
THE CHRISTMAS SEASON IS UPON US

December 14, 2025

Welcome to the Beamsville Church of Christ Online Ministry. This message is titled, The Christmas season is upon us. Thank you to Paul, Gloria, Aisha, Earl, Jade, and Don for being part of the service. The scripture readings are Psalm 46, one to seven, Jeremiah 33, 14 to 17, and Matthew 1, 18 to 23. Our candlelight Christmas Eve service will start at seven o'clock here at the church building. Happy birthday to Dianne, Debby, and Geoff. Happy anniversary to Jan and Geoff.

Scripture Reading

Matthew 1, verse 18 to 23. 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 it 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 gave birth to a son, and you are, 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 is with us.

Sermon

Morning everyone. Christmas season is upon us. Looking at our street, everyone has their lights. Beautiful, actually, lights. Across the street from us there's a reindeer. Not alive, of course.

So it's the anticipation of what is coming. What the angel said to Mary, the angel says to us. The Christmas story begins with the angel, Gabriel, appearing to Mary in her hometown, the little village, little village of Nazareth, up in the hill country. And the angel says, "Don't be afraid, Mary. You have found favor with God. You will be with child and give birth to his son, and you are to give him the name Jesus. The Holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the Most High will overshadow you."

But Mary's story is our story. It's not just the enunciation. In fact, the key to the Christmas story is that the child is born inside of us, for those of us who believe. We are part of that story. So all who believe, the Holy Spirit comes upon us, and power with the Most High overshadows us. Jesus begins small and hidden in the depths of our being. At first, an ocean, an idea, a possibility, but he's there, alive, in us, each and every one of us, growing, sometimes feeling the kick of a miracle, Christ in us. But when the moment of the birth comes, Christ cannot stay hidden in the manger forever.

Scriptures in the New Testament continually remind us of Jesus living in us. He matures us until we can see that we're growing stronger, without prejudice, without discrimination, restoring hope to the eyes of children, reconciling between our squabbles that we never need to have to begin with. And then he says this, it's amazing in the scripture. I think we can put it this way. Christ be with me. Christ within me. Christ behind me. Christ before me. Christ beside me. Christ to

win me. Christ to comfort and restore me. Christ beneath me. Christ above me. Christ in quiet. Christ in danger. Christ in hearts. Of all who love me. Christ in the mouth of friends and strangers. May Christ be born in us this holy season. Let your imagination soar. And remember, don't be afraid. You will be with child. His name is Jesus. The Holy Spirit will come upon you and the power of the Most High will overshadow you. So this Christmas season, it's wonderful time coming together, but there's this powerful message for all of us. And so we come to this beautiful time of year, the precious time of year, emotional time of year. It's so wonderful and so powerful that we can get even a little closer to what Jesus has done from his birth and his life. And we look at all of these wonderful things, hope, love, joy and peace and so forth. All wonderful.

Came across this article that I thought was kind of cute. My husband and I had been happily married for five years, but hadn't had the blessing of a baby. I decided to do some serious praying and promise God that if he would give us a child, I would be a perfect mother. Love it with all my heart. Raise it with this word as my guide. God answered my prayers and blessed us with a son. The next year, God blessed us with another son. And the next year, he blessed us with another son. And the next year, he blessed us with a daughter. My husband thought we'd been blessed right into poverty. We now had four children and the oldest was the only four years old. I learned never to ask God for anything unless I really meant it. And as a minister, if you pray for rain, make sure that you can carry an umbrella.

I began reading a few verses of the Bible to the children each day as they lay in their cribs. I was off to a good start. God entrusted me with four children, five children. Didn't want to disappoint him. I tried to be patient the day the children smashed two dozen eggs on the kitchen floor searching for the baby chicks. I tried to be understanding when they started a hotel for homeless frogs in the spare bedroom. Although it took me nearly two hours to catch all the 23 frogs.

When my daughter poured ketchup all over herself and rolled up in a blanket to see how it felt to be a hot dog, I tried to see the humor rather than the mess. In spite of changing over 25,000 diapers, never eating a hot meal, never sleeping for more than 30 minutes, I still thank God daily for my children. While I couldn't keep my promise to be a perfect mother, I didn't even come close. I did keep my promise to raise them in the word of the Lord. I knew I was missing the mark a little when I told my daughter that we're going to church to worship God. And she wanted to bring a bar of soap to wash something too. Something was lost in transition.

My proudest moment came during the children's Christmas pageant. My daughter was playing merry. Two of my sons were shepherds and my youngest son was a wise man. This was their moment to shine. My five-year-old shepherd had practiced his line. We found the babe wrapped in swaddling clothes. That buddy was nervous and said the baby was wrapped in wrinkled clothes. My four-year-old Mary said, "That's not wrinkled clothes, silly. That's dirty rotten clothes." A wrestling match broke out between Mary and the shepherd, and it was stopped by an angel who bent her halo and lost her left wing. I slouched a little lower in my seat when Mary dropped the doll, representing baby Jesus, and it bounced down the aisle crying, "Mama, Mama, Mama!" And then the wise men arrived. My other son stepped forward wearing a bathrobe and a paper crown knelt at the manger and announced, "We are the wise men, and we are bringing gifts of gold, common sense and fur." The congregation dissolved into laughter, and the pageant got a standing ovation. I've never enjoyed a Christmas program as much as this one left, the minister, wiping tears from his eyes. For the rest of my life, I will never hear the Christmas story without thinking of gold, common sense and fur.

My children are my pride and my joy and my need for an aspirin every day. Jesus had no servants. They called him master. He had no degree. He called them teacher. He had no medicines, yet he is the healer. Had no army, yet kings feared him. Amazing, the emotions and the reality of the coming of Christmas.

How many of you have ever seen the Northern Lights? Isn't that incredible? When we lived in Sundridge, away from the ambient lights, we saw stars zipping across the sky. Zipping across. We saw meteors. We saw all kinds of things. And I came across this article, which was very, very unique. It was written in 1950. When 19 years old and just out of school, I

packed a sledge one day in preparation for a trip some 500 miles north of Dawson up in the Yukon. This was to be the first Christmas I had ever spent alone in my most hazardous journey in the dead of winter. My objective was to chart a ledge that was only partially indicated on a crude map. Some two years previously, the markings of the map were reliable, but I hardly anticipated the variety of the hazards ahead. The trail was over ice and snow, frozen rivers and blankets, and steep grades and rock hills. I knew I could expect blizzards, hungry wildlife, and the peril of food shortage if delayed for any length of time, but I needed to go. I've never started on a trip of this type, and I said to God, "Please help me with this mission. Your divine protection for both myself and my dogs." I believe in this. I believe that he can while I'm on the run or when church or prayer is honest and sincere.

December 24, 1908. I was camped about 250 miles out of Dawson in a desolate, moonlit spot with nothing but snow-covered mountains in the distance with the dogs by my side. The weather had been fine, and the going was good, all of which made me deeply grateful. While preparing my Christmas Eve meal of tea and bacon over the pitch-stick fire, I thought of my family. Thousands of miles away, gathering around the fireplace with Christmas gifts under the tree. I could see the faces and guessed that much of the talk was going on. I also knew that Mother was just thinking about me strongly all of the time as I continued on my progress. "God, you're being good to me and to my dogs. I know you will comfort my mother in her thoughts and let her know that I'm all right and I'm not lonely or too cold, though far away." And then I startled, a hissing sound in the distance. In seconds, the hisses changed to sharp, crackling reports. I looked around quickly, and the sounds grew louder. I saw the sky begin to brighten in the north. Multicolored shafts of light shot skyward. The glory of it took my breath away. It was the Aurora Borealis. There was a reserved seat.

The northern lights showing a great Christmas pageant. Just me, watching it. All the colours of the rainbow reflected on the snow-covered mountains, flickered over the smooth snowy surface. It had the effect of a magnificent shimmering oriental rug. Just then, my dogs, who are precious to me, began to growl. They were tents. They stood as still as iron statues. I scanned the horizon. Their coming toward us from a distance was a pack of wolves. All the beauty was suddenly blackened out with the thought of self-preservation. I knew my dogs, and I knew them. I knew the rub from the back. I hoped the brilliant lights would distract some of them from us, but for how long? To my dismay, the wolves formed a large circle about 100 yards in front of us. I could count 14 wolves. Then, the leader of the pack took his place in the centre of that sitting circle and began to howl to the moon. Soon there was a full chorus of 14 howling, hardly-symphonic voices. For over an hour, this howling kept up as my tension mounted. Then, the Northern Lights began to sink back into the Northern. The leader of the pack abruptly stopped his howling, turned, and started back in the direction from which he had come. The others fell behind him. I was relieved and puzzled and so in awe that I could hardly believe what I had seen. Had the wolves put on a worship service for me, I haven't heard a church bell ring since that doesn't remind me of the most spectacular Christmas I have ever had. Incredible.

How many of you remember, maybe at kindergarten or in early ages, at Christmas time getting candies? The candy cane? Never really cared for it, but it was like it was a gift. There's a specific idea of the story of the candy cane. There were two villages in a far-off land, one was in a valley and one was on the mountain top. The people on the mountain village wanted to give each person a gift at that time. An elderly gentleman who had loved Jesus for many years, who was well-respected and loved, came up with the idea of a candy cane. Now you may be thinking, "What's so special about a candy cane and how can it be tied with the meaning of Christmas?" Well, here's how it was. The candy cane is the shape of a shepherd's staff. Jesus, our shepherd, and we are his flock. A sheep follows his own shepherd, knows his voice, and trusts him and knows that he's totally safe with him. The sheep will follow no other shepherd but their own. This is how we are to be with Jesus if we truly follow him. Upside down, the candy cane is a J, the first letter of Jesus. It's made of hard candy. The wide red stripes of candy represent his blood shed on the cross for each one of us. He redeems us, cleanses us with his blood. The white stripes on a candy cane represents a virgin birth. Sinless life, purity to our Lord, he is the only human being who ever lived on earth who've never committed a sin. The narrow red stripes on

the candy symbolize the stripes or wounds that were healed. The beaten back, but the flavoring of the cane is a peppermint which is similar hyssop. And when we break our candy cane, it reminds us that Jesus' body was broken for us.

When we have communion, it's a reminder of all of this, of his love. God gave himself to us. He sent Jesus. He loved us so much and loves us so much. He wants us to have a full and abundant life, an eternal life, which we can have in Jesus Christ. Christmas, what a wonderful time. Amen.

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