

**Largs Church of the Nazarene  
13 December 2020**

**Hark, the herald angels sing**

Charles Wesley

Hark! the herald angels sing,  
"Glory to the newborn King:  
Peace on earth, and mercy mild,  
God and sinners reconciled!"  
Joyful, all ye nations, rise,  
Join the triumph of the skies;  
Nature rise and worship Him  
Who is born in Bethlehem!

Refrain: Hark! the herald angels sing,  
"Glory to the newborn King"

Christ, by highest heaven adored,  
Christ, the everlasting Lord,  
Late in time behold him come,  
Offspring of the Virgin's womb:  
Veiled in flesh the Godhead see;  
Hail the incarnate Deity,  
Pleased as man with men to appear,  
Jesus, our Emmanuel here. [Refrain]

Hail the heaven-born Prince of Peace!  
Hail the Sun of Righteousness!  
Light and life around he brings,  
Ris'n with healing in his wings.  
Mild he lays his glory by,  
Born that men no more may die,  
Born to raise the sons of earth,  
Born to give them second birth. [Refrain]

**Third Sunday of Advent Candle Lighting**

**Reader 1:** On this third Sunday of Advent, we remember the shepherds who were working in the fields, and the angel who appeared to them saying, "Don't be afraid, for I am bringing you good news of great joy for all people."

**Reader 2:** The past few months have been a time of anxiety and fear for many people, but today we remember the words of the angel, "Do not be afraid—I bring you good news of great joy!"

**Reader 1:** The shepherds went to Bethlehem and found the Messiah, the King of Kings, Emmanuel, in the most unlikely of places—lying in a manger. And with great joy, they told others about the good news that they had heard, and about the Lamb of God that they had found.

**Reader 2:** We light these candles today as a sign of our joy--the joy we share with the shepherds as we also seek the Lamb called Jesus. We, too, find him in the least expected places, and today we celebrate the joy that the good news of Jesus' coming brings to all those who hear about it.

**Both readers:** O come, O come, Emmanuel.

**The people:** O Come, O Come, Emmanuel.

**The first noel, the angel did say**

Anonymous

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.

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.

And by the light of that same star  
Three wise men came from country afar;  
To seek for a king was their intent,  
And to follow the star wherever it went.

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: Noel, Noel, Noel, Noel,  
Born is the King of Israel.

Then let us all with one accord  
Sing praises to our Heavenly Lord  
That hath made heaven and earth of naught  
And with His blood mankind hath bought. [Refrain]



**Luke 2 (NRSV)**

8 In that region there were shepherds living in the fields, keeping watch over their flock by night. 9 Then an angel of the Lord stood before them, and the glory of the Lord shone around them, and they were terrified. 10 But the angel said to them, ‘Do not be

afraid; for see—I am bringing you good news of great joy for all the people: 11 to you is born this day in the city of David a Saviour, who is the Messiah, the Lord. 12 This will be a sign for you: you will find a child wrapped in bands of cloth and lying in a manger.’ 13 And suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host, praising God and saying,

14 ‘Glory to God in the highest heaven,  
and on earth peace among those whom he favours!’

15 When the angels had left them and gone into heaven, the shepherds said to one another, ‘Let us go now to Bethlehem and see this thing that has taken place, which the Lord has made known to us.’ 16 So they went with haste (*speudó*) and found Mary and Joseph, and the child lying in the manger. 17 When they saw this, they made known what had been told them about this child; 18 and all who heard it were amazed at what the shepherds told them. 19 But Mary treasured all these words and pondered them in her heart. 20 The shepherds returned, glorifying and praising God for all they had heard and seen, as it had been told them.

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**The Real Thing (Luke 2)**

- ***Gaudete in Domino semper*: “Rejoice in the Lord always.”**
- **The shepherds**
  - Lived in the fields (working) – not the land owners
  - Were terrified of the angel
  - Ran to find Jesus
  - *speudó* (spyoo'-do): to hasten to hurry
- **In Luke’s gospel**
  - Salvation involves a reversal of the social status quo
  - An upheaval and upending of the way things are
  - God redeems the marginalised and oppressed
- **All human beings crave joy**
  - Material joy is fleeting
- **The joy of the Lord is everlasting**
  - Down in my heart to stay
- **“Joy” vs “happiness”**: **Henri Nouwen**
  - Joy is “the experience of knowing that you are unconditionally loved and that nothing—sickness, failure, emotional distress, oppression, war, or even death—can take that love away.”

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**Joy is not cancelled\***

Kim Collingsworth

When life is put on hold  
All our plans have cancelled  
Things have changed  
Nothing feels the same  
Disappointments, fear and doubt  
Go hand in hand, and waves of worry threaten me  
Everywhere uncertainty  
But in the midst of chaos  
In the midst of fear  
There is something to remember  
Yes, there is something we all need to hear

