

# WHOLE CONGREGATION CHRISTMAS PAGEANT

With the HOLY EUCHARIST

Church of the Advent, Colwood B.C.—December 18, 2011

## **Welcome and explanation—Rev. Ken Gray**

Nar. 1 This morning we would like to invite you to share in an old fashioned Christmas pageant, one in which we will all take a part.

Nar 2 At the heart of the Advent and Christmas season is the story of a baby's birth. Today's worship service is designed to help us not only hear that familiar story again, but to enter into it, letting it become a part of us and letting ourselves become a part of it.

Nar 1 We invite you to relax and to enjoy this fresh way of telling a familiar story, almost as if we are hearing it for the very first time.

Nar 2 The characters in the story are well known to us: Mary and Joseph and their baby, the angels, the shepherds and the townspeople of Bethlehem. Because costumes are a part of theatre and story-telling we have prepared costumes for everyone. We want to see everyone with something on to help you get into the spirit of the pageant.

Nar 1 The stage managers will bring the costumes out now. Please come forward and select something appropriate.

## **As the stage managers distribute the costumes, the narrators continue with the introductions.**

Nar 2 We need some people to serve as the heavenly host so we have some halos for you to wear.

Nar 1 We will need some more people to be shepherds and we have some headpieces for you.

Nar 2 Now the rest of you will be the townspeople of Bethlehem; for you we have a nice assortment of hats and scarves and wraps and aprons, so pick out something and get yourself dressed. When everyone is ready we will get underway.

## **There is time for people to get dressed.**

Nar 1 The story will unfold today through a combination of narration and scripture

readings, as well as the words and music of several familiar carols.

**Nar 2** The words to the carols are all printed for you in the bulletin so you won't have to juggle a hymnbook. We will sing them seated.

**Nar 1** At different points in the service we will be inviting all of you: angels, shepherds, and townspeople to come and be part of the scene up front. Please bring your leaflet with you when you come up.

**Nar 2** Our hope is that we can all feel comfortable coming up front and joining in, and we hope you can join in the spirit of the event. But if getting around is difficult for you, please remain where you are most comfortable.

**Nar 1** We will begin with the gathering of the community

**Presider**     The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ  
                  and the Love of God  
                  and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit  
                  be with you all

**People**       And also with you

**Presider**     We read together

**People**       O God our creator, whose Word has come among us  
                  in the Holy Child of Bethlehem,  
                  may the light of faith illumine our hearts  
                  and shine in our words and deeds;  
                  through him who is Christ our Lord, Amen.

**Nar 2** This is the story of Jesus' birth when he came to share our life. We celebrate the miracle of God's gift of love and we remember and participate in - once again- the story of Christ.

**Nar 1** Long before the first Christmas day, the prophets of Israel foretold the coming of God's special person.

<b>O come, all ye faithful, joyful and triumphant,</b>	<b>Sing, choirs of angels, sing in exultation,</b>
<b>O come ye, O come ye to Bethlehem:</b>	<b>sing, all ye citizens of heaven above;</b>
<b>come and behold him, born the king of angels;</b>	<b>glory to God in the highest!</b>
<b>O come, let us adore him, Christ the Lord.</b>	<b>O come, let us adore him, Christ the Lord.</b>

**FIRST READING** The people walking in darkness have seen a great light ... 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)

Nar 2 The gospels tell of how the angel Gabriel was sent from God to tell Mary and Joseph that Mary would have a child and that they should call him Jesus ...

SECOND READING In the sixth month, God sent the angel Gabriel to Nazareth, a town in Galilee, to a virgin pledged to be married to a man named Joseph, a descendant of David. The virgin's name was Mary. The angel went to her and said, "Greetings, you who are highly favored! The Lord is with you." Mary was greatly troubled at his words and wondered what kind of greeting this might be. But the angel said to her, "Do not be afraid, Mary, you have found favor with God. You will be with child and give birth to a son, and you are to give him the name Jesus. (Luke)

Nar 1 Mary wasn't the only one aware of strange happenings. Her husband Joseph also had his own story to tell.

THIRD READING Mary was pledged to be married to Joseph, but before they came together, she was found to be with child through the Holy Spirit. Because Joseph her husband was a righteous man and did not want to expose her to public disgrace, he had in mind to divorce her quietly. But after he had considered this, an angel of the Lord appeared to him in a dream and said, "Joseph son of David, do not be afraid to take Mary home as your wife ... "She will give birth to a son, and they will call him Immanuel"—which means, "God with us." (Matthew)

Nar 2 The scene was Bethlehem, a small town south of Jerusalem. The prophets had said this is where the Messiah would be born.

FOURTH READING In those days Caesar Augustus issued a decree that a census should be taken of the entire Roman world ... 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 ... While they were there, the time came for the baby to be born, and she gave birth to her firstborn, a son. (Luke)

**Mary, Joseph and Child (and a little drummer boy) enter the sanctuary up the main aisle during singing and take their places before the manger.**

O little town of Bethlehem,  
how still we see thee lie!  
Above thy deep and dreamless sleep  
the silent stars go by;  
yet in thy dark streets shineth  
the everlasting light;  
the hopes and fears of all the years  
are met in thee tonight.

For Christ is born of Mary;  
and, gathered all above,  
while mortals sleep, the angels keep  
their watch of wondering love.  
O morning stars, together  
proclaim the holy birth,  
and praises sing to God the King,  
and peace to all the earth.

Nar 1 In a stable Jesus was born. Mary wrapped him in swaddling clothes and laid him in a manger. The baby born that night was no ordinary child, but the Messiah, God's special person. They named him Jesus.

**The shepherds come forward and stand left in front of the altar**

Away in a manger, no crib for a bed,  
the little Lord Jesus laid down his sweet head.  
The stars in the bright sky looked down where he lay,  
the little Lord Jesus asleep on the hay.

The cattle are lowing, the baby awakes,  
but little Lord Jesus, no crying he makes.  
I love you, Lord Jesus--look down from on high  
and stay by my side until morning is nigh.

Nar 2 The town of Bethlehem was sleeping, unaware of what was happening. But in the fields on the hills nearby shepherds were watching their flocks. Suddenly a great light appeared and the shepherds were afraid.

**The angels come forward and stand on the platform above the shepherds.**

Nar 1 The angels appeared to the shepherds and said to them: "Do not be afraid, for we bring good news to you. Today your Savior has been born. His name is Jesus. You will find him lying in a manger".

The first nowell 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.  
NOWELL, NOWELL, NOWELL, NOWELL,  
BORN IS THE KING OF ISRAEL.

Then let us all with one accord  
Sing praises to our heavenly Lord  
Who has made heaven  
and earth of naught  
And with his blood salvation wrought  
NOWELL

Nar 2 When the sky was clear again, the shepherds stood and said: "let's go see this baby."

**Shepherds move forward to the manger as the angels look over their shoulders**

Nar 1 They went to Bethlehem with their flocks of sheep, and came to the place where Mary, Joseph and the newborn baby were, just as the angel had said. They knelt before the manger.

Nar 2 The townspeople, filled with curiosity, said: "Where's everyone going?"

Nar 1 And they also went to see what happened.

**All the townspeople move forward, and after them, everyone is invited to come forward to the manger.**

While shepherds watched their flocks by night  
all seated on the ground,  
the angel of the Lord came down  
and glory shone around.

The heavenly babe you there shall find  
to human view displayed,  
all meanly wrapped in swaddling bands,  
and in a manger laid."

"Fear not," said he, for mighty dread  
had seized their troubled mind.  
"Glad tidings of great joy I bring  
to you and humankind.

Thus spake the seraph; and forthwith  
appeared a shining throng  
of angels praising God, who thus  
addressed their joyful song:

To you in David's town this day  
is born of David's line  
a Saviour, who is Christ the Lord;  
and this shall be the sign:

"All glory be to God on high,  
and to the world be peace;  
good will henceforth from heaven to earth  
begin, and never cease."

Nar 2 As we have heard of the coming of the Prince of Peace, let us share peace with one another.

Presider The Peace of Christ be with you  
All And also with you

**We share peace together; the altar is prepared; we receive the offering and sing**

Good Christians all, rejoice  
with heart and soul and voice!  
Listen now to what we say:  
Jesus Christ is born today;  
ox and ass before him bow  
and he is in the manger now!  
Christ is born today; Christ is born today!

Good Christians all, rejoice  
with heart and soul and voice!  
Hear the news of endless bliss:  
Jesus Christ was born for this;  
he has opened heaven's door  
and we are blessed for evermore!  
Christ was born for this.

Good Christians all, rejoice, with heart and soul and voice!  
Now you need not fear the grave; Jesus Christ was born to save:  
come at his most gracious call, to find salvation, one and all!  
Christ was born to save. Christ was born to save.

**The liturgy continues**

Presider The Lord be with you.  
People And also with you.

Presider Lift up your hearts.  
People **We lift them to the Lord.**  
Presider Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.  
People **It is right to give our thanks and praise.**  
Presider We give you thanks and praise, Source of all being,  
for the gift of a world full of wonder,  
and for our life which comes from you.  
By your power you sustain the universe.  
People **Glory to you for ever and ever.**  
Presider You created us to love you with all our heart,  
and to love each other as ourselves,  
but we rebel against you by the evil that we do.  
In Jesus, your Son, you bring healing to our world  
and gather us into one great family.  
Therefore, with all who serve you on earth and in heaven,  
we praise your wonderful name, as we sing (say),  
People **Holy, holy, holy Lord, God of power and might,  
heaven and earth are full of your glory. Hosanna in the highest.  
Blessed is the one who comes in the name of the Lord.  
Hosanna in the highest.**  
Presider We give you thanks and praise, loving Father,  
because in sending Jesus, your Son, to us  
you showed us how much you love us.  
He cares for the poor and the hungry.  
He suffers with the sick and the rejected.  
Betrayed and forsaken; he did not strike back  
but overcame hatred with love,  
On the cross he defeated the power of sin and death.  
By raising him from the dead  
you show us the power of your love  
to bring new life to all your people.  
People **Glory to you for ever and ever.**  
Presider On the night before he gave up his life for us,  
Jesus, at supper with his friends,

took bread, gave thanks to you,  
broke it, and gave it to them saying,  
"Take this, all of you, and eat it:  
this is my body which is given for you."

After supper, Jesus took the cup of wine,  
said the blessing, gave it to his friends and said,  
"Drink this, all of you: this is the cup of my blood,  
the blood of the new and eternal covenant,  
which is shed for you and for many, so that sins may be forgiven.  
Do this in memory of me."

People **Glory to you for ever and ever.**

Presider Gracious God, with this bread and wine  
we celebrate the death and resurrection of Jesus,  
and we offer ourselves to you in him.  
Send your Holy Spirit on us and on these gifts,  
that we may know the presence of Jesus in the breaking of bread,  
and share in the life of the family of your children.

People **Glory to you for ever and ever.**

Presider Father and Mother of us all, you call us to be your servants;  
fill us with the courage and love of Jesus,  
that all the world may gather in joy at the table of your kingdom.  
We sing your praise, Creator of All, through Jesus, our Lord,  
in the power of the Holy Spirit, now and for ever.

People **Glory to you for ever and ever. Amen.**

Presider And now as our Saviour Christ has taught us, we sing together  
People **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, But deliver us from evil;  
For the Kingdom, the power And the glory are yours,  
Now and forever, Amen.**

Presider We break the bread of life and that life is the light of the world  
People God here among us,  
light in the midst of us,  
bring us to light and life

Presider The gifts of God for the people of God  
People Thanks be to God

**All are encouraged to share in the communion**

**During communion the choir sings *Like a Shepherd* (R. Dufford) AND everyone is invited to join in some verses of *How Great Thou Art*, offered today with thanks for the life of Vera Bodman who died Dec 19, 2010**

O Lord my God, When I in awesome wonder,  
Consider all the worlds Thy Hands have made;  
I see the stars, I hear the rolling thunder,  
Thy power throughout the universe displayed.

Then sings my soul, My Saviour God, to Thee,  
How great Thou art, How great Thou art.  
Then sings my soul, My Saviour God, to Thee,  
How great Thou art, How great Thou art!

When through the woods, and forest glades I wander,  
And hear the birds sing sweetly in the trees.  
When I look down, from lofty mountain grandeur  
And see the brook, and feel the gentle breeze.

Announcements

**Postlude music is played today by Scott Hamar after we sing the following.  
Please come into the hall for refreshments and activity**

Down the Road to Bethlehem,  
Angels watching over them,  
Came a lady so pure and true  
In her mantle blue,  
And her time come due  
For her child.

Far away from Bethlehem,  
Stars and angels guiding them,  
In their raiment of purest gold  
Come the kings of old  
And their gifts unfold  
For the child.

In the fields of Bethlehem,  
Angels sing on high for them,  
Shepherds, hearing that summons clear,  
With a holy fear  
And with joy draw near  
To the child.

May we all to Bethlehem,  
Sing our songs of joy for them,  
For that lady so pure and true  
In her mantle blue,  
And for Joseph too,  
And the child.