

Historic Scripture Lessons for the Eve of the Nativity

LESSON

Luke 1:68-79 Blessed be the Lord God of Israel, For He has visited and redeemed His people, 69 And has raised up a horn of salvation for us In the house of His servant David, 70 As He spoke by the mouth of His holy prophets, Who have been since the world began, 71 That we should be saved from our enemies And from the hand of all who hate us, 72 To perform the mercy promised to our fathers And to remember His holy covenant, 73 The oath which He swore to our father Abraham: 74 To grant us that we, Being delivered from the hand of our enemies, Might serve Him without fear, 75 In holiness and righteousness before Him all the days of our life. 76 "And you, child, will be called the prophet of the Highest; For you will go before the face of the Lord to prepare His ways, 77 To give knowledge of salvation to His people By the remission of their sins, 78 Through the tender mercy of our God, With which the Dayspring from on high has visited us; 79 To give light to those who sit in darkness and the shadow of death, To guide our feet into the way of peace.

PROPHECY

Isaiah 11:1-3a,10 There shall come forth a Rod from the stem of Jesse, And a Branch shall grow out of his roots. 2 The Spirit of the LORD shall rest upon Him, The Spirit of wisdom and understanding, The Spirit of counsel and might, The Spirit of knowledge and of the fear of the LORD. 3 His delight is in the fear of the LORD, ... 10 And in that day there shall be a Root of Jesse, Who shall stand as a banner to the people; For the Gentiles shall seek Him, And His resting place shall be glorious.

CHRISTMAS GOSPEL

Luke 2:1-20 KJV And it came to pass in those days, that there went out a decree from Caesar Augustus, that all the world should be taxed. 2 (And this taxing was first made when Cyrenius was governor of Syria.) 3 And all went to be taxed, every one into his own city. 4 And Joseph also went up from Galilee, out of the city of Nazareth, into Judaea, unto the city of David, which is called Bethlehem; (because he was of the house and lineage of David) 5 To be taxed with Mary his espoused wife, being great with child. 6 And so it was, that, while they were there, the days were accomplished that she should be delivered. 7 And she brought forth her firstborn son, and wrapped him in swaddling clothes, and laid him in a manger; because there was no room for them in the inn. 8 And there were in the same country shepherds abiding in the field, keeping watch over their flock by night. 9 And, lo, the angel of the Lord came upon them, and the glory of the Lord shone round about them: and they were sore afraid. 10 And the angel said unto them, Fear not: for, behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy, which shall be to all people. 11 For unto you is born this day in the city of David a Saviour, which is Christ the Lord. 12 And this shall be a sign unto you; Ye shall find the babe wrapped in swaddling clothes, 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, and on earth peace, good will toward men. 15 And it came to pass, as the angels were gone away from them into heaven, the shepherds said one to another, Let us now go even unto Bethlehem, and see this thing which is come to pass, which the Lord hath made known unto us. 16 And they came with haste, and found Mary, and Joseph, and the babe lying in a manger. 17 And when they had seen it, they made known abroad the saying which was told them concerning this child. 18 And all they that heard it wondered at those things which were told them by the shepherds. 19 But Mary kept all these things, and pondered them in her heart. 20 And the shepherds returned, glorifying and praising God for all the things that they had heard and seen, as it was told unto them.

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Our Savior Lutheran Church ✠ Lakeland, FL USA
The Nativity of Our Lord ☪ ☪ ☆ ☪ ☪ *Christmas Eve*
December 24th, 2013 ☪ 7:00 pm



A Shepherd's Christmas

"As Each Happy Christmas" (ELH #117) J.W. Hey

**1. As each happy Christmas - Dawns on earth again,
Comes the holy Christ Child - To the hearts of men.**

**2. Enters with His blessing - Into ev'ry home,
Guides and guards our footsteps - As we go and come.**

**3. All unknown, beside me - He will ever stand,
And will safely lead me - With His own right hand.**



I. The Service of Preparation

PRAYER FOR PREPARING FOR WORSHIP



O Lord, our Maker, Redeemer and Comforter, we are assembled in Your presence to hear Your Holy Word and to offer You our praise and worship. We pray, open our hearts by means of Your Holy Spirit so that through the preaching of Your Word we may be taught to repent of our sins, to believe on Jesus in life and in death, and to grow day by day in grace and holiness. Hear us for Jesus' sake. **Amen.**

OPENING HYMN: "From Heaven Above to Earth I Come" (ELH #123)

♪ Congregation sings verses (1,2 & 6,7)

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|---|---|
| 1. "From heav'n above to earth I come
To bear good news to every home;
Glad tidings of great joy I bring,
Whereof I now will say and sing: | 2. "To you this night is born a child
Of Mary, chosen virgin mild;
This little child, of lowly birth,
Shall be the joy of all the earth." |
| 6. Now let us all with gladsome cheer
Go with the shepherds and draw near
To see the precious gift of God,
Who hath His own dear Son bestowed. | 7. Give heed my heart lift up thine eyes!
What is it in yon manger lies?
Who is this child, so young and fair?
The blessed Christ-child lieth there. |



THE INVOCATION (Congregation please rise if you are able.)

P: In the name of the Father, and of the Son✠, and of the Holy Spirit. **C: Amen.**

THE CONFESSION OF SINS

P: Beloved in the Lord! Let us draw near with a true heart and confess our sins unto God our Father, asking Him in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ to grant us forgiveness. – Our help is in the name of the Lord.

C: Who made heaven and earth.

P: I said, I will confess my transgressions unto the Lord.

C: And You forgave the iniquity of my sin.

P: Almighty God, our Maker and Redeemer, we poor sinners confess to You that we are by nature sinful and unclean, and that we have sinned against You by thought, word, and deed. Therefore we flee for refuge to Your infinite mercy, seeking and imploring Your grace for the sake of our Lord Jesus Christ.

C: O most merciful God, You have given Your only begotten Son to die for us; have mercy upon us and for His sake grant us remission of all our sins; and by Your Holy Spirit increase in us true knowledge of You and of Your will and true obedience to Your Word, to the end, that by Your grace we may come to everlasting life; through Jesus Christ, our Lord. Amen.

P: Almighty God our heavenly Father, has had mercy upon us and has given His only-begotten Son to die for us and for His sake forgives us all our sins. To all who believe on His name He gives the power to become the children of God and has promised them His Holy Spirit. ✠ He who believes and is baptized will be saved. Grant this, Lord, unto us all. **C: Amen.**

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CLOSING CHRISTMAS RESPONSIVE PRAYER & LORD'S PRAYER

P: Among our precious children dear,...(Congregation responds each of 10 times)

C: Lord Jesus, Come and make Your home. ... P: C: P: C: P: C:

ALL: Our Father, Who art in Heaven, Hallowed be Thy Name... Amen.

Blessing. P: "The Lord bless you and keep you, the Lord..." ...**C: Amen.**

Closing Hymn: "Joy To the World" (ELH #138) G.F.Handel

♪ Congregation and Children sing (verses 1&4):

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| 1. Joy to the world, the Lord is come!
Let earth receive her King;
Let every heart prepare Him room
And heav'n and nature sing,
And heav'n and nature sing,
And heav'n and nature sing. | 4. He rules the world with truth and grace
And makes the nations prove
The glories of His righteousness
And wonders of His love,
And wonders of His love,
And wonders, wonders of His love. |
|--|--|

OUR (SAVIOR) WELCOME

Our Savior congregation is so very pleased to have the opportunity to share with you the blessings of its Christ-centered ministry. We welcome you in the name of our Savior, Jesus Christ. To the friends who know us, we renew our welcome and to our first time guests we extend it most sincerely.

It is our goal to focus attention on the record of God's gracious accomplishments for our eternal destiny with Him. May the certainty of His mercy help to brighten the week ahead and this whole Holiday Season and to supply you with resolve for living as God's child and heir of eternal life.



FAMILIES & YOUTH OF OUR CONGREGATION (* = Participants)

(Leroy & Robin) Dux	Prescott*
(Daniel & Ramona) Steinberg	Shelby* Reece*, Faith* & Mason*(Aldridge)
	Moira,
(Jon, Sr. & Andrea) Sawyer	Jonathan Jr, Mariah



(OTHER) PARTICIPANTS IN THE SERVICE AND THE DAY

Pastor of Our Savior	Pastor Andrew Burmeister
Accompanist (Organ)	Mr. Phillip Griffith
Adult Choir Members	Nancy Durn, Elaine Jones
	Joan Patrick, June Weyenberg
	Orpha & John Weber
Flowers, Pointsettias	Our Savior Members
Food, Drinks, Refreshments	Our Savior Ladies & Families

solì Deo Gloria

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Pastor: Jesus visited many people, many “sheep of His flock” during His stay on earth. He told a parable about searching for one lost sheep. He said, “I am the **Good Shepherd**. The Good Shepherd lays down His life for His sheep.” Then He became our Lamb of Sacrifice, dying for our sins. When He Rose again, He told His friend Peter, “Feed My sheep.” We know Our Savior **never** forgot us sheep and shepherds.

We will *never* forget Him. (Our children now say & act out the 23rd Psalm)

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Pastor helps direct actions for younger children to motion.

Prescott, Reece & Mason lead the words of Psalm 23 **Ps. 23**
Faith & Shelby motion the actions for the verses of Psalm 23

The LORD is my shepherd; I shall not want. (Point to sky, then hands over heart.)
He makes me lie down in green pastures. (Fold arms in front like holding a baby.)
He leads me beside still waters. (Wave hands in a “water” motion.)
He restores my soul. (Hold both arms straight up.)
He leads me in paths of righteousness (Bring arms in front, palms up.)
For His Name’s sake. (Point to heaven.)

Even though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, (Cover face with hands)
I will fear no evil, (Open hands on either side of face.)
For You are with me; (Point to heaven.)
Your rod and Your staff, (At word **rod**, hold out 1 hand. At **staff**, hold out other hand)
They comfort me. (Hug yourself.)

You prepare a table before me (Spread hands out, palms up.)
In the presence of my enemies; (Arms straight out, hands in a “stop” position)
You anoint my head with oil; (Make a Cross on your forehead.)
My cup overflows. (Quickly spread out hands and fingers in a bursting motion.)
Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me (At the word **goodness**, put out one hand. At the word **mercy**, put out the other hand. Bring hands together.)
All the days of my life, (Spread out arms, palms up.)
And I shall dwell in the house of the LORD forever. (Arms over head, Make a tent. At the word **forever**, put both arms straight up.)

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Shepherd Hymn: “I Am Jesus’ Little Lamb” (ELH #177)

♪ **Children & Youth sing** one verse.

1. I am Jesus’ little lamb, - Ever glad at heart I am;
 For my Shepherd gently guides me,
 Knows my needs and well provides me,
 Loves me ev’ry day the same, Even calls me by my name.

SOLO: 🎵 **“Breath of Heaven”** (Elaine Jones)

Pastor: Our message today is based on the book **The Shepherd’s Christmas Story. A Shepherd** (or, in Our case, *many young Shepherds*.) tell us all about the **First Christmas**.

*He came not in glory, **not** to kings and princes. He came in humility to common people. He came to us . . . **to us!***

This is the story of our Savior’s birth in Bethlehem. . .

Our children know the story of Christmas, and are all excited to tell you the story with songs and words!

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CALL & RESPONSE SONG: “Little Children, Can You Tell?”

♪ **Congregation sing** verse 1. ♪ **Children & Youth sing** verse 2.

1. Little children, can you tell,
 Do you know the story well?
 Ev’ry girl and ev’ry boy,
 Why the angels sing for joy
 On that Christmas morning?

2. **Yes, we know the story well;**
Listen now, and hear us tell,
Every girl and every boy,
Why the angels sing for joy
On that Christmas morning.

Shepherds in field

Prescott: If I were more than a simple shepherd, I would have recorded every memory I had that night. But I couldn’t either read or write. And perhaps that made it even more amazing that of all the people on earth - Kings, nobles, religious leaders, rabbis - the message **came to us** on that first Christmas.



Younger Children (Shelby): “He came to us!”

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First Carol: “Oh, Come, Oh, Come, Emmanuel” (ELH #110) FRENCH

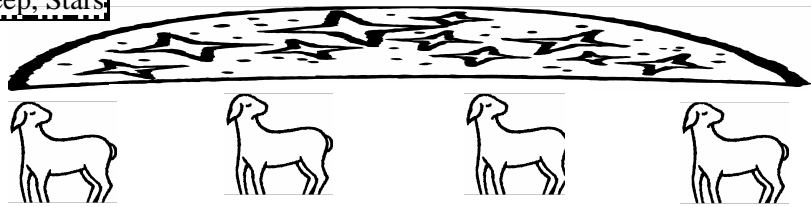
1. Oh, come, oh, come, Emmanuel,
 And ransom captive Israel,
 That mourns in lowly exile here
 Until the Son of God appear.

5. Oh, come, Thou Key of David, come,
 And open wide our heav’nly home,
 Make safe the way that leads on high
 And close the path to misery.

♪ **Rejoice! Rejoice! Emmanuel**
Shall come to you, O Israel!

Rejoice! Rejoice! Emmanuel
Shall come to you, O Israel!

Sheep, Stars



Faith: He could have come to Kings - with the ta-ta-DA, ta-ta-DA of trumpets blaring ... Not to poor shepherds on a windswept hill outside Bethlehem. But I remember the whoo-oo whoosh of the wind on that night. The stars shone down on our flocks, bright as a promise.

Mason: He could have come to nobles, who kept their distance from us shepherds, as they traveled into Bethlehem to be counted for Cyrenius's census.

"Do not worry that they look down on us," said my father, not for the first time. "On these hills, King David sang to his sheep."

"Father Abraham himself was a shepherd," my uncle added.

I listed other shepherds: "And Abel, Rebekah, Jacob, Joseph, Moses, Saul."

"It is an honorable life," my father concluded. "Didn't even the prophet Ezekiel call God, 'Our Shepherd'?"



Prescott: A Reading from Luke 2:1-5

And it came to pass in those days, that there went out a decree from Caesar Augustus, that all the world should be taxed. And this taxing was first made when Cyrenius was governor of Syria. And all went to be taxed, every one into his own city. And Joseph also went up from Galilee, out of the city of Nazareth, into Judea, unto the city of David, which is called Bethlehem; because he was of the house and lineage of David: To be taxed with Mary his espoused wife, being great with child.

Congregation Nativity Hymn: "Silent Night" (ELH #140) C:

- 1. Silent night, holy night! All is calm, all is bright Round yon virgin mother and child. Holy Infant, so tender and mild, Sleep in heavenly peace, Sleep in heavenly peace.
2. Silent night, holy night! Shepherds quake at the sight; Glories stream from heaven afar, Heav'nly hosts sing, Alleluia! Christ, the Savior, is born! Christ, the Savior, is born!
3. Silent night! Holy night! - Son of God, love's pure light Radiant beams from Thy holy face, - With the dawn of redeeming grace, Jesus, Lord, at Thy birth. - Jesus, Lord, at Thy birth.

Reece: A Reading From Luke 2:17&20

And when they had seen it, they made known abroad the saying which was told them concerning this child ... And the shepherds returned, glorifying and praising God for all the things that they had heard and seen, as it was told unto them.

Reece: The Good News could have been carried from the stable to kings and queens, nobles and warriors.

But I remember our joyful shouts as we shared all we had heard and seen

... to the late night travelers, ... to the early morning breadmakers, ... to the Roman guards at the gate.

Then we returned to the hills outside Bethlehem.

And we glorified God, the Great Shepherd, who had sent such Good News - To us.

Younger Children (Shelby): — to us, — to Us — to US!

Mission Carol: "Go Tell It on the Mountain" Appalachian

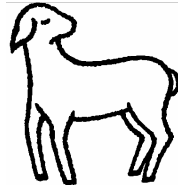
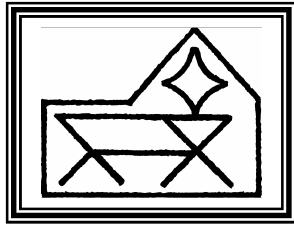
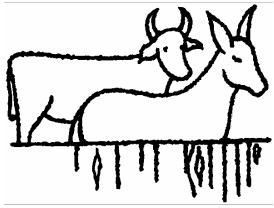
Congregation sings verses, with Children sing Refrain:

Children: Go tell it on the mountain, - Over the hills and ev'rywhere. Go tell it on the mountain - That Jesus Christ is born!

- 1. While shepherds kept their watching O'er silent flocks by night, Behold, throughout the heavens There shone a holy light. ...Refrain:
3. Down in a lonely manger The humble Christ was born; And God sent us salvation That blessed Christmas morn.

ALL: Go tell it on the mountain, - Over the hills and ev'rywhere. Go tell it on the mountain - That Jesus Christ is born!

Animals at the Manger



Prescott: The Savior could have been born in the Temple of Jerusalem, where we take our best, our perfect lambs for sacrifice. The aroma of incense would have blessed the air.

But I remember the smell of hay mixed with donkey sweat and cows. And there, in the manger, was a child, small and wrapped in strips of cloth - The Lamb of God Came **to us!**

Younger Children (Shelby): ... **“Came to US!”**

Younger Children (Shelby): *Reading From Luke 2:6-7*

And so it was, that, while they were there, the days were accomplished that she should be delivered. And she brought forth her firstborn son, and wrapped Him in swaddling clothes, and laid Him in a manger; because there was no room for them in the inn.



Cradle Hymn: **“Away in a Manger”** (ELH #119) *Anonymous*

♪ **Children & Youth** sing verse 1:

1. **Away in a manger, no crib for a bed,
The little Lord Jesus laid down His sweet head.
The stars in the sky looked down where He lay,
The little Lord Jesus asleep on the hay.**

♪ **Congregation** (join **Children**) on verses 2 & 3:

2. *The cattle are lowing, the baby awakes,
But little Lord Jesus, no crying He makes.
I love Thee, Lord Jesus! Look down from the sky,
And stay by my cradle 'til morning is nigh.*

3. *Be near me, Lord Jesus; I ask Thee to stay
Close by me forever and love me, I pray.
Bless all the dear children in Thy tender care,
And take us to heaven to live with Thee there.*

Reece: He could have come at the call of temple priests. But I remember the call of shepherds as we settled our sheep into the sheepfold. Our sheep know our voices. They follow us. We do not drive them, but lead them to quiet streams and green pastures, as **David** sang in the psalms.

He could have come in clouds of holy temple fires.

But I remember our small, bramble fires on the hillside as we warmed ourselves. I pulled my camel-hair cloak around me, lifting the veil against the night wind. My eyes wanted to close. But if I didn't keep watch, wild beasts waited to attack my sheep. I felt my slingshot in my pouch, my rod, and my staff. We guarded our sheep with our lives.

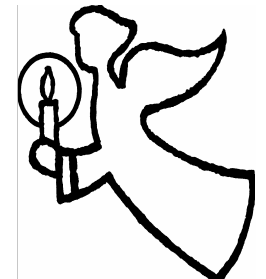
Reece: *A Reading From Luke 2:8-11*

And there were in the same country shepherds abiding in the field, keeping watch over their flocks by night. And, lo, the angel of the Lord came upon them, and the glory of the Lord shone round about them: and they were sore afraid. And the angel said unto them, “Fear not: for, behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy, which shall be to all people. For unto you is born this day in the city of David a Savior, which is Christ the Lord.”



Congregational Hymn **“While Shepherds Watched Their Flocks”**
(ELH #147) *Congregation* sing verses 1, 3 & 6

1. *While shepherds watched their flocks by night,
All seated on the ground,
The angel of the Lord came down,
And glory shone around.*
3. *To you in David's town this day,
Is born of David's line
A Savior who is Christ the Lord;
And this shall be the sign.*



6. **“All glory be to God on high, - And to the earth be peace;
Good will henceforth from Heav'n to men - Begin and never cease.”**

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Mason: The visit could have come to Herod's grand palace outside the city, surrounded by gold and marble.

But I remember the rocks, sparse grass, and barren olive trees. How it all changed in an instant! *An angel* appeared among us, with the glow of a thousand dawning lights. I dropped to the ground in fear. Around me, sounded the *thud, thud, thud* of shepherds' knees bowing before the glory of the Lord.

The angel could have spoken to religious leaders trained to understand revelations.

But he spoke to us: "Do not be afraid. I bring you good news of great joy that will be for all the people."

The word ALL echoed through the hills. It meant even the lowliest, even the shepherds, even US.

And there was more: "Today, in the town of David, a Saviour has been born to you; He is Christ the Lord."

(Shelby): "Christ the Lord.

Born to us . . .

To Us!"

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Prescott: Wisser men might have known how to recognize this Savior. But the angel understood our ignorance. "This will be a sign to you: You will find a baby wrapped in strips of cloth and lying in a manger."



The angel music could have come to temple singers, trained to join in.

Mason: A Reading from **Luke 2:12-14**
And this shall be a sign unto you; Ye shall find the babe wrapped in swaddling clothes, lying in a manger. And suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host praising God, and saying, "Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good will toward men."

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Faith: Yes the heavens ripped open before our eyes, and an army of angels descended with the music of the spheres. The hills were ablaze with angel light and song:
"Glory to God in the highest heaven,
And on earth peace, good will toward ALL."

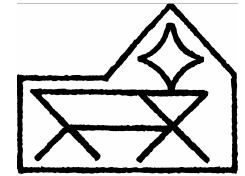
The song echoed in our hearts: . . . to ALL.

Younger Children (Shelby): "...to All. ...to Us!"

CHOIR Song: "On Christmas Night" (3 verses)

- 1. On Christmas night all Christians sing For all the news the angels bring.
On Christmas night all Christians sing For all the news the angels bring.
News of great joy, news of great mirth, News of our holy Savior's birth.
- Verses 2. & 3. ✧ p.5 ✧

Mason: And then the angels were gone – slipped behind the veil of heaven, leaving stars as shadows of their glory.



And there was no one but us. Silence was broken by the voices of my elders. "Let's go to Bethlehem and see this thing that has happened, which the Lord has told us about." Told us!

Younger Children (Shelby): . . . "Told Us!"

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Children's Song: "In a Little Stable" Children, Youth verses 1&2

- 1. In a little stable
Far across the sea
Was a little Baby
Just like you and me.
- 2. Not a bed or cradle,
Not a pillow deep.
But a lowly manger
Was His place to sleep.

Congregation join Children & Youth on verses 3 & 4

- 3. Shepherds stood around Him,
Angels watched with care,
For the Babe was Jesus,
Lying, smiling there.
- 4. Oh, I love this Jesus,
Who was little then,
For I know He loves me,
Little though I am.

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Faith: The announcement by angels could have been followed by bells ring-ringing. But I remember the slip-slap of sandals as we raced, stumbling and laughing, to Bethlehem.



Past the Roman guards at the gate -
Past inns and travelers - Flip-flap, Slip-slap, ... The angels ...Told us.

Younger Children (Shelby): . . . "Told Us!"

Faith: A Reading From **Luke 2:15-16**
And it came to pass, as the angels were gone away from them into heaven, the shepherds said one to another, Let us now go even unto Bethlehem, and see this thing which is come to pass, which the Lord hath made known unto us. And they came with haste, and found Mary, and Joseph, and the babe lying in a manger.