



The Carols of Christmas

A Children's Christmas Eve Service

by Jeffrey L. Schallert

Morrison Zion Evangelical Lutheran Church

December 24, 2013

Opening Hymn: *On Christmas Night All Christians Sing*

Children and Congregation

1. On Christmas night all Christians sing
To hear the news the angels bring;
On Christmas night all Christians sing
To hear the news the angels bring,
News of great joy, news of great mirth,
News of our merciful King's birth.
2. When sin departs before your grace,
Then life and health come in its place.
When sin departs before your grace,
Then life and health come in its place.
Angels and saints with joy may sing
All for to see the newborn King.
3. From out of darkness we have light
Which made the angels sing this night.
From out of darkness we have light
Which made the angels sing this night:
"Glory to God and peace to men
Now and forevermore. Amen."

Stand

Invocation and Litany:

M: In the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit.

C: Amen.

M: Unto us the Christ is born:

C: Oh, come, let us worship him.

M: Let us worship with musicians and singers throughout the years as they tell the story of Christmas:

C: O Lord, open my lips, and my mouth shall declare your praise.

M: Let us worship with the angels and sing praise to the Lord who came to save us:

C: Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, goodwill to men.

M: Let us worship with the shepherds who told everyone they met about the child, our Savior.

C: Christ the Lord, our Savior, everlasting God and Mary's son, we praise you forever.

M: O gracious Holy Spirit, enrich us as we hear the story of our Savior's birth. Open our hearts to hear and believe the story we know so well and to share the good tidings of great joy with people everywhere.

C: Hear our prayer, O Lord, for Jesus' sake, whose birth we now celebrate. Amen.

Be Seated

Introduction

Grades 7-8

Ben Dobberpuhl: No hymnal could be large enough to contain all the hymns that have ever been composed. Perhaps no greater number of songs, hymns, and carols has been composed than those for Christmas. So we can expect that our Lutheran hymnals, for all the richness of our singing tradition, do not have some of the most loved music for the Festival of the Nativity of Our Lord.

And so as we celebrate the birth of our Savior, we will include some of the music that did not make it into our hymnal. We will use some of these well-known carols of Christmas to share the Christmas message.

They come from many lands and many times. They have been written in and translated into many tongues. Their melodies and harmonies reflect the musical tastes and traditions of many periods of history.

But they all center on the same grand and beautiful theme, the theme that John put into such simple yet profound words in the first chapter of his gospel:

Grades 7-8 Boys: In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was with God in the beginning.

Grades 7-8 Girls: Through him all things were made; without him nothing was made that has been made. In him was life, and that life was the light of men. The light shines in the darkness, but the darkness has not understood it.

Grades 7-8: The Word became flesh and made his dwelling among us. We have seen his glory, the glory of the One and Only, who came from the Father, full of grace and truth. (Jn 1:1-5,14)

Anthony Feldkamp: The story of Christmas is the story of a child. The message that the God of Israel, the Creator of all things, should become a helpless child has captured the imagination of thousands. And it is a message that is found in many Christmas carols.

People often think of Christmas as a holiday for children. They think of little eyes lighting up like the lights on the Christmas tree and eager fingers ripping the wrapping off the presents.

For many, Christmas is toys and parties and little ones lying restless in bed on Christmas Eve, waiting for the coming of dawn.

While we know that Christmas is for all people of all ages, we still set aside a special place in the holiday for the children. Here they learn about the great love God has for them and that his Son entered the world, even as they did, and became one of them.

Song: *Little Children, Can You Tell*

Children and Congregation

Congregation **Little children, can you tell,
Do you know the story well,
Every girl and every boy,
Why the angels sing for joy,
On the Christmas morning?**

Children Yes, we know the story well;
Listen now, and hear us tell
Every girl and every boy,
Why the angels sing for joy,
On the Christmas morning.

Congregation **For a little Babe that day
Cradled in a manger lay,
Born on earth our Lord to be;
This the wondering angels see
On the Christmas morning.**

Children Joy our little hearts shall fill,
Peace and love, and all goodwill;
This fair Babe of Bethlehem
Children loves, and blesses them
On the Christmas morning.

The Savior Is Foretold

Grades 5-6

Lauren Griepentrog: “I bring you good news of great joy,” the angel told the shepherds. And it is this joy—which is for all people—that provides the theme for many Christmas carols. There is a certain spirit of this season, a spirit of anticipation and delight that affects almost everyone as Christmas approaches. The joy God’s people feel at Christmas is contagious.

“God rest you merry, gentlemen,” our next carol sings out. Today we would say, “God send you joy and peace, good gentlemen!” This carol sounds dark and slightly foreboding to modern ears, because we have come to associate the minor key of its melody with dark and tragic themes. But it was not always so. When this song was written, people sang it with the same sense of Christmas cheer that the prophet of ancient Israel felt when he wrote these words:

Grade 6: The people walking in darkness have seen a great light; on those living in the land of the shadow of death a light has dawned. You have enlarged the nation and increased their joy; they rejoice before you as people rejoice at the harvest, as men rejoice when dividing the plunder.

Grade 5: For to us a child is born, to us a son is given, and the government will be on his shoulders. And he will be called Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace. (Isaiah 9:2,3,6)

Song: *God Rest You Merry, Gentlemen*

Congregation

1. God rest you merry, gentlemen, let nothing you dismay,
For Jesus Christ our Savior was born upon this day,
To save us all from Satan's pow'r when we were gone astray:
Refrain: Oh, tidings of comfort and joy, comfort and joy,
Oh, tidings of comfort and joy.
2. From God our heav'nly Father a blessed angel came,
And unto certain shepherds brought tidings of the same,
How that in Bethlehem was born the Son of God by name: *Refrain*
3. Now to the Lord sing praises all you within this place,
And with true love and brotherhood each other now embrace;
This holy tide of Christmas all others doth deface. *Refrain*

The Journey to Bethlehem

Grades 3-4

Leah Ihlenfeldt: Illustrations of today that show the birth of Jesus are probably not very accurate. After all, the people were all Palestinians of the first century with dusky, olive-hued skin, dark hair, and coal-black eyes—nothing at all like the pale-skinned statues in our manger scenes, looking as if the nativity may have taken place in northern Europe.

Many of the songs of Christmas have reflected a similar desire to move the nativity into our own experience. Although the gospel of Luke never mentions the time of year, we imagine it to be in the winter because that is when we celebrate it.

But don't judge songwriters too harshly. They understood something important about the Christmas story. Christ did not come only as the Savior of the Jews. He was not meant only for the first century A.D. He came for all people of all times, and he invites us to his manger bed.

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

Grade 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. He went there to

register with Mary, who was pledged to be married to him and was expecting a child.

Grades 3-4: While they were there, the time came for the baby to be born, and she gave birth to her firstborn, a son. She wrapped him in cloths and placed him in a manger, because there was no room for them in the inn. (Luke 2:1-7)

Song: *The Snow Lay on the Ground*

Grades 3-4

1. The snow lay on the ground, the stars shone bright,
When Christ our Lord was born on Christmas night.
Venite adoremus Dominum. Venite adoremus Dominum.
Refrain Venite adoremus Dominum. Venite adoremus Dominum.
Venite adoremus Dominum. Venite adoremus Dominum.
2. 'Twas Mary, virgin pure, by God's great plan,
That brought into this world the God made man.
She laid him in a stall at Bethlehem;
The sheep and oxen shared the room with them. *Refrain*
3. And Joseph too was by to tend the child,
To guard him and protect his mother mild.
The angels hovered round and sang this song:
Venite adoremus Dominum. *Refrain*
4. And thus that manger poor became a throne,
For he whom Mary bore was God the Son.
Oh, come, then, let us join the heav'nly host
To praise the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost. *Refrain*

The Angels and the Shepherds

Grades 4K-5K

A.J. Laabs: The birth of God's Son to a peasant woman in a stable was bound to have repercussions. You have to understand what the ancient way of looking at humanity was. Some of the people were on the top—the great ones, the movers and shakers, noblemen and kings and emperors. And the rest were below them—the slaves and merchants and laborers, farmers and carpenters and shepherds.

And yet no less than the heavenly host came to deliver the first song of Christmas to the lowest of the classes. At the coming of Christ, all these differences between classes were shown to be nothing in God's sight. The shepherd is as precious to God as is a king.

4K-5K: There were shepherds living out in the fields nearby, keeping watch over their flocks at night. 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 of great joy that will

be for all the people. Today in the town of David a Savior has been born to you; he is Christ 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, and on earth peace to men on whom his favor rests.”

(Luke 2:8-14)

Song: *Bells are Gaily Ringing*

Grades 4K & 5K

1. Bells are gaily ringing
On this Christmas morn
Angel voices singing,
Jesus is born.
2. To our God be glory,
Peace, to men good will!
May the sacred story
Ev'ry longing still.

Song: The First Noel

Congregation

1. **The first Noel the angel did say
Was to certain poor shepherds in fields as they lay;
In fields where they lay keeping their sheep,
On a cold winter's night that was so deep.
Refrain Noel, noel, noel, noel. Born is the King of Israel.**
2. **They looked up and saw a star
Shining in the east, beyond them far;
And to the earth it gave great light,
And so it continued both day and night. *Refrain***
3. **And by the light of that same star
The wise men came from country far;
To seek for a King was their intent,
And to follow the star wherever it went. *Refrain***
4. **This star drew nigh to the northwest,
O'er Bethlehem it took its rest;
And there it did both stop and stay,
Right over the place where Jesus lay. *Refrain***
5. **Then let us all with one accord
Sing praises to our heavenly Lord;
Who hath made heav'n and earth of naught,
And with his blood our life hath bought. *Refrain***

The Adoration of the Shepherds

Grades 1-2

Leah Voster: What must that night have been like for those shepherds? Who could imagine such a thing? How hard it must have been for the shepherds to tell others what they had seen and heard!

Perhaps it was difficult to find the right words, but the shepherds found no difficulty in telling others about the child who was wrapped in swaddling clothes and lying in a manger.

If they had been musicians, they might have composed any of the great number of songs that have been put into their mouths by people of later ages. For the shepherds, it was not enough just to say their piece and go on their way. They expected it to echo throughout the world!

And so we sing songs like “While by the Sheep” and use our voices to echo the shepherds’ excitement.

Grades 1-2: 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. The shepherds returned, glorifying and praising God for all the things they had heard and seen, which were just as they had been told. (Luke 2:15-20)

Song: *While by the Sheep*

Grades 1-2

1. While by the sheep we watched at night,
Glad tidings brought an angel bright.
Refrain How great our joy! Great our joy!
Joy, joy, joy! Joy, joy, joy!
Praise we the Lord in heav’n on high!
Praise we the Lord in heav’n on high!
2. There shall be born, so he did say,
In Bethlehem a child today. *Refrain*
3. There shall the child lie in a stall,
This child who shall redeem us all. *Refrain*
4. This gift of God we’ll cherish well—
Jesus, our Lord, Immanuel. *Refrain*

The Adoration of the Magi

Grades 5-6

Jared Wiedow: The wise men probably did not reach the manger of Christ when the shepherds did. Matthew hints that they may have arrived a year or two later.

Scripture does not record their names. Their crowns were added by ancient and medieval storytellers; they were probably stargazers. But no matter. Much more important to us than their

rank is the gifts that they brought. In the events as we hear about them in this popular carol, the gifts themselves are a confession of faith.

Gold for the King of kings. Incense for the Son of God. Myrrh for the sacrifice of the Lamb of God, who came to take away the sins of the world. It is divine glory that is confessed here, the glory of the saving love of God, which outshines even that star of long ago.

Grade 6: After Jesus was born in Bethlehem in Judea, during the time of King Herod, Magi from the 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.”

Grade 5: 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.

Grade 6: “In Bethlehem in Judea,” they replied, “for this is what the prophet has written: ‘But you, Bethlehem, in the land of Judah, are by no means least among the rulers of Judah; for out of you will come a ruler who will be the shepherd of my people Israel.’”

Grade 5: Then Herod called the Magi secretly and found out from them the exact time the star had appeared. He sent them to Bethlehem and said, “Go and make a careful search for the child. As soon as you find him, report to me, so that I too may go and worship him.”

Grade 6: 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.

Grade 5: On coming to the house, they saw the child with his mother Mary, and they bowed down and worshiped him. Then they opened their treasures and presented him with gifts of gold and of incense and of myrrh. (Matthew 2:1-11)

Song: *We Three Kings of Orient Are*

Grades 5-6

1. We three kings of Orient are; Bearing gifts we traverse afar,
Field and fountain, moor and mountain—Following yonder star.
Refrain O star of wonder, star of light, Star with royal beauty bright,
Westward leading, still proceeding, Guide us to thy perfect light.
2. Born a King on Bethlehem’s plain; Gold I bring to crown him again,
King forever, ceasing never, Over us all to reign. *Refrain*
3. Frankincense to offer have I; Incense owns a Deity nigh;
Prayer and praising, voices raising, Worshiping God on high. *Refrain*
4. Myrrh is mine; its bitter perfume Breathes a life of gathering gloom;
Sorr’ wing, sighing, bleeding, dying, Sealed in the stone-cold tomb. *Refrain*

5. Glorious now behold him arise, King and God and sacrifice;
Alleluia! Alleluia! Sounds through the earth and skies. *Refrain*

The Glory Yet to Come

Grades 7-8

Evan Vaughn: And so, with alleluias sounding through earth and heaven, the carolers return, like the shepherds and the wise men, with a childlike joy at the birth of the Savior.

But the world is no place for children, is it? Trouble and strife, war and destruction, man's inhumanity to his fellow man—these seem to be the way of the world. Christmas seems like an all-too-short rest from a world of sorrow and hatred and death.

But we know something that Christmas has taught us. Its message cannot be drowned out by the sins of the world. The same Christ Jesus who came in weakness will come again in heavenly glory and bring us to a new world without the sinfulness and darkness of this one. To this the words of the angels continue to point our faith.

Grades 7-8 Girls: I heard a loud voice from the throne saying, "Now the dwelling of God is with men, and he will live with them. They will be his people, and God himself will be with them and be their God.

He will wipe every tear from their eyes. There will be no more death or mourning or crying or pain, for the old order of things has passed away."

He who was seated on the throne said, "I am making everything new!" (Revelation 21:3-5)

Grades 7-8 Boys: A highway will be there; it will be called the Way of Holiness.

Only the redeemed will walk there, and the ransomed of the LORD will return.

They will enter Zion with singing; everlasting joy will crown their heads. Gladness and joy will overtake them, and sorrow and sighing will flee away. (Isaiah 35:8a,9b,10)

Grades 7-8: In my Father's house are many rooms; if it were not so, I would have told you. I am going there to prepare a place for you.

And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come back and take you to be with me that you also may be where I am. (John 14:2,3)

Song: *It Came Upon the Midnight Clear*

Grades 7-8

1. 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.
2. Still through the cloven skies they come,
With peaceful wings unfurled,
Who toil along the climbing way
O'er all the weary world;
Above its sad and lowly plains,
They bend on hovering wing,
And ever o'er its babel sounds
The blessed angels sing.

4. And you beneath life's crushing load,
Whose forms are bending low,
With painful steps and slow,
And still their heavenly music floats
Look now! for glad and golden hours
Come swiftly on the wing.
Oh, rest beside the weary road,
And hear the angels sing!
5. For lo! the days are hast'ning on,
By prophets seen 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 the whole world sends back the song
Which now the angels sing.

Offering

Stand

Christmas Prayer

M: O Lord God, our heavenly Father, we thank you for the great mercy you have shown to our fallen race. Though we deserve nothing but your anger and your just punishment for our sins, you have shown us mercy and sent your only Son to be our Savior. Though we deserve to spend eternity in the darkness where there is weeping and gnashing of teeth, you have given us great joy and a reason for singing.

May the music of this Christmas season awaken us once again to the wonders of your love. May the songs of men and angels echo in our lives so that we may prove to be faithful Christians, who have been given a new birth through the birth of your Son. Let the glorious strains of Christmas music be ours on earth until we finally may hear, as the shepherds did, the heavenly host saying, "Glory to God in the highest!"

Hear us, O Lord, as we join in the prayer our Redeemer taught us to pray:

C: The Lord's Prayer

Be Seated

Evan Vaughn: And now we come to the most famous and loved Christmas carol. All the great themes of Christmas are brought together in this hymn.

Hymn: *Silent Night! Holy Night*

Congregation

1. **Silent night! Holy night!**
All is calm, all is bright,
Round yon virgin mother and child,
Holy Infant, so tender and mild,
Sleep in heavenly peace,
Sleep in heavenly peace.
2. **Silent night! Holy night!**
Shepherds quake at the sight.
Glories stream from heaven afar;
Heav'nly hosts sing, Alleluia;
Christ, the Savior, is born!
Christ, the Savior, is born!

- 3. Silent night! Holy night!**
Son of God, love's pure light
Radiant beams from thy holy face
With the dawn of redeeming grace,
Jesus, Lord, at thy birth,
Jesus, Lord, at thy birth.

Prayer for Peace

M: Lord God, all holy desires, all good counsels, and all just works come from you. Give to us, your servants, that peace which the world cannot give, that our hearts may be set to obey your commandments. Defend us also from the fear of our enemies that we may live in peace and quietness, through the merits of Jesus Christ our Savior, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.

C: Amen.

Benediction

M: The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with you all.

C: Amen.

Hymn: Joy to the World

Congregation and Children

- | | |
|--|---|
| <p>1. 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.</p> <p>2. Joy to the earth, the Savior 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.</p> | <p>3. 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, for as the curse is found,</p> <p>4. 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,</p> |
|--|---|

Children in the Christmas Service

Grades 7 & 8

Very Back Row: Matthew Krueger, Zachary Diny (altar) (tree)

Back Full Row: Natalie Zirbel, Hayden Meulemans, Lindsey Doyen, Evan Vaughn, Lauren Griepentrog, Anthony Feldkamp, Ben Dobberpuhl

Middle Row: Andrew VanDrisse, Leah Nushart, Leah Kuchenbecker, Jared Wiedow, Leah Voster, Alexander Laabs, Leah Ihlenfeldt

Front Row: Hailey Witt, Alyssa Laabs, Andy Gajewske, Emily Cappelle, Elaine Blauert, Jerod Voster

Grades 5 & 6

Back Row: Terrell Edinger, Erin Magley, Aaron Schultz, Samantha Zittlow, Matthew Gajewske, Trisha Feldkamp, Thomas Voster, Harmony Baril, Hayden Block, Sydey Salm, Anna Voster, Seth Alexander

Front Row: Justin Laabs, Paige Zirbel, Mitchell Leick, Jordyn Ossmann, Cole Yohanek, Georgia Blauert

Grades 3 & 4

Back Row: Simon Alexander, Samantha Rusch, Peyton Cappelle, Justin Ossmann, McKenzie Mathies, Cody Hassemer, Stella Block, Cole VanRossum, Emma Otto, Ethan Diny

Front Row: Scott Schultz, Alaina Feldkamp, Marshall Edinger, Hannah Hutjens, Isabella Blauert, Melissa Wotacheck, Jordan VanRossum, Heather Stein, Emma Geib, Jacob Gajewske, Emily Dobberpuhl

Grades 1 & 2

Back Row: Jordan Magley, Naomi Wittig, Marcus Humann, Drake Baril, Katelyn Geib, Andrew Doyen, Macey Block, Caden Yohanek, Brayden Zirbel

Front Row: Elizabeth Blauert, Sawyer Diny, Emily Plagenz, Riley Feldkamp, McKenzie Wotacheck, Ellie Kandziora, Connor Hutjens, Fletcher Pahl, Kiara Humann, David Stein

4K & 5K

Back Row: Brylie Zirbel, Josh Zirbel, McKayla Mathies, Seth Wittig, Sabrina Schmidt, Andrew Wegner, Tessa Block

Front Row: Isaiah Muchka, Bryce Dobberpuhl, Ethan Hassemer, Audrey Zirbel, Brooke Van Rossum, Elizabeth Laabs