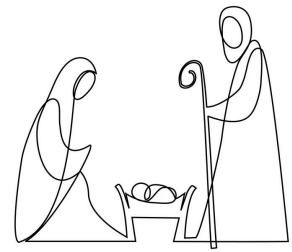




Christmas Day Dec 25th 2020 Shearwater Worship Resource



Gathering & Lighting the Candles



We light the light of Christ
Into a world often harsh and violent, the
Christ child was born in vulnerability
and innocence. Even while death was
threatened by the powers that be, and
while the shadows of fear covered the
earth, hope itself was born that night;
peace was embodied; joy was
proclaimed; and love came to live with
us, Emmanuel.

Into this same world,
we bring the light of Christ.

Call to worship

The people who walked in darkness
have seen a great light
For a Child has been born to us
a son given to us.
authority rests upon his shoulders,
and he is named

**Wonderful Counselor
Mighty God
Everlasting father
Prince of Peace.**

Come Child of God
and melt our hearts of stone
Come stand in the Light
Emmanuel: God is with us.

Acknowledging

We acknowledge the First Peoples of this
place: their elders past and present: and
those emerging: we seek healing and a
loving relationship together.



Uniting Aboriginal and Islander
Christian Congress

Singing TiS 304

O come, all ye faithful vv 1,2,3,6 & 7

O come, all ye faithful,
joyful and triumphant,
come ye, O come ye to Bethlehem;
come and behold him
born the king of angels:
O come, let us adore him,
O come, let us adore him,
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:
O come, let us adore him,
O come, let us adore him,
O come, let us adore him,
Christ the Lord!

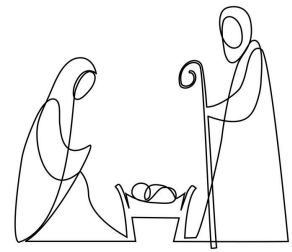
See how the shepherds
summoned to his cradle,
leaving their flocks,
draw nigh with holy fear;
we too will thither
bend our joyful footsteps:
O come, let us adore him,
O come, let us adore him,
O come, let us adore him,
Christ the Lord!

Sing, choirs of angels,
sing in exultation
sing all ye citizens of heaven above
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,
Christ the Lord!

"Do not be afraid! I bring good news of great joy for all people..."



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Yea, Lord, we greet thee,
born this happy morning
Jesus, to thee be glory given;
Word of the Father
now in flesh appearing:
O come, let us adore him,
O come, let us adore him,
O come, let us adore him, Christ the Lord!

O come, all ye faithful TIS 304 Used with Permission
Possibly by John Francis Wade c.1711-1786 Adeste
Fideles



Prayer

God who chose to come to us,
we are finally still enough
to come to you.
All the preparations and presents,
all the cooking and cleaning
all the cards and conversations
we leave them all, for this time ...

and we come to you with grateful hearts,
inviting you to fill us
with your love and hope,
your joy and peace
inviting the child of love to be born
in the manger of our hearts
(stillness)

God of light,
you came as a baby into our world,
forgive us for ignoring the children
who are hungry and lost around us.
You became weak for our sake,
forgive us when we think
power is the only way to live.
You became poor to serve the world,
forgive us for our obsession with
wealth and material goods.

You became one of us,
so we might draw closer to you,
God of Christmas mornings,
so have mercy on us.
Comfort us, as you touch us

with your
steadfast love;
strengthen us as you pour out
your faithfulness on us;
help us to sing the good news
of the coming of Jesus Christ our Lord,
your Child, into our world.

(stillness)

In the silence of that first morning,
grace took a breath,
a tiny hand clutched love,
the Light of life came into the world
that we might be forgiven.
We join all around us
in singing the glad songs
of Christmas joy this morning
and all the days to come.
Amen.

Listening

- **Isaiah 52:7-10**

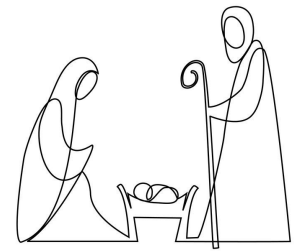
Reflecting - Wendy

I am not really sure what it means for God to have a bared holy arm (v 10). But what an opening line "How beautiful on the mountains are the feet of the messenger who announces peace, who brings good news....." (v 7). I want to be that person who gets to announce Peace! We are to announce that God is love and that God's realm and its topsy-turvy values are worth trumpeting about. What an image though! Sentinels singing for joy, Jesus breaking into the world, and comfort and redemption for all. Even the ruins are singing. The love of God is bursting out and won't be contained. We are privileged to be given such a charge but there is a responsibility for us too. If we are to declare the Realm of God, born into our world in a continuous

"Do not be afraid! I bring good news of great joy for all people..."



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and ongoing sense, we are also to live it. We live it in our interactions with our neighbours, with those who are different from us and even those in our own families. We live these very different values that Jesus lived out in dining with the marginalised and unpopular. These values mean praying for those we disagree with, rather than our tendency to denigrate (even the politicians and leaders!). And it means sharing with those we don't easily consider 'deserving'. They really are topsy-turvy values and it's often us who are turned upside down by them. But there is comfort in the redemption we are offered also. There is joy for us in being and bringing the message of Peace this Christmas time.

- **Luke 2: 1-7**

Reflecting - Jennie

These seven verses are a key and deeply cherished part of our sacred story and they are bursting with contrast and connection:

- ★ A decree from political authority juxtaposed with the birth of one who will challenge earthly power with a greater authority.
- ★ The journey together to a place of homecoming that was a long way from home.
- ★ Ancient prophecy fulfilled through an obscure young woman and a vulnerable newborn baby.
- ★ The wrapping of bands of cloth, a connection to empty burial cloths.
- ★ She gave birth to her firstborn son, in Greek, *prototokos*, dedicated to God, as Israel is God's 'firstborn son' (Ex 4:22)
- ★ The first resting place of this baby in a feeding trough, when at the end of his life he will be 'the broken body' that

feeds us.

★ There was no room for them in the central, private part of the inn; here is the God of the margins, the one who comes for those who find themselves on the edge.

This is a story of God coming to us in a long anticipated but totally radical and surprising way. Don't forget that! Don't get over-dazzled at the manger by the cuteness of the baby or the lowing of the cattle. God rends the heavens and comes to us as one of us, through the agency of Mary and in the particularity of a time and a place. These simple, seven verses hold so much. *While they were there, the time came...* The time has come, the Christ is born, Emmanuel, God is with us. Alleluia.

- **Luke 2: 8-20**

Reflecting - Ian

Meanwhile, out in the fields, everything was normal: shepherd: sheep! Yet simultaneous realities are about to be awakened: the Messiah is born and is placed in a manger, because there was no room in the inn: and shepherds watch their flocks by night!

In the suburb where I grew up, nothing happened. We were never on the news, our congregation was never in the church newspaper, our school was never chosen for some noted event.

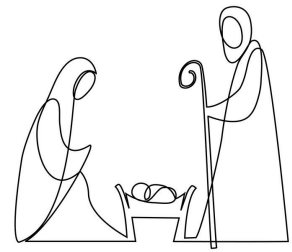
But here in a field, ordinary shepherds encounter a terrifying scene. Light, glory, and a message.

That unbelievable encounter, rather than paralyzing these shepherds, sent them on a curious mission: and upon finding Mary, Joseph and the Christ child. Wonder! But I imagine it might have been the kind of wonder that draws you

"Do not be afraid! I bring good news of great joy for all people..."



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in, and softly asks you to pay attention and step up to the reality of life; this child is in your world: what must you do, how must you live, to bring wholeness to human life?

The place of wonder for a new family: the place of wonder on an ordinary night. Maybe there never was a night like that again in these shepherds lives? The ordinary continued: but all who encounter the Christ Child are forever changed.

Singing TiS 322 The North Wind

The north wind is tossing the leaves
the red dust is over the town
the sparrows are under the eaves
and the grass in the paddock is brown
as we lift up our voices and sing
to the Christ child, the heavenly King.

The tree ferns in green gullies sway
the cool stream flows silently by
the joybells are greeting the day
and the chimes are adrift in the sky
as we lift up our voices and sing to the
Christ Child, the heavenly King.

John Wheeler 1901- and music John Wheeler/William Garnet James © Copyright Chappell Music Limited. Used with Permission CCLI 241 839

Responding:

Prayers for World & Community

'How lovely are our feet', you say. Because you have asked us to bring the message of Good News. Well, actually to BE the good news itself. And heaven knows we all need some of that. It has been a sad year God, hard to see the good really. Bushfires, pandemics, lockdowns and isolations. Loss and grief and fear have been common and this has been the focus of our corporate imagination.

We pray for all who have felt this loss so

deeply. Some of us have known loss personally, some in a more corporate sense. There has been a sense of fear, and even of shock perhaps. We hold in this prayer space, those who have touched our hearts.

And faintly we hear the echo in the birth story, the word 'Behold'. Behold you bring good news of great joy! This is our great good news, Jesus you enter our world anew. You enter in unexpected ways and through the most unexpected of people, us. May our hearts be open to others, open to be the cradle which welcomes your incarnational presence and shares your love with the world. May our feet and our hearts be beautiful vessels of Good News.

All of the earth will know your redeeming love, and we rejoice in your unfailing goodness.

The Lord's Prayer

Our Father in heaven,
hallowed be your name,
your kingdom come,
your will be done,
on earth as in heaven.
Give us today our daily bread.
Forgive us our sins,
as we forgive those who sin against us.
Save us from the time of trial
and deliver us from evil.
For the kingdom, the power, and the
glory are yours
now and for ever. Amen.

Passing the peace

May the Peace of God
be born within you:
and also within you.

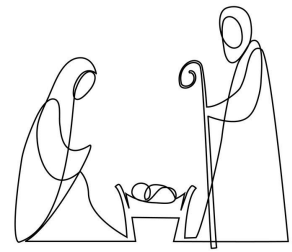
Offering- Christmas Bowl

In 1949 refugees were starving in war-ravaged Europe. Rev Frank Byatt, a

"Do not be afraid! I bring good news of great joy for all people..."



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Methodist Minister from Victoria, called on his congregation to “get a bowl to put on your Christmas dinner table as a Bowl of Remembrance and see if you can get everybody round the table to make a generous gift so that you can share your good dinner with hungry children in other lands.”

This year the Christmas Bowl encourages us to Act for Peace in Zimbabwe. Devastated by drought, disaster and inflation the pandemic has impacted families with food shortages, closure of schools and caused unemployment. Worryingly, most families don't even have the clean water they need to stop the spread of the virus.

Your donation will enable Act for Peace's local partner to continue distributing food rations, soap, clean water and vital health information. Through your gift this Christmas Bowl, you will bring them lifesaving relief.

<https://christmasbowl.actforpeace.org.au>

Singing - TiS 268 Joy to the World

Joy to the world! The Lord is come;
let earth receive its 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 earth! The Saviour reigns;
let us our songs employ;
while fields and streams,
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, wonders of his love.

Used with permission CCLI 241 739 TIS 268 Isaac Watts, 1674-1748 alt., based on Psalm 98 ANTIOCH

Blessing

We have heard the story as it begins.
It is yet to end.

It continues to be re-born in us,
the spark of the divine in us
as we play our part in God's mission
in the world.

We leave from here, to live that story,
to tell the story again
of love born at Christmas
and to be bearers of peace, love,
hope and joy.

May Emmanuel, God-with-us,
be with you and remain with you always.
Amen.

Shearwater Ministry Team:
Rev. Deacon Wendy Elson
Rev. Jennie Gordon
Rev. Ian Turnnidge



“Do not be afraid! I bring good news of great joy for all people...”