

Do Not Be Afraid: #morejoy

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Date: 11 December 2022

Preacher: Pastor Scott Johnson

[0 : 00] Thank you.

Thank you.

Thank you.

Thank you.

Thank you.

[2 : 30] Thank you.

Thank you.

Thank you. Thank you. And we have bills. We're ready for the game this afternoon. So may the peace of Christ be with you today and always.

We have a few announcements. We have a few announcements. On Thursday, we're doing a few minutes. We're doing a few minutes. We're doing a few minutes. So that information is in your bulletin.

So that information is in your bulletin if you're interested in registering for that. Thursday, December 22nd at 7 o'clock we are doing a blue Christmas service. And then, of course, we're doing a few minutes.

[4 : 06] And then, of course, tonight, you're all invited, yes, for our musical program. And we got a little bit of a preview yesterday when we practiced. And you'll hear one of the songs today for the Ovitory.

And it's beautiful. So we hope that you all come at 7 o'clock tonight. And then you can join us afterwards for cookies. So please come and join in the Christmas spirit.

Good morning, church. Good morning.

May the grace and peace of the risen Christ be with you. And that also be with you. So we're continuing our journey through our sermon series called Angels Among Us. And this is the week in Advent where we typically focus on joy.

So hear these words as we enter into our worship space together. Every angel seems to use do not be afraid. As their opening line. But perhaps no one needed to hear it more than Joseph.

[5 : 05] What was happening to him was the stuff that ruins people's lives. As a man in that time, he had all the rights to abandon Mary and preserve his dignity when he found out about her pregnancy.

The stakes were very high. But the angel's message of encouragement was to see a difficult circumstance not with dread but with joy.

Remember, there are angels among us. That may not meet the eye. There are messages of joy that come from a choir on high.

But don't just look up. For the way God works is to plant more joy right here on earth. Just like it was at Jesus' birth.

- There are angels among us bringing joy on earth. Do not be afraid. Let's pray together. Let's pray together. Holy and living God, blesses Jesus' guiding spirit.
- [6 : 04] A life within us in the land of the Holy Spirit. Grant us openness to hear your message. Grant us courage to be your messengers in the world.
- Create more hope in the midst of fear. And with the angel messengers above us, among us, and within us, we sing. Surely the presence of the Lord is in this place.
- I can feel his mighty power and his grace. I can hear the brush of angels' wings.
- I see glory on each face. Surely the presence of the Lord is in this place.
- I'm going to invite you to stand for our two opening songs. Hark the herald angels sing and I will lead you home. Hark the herald angels sing.
- [7 : 36] Glory to the Lord is in this place. Glory to the Lord is in this place. Glory to the Lord is in this place. Glory to the Lord is in this place. Peace on earth and mercy mild.
- God and sinners reconciled. Joyful all ye nations rise.
- Join the triumph of the skies. With the heaven and sinners rise. With the heaven and sinners rise. Glory to the heaven and sinners rise.
- Christ is born in Bethlehem. Come, the herald angels sing. Glory to the newborn King.
- Hail the heaven and sinners rise. Hail the heaven and sinners rise. Hail the heaven and sinners rise. Hail the son of righteous past. Hail the son of righteous past. Light and life to all he brings.
- [8 : 37] Risen with healing in his wings. Risen with healing in his wings. While he lays his glory by. For that we no more may die. Risen to raise us from the earth.
- Risen to give us second birth. To give us second birth, What the herald angels sing, Glory to the newborn King.
- Are you far away from home, This dark and lonely night?
- Tell me what best would go, To ease your mind. Someone to give direction for, This one familiar road.
- [10 : 06] Oh, who says follow me, And I will lead you home. How beautiful, how precious, The Savior of all.
- To love so completely, The loneliest soul. How gently, how tenderly, He says to one and all, Tell you can follow me, And I will lead you home.
- Trust me and follow me, And I will lead you home. Lord Jesus, I ask you to stay.
- Lord Jesus, I ask you to stay. Lord Jesus, I ask you to stay.
- Close by me forever, and love me I pray. Bless all my dear children, In thy tender care.
- [11 : 56] And take us to heaven, To live with me there.
- Take us to heaven, To live with me there. You may be seated.
- You may be seated. Good morning. Good morning.
- Welcome to worship, Whether you're here in person with us, Or watching online. And pay no attention to the moving people. Because the good news is, It's a choir.
- Woo hoo. One of the other things that we're doing this morning, Which is the first time, Two and a half years we've been here, And this will be the first Sunday morning service, That we will receive the offering with offering plates.
- [13 : 01] So, welcome back, right? So, here's the thing, Because I know I give differently. I give automatically. So, I don't always have anything to put in an offering plate.

And I just want to remind you, This is an excellent time and way to put these cards in, To offer prayers for people, Special offerings when we have them, etc. There's way more than money that goes on in the offering period.

Because it is a time when we offer our hearts. And there's a symbolism in the passing of the plate, That says, I give myself. And my heart.

And my work. And all of that. And so, this day, Let us be mindful of that as we receive the offering. So, as Jen said, Our Christmas music program is tonight, And you can see a handful of our choir, We still have seven more to go.

It's so great to have them with us. But we're going to give you a sneak preview of Midnight Clear. And this, if you come tonight, Will be one of the sing-along songs. So, sing along with us today if you know it, Or learn it so you can sing it tonight.

[14 : 14] Can you sing? Thank you. It says, It came upon the midnight hill That glorious song of all From angels bending near the earth To touch their hearts of gold Peace on the earth, the will to men From heaven's all-gracious king The world in solemn stillness reign

To hear the angels sing Still through the golden skies they come With peaceful wings unfurled And still their heavenly music flows Through all the weary world And then at home with bad years other The love song which they bring Oh, watch the noise and cease the strife And hear the angels sing Glory to God in the highest

Glory to God and the Lord Good news, great joy for all Galilee breaks through the silence Christ the Savior is born Jesus, the love song of God O glory to God in the highest Oh, glory to God in the highest

Glory to God evermore Could you break your call?

Now that He breaks through the silence Christ the Savior is born Jesus, the love song of God Jesus, the love song of God You're the love song You're the last song And say, love the world You're the last song It came upon the wind, I fear

[18 : 37] That glorious song of all From angels bending near the earth To touch their hearts of gold And the angel of heaven To prepare for full love Firmens, ■ of intimidated Allah Amen.

O Lord, we offer ourselves and our gifts to you. May we offer that which separates us from your joy, that the light might shine surely through and through the light of your life, the light of your gift, the light of your Son, Jesus Christ.

We offer these gifts and give thanks in Jesus' name. Amen. Amen.

As we come to this time of prayer, celebrations, and those things that maybe are heavy on our hearts, I do want to share with you, we learned this morning that Lee Muir passed away.

He was experiencing some improvement, and maybe that was a gift to his family, and now he has passed away. So we celebrate his life and his family, and we'll let you know how things unfold as we hear about them.

[21 : 01] Dorothy's nephew, who's had some health issues throughout a period of time, is in very critical condition, and so we lift him up in prayer.

Sherry Wailed is having surgery this week, and so we want to lift her up as well. Are there others that you would like to lift up this morning?

Yes. Yes. Yes. Yes. Yes. Thank you.

For Paul Whelan, who is still in Russia, some way for him to be released and brought home to his family. Yes, Kelly.

Amen to that.

[22 : 05] And I think about, you know, when Nancy was like, well, maybe, maybe we'll do it again this year. And I'm thinking, is this the day she's going, I'm not going to do this again next year?

So keep on the encouragement. Keep on the encouragement. Becky?

Just a hug. So Peyton is having two procedures this week.

Yes, Melissa? Melissa? My husband is asking some time to do a lot of recovery. So Melissa is asking prayers for her cousin who's still struggling with recovery from a back surgery and for the way it's impacting their finances.

Yes. This is your niece's daughter.

[23 : 26] Your niece's son. Sorry. So nine months old and hospitalized with several viral infections going on. Yes.

Yay. Wonderful. That's great news.

Yes. Yes. So Jan's friend has a disease that's similar to Lou Gehrig's disease and will have to stay isolated all winter because she's so susceptible.

Let us pray. Oh, Lord, in the peace and the beauty of this space, we offer to you all that is on our hearts.

We offer to you the praises and blessings and joy of this day. Everybody. Voices raised in song and lights lit in beauty.

[24 : 57] angels hanging on the tree. So many things to lighten our spirits. we are mindful today of those who cannot come to church when the weather provides obstacles like snow on the roads and treacherous walking conditions we are mindful of those whose illnesses sudden or long-term put people in the hospital or suffering at home by themselves sometimes lord we lift up lee's family we pray that as he has said that he was ready that you have received him into your kingdom this very moment and we give thanks for the relief the healing that that brings and yet the journey becomes hard for his family and for all of those who have lost loved ones or who are on the verge of losing loved ones lord this season is holy so we pray that no matter the storms the snow the darkness that your light may be revealed to us in each other's faces in the chords played on a guitar or drum notes or piano that they may lighten our load for just a moment that we may be able to really or figuratively join hands in holding up your people in holding together our families not by our own work but by yours so send your holy spirit and bind us and liberate us and love us and give us your presence we pray and give thanks this day in jesus name amen good morning it's a little bit early but it's beautiful so merry christmas everybody so this story this morning from the book of matthew is about joseph what a guy matthew chapter 1 verses 18 to 25 this is how the birth of jesus the messiah came about his mother 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 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 all this took place to fulfill what the lord had said through the prophet the virgin will conceive and give birth to a son and they will call him emmanuel which means god with us when joseph woke up he did what the angel of the lord had commanded him and took mary home as his wife but he did not consummate their marriage until she gave birth

to a son and he gave him the name jesus this is the word of our lord thanks be to god so friends would you join me for a moment of prayer almighty and gracious god we are indeed full of joy our joy flows from us today as we have heard such high praise sung heard your word read and been in prayer together for news both good and bad as our joy flows through us today we pray that you would continue to stoke that joy continue to increase that joy and plant that seed in us that seed that will grow and bear fruit for the honor and the glory of your name through jesus christ our lord we pray amen so it's december 11th right i don't know i don't have that wrong it's december 11th right so that means we're two weeks out two weeks out from the big day so how are we doing okay i see that those kinds of nervous snickers let me know how we're doing whether some people wanted to admit that or not right hopefully everybody's still on track but there's that stuff underneath right that stuff underneath that says well there's the list right and that list has this strange function for us because that list kind of moves us out of this place where we like to think we are and takes us to this place kind of where we really are right because you heard me and you heard everybody today talking about joy funny thing about the list is the list is usually not the source of joy right because the list is that thing that makes you realize that things are not going according to plan or it makes you start to think too hard about what still has to be done and the other feelings certainly other feelings besides joy tend to show up along with that list right people start to get a certain amount of frustration because maybe that thing you were looking for wasn't on the shelf when you went to the store or it cost a whole lot more than it was supposed to last year right maybe amazon has let you know that that thing we're not sure when it's going to show up i know a lot of folks dealing with that right now and so that doesn't exactly produce joy does it we also deal with other things we start to feel certain anxieties around well maybe folks will be able to make it and come be with the family as planned because other stuff is happening in life and we start to feel some of those feelings that don't exactly feel like joy maybe there's some tensions there that need to get resolved with some folk around the table we're not exactly sure if everybody's going to play nice y'all know what i'm talking about we keep it real in here so that produces some feelings that ain't exactly joy right then of course there's those other things those things that are much more serious in life we already talked about some of them today there are people who are grieving there are people who are dealing with serious health conditions people who are far apart from the loved ones people who are facing legitimate financial crises and as we experienced this morning when the winter turns there are people who aren't sure where they're

going to sleep that certainly doesn't produce joy so what we want to talk about is on a certain level we get it and we know the message of the season and we know what the season tells us we're supposed to feel like and if we're in the right place we are feeling those things but in reality not only are we feeling those things but we're feeling this real world stuff too and don't get me wrong the good things are part of the real world too but this tends to divert our eye tend to divert our heart tend to diverts our soul from what god is trying to do in us and with us during this season and the question for us is how do we live in the space that god wants us in how do we get there especially when the real world does what it does to us during these times of year that's our focus today and joseph's story is a good one to help us understand that how does joy provide the antidote for that and not only how does joy provide the antidote to that how do we get in touch with joy when those other things are present joseph shows us that so let's talk a little bit about what joseph is about the thing about joseph that's always fascinated me not only joseph but mary as well what's extraordinary about joseph is just how ordinary he is there's really nothing distinctive nothing that would make him stand out nothing all that exciting now our tradition holds that joseph is probably a young man there are different traditions that say he was probably older but what we see is most likely a guy who was probably between 16 and 20 years old a full-grown man in that culture looking forward to a life with a young family and living life as a devout jew he was doing all the right things and as he is on his path as he is doing all the right things somehow now we're not exactly sure how this plays out but somehow in the midst of his betrothal period so he's in our world engaged but it's different then because betrothal actually had kind of a contractual piece to it people actually called each other husband and wife during their betrothal period during that time they just didn't live together and they hadn't consummated their marriage so sometime during this betrothal period he finds out that his betrothed is pregnant now you talk about world world stuff crashing your plans because it's hard to imagine what that conversation would have been like we wonder how much conversation there really might have been because we don't really get this right it could have been a scenario where he showed up and there might have been like a little family gathering and mary turns around and that baby bump is just not deniable what does that do to your brain what does that do to your heart what does that do to a soul what does that do to your stammer yourself and you doctoring

So he's in this weird confluence of emotions. Probably a lot of anger. Probably a lot of sadness. Probably a lot of anxiety about what am I going to do now?

Real world stuff just crashes into his life. Now what Matthew lets us in on is that Joseph is faithful to the law.

[37 : 50] But there's something here. See, most marriages at the time were probably prearranged. So we're not sure the degree of connection that Joseph and Mary may have had.

But what we get is that there's enough feeling there for him that he doesn't want her to do what the law entitles him to do. Because the law entitles him to publicly humiliate her.

And public humiliation here means something very specific. The penalty for what Mary would logically be accused of was to be dragged into the street and stoned to death. And he has the right to do that.

Now, as you heard Amy read, that's not what he wants to do. His mind is to, he can divorce her quietly. That's also an option in the law. So there's something there.

There's some degree of feeling and compassion that he's bringing to the table. But friends, what I want us to remember is I want you to sit with where this guy's head and heart must be during that time.

[39 : 01] Okay? Because we kind of blow through that story pretending that it was easy. Like we hear the words.

But if you had that moment in front of you, and we don't get a time horizon. So it could have been like he left the house, went home, went to bed that night, and then the angel showed up.

Could be that. But it also could have been longer than that. We don't know how long he was doing in there. And what's interesting about Joseph's story is that we hear about Joseph, but we naturally hear from Joseph.

You notice in the passage, Joseph doesn't talk. He's talked about. He's talked about. So he's in this place.

So as we were saying before, the way the real world cuts in underneath these times that are supposed to be celebratory, as the real world breaks through into these times that are supposed to be full of joy, yet we've got all this real world stuff going on.

[40 : 12] And maybe we're not where we want to be. But the encouraging piece for all of us, both Joseph, and we see it in his story, and the encouraging note is it happens in ours as well, is that God knows what's going on.

God not only knows what's going on, but God works in what's going on. See, the thing about what Joseph is going through is God knows the plan.

Joseph doesn't. He just knows what he just saw. Right? Now, probably in this encounter, Mary let him in on what was happening.

Right? And Mary probably told him the whole deal. Now, I want you to add that to all the feelings that Joseph was having. Right?

Because not only do you have the real world stuff kick in, but now you've got this story. Okay, son of God. What do we do with that?

[41 : 24] So Joseph goes home. In the midst of all of this crashing around in his brain and in his soul. But as we said, God shows up.

Because, friends, that's the key that all of us really should hold on to. That hope that we really have is that God sees what we're going through. Sometimes we don't feel like that.

Sometimes we forget that. But God sees what we're going through. God understands what's happening. And what Joseph gets is a message.

That in his sleep, in his dream, God breaks through. And tells him, dude, I see what you're going through. Really.

I get it. But don't be afraid. Don't be afraid to take Mary home because she's telling you the truth. What's conceived in her is from the Holy Spirit.

[42 : 33] And here's what I need you to do. Now, here's where it gets really real for all of us. Because as much as we would like to think, we would have a moment like that.

In the midst of our crisis. In the midst of our drama. In the midst of all of our thing. We would say, God, if only you would come here and just let me know it's going to be okay. That's exactly what Joseph got.

But here's the thing that we got to be ready to do. If God says, here's what's happening. And here's what I need you to do. Are you prepared to do what God actually asked you to do?

Because what happens with Joseph is this whole story doesn't get the Hollywood ending and the credits roll and the violins play.

This doesn't get nice and neat after that. You know why it doesn't get nice and neat after that? It's because, think about what's happening. Remember, Joseph has the right to accuse Mary of adultery.

[43 : 34] That's the crime with which she would have been accused. Okay? And so, he has that right. But if he takes her home.

If he brings her into his house and they proceed with their marriage as planned. Here's where everything shifts. Because now, everybody will assume that she's pregnant and he's responsible.

Which means they both done broke the law. Because they weren't supposed to do that. Or, he knows she cheated on him and he's just too weak to do anything about it.

That's the problem. So, it doesn't get all nice and clean because Joseph says yes. That's not what happens.

And so, you're probably sitting there going, well, pastor, where's the joy part? We haven't gotten there yet. I thought this was about joy.

[44 : 39] We didn't get there yet. You're right. We didn't get there yet. Because it's important that we name that reality. I want y'all to hear that. It's important that we name that reality.

This isn't a pat you on the head and everything's going to be alright kind of message. But it is about how do we get in touch with our joy. Because, see what happens with Joseph is that Joseph makes the step that God hopes we will make.

Because Joseph finds his joy in the right place. Hear that again. Joseph finds his joy in the right place.

In other words, Joseph isn't looking for joy in the world anymore. He knows the world isn't going to believe him. He knows that the world isn't going to care about what happened in his dream.

But what he does know is that his God will. And because he's living in God's truth.

[45 : 45] Because he's walking the path that God has told him to walk. Because he knows he's playing a part in God's greater plan. And remember, at the end of the day, God is about to do something amazing for all of humankind.

And Joseph has a part to play in it. And he has said yes. That is the source of his joy. And he's going to be a part of his joy. That's the difference.

So when we think about all these things that creep into our lives, the little things. The frustration about packages. The frustration about prices.

The worrying about how dinner might play out. All those sorts of things have their place. Those aren't fake things. But hear me, friends.

If that is what you are counting on for your Christmas joy, you have fundamentally misunderstood. Those things have their place.

[46 : 52] I'm looking forward to it just as much as everybody. I love this time of year. I love this season. And I can't wait to spend these days with my family when they get to town. I'm very much looking forward to that.

And that will make me happy. That will make me very real joy. But that is not the source of my Christmas joy. The source of my Christmas joy is what Christmas is really all about.

Do we remember that? Because somewhere in the midst of all of the planning, somewhere in the midst of all of the list, somewhere in the midst of all of the stuff, is that core truth.

And where is that core truth in why you are doing what you are doing? We sat here and we had a glorious moment with God a few minutes ago.

Y'all felt it just as well as I did. As we were singing along with the choir. We all felt it. I know you did. We all felt it. God broke through into this room.

[48 : 01] And the reason why we felt it is not only because of the joy of the song itself. But hopefully, it wasn't just the words. And it wasn't just seeing everybody up there.

It was, what's this song telling us? See, the thing about when those songs hit your soul that way, just like you heard Pastor Jen talk about last week with Mary, the thing about when those songs hit your soul that way is because they speak your truth.

They go to that place in you because you recognize what happened on a midnight clear. That glorious song of old. Did you catch that line in the rewrite? Jesus is the love song of God.

The love song of the world. If you've experienced that, if you know what it means to have Jesus have changed your life, to have touched your world, and to know that things are different and better because Jesus is at work in my world, then you sing that song from a different place.

that's the joy God is looking for. So hopefully, that's the difference maker.

[49 : 28] Right? Because the stresses are always going to be there. The list is always going to be there. This ain't your first Christmas. Don't act like this is the first time you've been through this. But it happens every year.

But see, that's the key. Because we know the difference. See, the key for Joseph is Joseph takes a step that God wants us all to take.

That's really the core of the example he sets is when Joseph has that breakthrough dream with God. God's dream for him becomes his dream.

Joseph had a dream. Nice young family. Ply my trade. All of that. But God said, here's what's going to happen. Here's the opportunity in front of you.

Say yes to this. Notice, he still gets that. He still plies his trade. He still gets a nice young family. All that happens. But, some other things happen in his story. But the joy comes because he knows he's walking in God's truth for him.

[50 : 42] The joy comes because he knows that God is with him and with Mary and with the young Christ child. He knows this.

The spirit has been changed. He has been touched by it. And because of that, that is the source of joy.

So friends, simply put, what's your source of joy right now? Are you drawing joy from what God is doing in you, on you, and through you?

Are you getting your hope from the fact that you know God is at work in these real ways? Is the source of your peace what Christ is really about?

Because if you would break through the frustration that comes with the trappings of the season, if you would overcome the anxieties and fears that flow from worrying about whether everything's going to be okay, if you would counter the sadness and depression that happens because things aren't going the way they're supposed to go or I'm never going to live up to these cultural expectations or this person isn't going to be at my table this year.

[52 : 04] Very real stuff. If you would break through through all of those feelings, the world isn't going to do that.

Only God is going to do that. go to the true source of joy. And when that happens, all of this rings true.

Don't be afraid. Don't be afraid. Don't be afraid. afraid.

Because God really is with you. Amen. And amen. Loving and gracious God, we give you thanks for who you are and what you choose to work in our lives.

We give you thanks for the fact that you are the real source of real. That for all of the beautiful things that come with this time of year, for all of the things that put real smiles on our faces, deep and genuine smiles on our faces, the thing that puts joy in our heart is the birth of Jesus, the gift of Christ to the world, the gift of your truth lived out, the truth of your love made flesh, the gift of salvation made real in all of our lives, possible only because Christ is who he always said he would be, that you fulfilled every promise in the birth and we get to receive it.

[53 : 39] let our joy be full, let our joy be real, help us to not look for joy in the wrong places but to look for joy where you send it, how you send it and that you and you alone are in it.

Amen. Amen. Christ's table is open to all and we are invited each week to come with a sense of joy, a sense of peace, a sense of hope knowing that Christ is coming and Christ was born for us.

Paul's letter to the Hebrews includes a wonderful word, word, do not neglect to show hospitality to strangers for by doing that some have entertained angels without knowing it.

As we enter this season of Advent, it's right and good that we gather at the table of Jesus Christ whose ministry was centered in showing hospitality, inviting us all no matter whether we feel at home in our faith or at times we feel like strangers, to know that the grace of God that is already and always awaiting us, all we have to do is but open ourselves to it.

Let us set aside any hesitation, any obstacle to the invitation and in this silence we will offer to God our confession of the ways we turn away from the fullness of love.

[55 : 30] Amen. Amen. Amen. Know this, the things you have confessed before God and even those things you have no words for in this moment, they're all being lifted away on the wings of God's love.

Be assured of your freedom as forgiven and beloved children of the most gracious God and all God's people say, Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen.

Amen. I believe there are angels among us sent down to us from somewhere up above. They come to you and me in our toughest hours to show us how to live, to teach us to forgive, to guide us with the light of love.

The Lord be with you. And also with you. Lift up your hearts. We lift them up to the Lord. Let us give thanks to the Lord our God. It is right to be our thanks.

In the beginning you set everything in motion, creator of heaven and earth. With bold creativity you splash the sky with light and stars, sun and moon, wind and clouds, rain and rainbows, and winged ones.

[56 : 53] With a word you have brought forth the waters, the waves, the mountains, and the valleys. And you called forth our lives from the dust and called it good. And so we proclaim this ancient song with all of the saints and angels.

Holy, holy, holy God, God of power and might, heaven and earth are full of your glory. Hosanna in the highest. Blessed are you.

Blessed are you. You sent your son, Jesus, your message made flesh to dwell among us, harbinger of hope, prince of peace, cup of joy, bread of love.

Through Jesus, you gave birth to your church and sealed a new covenant by water and the spirit. On the night in which he gave himself up for us, he took bread, gave thanks to you, broke the bread, and said, take and eat, this is my body which is given for you.

Do this in remembrance of me. And when the supper was over, he took the cup. He gave thanks to you, gave it to his disciples and said, drink from this, all of you.

[58 : 07] This is my blood of the new covenant poured out for you and for many for the forgiveness of sins. Do this as often as you drink it, always in remembrance of me.

And so, as we anticipate the birth of peace anew, we proclaim the mystery of faith. Christ has died, Christ is risen, Christ will come again.

Touch us, O Spirit, and these gifts with your transforming power. Open us to your promise of resurrection from fear and death. In partaking of these elements, make us a people ready as your body in and for an anxious world.

Let us become your messengers of hope in all that we say and do. Make us one in this purpose, O God. Make us one in your Son, Jesus Christ, who taught us to pray.

Our Father, who art in heaven, hallowed be thy name. Thy kingdom come, thy will be done, on earth as it is in heaven.

[59 : 15] Give us this day our daily bread and forgive us our trespasses as we forgive those who trespass against us and lead us not to temptation, but deliver us from evil for thine is kingdom and the power and the glory forever and ever.

Amen. We invite those who are going to help serve to come forward, please.

Amen. Amen.

communion by intention.

So you'll receive the gift that is Jesus in the bread. You will dip it in the cup, eat it, come down the middle and go out the side aisles.

[61 : 42] There is gluten-free here available if you so choose. The table is open and we're each invited, so please come and eat. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen.

Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Go to sleep, My son This manger For your bed You have a long road before you rest Your little end Can you feel the weight of your glory?

Do you understand the price? Does the Father God your heart for now So you can sleep tonight?

Go to sleep, my son Go and chase your dreams This world can make for one more moment Go and sleep in peace I believe the glory of heaven Is lying in my arms tonight Lord, I ask that He For just this moment Simply be my child I ask that He is a good person

I ask that He is a good person I ask that He is a good person Go to sleep, my son And baby, close your eyes Soon enough, you'll save the day But for now, dear child of mine Oh, my Jesus Sleep time

[65 : 23] I ask that He is a good person I ask that He is a good personotros really He only are there I ask that He has stayed To boyfriend Are there As with God Hart How has been I my heart you Lee And couldn't You play Amen.

Amen. I'm going to invite you to stand as we sing from that true place of, and that source of Christmas joy.

Our closing song is Joy to the World. Amen.

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

Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Let all our songs employ From fields and floods From hills and plains Repeat the sounding joy Repeat the sounding joy Repeat, repeat the sounding joy No more than sins and sorrows grow No more than sins and brown He comes to make His blessings, Lord Far as the curse is round Far as the curse is round Far as the curse is round

[69 : 13] He rules love and truth and praise And makes the nations prove The glories of His righteousness And wonders of His love And wonders of His love And wonders of His love No matter what may be happening in your mind and your heart and your brain as you worry about what happens two weeks from now, remember the truth of what two weeks from now means.

Let that be the true source of joy in your life. That is how you overcome all those negative emotions By counting on the truth of God in your life.

Now in the name of God, our Creator and King In the name of Jesus Christ, our Lord and our Savior And in the name of the Holy Spirit, our Counselor and our Sustainer May God bless us as we leave the love of God and all God's children.

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

Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. So now, I pray.

[70 : 58] Amen. Amen.