

"TAKE 10"- Worship While Away! (December 23, 24, 25, 26 2021)

Share:

Hope has come—

awakening us to new possibilities.

Peace has come—

inviting us to be agents of reconciliation.

Joy has come—

turning our hearts from fear to wonder.

Love has come—

transforming our lives, transforming our world.

We have come—

amazed and humbled by God's grace, to worship the newborn king!

Read these words from a hymn for Sunday:

Once in Royal David's City

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 mild, 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 cradle was a stall;

With the poor and meek and lowly, lived on earth our Savior holy

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 has gone

Read this scripture from worship:

Luke 2:1-20, *The Message*

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 neighborhood. 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!

Talk together, responding to these questions:

- What did you recall from these lessons and carols that we read and sing every year?
- What did you forget? What surprises you? What questions do you have?
- What does the story of God's salvation in Christ personally mean to you?
- In what ways do you hold and ponder the story of Christ's birth in your heart?
- Which good news leaps out the most to you?
- How does the "good news to all the world" bring hope, peace, joy, and love?

Pray together:

Gracious and loving God, the gift of your Son, Jesus, was a gift that changed the course of human history for all time. Words are inadequate to express our gratitude for such an extravagant outpouring of generosity, love and grace. It is, instead, our lives that need to speak for us -- lives that are testimonies to the difference that this Jesus makes in the human heart and the human condition. When we act with compassion, kindness and gentleness toward others, we are the incarnational presence of Christ. When we are patient rather than angry and short-tempered, we exhibit the life of Jesus. As we stretch to do the hard work of forgiveness, rather than justify our bitterness and grudges, we become more like your Son. When we dwell on your word, it transforms our minds so that we may choose, act and respond as those who are devoted followers of the one who said, "Come, follow me." O God, this is who we long to be. Grant us your grace and mercy to walk as friends and worshipers of the Christ child, in whose name we pray. Amen.

Bless one another:

Take each person's hand and say: "God's grace is for you, God's love is upon you, God's call is within you. Be kind to yourself and others this week as a child of God."

Resources Used: *A Sanctified Art*
 Feasting on the Word, Year C
 Glory to God, The Presbyterian Hymnal
 The Message, by Rev. Eugene Peterson