

## Christmas Eve Family Service 2022

1. If you're like me this is the most wonderful night of the year, as a kid it was full of wonder and excitement as we celebrated with family and friends and await gifts
  - a. Now that I'm older it's still a night of wonder and excitement not just because we celebrate with family and await gifts (still exciting) but because I understand what Christmas is about and the gift that we received that first Christmas in Jesus
    - i. Do you ever wonder why we give gifts at Christmas?
    - ii. We heard about the Wise Men bringing Jesus gold and frankincense and myrrh as presents
    - iii. But that's not why we give gifts...we give gifts because in Jesus God has given us the greatest gift of all – the forgiveness of sins and eternal life.
  - b. We heard Scripture tell the full story of why we needed Jesus and what He came to do
    - i. In our first reading we heard how Adam and Eve disobeyed God and broke the relationship that we were supposed to enjoy with God by sin which we all inherit.
    - ii. But God made a promise to Adam and Eve that One would come who would restore that relationship.
    - iii. The rest of Scripture is an unfolding of that promise fulfilled by Jesus.
2. But you don't have to know Scripture or have gone to church to have heard that promise, many of the traditional Christmas carols you've always known do the same.
  - a. Not Mariah Carey "All I want for Christmas is You," or even venerated classics like "I'm Dreaming of a White Christmas"
    - i. But the carols that are still interspersed with those songs on the radio
    - ii. God has been speaking to you your whole life, but you may not have realized it
  - b. What have we sung tonight, what have you been whistling and humming all your life?
    - i. **"Hark the herald angels sing glory to the new-born King, peace on earth and mercy mild, GOD AND SINNERS RECONCILED! Born to raise the sons of earth born to give them second birth!"** – this is the Gospel
    - ii. God has been speaking through these carols, have you listened to him, have you believed that promise for yourself?
    - iii. Or **"Silent night, holy night shepherds quake at the sight glories stream from heaven afar, Heavenly hosts sing Alleluia, Christ the Savior is born!"**
    - iv. Did you hear that, Christ the Savior is born! The savior from what, sin, death and Satan or as another hymn puts it, **"to save us all from Satan's power when we were gone astray, oh tidings of comfort and joy."**

- c. Even some of your most beloved and cherished Christmas specials unwittingly declare what God has done through Jesus
  - i. How many of you can watch the Peanuts Christmas special and recite with Linus the true meaning of Christmas?
  - ii. He's reciting the Gospel of Luke, "**Fear not, for behold, I bring you good news of great joy that will be for all the people. For unto you is born this day in the city of David a Savior, who is Christ the Lord.**" (Luk 2:10-11) – that is the Gospel, Christ born for you!
  - iii. God has been speaking to you your whole life, His arms are wide-open! Listen to His invitation, believe in His promise!
- d. Jesus was the gift sent from God the Father to restore our relationship with Him, the relationship we broke through our disobedience and sin.
  - i. He didn't do this by remaining a cute little baby in the manger at Bethlehem, no the wood of the manger looks forward to the wood of the cross for it was there that this baby's real purpose was revealed
  - ii. It was there that He took upon Himself our sin, God made Him to be sin who knew no sin, and was punished in our place, the separation between God and man was removed by Jesus
  - iii. So that as we hear in It Came Upon a Midnight Clear, "**All you beneath your heavy load by care and guilt bent low,**" might "**look up for golden in the hour...the Prince was born to bring you Peace!**"
  - iv. That's the Good News of which the angels sang over the plains of Bethlehem, the Good News you've been singing your whole life.
  - v. Glory to the newborn King whose birth has brought glad tidings of peace and the promise of sins forgiven for you – believe and live!