiah and Master. This is what you're to look for: a baby wrapped in a blanket and lying in a manger."

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The long-awaited Messiah had been born. What a way to announce the birth of the Messiah! The shepherds were initially terrified, but their fear turned to joy as the angels announced the Messiah's birth.

First, the shepherds ran to see the baby, then they spread the word! Jesus is our Messiah, our Saviour. The greatest event in history had just happened! The Messiah had been born! For ages the Jews had waited for this, and when it finally occurred, the announcement came to humble shepherds, not the king or the chief priests, who would have thought it?

The good news about Jesus is that He comes to all, including the plain and ordinary. He comes to anyone with a heart humble enough to accept Him. The important thing to know is:

Whoever you are, whatever you do, you can have Jesus in your life. Don't think you need special qualifications, He accepts you as you are!

Do you look forward to meeting Him in prayer and in His Word each day? Have you discovered a Lord so wonderful that you can't help sharing your joy with your friends?

Let's sing about our joy by singing:

77 – Joy to the world, the Lord is come!
Let earth receive her King;
Let every heart prepare Him room,
And heaven and nature sing,
And heaven and nature sing,
And heaven, and heaven and nature sing.

Joy to the world, the Saviour reigns!

Let all their songs employ;
While fields and floods, rocks, hills and plains
Repeat the sounding joy,
Repeat the sounding joy.
Repeat, repeat the sounding joy.

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, and wonders of His love.

Then finally we can sing about our thanksgiving for our Saviour by singing the first five verses:

110 – O Come, all ye faithful,
Joyful and triumphant,
O come ye, O come ye to Bethlehem;
Come and behold Him,
Born the King of angels:
O come, let us adore Him, Christ the Lord.

True God of true God,
Light of light eternal,
Lo, He abhors not the virgin's womb;
Son of the Father,
Begotten, not created:

See how the shepherds,
Summoned to His cradle,
Leaving their flocks, draw nigh to gaze;
We too will thither
Bend our joyful footsteps:

Lo, star led chieftains,
Magi, Christ adoring,
Offer Him incense, gold and myrrh;
We to the Christ child
Bring our hearts oblations:

Sing choirs of angels,
Sing in exultation,
Sing, all ye citizens of heaven above:
Glory to God
In the highest':

THE GRACE

The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with us all. Amen