Children's Christmas Program Joy Has Dawned

December 24, 2024



Stand

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

Congregation and children: Amen.

Opening Dialogue: (selected verses from Psalm 65) Leader: Praise awaits you, our God, in Zion:

Congregation: to you our vows will be fulfilled.



Our mission is to

Glorify God

as we

Gather

around the Gospel to help people

Grow

in the **Gospel** and

Go

with the Gospel

Welcome! We thank God that you have joined us at worship today.

Restrooms are located in the basement. Hearing loop headphones and Large Print Hymnals are available from an usher.

If your children need to leave worship, please take them to the basement. A TV broadcasts the service in the basement.

Today we gather together in the presence of God. He is present among us in a special way through his Word and Sacrament. We confess our sin and rejoice in the good news of forgiveness through the life and death of Christ. This is the focus of our worship.

- L: You who answer prayer,
- C: to you all people will come.
- L: When we were overwhelmed by sins,
- C: you forgave our transgressions.
- L: Blessed are those you choose and bring near to live in your courts!
- C: We are filled with the good things of your house, of your holy temple.
- L: The whole earth is filled with awe at your wonders;
- C: where morning dawns, where evening fades, you call forth songs of joy.

L: O Jesus Christ, your manger is our paradise at which we now recline. There, O Lord, we find the Word made flesh for us; there, O Lord, your grace brightly shines. Move us by your Spirit to depend on you alone; enable us to be of good cheer; keep us steadfast in the midst of sorrow; fix our hearts on you, our greatest treasure. For in you and through faith in you we possess a lasting crown and look forward to honor beyond measure in the eternal glories of heaven. We ask these things in your name, our Savior and Lord (based on "O Jesus Christ, Your Manger Is" [CW 342]).

C: Amen.

Be seated

Message

Part 1 The Dawn of Time

Rosemary Ruddat / Carlissa Heling: "In the beginning . . ." These familiar words from Genesis launch the account of God creating the universe. The eternal God, who knows no beginning and no end, created time.

Grades 5-6: In the beginning, God created the heavens and the earth. And God said, "Let there be light," and there was light. God saw that the light was good, and he separated the light from the darkness. God called the light "day," and the darkness he called "night." And there was evening, and there was morning—the first day (Genesis 1:1,3-5).

Rosemary Ruddat / Carlissa Heling:From there we hear about the creation of water and sky, land and vegetation, stars and planets, and all animals in the sky and in the waters and on the land. And then God created humans.

Grades 5-6: Then God said, "Let us make mankind in our image, in our likeness, so that they may rule over the fish in the sea and the birds in the sky, over the livestock and all the wild animals, and over all the creatures that move along the ground." So God created mankind in his own image, in the image of God he created them: male and female he created them (Genesis 1:26-27).

Rosemary Ruddat / Carlissa Heling: After creating the first man and woman, God established marriage and gave humans their purpose. He blessed these people, named Adam and Eve, and said to them:

Grades 5-6: "Be fruitful and increase in number; fill the earth and subdue it. Rule over the fish in the sea and the birds in the sky and over every living creature that moves on the ground." Then God said, "I give you every seed-bearing plant on the face of the whole earth and every tree that has fruit with seed in it. They will be yours for food. And to all the beasts of the earth and all the birds in the sky and all the creatures that move along the ground—everything that has the breath of life in it—I give every green plant for food." And it was so (Genesis 1:28-30).

Rosemary Ruddat / Carlissa Heling: God also made a way for humans to show their love for him—he gave them a command that they could follow.

Grades 5-6: The LORD God commanded . . . "You are free to eat from any tree in the garden; but you must not eat from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, for when you eat from it you will certainly die" (Genesis 2:16-17).

Rosemary Ruddat / Carlissa Heling: The record of the dawning of time concludes with these joy-filled observations:

4K-5K: God saw all that he had made, and it was very good (Genesis 1:31).

Hymn Grades 5-6

- 1. Angels from the realms of glory, Wing your flight o'er all the earth; Once you sang creation's story, Now proclaim Messiah's birth: Refrain Come and worship, come and worship Worship Christ, the newborn King.
- 4. Saints before the altar bending, Watching long in hope and fear, Suddenly the Lord, descending, in his temple shall appear. *Refrain*

Angels from the Realms of Glory CW 347:1,4,5

5. All creation, join in praising God the Father, Spirit, Son, Evermore your voices raising To th'eternal Three in One. *Refrain*

Text (st. 1): James Montgomery, 1771–1854, alt.; (st. 4): Salisbury Hymn Book, 1857, alt. Text: Public domain

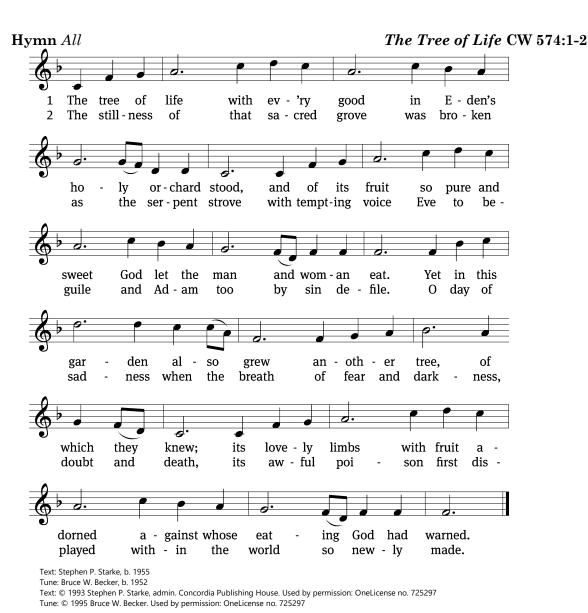
Carlissa Heling: It was not long before the perfection and joy in all of God's creation were shattered, and God's perfect relationship with humans was severed. It began in heaven. In the last book of the Bible, we are told that shortly after God created all that there is, a rebellion took place, led by an angel of light who became an agent of darkness.

Grades 7-8: War broke out in heaven. Michael and his angels fought against the dragon, and the dragon and his angels fought back. But he was not strong enough, and they lost their place in heaven. The great dragon was hurled down—that ancient serpent called the devil, or Satan, who leads the whole world astray. He was hurled to the earth, and his angels with him (Revelation 12:7-9).

Carlissa Heling: Back in the first book of the Bible, we hear what this devil, Satan, did next. He seeded doubts and spread lies. He did only what his fallen nature could do: deceive, harm, and relentlessly pursue the spiritual death of God's beloved children.

Grades 7-8: Now the serpent was more crafty than any of the wild animals the LORD God had made. He said to the woman, "Did God really say, 'You must not eat from any tree in the garden'?" The woman said to the serpent, "We may eat fruit from the trees in the garden, but God did say, 'You must not eat fruit from the tree that is in the middle of the garden, and you must not touch it, or you will die." "You will not certainly die," the serpent said to the woman. "For God knows that when you eat from it your eyes will be opened, and you will be like God, knowing good and evil" (Genesis 3:1-5).

Carlissa Heling: And then it happened. Love for following God's command not to eat from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil was replaced by rebellion against his command. Eve ate. Adam accepted her offer of the fruit and also ate. Sin and all its evil effects had entered the world. Adam and Eve realized they were naked and they felt shame. They heard God walking in the garden and hid in fear. They avoided any blame for their wrongdoing at all cost.



Carlissa Heling: Adam and Eve's rebellion had immediate and severe consequences:

All: To [Eve, God] said "I will make your pains in childbearing very severe; with painful labor you will give birth to children. Your desire will be for your husband, and he will rule over you" (Genesis 3:16).

To Adam he said, "Because you listened to your wife and ate fruit from the tree about which I commanded you, 'You must not eat from it,' Cursed is the ground because of you; through painful toil you will eat food from it all the days of your life. It will produce thorns and thistles for you, and you will eat the plants of the field. By the sweat of your brow you will eat your food until you return to the ground, since from it you were taken; for dust you are and to dust you will return" (Genesis 3:17-19).

Madeline Laabs: A great darkness had come over and into creation—not in physical light but in life now and forever. Pain, curses, adversities, tiring and aggravated daily effort, broken relationships, and worst of all—physical death and eternal separation from God for eternity. The prophet Isaiah sums up this darkness that by nature is at the center of every human soul and into which all are born:

Grades 7-8: Distressed and hungry, they will roam through the land; when they are famished, they will become enraged and, looking upward, will curse their king and their God. Then they will look toward the earth and see only distress and darkness and fearful gloom, and they will be thrust into utter darkness (Isaiah 8:21-22).

Madeline Laabs: Can there be any hope after this great and eternal fall? After meriting nothing but distress, death, and eternal darkness? Yes! Returning to Genesis, we immediately read this promise from God, graciously given to Adam and Eve after their fateful choice:

Grades 7-8: The LORD God said to the serpent, . . . "I will put enmity between you and the woman, and between your offspring and hers; he will crush your head, and you will strike his heel" (Genesis 3:14-15).

Madeline Laabs: There it is . . . the dawn of hope! The first promise of a Savior who would crush the devil and redeem humanity from his evil grasp. The prophet Isaiah repeats this promise with greater detail:

Congregation: The people walking in darkness have seen a great light; on those living in the land of deep darkness, a light has dawned (Isaiah 9:2).

Grades 7-8: 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. Of the greatness of his government and peace there will be no end. He will reign on David's throne and over his kingdom, establishing and upholding it with justice and righteousness from that time on and forever (Isaiah 9:6-7).

Grades 7-8: The zeal of the LORD Almighty will accomplish this (Isaiah 9:7).

Hymn Grades 7-8

- 1. Behold, a branch is growing of loveliest form and grace! As prophets sang, foreknowing, it springs from Jesse's race and now begins to flow'r In midst of coldest winter, at deepest midnight hour.
- 2. Isaiah had foretold it In words of promise sure, And Mary's arms enfold it, A virgin meek and pure. Through God's eternal will This child to her is given At midnight calm and still.

Behold, a Branch is Growing CW 360:1-2,4

4. O Savior, child of Mary, Who felt our human woes, O Savior, King of glory, Who conquered all our foes, Bring us at last, we pray, To the bright courts of heaven And to the endless day

Text: German, 16th cent.; (sts. 1–2): tr. Harriet R. K. Spaeth, 1845–1925; (st. 4): John C. Mattes, 1876–1948, alt. Text: Public domain

Part 3

The Dawn of Joy

Isaac Gagnon: A promise made is only good if it is kept. God repeated the promise of a Savior for hundreds of years, offering more details about the circumstances of the Savior's appearance and keeping it central in the minds and hearts of his people as they endured the many ups and downs of their sin-filled existence. But would it ever happen? Would the Savior ever appear? Generation after generation died still waiting. Would God ever fulfill that promise? Would he keep it? The gospel writers report the details. When the time was right, God sent his messenger to a young virgin named Mary.

Grades 3-4: 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. You will conceive and give birth to a son, and you are to call him Jesus. He will be great and will be called the Son of the Most High. The Lord God will give him the throne of his father David, and he will reign over Jacob's descendants forever; his kingdom will never end" (Luke 1:26-28,31-33).

"How will this be," Mary asked the angel, "since I am a virgin?" (Luke 1:34).

Grades 3-4: The angel answered, "The Holy Spirit will come on you, and the power of the Most High will overshadow you. So the holy one to be born will be called the Son of God" (Luke 1:35).

Isaac Gagnon: A pregnant virgin? Yes, just as Isaiah foretold. But that would cause quite a stir in the community—an unmarried woman found to be pregnant! Matthew records the commotion and God's faithfulness to his salvation promise and plan.

All Women and Girls: Mary was pledged to be married to Joseph, but before they came together, she was found to be pregnant through the Holy Spirit. Because Joseph her husband was faithful to the law, and yet did not want to expose her to public disgrace, he had in mind to divorce her quietly (Matthew 1:18-19).

All Men and Boys: 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, because what is conceived in her is from the Holy Spirit. She will give birth to a son, and you are to give him the name Jesus, because he will save his people from their sins." When Joseph woke up, he did what the angel of the Lord had commanded him (Matthew 1:20-21,24).

Isaac Gagnon: Trusting in God's promises, Mary and Joseph moved forward to the blessed day of the Savior's birth. Luke records the final details of that first Christmas.

Grades 3-4: In those days Caesar Augustus issued a decree that a census should be taken of the entire Roman world. (This was the first census that took place while Quirinius was governor of Syria.) And everyone went to their own town to register (Luke 2:1-3).

Grades 3-4: 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, who was pledged to be married to him and was expecting a child (Luke 2:4-5).

4K-5K: While they were there, the time came for the baby to be born, and she gave birth to her firstborn, a son. She wrapped him in cloths and placed him in a manger, because there was no guest room available for them (Luke 2:6-7).

Hymn Grades 3-4

- 1. Once in royal David's city Stood a lowly cattle shed, where a mother laid her baby In a manger for his bed: Mary was that mother mild, Jesus Christ her little child.
- 2. He came down to earth from heaven Who is God and Lord of all, And his shelter was a stable, And his cradle was a stall; With the poor and mean and lowly Lived on earth our Savior holy.

Once in Royal David's City CW 343

- 3. And our eyes at last shall see him Through his own redeeming love, For that child, so dear and gentle, Is our Lord in heav'n above, And he leads his children on To the place where he is gone.
- 4. Not in that poor, lowly stable
 With the oxen standing by
 Shall we see him, but in heaven,
 Set at God's right hand on high.
 Then like stars his children crowned,
 all in white, his praise will sound

Text: Cecil F. Alexander, 1818–1895, abr., alt. Text: Public domain

Elijah Patterson: When Jesus—the world's long-promised and only Savior—was born, God ensured that the news began spreading immediately. Luke continues his report:

Grades 1-2: There were shepherds living out in the fields nearby, keeping watch over their flocks at night. An angel of the Lord appeared to them, and the glory of the Lord shone around them, and they were terrified. But the angel said to them, "Do not be afraid. I bring you good news that will cause great joy for all the people. Today in the town of David a Savior has been born to you; he is the Messiah, the Lord. This will be a sign to you: You will find a baby wrapped in cloths and lying in a manger" (Luke 2:8-12).

Hymn 4K and 5K

1. Away in a manger
No crib for a bed
The little Lord Jesus
Lay down his sweet head.
The stars in the bright 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 you, Lord Jesus; Look down from the sky, And stay by my side Until morning is nigh.

Away in a Manger CW 341

3. Be near me, Lord Jesus I asked you to stay Close by me forever And love me, I pray. Bless all the dear children In your tender care, And take us to heaven To live with you there.

Text (sts. 1–2): The Myrtle, Boston, 1884; (st. 3): Vineyard Songs, Louisville, 1892, alt. Text: Public domain

Elijah Patterson: "To you." Those words know no bounds of time or culture, of status or reputation, of sin or shame or guilt. This event wasn't just for the shepherds—it's for all of us too! Jesus was born to be your Savior and mine . . . the dawn of joy for all the world! Such joyous news calls for glorious praise. And the shepherds saw and heard just that.

Grades 1-2: Suddenly a great company of the heavenly host appeared with the angel, praising God and saying,

4K-Grades 2: "Glory to God in the highest heaven, and on earth peace to those on whom his favor rests" (Luke 2:13-14).

Hymn Grades 1-2

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

Hark! The Herald Angels Sing CW 350:1-2

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 God head see, Hail th'incarnate Deity! Pleased as man with man to dwell, Jesus, our Immanuel! Hark! The herald angels sing, Glory to the newborn King!

Text: Charles Wesley, 1707–1788, alt. Text: Public domain

Part 4

The Dawn of "Christians"

Audra Wittig: The good news of the long-awaited birth of the Savior had a remarkable effect on these shepherds. Luke tells us:

Grades 1-2: When the angels had left them and gone into heaven, the shepherds said to one another, "Let's go to Bethlehem and see this thing that has happened, which the Lord has told us about" (Luke 2:15).

So they hurried off and found Mary and Joseph, and the baby, who was lying in the manger (Luke 2:16).

Stand



Be seated

Audra Wittig: And what did the shepherds do after finding Jesus in the manger? Luke tells us that "they spread the word concerning what had been told them about this child" and that they returned to their fields and flocks "glorifying and praising God for all the things they had heard and seen, which were just as they had been told" (Luke 2:17-18). The birth of Jesus was a turning point in history, from waiting on the fulfillment of a promise to sharing the news of a promise fulfilled. They wouldn't be called Christians until some decades later, but the birth of Jesus was the dawning of a new name for the people of God, followers of the God-man, Jesus. Luke tells us in his other book in the Bible, Acts:

Grades 1-4: For a whole year Barnabas and Saul met with the church and taught great numbers of people. The disciples were called Christians first at Antioch (Acts 11:26).

McCoy Matthies: Like the shepherds that first Christmas night, God's believers share throughout the world the good news of sins forgiven in Jesus. And the Lord blesses that effort. Luke shares this report about those first-called Christians:

Grades 5-8: Those who had been scattered by persecution . . . traveled as far as Phoenicia, Cyprus and Antioch, spreading the word only among Jews. Some of them, however, men from Cyprus and Cyrene, went to Antioch and began to speak to Greeks also, telling them the good news about the Lord Jesus. The Lord's hand was with them, and a great number of people believed and turned to the Lord (Acts 11:19-21).

McCoy Matthies: The good news that began at Christmas culminated in Good Friday and Easter Sunday. Jesus' death in our place redeemed us from all our sins. His resurrection defeated death forever. This salvation is ours. This free gift is ours to share with everyone.

4K-Grades 8: Joy has dawned for you, for me, for all!



Hymn 4K – Grade 8 v1-3 (Congregation v4)

Joy Has Dawned CW 352

All Students

1. Joy had dawned upon the world, Promised from creation God's salvation now unfurled, Hope for ev'ry nation.

Not with fanfares from above, Not with scenes of glory, But a humble gift of love Jesus born of Mary.

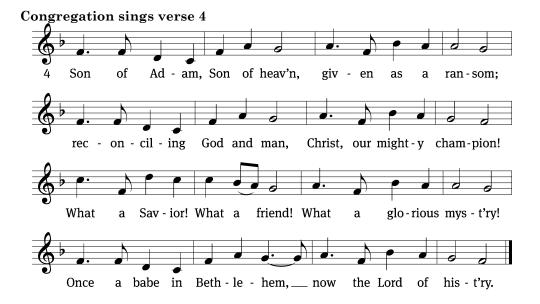
Grades 5-8

2. Sounds of wonder fill the sky
With the songs of angels
As the mighty Prince of life
Shelters in a stable.
Hands that set each star in place,
Shaped the earth in darkness,
Cling now to a mother's breast,
Vuln'rable and helpless.

Grades 4K - 4

3. Shepherds bow before the Lamb, Gazing at the glory.
Gifts of men from distant lands
Prophesy the story:
God a king is born today;
Incense God is with us;
Myrrh his death will make a way,
And by his blood he'll win us.

Text: Stuart Townend, b. 1963; Keith Getty, b. 1974
Tune: Stuart Townend, b. 1963; Keith Getty, b. 1974
Text and tune: © 2005 Thankyou Music, admin. CapitolCMGPublishing,com.
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Offering

Please sign the friendship register located in your pew.

Guests please don't feel a necessity to give an offering today. "Each of you should give what you have decided in your heart to give, not reluctantly or under compulsion, for God loves a cheerful giver" (2 Corinthians 9:7).

Canon in D

Carlissa and Kurt Heling

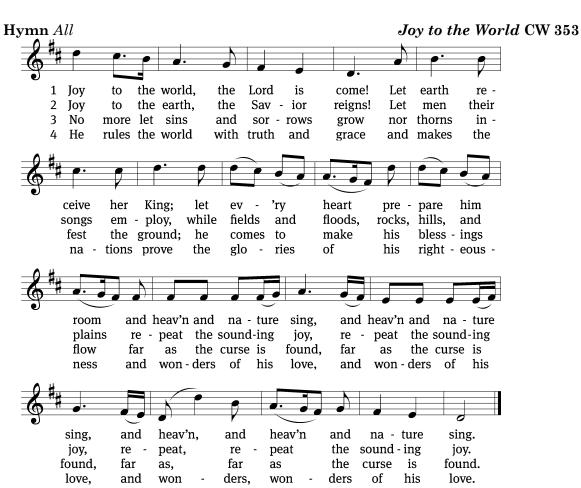


Stand

Prayer and Blessing

Text and tune: Public domain

Be seated



Text: Isaac Watts, 1674-1748

Tune: George Frideric Handel, 1685-1759, adapt.

Text and tune: Public domain

Christmas Eve Lineup

4K & 5K - Piano side

Back row: Onycha Enderle, Axel Geurts, Kayden Lemke, Eddie Ripp, Leighton Evenson,

Elliott Braun

Front row: Conner McGuire, Ella Hendricks, Savannah Baeten, Emerson Swanningson,

Lillian Wagner, Aislinn Frelich, Ethan Dahlke

Grades 1-2 - Piano side

Back row: Callum Braun, Logan Dahlke, Brooklyn Baeten, Isaiah Enderle, Wyatt Bergman **Front row:** Elijah Simek, Nevaeh Griepentrog, Jackson Lemke, Bennett Bruss, Ava Frelich

Grades 3-4 - Lectern side

Back row: Tanner Schuettpelz, Brylie Stepien, Ellie Pues, Hailey Beimborn, Alden Braun,

Owen Sikorski

Front row: Sawyer Bruss, Tori Ripp, Haddie Hagenow, Remi Ripp, Max Dobberpuhl,

Joel Simek

Grades 5-6 - Lectern side

Back row: Claire Laabs, Grant Cracraft, Hannah Stepien, Forbes Fields, Kate Beimborn, Kylie Phillips

Front row: Calvin Baerenwald, Kailey Gagnon, Aerilyn Ossmann, Emytt Pues,

Trinity Schuettpelz

Grades 7-8 - Pulpit side

Back row: Ethan Sikorski, Kaleb Stepien, Braden Kesner-Gifford, Isaac Gagnon, Eli Patterson,

McCoy Mathies

Middle row: Jazmine Kiley, Crosley Fields, Harper Zirbel, Audra Wittig, Carlissa Heling **Front row:** Evelyn Scheider, Charlie Dobberpuhl, Henry Baerenwald, Gabbi Nommensen,

Rosie Ruddat, Madie Laabs

