

Hark! The Herald Angels Sing

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Written by Rhonda Schroeder

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Hark! The Herald Angels Sing

Note to Director: See Leader Notes for additional helps for staging and preparing children for this service.

The Processional Hymn: O Come, All Ye Faithful

LSB 379:1–3

Congregation and Children

1. O come, all ye faithful,
Joyful and triumphant!
O come ye, O come ye to Bethlehem;
Come and behold Him
Born the king of angels:

Refrain:

- O come, let us adore Him,
O come, let us adore Him,
O come, let us adore Him,
Christ the Lord!
2. Highest, most holy,
Light of Light eternal,
Born of a virgin, a mortal He comes;
Son of the Father
Now in flesh appearing! *Refrain*
3. Sing, choirs of angels,
Sing in exultation,
Sing, all ye citizens of heaven above!
Glory to God
In the highest: *Refrain*
4. Yea, Lord, we greet Thee,
Born this happy morning;
Jesus, to Thee be glory giv'n!
Word of the Father
Now in flesh appearing! *Refrain*

The Invocation

Pastor: In the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit.

All: Amen.

Responsive Reading

Leader: He came as a baby in a manger.

People: Come, Lord Jesus.

Leader: He came to be our Savior.

People: Come, Lord Jesus.

Leader: With joy and gladness,

People: Come, Lord Jesus.

Leader: He comes to us each day in His Word of promise.

People: Come, Lord Jesus.

Leader: Let us open our hearts to Him,

People: and walk in His ways.

Leader: He will come again to take us to Himself in heaven.

People: Come, Lord Jesus.

Hymn: Angels We Have Heard on High

LSB 368

Congregation and Children

1. Angels we have heard on high,
Sweetly singing o'er the plains,
And the mountains in reply,
Echoing their joyous strains.

Refrain:

Gloria in excelsis Deo.

Gloria in excelsis Deo.

2. Shepherds, why this jubilee?
Why your joyous strains prolong?
What the gladsome tidings be
Which inspire your heav'nly song? *Refrain*
3. Come to Bethlehem and see
Him whose birth the angels sing;
Come, adore on bended knee
Christ the Lord, the newborn King. *Refrain*

The Message Presented by the Children

SPEAKER 1: “Hark! The Herald Angels Sing” was written by Charles Wesley in 1739. This beloved hymn is a condensed lesson of Christian doctrine written in poetry form. Let us look at the first stanza.

(Children in grades K–2 will be shepherds. Grades 3–5 will be the angels. Shepherds will be at the front with their staffs and sheep. Angels will enter at appropriate times.)

SPEAKER 2: Hark! The herald angels sing,
 “Glory to the newborn King;
 Peace on earth and mercy mild, . . .”

SPEAKER 3: The opening three phrases of “Hark! The Herald Angels Sing” are supported by the account of the angel’s announcement to the shepherds of Jesus’ birth in Luke 2:8–15.
(Pause)

“And in the same region there were shepherds out in the field, keeping watch over their flock by night. And an angel of the Lord appeared to them *(enter one angel)*, and the glory of the Lord shone around them, and they were filled with great fear. And the angel said to them,”

“ ‘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. And this will be a sign for you: you will find a baby wrapped in swaddling cloths and lying in a manger.’ ”

SPEAKER 4: “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 among those with whom He is pleased!’ ”

SPEAKER 5: “When the angels went away from them into heaven, the shepherds said to one another,” *(Exit angels)*

“ ‘Let us go over to Bethlehem and see this thing that has happened, which the Lord has made known to us.’ ” *(Exit shepherds with their sheep)*

SPEAKER 6: Jesus Christ’s birth in Bethlehem is foretold to the Hebrew nation in Micah 5:2.
 “But you, O Bethlehem Ephrathah, who are too little to be among the clans of Judah, from you shall come forth for Me one who is to be ruler in Israel, whose coming forth is from of old, from ancient days.”

SPEAKER 7: As we continue through the first stanza, Wesley incorporates Law and Gospel into the song: “God and sinners reconciled!”

SPEAKER 8: In Romans 5:6–11, Paul tells of our reconciliation when he says, “For while we were still weak, at the right time Christ died for the ungodly. For one will scarcely die for a righteous person—though perhaps for a good person one would dare even to die—but God shows His love for us in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us.”

SPEAKER 9: “Since, therefore, we have now been justified by His blood, much more shall we be saved by Him from the wrath of God. For if while we were enemies we were reconciled to God by the death of His Son, much more, now that we are reconciled, shall we be saved by His life. More than that, we also rejoice in God through our Lord Jesus Christ, through whom we have now received reconciliation.”

***ALL CHILDREN:** Angels sang, and we will sing, “Glory to the newborn King!”

Hymn: Hark! The Herald Angels Sing

LSB 380:1

Congregation and Children

1. 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;
 With th’ angelic host proclaim,
 “Christ is born in Bethlehem!”

Refrain:

Hark! The herald angels sing,
 “Glory to the newborn King!”

SPEAKER 10: The second stanza of our featured hymn points us to the center of Christmas:
 “Christ, by highest heav’n adored, Christ, the everlasting Lord.”

SPEAKER 11: At Jesus’ Baptism in Matthew 3:17, and again at His transfiguration in Matthew 17:5, we hear a voice from heaven declare:

SPEAKER 12: *(over the microphone and out of sight)* “This is My beloved Son, with whom I am well pleased.”

SPEAKER 13: God speaks about the Son in Hebrews chapter 1, verses 8 and 12.

SPEAKER 14: “Your throne, O God, is forever and ever”; “But You are the same, and Your years will have no end.”

SPEAKER 15: The hymn continues, “Late in time behold Him come, Offspring of a virgin’s womb.”

SPEAKER 16: God foretells the coming Christ when the prophet Nathan speaks to King David in 2 Samuel 7:11–13. “I will appoint a place for my people Israel and will plant them. . . . And I will give you rest from all your enemies.”

SPEAKER 17: “Moreover, the LORD declares to you that the LORD will make you a house. When your days are fulfilled and you lie down with your fathers, I will raise up your offspring after you, who shall come from your body, and I will establish His kingdom. He shall build a house for My name, and I will establish the throne of His kingdom forever.”

SPEAKER 18: From the time of Abraham until the birth of Christ, there are forty-two generations.

SPEAKER 19: Isaiah speaks of the Christ’s virgin birth in Isaiah 7:14: “Therefore the Lord Himself will give you a sign. Behold, the virgin shall conceive and bear a son, and shall call His name Immanuel.” In Luke 1:26–38; 2:1–7, we see the story unfold.

NARRATOR 1: In the sixth month the angel Gabriel was sent from God to a city of Galilee named Nazareth, to a virgin betrothed to a man whose name was Joseph, of the house of David. And the virgin’s name was Mary. And he came to her and said,

“Greetings, O favored one, the Lord is with you!”

NARRATOR 2: But she was greatly troubled at the saying, and tried to discern what sort of greeting this might be. And the angel said to her,

“Do not be afraid, Mary, for you have found favor with God. And behold, you will conceive in your womb and bear a son, and you shall call His name Jesus. He will be great and will be called the Son of the Most High. And the Lord God will give to Him the throne of His father David, and He will reign over the house of Jacob forever, and of His kingdom there will be no end.”

“How will this be, since I am a virgin?” Mary asked the angel.

NARRATOR 3: The angel answered, “The Holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the Most High will overshadow you; therefore the child to be born will be called holy—the Son of God. And behold, your relative Elizabeth in her old age has also conceived a son, and this is the sixth month with her who was called barren. For nothing will be impossible with God.”

Mary answered, “Behold, I am the servant of the Lord; let it be to me according to your word.”

And the angel departed from her.

SPEAKER 20: (*Joseph joins Mary as the speakers read Luke 2:1–7*) “In those days a decree went out from Caesar Augustus that all the world should be registered. This was the first registration when Quirinius was governor of Syria. And all went to be registered, each to his own town.”

SPEAKER 21: “And Joseph also went up from Galilee, from the town of Nazareth, to Judea, to the city of David, which is called Bethlehem, because he was of the house and lineage of David, to be registered with Mary, his betrothed, who was with child.”

SPEAKER 22: “And while they were there, the time came for her to give birth. And she gave birth to her firstborn son and wrapped Him in swaddling cloths and laid Him in a manger, because there was no place for them in the inn.” (*Remain up front through the explanation of the rest of stanza 2.*)

Song: In a Little Stable

LOSP, p. 81

Early Childhood

| | |
|-----------------------------|---|
| In a little stable | <i>Hold hands in front, fingertips together, pointing up.</i> |
| Far across the sea | <i>Shade eyes with one hand.</i> |
| Was a little Baby | <i>Cradle arms in front as if holding a baby.</i> |
| Just like you and me. | <i>Point to audience; then point to self.</i> |
| | |
| Not a bed or cradle, | <i>Hold hands together under one side of head.</i> |
| Not a pillow deep, | <i>Switch hands to other side of head.</i> |
| But a lowly manger | <i>Hold hands together in front, palms up and cupped.</i> |
| Was His place to sleep. | <i>Hold hands together under one side of head.</i> |
| | |
| Shepherds stood around Him, | <i>Swing one arm out to side and around to front.</i> |
| Angels watched with care, | <i>Swing other arm out to side and around to front.</i> |
| For this Babe was Jesus, | <i>Point to heaven.</i> |
| Lying, smiling there. | <i>Cradle arms in front as if holding a baby.</i> |
| | |
| Oh, I love this Jesus, | <i>Cross arms over heart.</i> |
| Who was little then, | <i>Hold hands in front, palms down.</i> |
| For I know He loves me, | <i>Cross arms over heart.</i> |
| Little though I am. | <i>Hold hands in front, palms down.</i> |

SPEAKER 23: “Veiled in flesh the Godhead see, Hail the incarnate Deity! Pleased as Man with man to dwell, Jesus, our Immanuel!”

SPEAKER 24: The Gospel of John declares Jesus’ divinity and humanity. John 1:1–2, 14 states: “In the beginning was the Word [Jesus], and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was in the beginning with God.”

SPEAKER 25: “And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, and we have seen His glory, glory as of the only Son from the Father, full of grace and truth.”

SPEAKER 26: The name given to the holy Child shall be Immanuel, as stated in Matthew 1:23: “Behold, the virgin shall conceive and bear a son, and they shall call His name Immanuel’ (which means, God with us).”

***ALL CHILDREN:** Angels sang, and we will sing, “Glory to the newborn King!”

Hymn: Hark! The Herald Angels Sing**LSB 380:2***Congregation and Children*

2. Christ, by highest heav'n adored,
Christ, the everlasting Lord,
Late in time behold Him come,
Offspring of a virgin's womb.
Veiled in flesh the Godhead see,
Hail th' incarnate Deity!
Pleased as Man with man to dwell,
Jesus, our Immanuel!

Refrain:

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

Song: Oh, Come, Little Children**TLCS, p. 35***Congregation and Children*

1. Oh, come, little children, oh, come, one and all;
To Bethlehem haste to the manger so small.
God's Son for a gift has been sent you this night
To be your Redeemer, your Joy and Delight.
2. He's born in a stable for you and for me;
Draw near by the bright, gleaming starlight to see,
In swaddling clothes lying, so meek and so mild,
And purer than angels, the heavenly Child.
3. See, Mary and Joseph, with love-beaming eyes,
Are gazing upon the rude bed where He lies;
The shepherds are kneeling with hearts full of love,
While angels sing loud alleluias above.
4. Kneel down and adore Him with shepherds today,
Lift up little hands now and praise Him as they;
Rejoice that a Savior from sin you can boast,
And join in the song of the heavenly host.

SPEAKER 27: "Hail, the heav'n-born Prince of Peace! Hail, the Sun of Righteousness!"

SPEAKER 28: Isaiah writes in chapter 9, verse 6: "For to us a child is born, to us a son is given; . . . and His name shall be called Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace."

SPEAKER 29: Malachi 4:2 recounts the Lord’s words to the faithful: “But for you who fear My name, the sun of righteousness shall rise with healing in its wings. You shall go out leaping like calves from the stall.”

SPEAKER 30: “Light and life to all He brings, Ris’n with healing in His wings.”

Congregational Sentences:

WOMEN: In Him was life, and the life was the light of men. (*John 1:4*)

MEN: Again Jesus spoke to them, saying, “I am the light of the world. Whoever follows Me will not walk in darkness, but will have the light of life.” (*John 8:12*)

WOMEN: [Jesus said,] “As long as I am in the world, I am the light of the world.” (*John 9:5*)

MEN: So Jesus said to them, “The light is among you for a little while longer. Walk while you have the light, lest darkness overtake you. The one who walks in the darkness does not know where he is going. While you have the light, believe in the light, that you may become sons of light.” (*John 12:35–36*)

***ALL:** Jesus said to him, “I am the way, and the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through Me.” (*John 14:6*)

Song: Away in a Manger

LSB 364

(Lyrics for the Cradle Song version are slightly different.)

All Children

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.
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 till 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.

SPEAKER 31: “Mild He lays His glory by, Born that man no more may die.”

SPEAKER 32: “In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. . . . And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, and we have seen His glory, glory as of the only Son from the Father, full of grace and truth.” (*John 1:1, 14*) “For God so loved the world, that He gave His only Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have eternal life.” (*John 3:16*)

SPEAKER 33: “Born to raise the sons of earth, Born to give them second birth.” *****

SPEAKER 34: In John 3:3, Jesus explains about a second birth to Nicodemus when He says, “Truly, truly, I say to you, unless one is born again he cannot see the kingdom of God.” He also explains it in verse 5, “Truly, truly, I say to you, unless one is born of water and the Spirit, he cannot enter the kingdom of God.”

SPEAKER 35: In his letter to the congregation at Corinth, Paul writes: “For as by a man came death, by a man has come also the resurrection of the dead. For as in Adam all die, so also in Christ shall all be made alive.” (*1 Corinthians 15:21–22*)

SPEAKER 36: May this carol bring you joy, peace, and happiness when you praise our triune God through the words penned by Charles Wesley.

***ALL CHILDREN:** Angels sang, and we will sing, “Glory to the newborn King!”

Hymn: Hark! The Herald Angels Sing

LSB 380:3

Congregation and Children

3. Hail, the heav'n-born Prince of Peace!
 Hail, the Sun of Righteousness!
 Light and life to all He brings,
 Ris'n with healing in His wings.
 Mild He lays His glory by,
 Born that man no more may die,
 Born to raise the sons of earth,
 Born to give them second birth.

Refrain:

Hark! The herald angels sing,
 “Glory to the newborn King!”

Prayer (other prayers and intercessions could be added)

Pastor: We pray:

All: Father in heaven, thank You for sending us Your Son and our Savior, Jesus. Thank You for all You have done and continue to do for us in His name. For forgiveness of sins, and for joy, peace, hope, and all spiritual blessings, we give You thanks. Fill our hearts with love for You and for others. In Jesus' name, we pray. Amen.

Benediction

Closing Hymn: Joy to the World

LSB 387

1. Joy to the world, the Lord is come!
Let earth receive her King;
Let ev'ry heart prepare Him room
And heav'n and nature sing,
And heav'n and nature sing,
And heav'n, and heav'n and nature sing.

2. Joy to the earth, the Savior reigns!
Let men their songs employ,
While fields and floods, rocks, hills, and plains
Repeat the sounding joy,
Repeat the sounding joy,
Repeat, repeat the sounding joy.

3. No more let sins and sorrows grow
Nor thorns infest the ground;
He comes to make His blessings flow
Far as the curse is found,
Far as the curse is found,
Far as, far as the curse is found.

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.