



NATIVITY SERVICE

Engaging deeper with Jesus | Enabling all to meet Jesus | Enriching our community.

SERMON NOTES

17 December 2023

WELCOME ... **Andy**

EXPLANATION ...

- We have come together today to hear the story of Jesus.
- The baby who was born on the first Christmas
- Jesus the son of God!
- What is your favorite thing about Christmas? (Gifts to give & receive)
- Some of you were given gifts as you came in – DON'T WORRY if you were not given one, as they are for us all to share.
- If you have a gift please wait until you are asked to open it...then we can all join in the excitement!

Open Gift no. 1 ...

- **BIBLE!**
- This is a reminder that the story we will hear today is from the Bible.
- It is a true story written down many years ago!

Open Gift no. 2 ...

1st Carol = O come all ye faithful

Open Gift no. 3 ...

- **TELEPHONE!**
- What do we use a telephone for?
- To communicate and send messages.
- Sometimes when there is someone we particularly want to get hold of we wish that we had a direct line to them.
- All through the Bible there are messages from God
- Many of the OLD TESTAMENT messages are about God's MESSIAH – his special person who was coming.

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- Isaiah was one of the prophets who seemed to have a direct line to God.
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1st READING ...

ISAIAH 9:2,6-7

Mia & Robyn

NARRATION ...

- So, GOD has promised that His special person – His MESSIAH – the anointed one is coming!
 - How is this going to happen?
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Open Gift no. 4 ...

- **A RING!**
 - Because this young girl named Mary is engaged to be married.
 - Mary, please put the ring on your finger.
 - But before Mary can get married something very strange and wonderful happens.
 - She has a visit from an Angel.
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2nd READING ...

LUKE 1:26-38

Margaret Keen

NARRATION ...

- Mary finds she is pregnant!
 - BUT she is NOT MARRIED!!
 - This was shocking – even punishable by law in those days.
 - BUT it is GOOD NEWS because it comes from God and this is no ordinary baby!
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Open Gift no. 5 ...

2nd Carol = Tell out my soul

Open Gift no. 6 ...

- **A TAX FORM!**
 - Most of the adults here have had one of these, and so did Joseph here. (Indicate the person who opened the gift)
 - Joseph is Mary's fiancé.
 - He found it very difficult to accept the news about the baby, but an Angel visited him too and told him that it was all part of God's plan.
 - Now just as the baby is due, he had a summons from the Roman tax office to go and register at Bethlehem, 70 miles away!
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3rd READING ...

LUKE 2:1-7

Mia & Robyn

Open Gift no. 7 ... **3rd Carol = O little town of Bethlehem**

- Open Gift no. 8 ...
- **NO VACANCY SIGH**
 - Now who can remember what happened when Mary and Joseph reached Bethlehem?
 - There was no room for them to stay anywhere!
 - What were they going to do?
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4th READING ... **LUKE 2:5B-7** **Mia & Robyn**

NARRATION ... Please can our innkeeper come and show Mary and Joseph into this stable? (M & J sit on the bench by the manger)

Open Gift no. 9 ... **4th Carol = Away in a manger**

- NARRATION** ...
- Mary and Joseph have found a safe place to stay in Bethlehem.
 - That night Mary's baby is born.
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- Open Gift no. 10 ...
- **SUNGLASSES?**
 - Please put them on!
 - You don't usually need sunglasses in the middle of the night, do you?
 - On this particular night the shepherds could have done with them.
 - A bright light shocked and scared them!
 - But then they heard the Angel again with an amazing message!
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5th READING ... **LUKE 2:8-16** **Alison S**

- NARRATION** ...
- The shepherds could not wait to get to Bethlehem!
 - As they hurry on their way let's sing...
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Open Gift no. 11 ... **5th Carol = While Shepherds watch**

- NARRATION** ...
- On that very special night the baby was born and had his first visitors.
 - But others came to visit him too!
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Open Gift no. 12 ...

- **STARCHART**
- **TELESCOPE**
- **MAP**
- The three wise men want to go on a journey!
- How are they to decide where to go?
- Is this star chart a clue?
- Or perhaps the map is a sensible guide?
- Sometimes it is hard to know who to follow.
- We get confused and sometimes even go astray.
- Remember the wise man took a wrong turn and ended up at Harrods palace.
- It was only when they studied God's word that they got back on track.

6th READING ...

MATTHEW 2:1-11

Mike Coats

NARRATION ...

- As we sing could the wise men make their way to Bethlehem?

Open Gift no. 13 ...

6th Carol = We three Kings

NARRATION ...

- So, here is our story...
- Here is the small group of people gathered together in Bethlehem watching God's purpose being fulfilled.
- As we pray age let's think about the people in this story.

1st PRAYER ...

Mary and Joseph were people in a country under occupation. The Romans ruled them and told them what to do. They had little or no say about their circumstances. They were moved around at the whim of an Emperor.

We pray for those with no voice, who cannot decide where they live, who are oppressed by forces beyond their control. We ask that we will remember them, and be their voice when we can.

The innkeeper had little to offer, but gave what he could. We thank you, Lord, for those who share what they have, whether it be little or much, with others. Help us to be like them.

The shepherds were poor people who lived ordinary lives, but their lives were changed and their vision was transformed on that night.

We praise you for the way you transform the lives of ordinary people. We pray for Christians all over the world as they live for you, and we ask that you will give them vision as they tell others about you.

The wise men were people who were searching, looking for meaning in life. We pray for all those who are dissatisfied and are searching for the truth. We pray that they won't be confused by the things of the world, but will find Jesus, the source of all truth.

We ask all these prayers in the name of the Lord Jesus, who came on that first Christmas Day. Amen.

NARRATION ...

- This amazing story is more than 2000 years old but it is still important for us today!
 - It was so significant that it was the event that started our year count.
 - You might have notice that something is missing in our picture.
 - We have a few more gifts to open.
 - What might be in them?
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Open Gift no. 14 ...

- RUBBISH SACK?
 - Well, this is something we certainly need... all these packaging we have used needs to go somewhere...
 - If we were expecting something else in that gift, we do not have to be disappointed!
 - The real gift has been here all the time!
 - It is too big to put in a gift bag and has already been given to us.
 - It is Jesus, the son of God given at that very first Christmas.
 - To make our picture complete we will use a doll to represent the baby Jesus in the Manger here.
 - BUT what will we do with the real Jesus?
 - Will we clear him away with these wrappings at the end of the service?
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- Will he be put out with the rubbish when Christmas is over?
 - Joseph and Mary, the shepherds and the wise men, all recognised who he was.
 - What about us?
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2nd PRAYER ...

Holy Lord God,
Mary and Joseph, the shepherds, and the wise men were people who listened to God and made Jesus the focus of their attention at the 1st Christmas.
Dear Lord, we pray that this Christmas we might be like them putting you in the center of our celebrations in the centre of our lives. Amen.

NARRATION ...

- As we think about who Jesus is and why he came and what he means to each one of us let's open the next gift.
 - As we sing can all the children come down and sit around the manger please.
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Open Gift no. 15 ...

7th Carol = See Him lying on a bed of straw.

Gifts for children ...

Ali, Simon, Wendy, Matt, Paul & Joshua.

BLESSING ...

Andy

Open Gift no. 16 ...

8th Carol = Silent Night.
