

All Age Carol Service

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[0 : 00] Isaiah 9 verse 6 to 7 The zeal of the Lord Almighty will accomplish this.

Our reading is from Luke chapter 2 verses 8 to 14. And 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 of great joy, that will be for all the people. Today in the town of David, a saviour has been born to you.

He is Christ the Lord, this will be a sign to you. You will find the baby wrapped in cloths and lying in a manger. Suddenly a great company of the heavenly host appeared with an angel, praising God and saying, Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace to men, whom favour us.

Well, Merry Christmas everybody. Seems a bit early, doesn't it, to be saying Merry Christmas? But you'll be pleased to know, perhaps stressed to know, parents, that there are only 16 days to go now until Christmas.

[1 : 35] That's right, 16 days. I wonder how many of you have been counting down the days to Christmas. Hands up if you've been given an advent calendar this year. Lots of you.

Yeah? Good, well put your hands down. Advent calendars are great, aren't they? Get to count down the days to Christmas. Each morning you get to find the right door, open it up, see what's behind it.

Perhaps there's some chocolates behind some. I won't ask if some of you have opened up the wrong doors just to get another chocolate. But talking of advent calendars, I have brought my advent calendar with me this morning to show you all.

And this is a very special advent calendar because we can open up all the doors, see what's behind all of them, and perhaps eat all the chocolates if there are some there.

Let me show you my advent calendar. Whoa! Ta-da! Now, and you think I made it.

[2 : 39] I didn't. Anyway, now here we have a picture of the Bible story you just heard read out from Imogen, from Luke's Gospel. So we've got the shepherds watching their flock at night.

And we have the angel appearing to the shepherds and telling them the good news about Jesus.

Here we have a picture of the Christmas story. And I want us to just spend a few moments thinking together about why the Christmas story is such good news for us.

Now, I'm going to need a few volunteers, three volunteers, to come up one at a time to try and find the right door and open it and see what's behind it.

So let's go for, yep, you there. Up you come. I think you have the quickest hand. Sorry, I think I went, yeah, okay, you can sit there.

Yep, come on up in the red jacket. What's your name? Matthew. Hi, Matthew. Come on over here. See if you can find door number one. Very good.

[3 : 40] Open that. Put it all the way back. What's behind there? I want a chocolate. A heart, a chocolate heart. You can have that. Do you want to take it? Excellent.

You can have that. And just tell us, can you see what that says? Good news. Good news. Okay, thanks, Matthew. Give Matthew a round of applause. Can you have that? Okay, your next go. Give it a seat. Don't worry, I'm going to explain door one first before door two.

Do you want to grab a seat? I know you're eager for the next door. Just have a seat there. I know you will want some. Just you wait. Now, what this first door tells us from Luke's Gospel is that Christmas is good news.

It's good news. That was the first thing that the angel said to the shepherds. Let me read it to you again. The angel said to the shepherds, don't be afraid. I bring you good news.

Good news about a baby being born. Now, it's always good news when a baby's born, isn't it? Particularly for friends and family. But this, this is no ordinary baby. Because the angel says, this baby is Christ the Lord.

[4 : 47] In other words, this baby is God himself. How amazing is that? The God who made the world. The almighty, powerful, supreme God. The God who made the world.

He has come into the world. God, come to earth. This is what the angel is saying to the shepherds. Good news. God's arrived. Good news.

Because God's arrived. And, I mean, imagine it. Imagine if you were the shepherd. Imagine, you probably had your socks knocked off by the angel. Then you're told to go along to this town. And you see this, this baby lying in a manger, wrapped in cloths.

And you are looking at God himself. So the first thing I want us to realise is that Christmas is good news because God came to earth. Our God's not a distant God. Our God didn't just set up the world and leave us to it.

God's a personal God. God cares for his world. God cares for his people. And 2,000 years ago he showed it by coming to earth. Now, that's the first door.

[5 : 46] Let's think why God came to earth. Why Jesus was born. So, who wants to go for door number two? I'm going to make some people very unhappy now, aren't I? I think I should, shouldn't I? Just because you were so keen.

Go on, you go. Oops. You all right? There we are. You see all right? Well done. There we are. Pull that all the way back. Great. Yeah, go for the chocolate. Nice.

What's your name? Samuel. Samuel. Well done. I'll take that. If your mum and dad let you, you can eat that now. Thanks, Samuel. Right, good.

The second thing our advent calendar tells us is that Christmas brings great joy. And again, the angel tells us why. Let me read from Luke chapter 2. The angel said to them, do not be afraid. I bring you good news of great joy because today in the town of David, a saviour has been born to you. So this is why Jesus was born.

[6 : 44] Why God came into the world. To save the world. Jesus is a saviour. He saves people. He saves people from, well, the mess people make of their own lives. Jesus saves people from the mess people make of the world.

And you only have to look at the world with all the death and destruction and famine and evil to see the mess we make. But most importantly, most importantly, Jesus came to save us from the mess we're in with God.

You see, the shepherds, they would have been the first to know that they hadn't loved God as they should. They'd lived for themselves. They'd ignored God, turned their back on God. And that's why they were terrified when the angel turns up because the glory of the Lord shines around them.

And they're terrified of what God will do to them. They know one day that they're going to die and face the consequences before God. But what's the angel say? The angel says, don't be afraid.

Don't be terrified.

I bring you good news of great joy. Because today a saviour has been born to you. This is why it's such great joy. Because Jesus has come to save us.

[7 : 46] Save us from God's punishment. Save the shepherds from God's punishment. And bring us back into a relationship with God. So we can be friends with God forever. Now. And in a perfect brand new world when there is no death or destruction.

So this is the second thing that the Christmas tells us. It's good news. God's come to earth. It's great joy. Because he's come to save us. And save the shepherds. And the third thing.

We're going to find out. Let's have a girl because I've had two boys. Go on.

Yeah, go on. Ooh. What does that say? Is there a chocolate there? No.

I tell you. What's your name? Clementine. Clementine. Clementine. Do you know. Go back to your chair. Have a look under your chair. All of you. Have a look under your chair. Yes.

[8 : 44] Ooh. Hit it. Anyone not got one?

Honestly now. Everyone got one? Good. Everyone, yeah. Everyone's got a chocolate. There's a chocolate for all people. For everyone.

Second. No, you can have a seat now, Clementine. Thank you. Great. Great. Well, this is the third and final thing that our Advent galander tells us from Luke's gospel. And that is that Christmas is for all people.

So let's listen to the angel one more time. He says to the shepherds, don't be afraid. I bring you good news of great joy that will be for all the people.

Christmas is for all people. You see, Jesus wasn't just the saviour of the shepherds back then.

Jesus wasn't just the saviour of people that lived back then. Jesus is saviour for all people.

[9 : 43] For you. For me. For everyone. And that's why you've all got chocolate hearts this morning. I'm speaking to parents now just as much as kids. Jesus is saviour of everyone. It doesn't matter how bad you are.

Jesus came for you to die for you so you could know God. It doesn't matter how good you think you are. Jesus came to save you. We all need saving. No one can save themselves from sin. None of us can save ourselves from death.

We need a saviour. And marvellously, the good news of Christmas is that we have a saviour. And his name is Jesus Christ. God himself. Come to earth. To save us.

And bring us into a relationship with God. What we were made for. So these are the three things I want us to remember about Christmas. Good news. God's come to earth. Great joy. A saviour for you and me.

Let's pray together. Dear Lord Jesus, thank you so much for the good news of Christmas. Thank you for being born into the world as our saviour. Thank you that because of you, we can know God as our friend.

[10 : 46] Thank you and the great truth. Amen. Amen.

Amen. Amen.