

“Caroling Service”  
(12/20/15)

Welcome and introduction:

Good morning,

And welcome to our Caroling Service.

Following the service

I invite you to remain

To enjoy a meal

And some seasonal refreshments.

And of course,

You’re also welcome to return tonight

For our evening worship service.

Let’s begin with prayer.

This morning,

We have the opportunity

To sing some classic Christmas Carols.

We’ll be singing them in four part harmony.

If you know the parts, feel free to sing them.

If not, the melody will do just fine.

I’ll begin each with a brief introduction –

Not of the carol writer’s background

Or the circumstances in which it was written –  
But of the message of the carol,  
So that we may sing each with understanding.

A. Christmas Carols, as you know,  
Are songs written about the First Advent –  
The birth of Jesus Christ;  
The fulfillment of God's promise  
To send His Son into the world  
To redeem fallen mankind –  
To reconcile us with Himself  
After we had fallen away from Him  
And become His enemies.

The first carol we'll sing is "O Come, O Come, Emmanuel."

It reminds us  
Of that time between  
When God made the promise  
That He would send His Son  
And the time He came.

He first made this promise  
To those who needed to hear it the most:  
To Adam and Eve  
Just after they sinned against God

And fell away from Him –

Not only for themselves,

But for all mankind.

In cursing the serpent –

Who was Satan,

And who had just tempted

Adam and Eve to sin –

God said, “And I will put enmity between you and the woman, and between your seed and her seed; He shall bruise you on the head, and you shall bruise him on the heel” (Gen. 3:15).

This was the first indication

That God would send His Son

To become a man,

To destroy the serpent;

And what would happen to Him

When He did: He would be injured.

God’s people wouldn’t know until later

Just how badly He would be wounded –

But we know now

That He would give up His life to save us.

They also didn’t know exactly

How a woman could have a seed –

That's something usually attributed to a man –

At least they didn't until Isaiah's day.

He tells us that the One who was promised

Would be born of a Virgin –

His mother would be a daughter of Adam,

But His Father would be God.

Isaiah writes, "Listen now, O house of David! Is it too slight a thing for you to try the patience of men, that you will try the patience of my God as well? Therefore the Lord Himself will give you a sign: Behold, a virgin will be with child and bear a son, and she will call His name Immanuel" (7:13-14).

This Virgin would be from the line of Jesse –

Who was the father of King David –

He would be a son of David

That He might have the right to David's throne.

Again, Isaiah writes, "Then a shoot will spring from the stem of Jesse, and a branch from his roots will bear fruit. The Spirit of the LORD will rest on Him, the spirit of wisdom and understanding, the spirit of counsel and strength, the spirit of knowledge and the fear of the LORD. And He will delight in the fear of the LORD, and He will not judge by what His eyes see, nor make a decision by what His ears hear; but with righteousness He will judge the poor, and decide with fairness for the afflicted of the earth; and He will strike the earth with the rod of His mouth, and with the breath of His lips He will slay the wicked. Also righteousness will be the belt about His loins, and faithfulness the belt about His waist" (Isa. 11:1-5).

This hymn also reminds us for whom was He coming:

For those who mourned for their sins,

Who desired to be set free from the tyranny of Satan,

Not just from among the Jews,

But from every nation under heaven.

He was coming to save them from hell,  
 And bring them safely to heaven –  
 Not only for those who believed in Him  
 From the time He came onward,  
 But also for those who looked forward to Him  
 Through these promises.

Let's sing, "O Come, O Come, Emmanuel" verses 1, 3, 5

B. But who would this Child be

That would be born of the virgin,  
 That would be an heir to David's throne,  
 That was coming to redeem His people  
 From every nation?

He would be God in our nature.

Isaiah writes, "For a child will be born to us, a son will be given to us; and the government will rest on His shoulders; and His name will be called Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Eternal Father, Prince of Peace. There will be no end to the increase of *His* government or of peace, on the throne of David and over his kingdom, to establish it and to uphold it with justice and righteousness from then on and forevermore. The zeal of the LORD of hosts will accomplish this" (Isa. 9:6-7).

God Himself – God the Son,  
 The Second Person of the Triune God –  
 Would descend to earth  
 By becoming incarnate –

That is, by becoming a man –  
 So that He might make the payment for man's crimes –  
 But without ceasing to be God –  
 So that His payment might be valuable enough  
 To satisfy God's justice once and for all,  
 That He might remove the sentence of death  
 For all who believe in Him.

The fact that He is God in our nature  
 Is why He would be called Emmanuel:

Matthew writes, "Now the birth of Jesus Christ was as follows: when His mother Mary had been betrothed to Joseph, before they came together she was found to be with child by the Holy Spirit. And Joseph her husband, being a righteous man and not wanting to disgrace her, planned to send her away secretly. But when he had considered this, behold, an angel of the Lord appeared to him in a dream, saying, 'Joseph, son of David, do not be afraid to take Mary as your wife; for the Child who has been conceived in her is of the Holy Spirit. She will bear a Son; and you shall call His name Jesus, for He will save His people from their sins.' Now all this took place to fulfill what was spoken by the Lord through the prophet: 'BEHOLD, THE VIRGIN SHALL BE WITH CHILD AND SHALL BEAR A SON, AND THEY SHALL CALL HIS NAME IMMANUEL,' which translated means, 'GOD WITH US.' And Joseph awoke from his sleep and did as the angel of the Lord commanded him, and took *Mary* as his wife, but kept her a virgin until she gave birth to a Son; and he called His name Jesus" (Matthew 1:18-25).

Let's sing "Let All Mortal Flesh Keep Silence," vv. 1, 3, 4. Acapella

### C. How would Jesus save

Those who believed in Him from their sins?

Being God and man,

He would willingly give Himself up

To die on the cross –

To undergo the penalty of sin

Which is death –

Not only physically,

But judicially.

The guilt of everyone

Who would ever trust in Him,

Would be charged to His account,

And He would die in their place.

David looked forward to Jesus' suffering and crucifixion when he wrote, "For dogs have surrounded me; a band of evildoers has encompassed me; they pierced my hands and my feet. I can count all my bones. They look, they stare at me; they divide my garments among them, and for my clothing they cast lots" (Ps. 22:16-18).

The Lord also said through Zechariah, "I will pour out on the house of David and on the inhabitants of Jerusalem, the Spirit of grace and of supplication, so that they will look on Me whom they have pierced; and they will mourn for Him, as one mourns for an only son, and they will weep bitterly over Him like the bitter weeping over a firstborn" (12:10).

We see from John's account

This is exactly what happened.

"They took Jesus, therefore, and He went out, bearing His own cross, to the place called the Place of a Skull, which is called in Hebrew, Golgotha. There they crucified Him, and with Him two other men, one on either side, and Jesus in between. Pilate also wrote an inscription and put it on the cross. It was written, 'JESUS THE NAZARENE, THE KING OF THE JEWS.' Therefore many of the Jews read this inscription, for the place where Jesus was crucified was near the city; and it was written in Hebrew, Latin *and* in Greek. So the chief priests of the Jews were saying to Pilate, 'Do not write, "The King of the Jews"; but that He said, "I am King of the Jews."' Pilate answered, 'What I have written I have written.' Then the soldiers, when they had crucified Jesus, took His outer garments and made four parts, a part to every soldier and *also* the tunic; now the tunic was seamless, woven in one piece. So they said to one another, 'Let us not tear it, but cast lots for it, *to decide* whose it shall be'; *this was* to fulfill the Scripture:, 'THEY DIVIDED MY OUTER GARMENTS AMONG THEM, AND FOR MY CLOTHING THEY CAST LOTS.' Therefore the soldiers did these things. But standing by the cross of Jesus were His mother, and His mother's sister, Mary the

wife of Clopas, and Mary Magdalene. When Jesus then saw His mother, and the disciple whom He loved standing nearby, He said to His mother, ‘Woman, behold, your son!’ Then He said to the disciple, ‘Behold, your mother!’ From that hour the disciple took her into his own *household*. After this, Jesus, knowing that all things had already been accomplished, to fulfill the Scripture, said, ‘I am thirsty.’ A jar full of sour wine was standing there; so they put a sponge full of the sour wine upon *a branch of* hyssop and brought it up to His mouth. Therefore when Jesus had received the sour wine, He said, ‘It is finished!’ And He bowed His head and gave up His spirit. Then the Jews, because it was the day of preparation, so that the bodies would not remain on the cross on the Sabbath (for that Sabbath was a high day), asked Pilate that their legs might be broken, and *that* they might be taken away. So the soldiers came, and broke the legs of the first man and of the other who was crucified with Him; but coming to Jesus, when they saw that He was already dead, they did not break His legs. But one of the soldiers pierced His side with a spear, and immediately blood and water came out. And he who has seen has testified, and his testimony is true; and he knows that he is telling the truth, so that you also may believe. For these things came to pass to fulfill the Scripture, ‘NOT A BONE OF HIM SHALL BE BROKEN.’ And again another Scripture says, ‘THEY SHALL LOOK ON HIM WHOM THEY PIERCED’” (John 19:17-37).

Isaiah writes, “ But the LORD was pleased to crush Him, putting *Him* to grief; if He would render Himself *as* a guilt offering, He will see *His* offspring, He will prolong *His* days, and the good pleasure of the LORD will prosper in His hand. As a result of the anguish of His soul, He will see *it and* be satisfied; by His knowledge the Righteous One, My Servant, will justify the many, as He will bear their iniquities” (53:10-11).

Jesus willingly offered Himself up on the cross,

So that everyone who believes in Him

Would be saved.

Let’s sing “What Child Is This” vv. 1, 2, 3

D. Is it any wonder

That when Jesus finally came into the world,

That the Lord sent His angels to announce His birth?

We read in Luke’s Gospel,

“Now in those days a decree went out from Caesar Augustus, that a census be taken of all the inhabited earth. This was the first census taken while Quirinius was governor of Syria. And

everyone was on his way to register for the census, each to his own city. Joseph also went up from Galilee, from the city of Nazareth, to Judea, to the city of David which is called Bethlehem, because he was of the house and family of David, in order to register along with Mary, who was engaged to him, and was with child. While they were there, the days were completed for her to give birth. And she gave birth to her firstborn son; and she wrapped Him in cloths, and laid Him in a manger, because there was no room for them in the inn. In the same region there were *some* shepherds staying out in the fields and keeping watch over their flock by night. And an angel of the Lord suddenly stood before them, and the glory of the Lord shone around them; and they were terribly frightened. But the angel said to them, ‘Do not be afraid; for behold, I bring you good news of great joy which will be for all the people; for today in the city of David there has been born for you a Savior, who is Christ the Lord. This *will be* a sign for you: you will find a baby wrapped in cloths and lying in a manger.’ And suddenly there appeared with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host praising God and saying, ‘Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace among men with whom He is pleased.’ When the angels had gone away from them into heaven, the shepherds *began* saying to one another, ‘Let us go straight to Bethlehem then, and see this thing that has happened which the Lord has made known to us.’ So they came in a hurry and found their way to Mary and Joseph, and the baby as He lay in the manger. When they had seen this, they made known the statement which had been told them about this Child. And all who heard it wondered at the things which were told them by the shepherds” (Luke 2:1-18).

The Father wanted at least some to know

On that eventful night,

That His promise had been fulfilled.

So He sent His angels

To tell these poor shepherds.

Let’s sing “Angels We Have Heard on High” vv. 1, 2, 3

E. What happened after Jesus died on the cross?

After three days, He rose again from the dead

And showed Himself to His disciples.

Paul writes, “For I delivered to you as of first importance what I also received, that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures, and that He was buried, and that He was raised on the third day according to the Scriptures, and that He appeared to Cephas, then to the twelve. After that He appeared to more than five hundred brethren at one time, most of whom remain until now, but some have fallen asleep; then He appeared to James, then to all the

apostles; and last of all, as to one untimely born, He appeared to me also” (1 Cor. 15:3-8).

He could hardly be trusted

As One who can save you from death

If He had not conquered death Himself.

Again, Paul writes, “But now Christ has been raised from the dead, the first fruits of those who are asleep. For since by a man *came* death, by a man also *came* the resurrection of the dead” (1 Cor. 15:20-21).

After forty more days,

He ascended to heaven,

Where He sits on His throne

Ruling the world.

We read in Hebrews, “But He, having offered one sacrifice for sins for all time, SAT DOWN AT THE RIGHT HAND OF GOD, waiting from that time onward UNTIL HIS ENEMIES BE MADE A FOOTSTOOL FOR HIS FEET” (Heb. 10:12-13).

And where there are those

Who are willing to submit to His rule

He is willing to grant His blessings.

Let’s sing “Joy to the World! The Lord Is Come” vv. 1, 2, 3, 4

F. So what’s next?

Jesus will continue to reign until He comes again

To raise and gather everyone for the final judgment.

Luke tells us

That when Jesus ascended,

With His disciples looking on,

Two angels stood next to them

And said, “Men of Galilee, why do you stand looking into the sky? This Jesus, who has been taken up from you into heaven, will come in just the same way as you have watched Him go into heaven” (Acts 1:11).

Jesus says in Matthew 16:27, “For the Son of Man is going to come in the glory of His Father with His angels, and **WILL THEN REPAY EVERY MAN ACCORDING TO HIS DEEDS.**”

What will He give you when He comes?

What have you earned by the things you’ve done?

Paul writes, “For all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God” (Rom. 3:23),

And, “The wages of sin is death” (6:23).

We have all earned God’s judgment.

But the Father sent His Son that we might have life.

Jesus said, “For God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him shall not perish, but have eternal life. For God did not send the Son into the world to judge the world, but that the world might be saved through Him” (John 3:16-17).

He is the only One who can give you this life.

Jesus said, “I am the way, and the truth, and the life; no one comes to the Father but through Me” (John 14:6).

Peter tells us, “And there is salvation in no one else; for there is no other name under heaven that has been given among men by which we must be saved” (Acts 4:12).

Have you received His life?

How can you receive it?

What do you need to do?

The same thing Paul and Silas

Told their jailer when he asked this same question:

“They said, “Believe in the Lord Jesus, and you will be saved” (Acts 16:31).

Turn from your sins/disobedience,

Believe in/trust Jesus alone to save you,

Commit yourself to following Him the rest of your life,

And you will be saved.

Paul writes, “For you know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that though He was rich, yet for your sake He became poor, so that you through His poverty might become rich” (2 Cor. 8:9).

The Son of God,

Became man,

And went to the cross

To face God’s judgment

So that we might not perish in hell forever,

But that we might be in heaven.

Have you received Him?

Are you on your way to heaven?

Then give Him all the praise.

Let’s close with “Hark! the Herald Angels Sing” vv. 1, 2, 3 Acapella

Close with prayer