

# God is Joy

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Preacher: Pastor Tom Kraft

[ 0 : 0 0 ]     Good morning. This is the day that the Lord has made.

We will rejoice and be glad in it. This is the day This is the day That the Lord has made  
That the Lord has made Let us rejoice Let us rejoice And be glad in it And be glad in it  
This is the day That the Lord has made Let us rejoice And be glad in it This is the day This  
is the day That the Lord has made Shall we pray together?

Dear God in heaven, Pour your Holy Spirit into this place Wash over us with your love  
Your grace and your hope And help us to experience the living God As we come to  
worship you In Jesus name we pray Amen I'd like to invite you to stand As we're going to  
sing together Good Christian friends rejoice Good Christian friends rejoice With heart and  
soul and voice Good Christian friends rejoice With heart and soul and voice With heart  
and soul and voice Now ye hear of endless bliss News, news, news Jesus Christ was  
born for this He has opened heaven's door And we are blessed forevermore

Christ is born for this Christ was born for this Christ was born for this Good Christian  
friends rejoice With heart and soul and voice Now ye need not fear the grave News, news,  
news Jesus Christ was born to save Calls you on and calls you on To gain his everlasting  
hope Christ was born to save Christ was born to save The Lord be with you And also with  
you Please be seated In our Advent wreath And today's scripture is from Philippians  
chapter 2 Verses 1 through 11 Therefore if you have any Encouragement from being  
united

With Christ If any comfort from his love If any common sharing in the Spirit If any  
tenderness and compassion Then make my joy complete By being like-minded Having the  
same love Being one in the Spirit And of one mind Do nothing out of selfish ambition Or  
vain conceit Rather in humility value others Above yourselves Not looking to your own  
interest But each of you to the interest Of others In your relationships with one another  
Have the same mindset as Christ Jesus Who being in the very nature of God Did not  
consider equality with God Something to be used to his own advantage Rather he made  
himself nothing By taking the very nature of a servant Being made human In human  
likeness After being found in appearance As a man He humbled himself By becoming  
obedient to death

[ 4 : 0 2 ]     Even death on a cross Therefore God exalted him To the highest place And gave him the  
name That is above every name That at the name of Jesus Every knee should bow In  
heaven and on earth And under the earth And every tongue acknowledge That Jesus  
Christ is Lord To the glory of God the Father This is the word of the Lord Thanks be to  
God Good morning Good morning I know there's some clipboards going around Do you  
know what they're for?

Let me see what they're Tell me what they're for Karen First church community dinner That's coming up And Christmas caroling Which is a wonderful thing to do If you want to go out caroling Please sign up for that And contact the folks who are involved It's a wonderful thing to be here I am glad and grateful to be back I know our choir is all set and ready With the orchestra and everything For the cantata My lovely daughter will be playing trombone Alongside Dick Shenton Very exciting And I don't know what joys you have To share with us this morning Judy Give me praise to Jesus A couple weeks ago You looked at the job From Hillary And she got a great job In her career Where she is kicking in So thank you so much Wonderful Praise God For answers to prayer About all kinds of things That we need in our lives In this case A job that was needed What other joys do we have To share this morning?

I got to hear this louder Gathering of families for the holidays Amen That is a wonderful thing I'm so grateful That our church family Is gathered together And I know you're grateful And going to be grateful To be gathering with family Over the next few weeks I am grateful to have returned safely From yet another trip to Israel It was a wonderful blessing With all of these blessings As God has poured them out So abundantly into our lives Let's return some of that joy With our gifts Tithes and offerings And I want to make A very brief announcement I always talk about the cantata And hope that you will come back tonight To see us We are going to have about 60 singers So we're maybe a little more than half And we have about 30 people In the orchestra down here It's a wonderful night Two things It's usually done by 8 o'clock

So you have time to get a cookie And still get home from the building But no excuses And we'll come And we'll be like in If we are So Home and staff Is an important announcement Is that it is at 7 o'clock Apparently there was an ailing That went out to the community That said 6 o'clock But we will be starting at 7 o'clock So tell your friends and family If they got something That says 6 o'clock It really is supposed to be 7 o'clock I said if they come at 6 We'll have an hour to tell them about Jesus And hopefully they'll stay But just tell those friends It's 7 o'clock And we do hope to see you So thank you Can you guys see me?

Can you guys see me? Can you guys see me? Can you see me? How much of a light is aroundgrees 2? Have you had to wait for John? Just to know that There it is Here it comes Okay Look it in Leil Magical Acoustic Amish C deaf The C deaf The really T So The angels from the realms of glory With your plan for all the earth Through his end creation's glory Now proclaim the sight of the earth Come and worship, come and worship Worship Christ the new Lord We'll be free

[ 8 : 36 ] Shedded in the field of hiding Watching for our cross to die The good man is now residing Yonder shines the infinite light Come and worship, come and worship Worship Christ the new Lord We'll be free Emmanuel Emmanuel Emmanuel You are the God who saved us Worthy of all our praises Emmanuel Emmanuel Emmanuel Our new way upon us We love the new year, Lord Jesus

Our new way upon us We love the new year, Lord Jesus Emmanuel Emmanuel Emmanuel Emmanuel Emmanuel Come and worship, worship Emmanuel Emmanuel Emmanuel Emmanuel God is with us, even now His love is here.

Come and worship, worship Christ, the newborn King. God is with us, even now His love is here.

His love is here. Emmanuel, Emmanuel, you are the God who saves us, worthy of all our praises.

Emmanuel, Emmanuel, come and your way among us. We welcome you here, Lord Jesus.

[ 11 : 07 ] Come and your way among us. We welcome you here, Lord Jesus. Emmanuel, Emmanuel, Emmanuel.

Emmanuel, Emmanuel. Emmanuel, Emmanuel. Thank you.

Heavenly Father, we do give you thanks and praise for this day and for the opportunity to gather together in worship, to remember that we're waiting for your coming, and we are waiting with great anticipation.

Lord God, we offer ourselves to you this morning and all of the gifts that you have given us, especially this gift of our finances, Lord. We pray that you take all of our gifts, bless them, and give us wisdom to know how to best use them for the furtherance of your kingdom.

It is in Jesus' name we pray. Amen. Amen. Please be seated. With these concerns and those that are on your heart, whether you join me at the rail or from your seat, let's turn to the Lord in prayer.

[ 13 : 03 ] Amen. Our gracious Heavenly Father, we come before you now knowing that you are the God who hears and answers prayer, that you are the Lord who heals us, that you are the Lord who cares about every single hair on our heads.

Even the smallest things are not small to you, Lord God, when they concern your people. And even the biggest things that seem to overwhelm and overcome us are not too big for you to handle.

And so we come before you with grateful hearts, knowing that you will hear and answer our prayers, knowing that you want to be part of our lives.

So we give our lives over to you in the lives of those that we are concerned for. We pray for those, Lord God, who are sick and infirm, who are in need of healing.

We pray that you will touch them. We pray that you will send your healing power on to them. Let it flow in them and through them.

[ 14 : 27 ] Make every single part of their bodies whole. And Lord, draw them close to you as you are bringing about healing, as you are doing your mighty work in their spirits, their souls, and their bodies.

Let them know who you are. Let them know that they can trust in you. Heal relationships, Lord God, where there are troubles with relationships.

In our families, among friendships. In work environments, in neighborhoods. Wherever it is, Lord God, we just pray in Jesus' name. That you would give people hearts of forgiveness and compassion toward one another.

Let this be truly a season where we remember your love and joy and hope and peace. Lord, we pray for those who are grieving losses of all kinds.

We just ask in Jesus' name that you come by your spirit and bring comfort. Bring grace, bring mercy. Draw these people to yourself.

[ 15 : 41 ] Give each one the hope of salvation in you. The hope of eternal life, which is why Jesus came. We thank you, Lord.

For all of those prayers that you have placed in our hearts. For those things that are welling up inside of us that we did not say out loud. And we just lift them up before you this morning, right now, in the silence of our hearts.

Let it be. Let it be. Let it be. Now, Lord God, help us to worship you well.

Let every song of praise, every word of scripture, every prayer that we pray, let it nourish us in our spirits. Let it wash over us and bring healing to ourselves.

Making us more like Jesus. Giving us the inspiration and the ability to go out and share your love in this season. To come to a place where we can help people see that it's not just about all the glitter and the glitz.

[ 16 : 52 ] It's not all about the gifts and the gift giving. But it's about the gift giver. The one who gave the gift of his son. So that we might come to know life and love in this world.

We pray that you would bless Pastor Tom and the message that you have given him for us this day. Let it be a blessing to him and a blessing to us.

Most of all, Lord, make all of our worship to be a blessing to you. In Jesus' name we pray. Amen. Amen. Shall we hear from the word of the Lord?

Amen. I love you.

Good morning. Today's reading is from Luke chapter 1 verses 39 through 45. At that time Mary got ready and hurried to a town in the hill country of Judea where she entered Zachariah's home and greeted Elizabeth.

[ 18 : 22 ] When Elizabeth heard Mary's greeting, the baby leaped in her womb and Elizabeth was filled with the Holy Spirit. In a loud voice she exclaimed, Blessed are you among women and blessed is the child that you will bear.

But why am I so favored that the mother of my Lord shall come to me? As soon as the sound of your greeting reached my ears, the baby in my womb leaped for joy. Blessed is she who has believed that the Lord would fulfill his promises to her.

This is the word of the Lord. Thanks Kaylee. I just wanted to mention by the way, I know that there's a Buffalo Bills game tonight.

You know, and I know some of you are worried, how are you going to see that game and go to a concert? But I just wanted to mention the game doesn't start till 820. And to be honest with you, the Bills aren't any good in the first half anyways.

You don't want to watch that, right? It's the second half where they get their act together and crush Pittsburgh. So you've got plenty of time not only to come to the concert but eat some cookies, you know?

[ 19 : 24 ] I mean, enjoy. And they go home and watch the Bills crush Pittsburgh. Mary. Mary just found out from Gabriel that she's pregnant and it's God's baby.

She said, let it be to me as you have said. But now it strikes her. What did I just agree to? How am I going to tell Joseph this?

We don't know if she has parents, but how would she tell them what's happened? This is what a young woman would call a crisis.

Most of us would. Where do we go? Go home? That's a problem. Go to work or go to school or wherever she might spend her other time?

That doesn't seem to work. Mary needs a third place. She's worried. I imagine she's even a bit afraid.

[ 20 : 29 ] What's everybody going to say? And then she remembers that Gabriel said to her, Elizabeth, that old lady, old as dirt, is having a baby. I'll go see Elizabeth.

Elizabeth. So she takes a journey. Approximately 80 to 100 miles, most likely on foot. Because we know Mary wasn't very wealthy.

A young girl traveling on foot 80 to 100 miles by herself. And after all, Zechariah is a priest. What will he think about her showing up with this announcement?

And will Elizabeth be pregnant at all? And will they accept her or reject her, take her in, or push her away? Does anyone care?

Where should she go? Sometimes life can be a struggle to try and just figure out what you do. And especially when you come up poor, like Mary.

[ 21 : 34 ] And you can't just go by yourself into some place, some spa somewhere where they'll take care of you. Where do we go when life seems to be crashing around us?

Hey, maybe I'll dye my hair. Maybe I'll move somewhere. Maybe I'll get a car.

Maybe I'll drive so far they'll all lose track. Me, I'll bounce like black. Maybe I'll sleep real late.

Maybe I'll lose some weight. Maybe I'll clear my junk. Maybe I'll just get drunk on apple wine. I found this little video and I thought, wow.

You ever feel like that? I just want to give it up. I just want to quit. I just really don't know what to do. I don't know where to go. I want to run away. Anybody ever feel like running away?

[ 22 : 41 ] Go find a place where nobody knows you. Nobody has any judgments about you. Where you can just belong. Go where everybody knows our name.

And they're always glad we came. Remember that tug? So she goes to see Elizabeth. Now, you need to understand, Elizabeth doesn't know she's coming.

There's not only no cell phones, there's no phones. So Elizabeth is not aware this young pregnant girl is going to show up. She's six months pregnant.

And a young girl shows up looking for help. Kenneth, some sort of cousin, where's her parents? She's a pregnant old lady.

She doesn't have time for this. On top of this, her husband is out of work. I mean, he's a priest and he can't talk. What's he going to do? He doesn't know if he's out of work for a short time or if this is changing their lives.

[ 23 : 42 ] They're worried this is not a convenient time for Mary to show up at Elizabeth's house. But the thing about love is it's rarely convenient. But we're supposed to love anyway.

It's a crazy time of year for me. You know? I've got a lot of people going, it's the most wonderful time of the year. Let's go to concerts and parties. Do you know how many parties I go to at Christmas time?

That's when my sugar goes. I've been about four or five this week and I had to skip two because I couldn't make two at the same time. That's what I do.

Go to parties. And go to hospitals. And go to visit people who can't get out to go to hospitals. Go to parties, rather. And be with people who've lost someone they love.

It's a very weird time. It's not convenient to do these things. But sometimes love says that we do what isn't convenient.

[ 24 : 51 ] We heard that passage from Philippians about God stepping into our broken world. And in that we have these words where it says, God calls us, if we're really Christians, to live our faith in the way Jesus lived for us.

And died for us. Remember the platinum rule from John where it says, A new command I give you, love one another as I have loved you.

Not a convenient love. He would have rather have stayed in glory than come down here to be born in a stable. A barn. He would have rather have stayed in glory with the angels than to walk through life with people criticizing, attacking, abusing, and eventually hanging on a cross.

But he did what was loving anyway. And we don't need that. We need some place where we can belong. Where when we're hurting, somebody can help us.

And when someone else is hurting, we can help them. They call it the third place. Not work or school, not home. That other place that people go.

[ 26 : 33 ] God talks about this in Psalms. He says that he's a father to the fatherless, a defender of widows, is God in his holy dwelling. God sets the lonely in families.

He leads out the prisoners with singing. God makes a place for people. And God wants us to make a place for people who are struggling, who are troubled, who have difficulties, who are trying to get through.

And God wants us to make a place for people that will help us through that journey when it's us who are struggling. I happen to be a grandfather. Some of you are grandparents.

Most of you have had grandparents, if you aren't one. Grandparents are those cool people that don't have to do what parents have to do. So, like, we can make Christmas cookies with kids and let them eat them.

It's fun. In fact, my mother used to do this with my grandson, and that's his favorite memory of his great-grandma. My mother was making something called snickerdoodles, which is a fun little cinnamon cookie.

[ 27 : 39 ] It sounds a little bit crazier than it is. Making cookies. It can be great joy, but sometimes it's a struggle to get to that.

Welcome to our kitchen! What are we making today? Taste it? No, let's not taste it yet. Vaughn, uh-uh. No. Okay. We did.

Okay. What are we making today? Today, we thought we would make Christmas cookies in our Christmas pajamas! Yay! Yay!

We're totally- No. We're totally cheating, and we're making boxed cookies. Can you please put that down? All right, so your job is to stir. You stir. Yay!

Ew! Guys, we're having so much fun! No! We're not- Roll it on a floured surface. No! No! No! No! No! No!

[ 28 : 37 ] No! No! No! No! No! No! No! No! Please lay it on its own lady!

Sit-on your bottom No! No! We're gonna make these cookies! Down! Down! Down! No!

No! Get down, baby. Get down. Look, you don't want to make the cookies? No, get down. Get down.

Get down. Get down. Okay. Get down. Come on, aren't we having fun? You want to make one? See more like it.

See more like it. Play more iPad. Play more iPad. Play more iPad. Vaughn, why do you want to watch your iPad? Yeah.

[ 29 : 49 ] Whoa. Okay. Play more like the Playboy iPad. Play more. Don't you want to make cookies? No.

No cookies. No cookies. You're a leader. I'm so glad we did this.

Whoa. Whoa. You want Elsa's a lot. Take a bite. Okay. Okay. I'm so glad we did this. Whoa. Whoa. You want Elsa's a lot. Take a bite.

Okay. Okay. Okay. Take a bite. Okay. Okay. And that was the whole point.

So we could have the joy of making Christmas cookies. Sometimes bringing joy isn't even convenient. But we do it anyways.

[ 30 : 50 ] Especially with the people we love. Our family. Elizabeth and Mary were family. First Timothy says to us, Anyone who doesn't provide for their relatives and especially for their own household has denied the faith and is worse than an unbeliever.

God calls us to love each other the way he loved for us. Even when it's difficult. Even when it's a problem. Even when it's a struggle.

Philippians says to us, If you have any encouragement from being united with Christ. If any comfort from his love. If any common sharing in the spirit. If any tenderness and compassion.

Then make my joy complete. Being like-minded. Having the same love. Being one in spirit and of one mind. God blesses us.

When Mary shows up, Elizabeth says, Why am I so favored that the mother of my Lord should come to me? Why am I so favored that God would care about me?

[ 32 : 00 ] Sometimes I think we believe we're doing God a favor when we give him some time. I came to worship today, God. You should be happy. You owe me. Right?

Doing you a salad, God. You know it's snowing out. He made the snow. He knows. Do we see that God put us here not to be favored, but to do favors with each other?

For many people, church is the third place. And rightfully so. A place we put people who are lonely in families.

A place where we care for one another. A place where we're cared for. A place where the street walks in both directions. And we love as God loved us.

Elizabeth took Mary in. Not what necessarily she wanted. An old lady who's pregnant. Taking care of a young girl who's pregnant.

[ 32 : 59 ] But what she needed to do. They were drawn together. And church draws us together.

Even across generations just like Mary and Elizabeth. Oh, sometimes we sing weird songs that that other generation likes. But that's okay. They sing our songs too.

Sometimes we do the things that a younger group wants. Maybe sometimes what an older group wants. And occasionally we get lucky and we do both. But it's not about what we want.

It's about what God wants us to do for others through us. God brings joy. And makes us a joy for one another.

In verse 41 it says, When Elizabeth heard Mary's greeting, the baby leaped in her womb. And Elizabeth was filled with the Holy Spirit.

[ 33 : 55 ] When God comes to us, it's supposed to change us. It's supposed to transform us. It's supposed to make us different than we were. Shift our whole way of looking at life.

Because the Holy Spirit, God himself, dwells within us. And so God should be living through us. This is a time for joy. This is a time for celebrating the birth of Jesus Christ.

This is a time for kindness. This is a time when the traffic is the busiest and somebody pulls up. And you have the possibility you let them in.

This is a time to throw the coins in the red copper kettles. This is a time to help somebody who needs help with their driveway. Or visit somebody you know is lonely and hurting.

This is a time to be kind to Pittsburgh fans. It's not their fault. They're really not much different than us. Except they won the Super Bowl, but we won't get into that.

[ 35 : 01 ] God wants us to live out Jesus with the world. Because we're changed.

In verse 42, in a loud voice, she exclaimed, Blessed are you among women, and blessed is the child you will bear. Elizabeth gives a blessing to Mary and to Jesus.

She shares what she can. Because we're all blessed to be a blessing. And God comes to us in our time of need.

Because it wasn't just Mary needed help. Elizabeth too. When I find myself in times of trouble, Mother Mary comes to me, seeking words of wisdom.

Let it be. Oh, you didn't know that that was a theological song, did you? Mary showed up at Elizabeth's house, not just when she needed help, but at the very time Elizabeth needed the most help.

[ 36 : 08 ] Now it says this was the sixth month of Elizabeth's pregnancy. And in verse 56, it says that Mary stayed with Elizabeth for three months. You follow?

When you're old as dirt and you're having a baby, it's helpful to have a young woman around in the last three months. And so they encouraged one another. Mary encouraged Elizabeth.

And Elizabeth encouraged Mary. And I'm sure that she learned from Zachariah's faith and from Elizabeth's faith how she could have courage and what gave her the ability to go back to her first place at home and her second place in her community because she had had a place where somebody loved her.

Have a holly jolly Christmas. It's the best time of the year. I don't want to see people who are sad or having problems that all go away. It's Christmas. Let's just smile.

But we also know that people are struggling. And when everyone is struggling, we need somebody who will come in and bring us a little bit of joy.

[ 37 : 25 ] And sometimes you need to be that person for me and sometimes I need to be that person for you. We need to be that third place for each other. Where God, through us, lifts up the world.

When life is kicking you down, you need somebody who understands how to break through the brokenness. Hey, maybe I'll dye my hair.

Maybe I'll move somewhere. Maybe I'll get a car. Maybe I'll drive so far they'll all lose track.

Me, I'll bounce right back. Maybe I'll sleep real late. Maybe I'll lose some weight.

Maybe I'll clear my junk. Maybe I'll just get drunk on apple wine. Maybe I'll be just fine.

[ 38 : 29 ] Maybe, maybe I'll dö give your way o'stellen. Maybe I'll be just fine. Maybe I'll put my heart up, I'll give you a pow and be okay. But still I won't let sorrow bring you way down.

Have you ever seen Dolly Parton and not felt good? Is it because she had such an easy life? She grew up in a tiny little dirt cabin. No money. She's had her struggles, her problems, her difficulties, and yet every time I see the woman, she's smiling, bringing life and cheer to us.

Be like Dolly. Now I know Dolly believes in God because she tells everybody. She's not shy about it, right? And people love her because she loves in return. In the book of Romans it says to us, Bless those who persecute you.

Bless, don't curse, like the Pittsburgh, you know. Rejoice with those who rejoice. Mourn with those who mourn. Live in harmony with one another. Do not be proud, but be willing to associate with people of low position.

Don't be conceited. Do not repay anyone evil for evil. Be careful to do what is right in the eyes of everyone. And if it's possible, as far as it depends on you, live at peace with everyone.

[ 39 : 54 ] Because you might find that you're entertaining angels, or even the mother of the Lord, not knowing so. And maybe you can be an angel to someone else.

Isn't that what God wants for us? To celebrate the birth of his son. There is a candle in every soul.

Hopeless, confused and torn.

Hold out your candle for all to see it. Take your candle. Go light your world.

Go light your world. Take your candle. Go light your world. See how you're Let's pray.

[ 42 : 20 ] Let's pray.

Let's pray.

Let's pray. Let's pray.



Let's pray. Let's pray. Let's pray. Let's pray. Let's pray. Let's pray.

Let's pray. And we should confess the things we do wrong, of course. And God does want to forgive those, but sometimes we neglect to mention the things we forgot to do.

[ 44 : 18 ] The sins of omission. The sins of omission. Or we saw somebody hurting and struggling or having a difficulty in life and we just walk by because we want that holly jolly Christmas and we don't.

We don't want to see that. But God wants us to be Christ on earth. All the people here. So let's confess our sins of commission and our sins of omission this morning together.

Dear God in heaven, I have sinned. I have forgotten you when I see people struggling. I have forgotten what you've done for me when I neglect to do for others.

I have sinned in what I do and what I don't do. Forgive me, Lord. Free me for life.

The life you want me to live in this world. Bless me to be a blessing. In Jesus' name.

[ 45 : 29 ] Amen. Jesus wants us to have a new life, a new beginning, a fresh start. To fill our lives full of the Holy Spirit, the power of God. In the name of Jesus Christ, your sins are forgiven.

Glory to God. Amen. We'll be anelly song.

Ooh, behold, thy starlit night. Our king is born in Bethlehem. Our journey long receipts unrighted that leads to the hallowed King, of the Xiao good andbbled.

What fear we felt For silent age For hundred years Can He be found We're broken by Our baby's cry Rejoice in the Howl of things Are gone When I get Emmanuel God incarnate Here to come Emmanuel Emmanuel Praise His name Emmanuel Emmanuel A Son of God

In heart to bleed A crown of thorns With His lips bowed When we beheld His offering Exalted now And now the King of kings Praise all from the Hallowed And manger ground Emmanuel Emmanuel Emmanuel God incarnate Here to grow Emmanuel Emmanuel Emmanuel Emmanuel Absolutely Emmanuel Kind of Emmanuel Emmanuel Emmanuel Emmanuel reminded

[ 48 : 23 ] Yeah... Emmanuel Emmanuelanne Jay G And now as forgiven children of God, let's greet our neighbor with the peace of the Holy Spirit.

And peace be with you. Thank you.

Thank you. Thank you. Thank you. Thank you. Thank you. Thank you.

Thank you. Thank you. Thank you. Thank you. Thank you. Thank you. Thank you.

Thank you. Thank you. Thank you. Thank you. Thank you. Thank you.

[ 50 : 08 ] Thank you. Thank you. Thank you. Thank you. Thank you. Thank you.

Thank you. Thank you. Thank you. Thank you. Thank you. Thank you.

Thank you. Thank you. Thank you. Thank you. Thank you. Thank you.

Thank you. Thank you. Thank you. Amen. Amen. Amen.

That God comes to us. That God comes to us. Not just remembering the baby in the manger that came 2,000 years ago. But remembering that Christ has promised as we will say in just a couple of minutes that he has promised to come again and we're waiting for him to come again.

[ 51 : 45 ] But also that each and every moment of each and every day we can expect Christ to be born in our own hearts every time we seek him.

We come to the table seeking him. Seeking that he will come to us in a fresh and new way. So come to the table.

Everyone is welcome. If you love God, repent of your sin and seek to live in peace as a disciple of Jesus Christ. You are welcome at his table.

By his invitation. Not mine. Doesn't matter if you're a member of this church. Doesn't matter if you're a member of any church. If you have sensed the presence of God this morning.

And you know that you want to have God birthed in your heart in a new way today. In this moment. Come to the table and receive what Jesus himself asked us to do in remembrance of him.

[ 52 : 53 ] The Lord be with you. And also with you. Lift up your hearts. Lift up your hearts. Lift up your hearts. Let us give thanks to the Lord our God. It is right to hear our thanks and praise.

It is right. And a good and joyful thing always and everywhere. To give thanks to you, Father Almighty. Creator of heaven and earth. You formed us in your image.

And breathed into us the breath of life. When we turned away and our love failed. Your love remained steadfast. You delivered us from captivity.

Made covenant to be our sovereign God. And spoke to us through your prophets. Who looked for that day when justice shall roll down like waters. And righteousness like an ever flowing stream.

When nation shall not lift up sword against nation. Neither shall they learn war any more. And so with your people on earth. And all the company of heaven.

[ 53 : 52 ] We praise your name and join their unending hymn. Holy, holy, holy Lord. God of power and might. Heaven and earth are full of your glory.

Hosanna in the highest. Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord. Hosanna in the highest. Holy are you. And blessed is your son Jesus Christ.

Whom you sent in the fullness of time. To be a light to the nations. You scatter the proud in the imagination of their hearts. And have mercy on those who fear you.

From generation to generation. You put down the mighty from their thrones. And exalt those of low degree. You fill the hungry with good things.

And the rich you send empty away. Your own son came among us as a servant. To be Emmanuel. Your presence with us.

[ 54 : 53 ] He humbled himself in obedience to your will. And freely accepted death on a cross. By the baptism of his suffering. Death and resurrection.

You gave birth to your church. Delivered us from slavery to sin and death. And made with us a new covenant by water and the spirit. And on the night in which he gave himself up for us.

He took bread. He gave thanks to you. And he broke the bread. Saying take this. And eat it. All of you. This is my body which is given up for you.

Do this in remembrance of me.

And so. And when the supper was over. He took the cup. Again. He gave you thanks and praise. And said drink from this all of you. This is the cup of my blood.

[ 55 : 53 ] The blood of the new covenant. Poured out for you. Poured out for many. For the forgiveness of sin. Do this as often as you drink it.

In remembrance of me. And so. In remembrance of these. Your mighty acts in Jesus Christ. We offer ourselves. In praise and thanksgiving.

As a holy and living sacrifice. In union with Christ's offering for us. As we proclaim the mystery of faith. Christ has died. Christ is risen.

Christ will come again. Pour out your Holy Spirit on us gathered here. And on these gifts of bread and wine. Make them be for us the body and blood of Christ.

That we may be for the world. The body of Christ. Redeemed by his blood. By your spirit. Make us one with Christ. One with each other.

[ 56 : 55 ] And one in ministry to all the world. Until Christ comes in final victory. And we feast at his heavenly banquet. Through your son Jesus Christ. With the Holy Spirit in your holy church.

All honor and glory is yours almighty God. Now and forever. Amen. Now shall we pray together. As dearly beloved. Forgiven children of God.

The prayer Jesus taught us. Our Father. Who art in heaven. Hallowed be thy name. Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done.

On earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread. And forgive us our trespasses. As we forgive those who trespass against us.

And lead us not into temptation. But deliver us from evil. For thine is the kingdom. And the power. And the glory forever and ever.

[ 57 : 54 ] Amen. Will those who are serving this morning please come forward. JUDY FRANTDRIDE Amen.

Amen. Amen.

Amen. Amen.

Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen.

Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. I'd invite you if you're able to stand and sing as we're going to join together.

[ 61 : 09 ] Join to the world. Joy to the world, the Lord is come Let us receive our King And every heart will prepare Him And heaven and nature sing And heaven and nature sing And heaven and nature sing Joy to the world, the Savior reigns

That all their songs employ While hills and floods Rocks, hills and lands Repeat the sounding joy Repeat the sounding joy Repeat, repeat the sounding joy No more let's receive our King When John Wesley was traveling home from a disappointing ministry in the United States, he had a crisis of faith and a friend of his said to him, preach faith until you have it.

Until you have it You know love in the Bible is not a noun, it's a verb Until you feel it Be loving, be gracious, be filled with hope Share joy Make Christmas special This Christmas season Even for the people in Pittsburgh Because they're going to have a sad night And they're going to need somebody to lift them up May God go with you and bless you this day and always Amen Amen Amen Amen Amen Amen Amen Amen You