CHILDREN’S CHRISTMAS SERVICE

THEME

The theme for this year’s service is taken from the beloved children’s carol “Away in a Manger.” The carol, often incorrectly attributed to Martin Luther, is one of the most frequently sung carols of Christmastide. So what is found in that manger? Is it a cute little baby, or is there more? Who is that baby? God’s Son, our Savior, is He who lies in that manger and brings to us gifts of forgiveness, life, and salvation from our heavenly Father. Join us now as we, through song and verse, look for and discover the gifts that are found in the manger. These Christmas gifts are eternal and these gifts are for you!

Be near me, Lord Jesus; I ask Thee to stay
Close by me forever and love me, I pray.
Bless all the dear children in Thy tender care,
And take us to heaven to live with Thee there.

A NOTE REGARDING PHOTOGRAPHS

Because this church service is not a mere program or performance but an opportunity to worship, we kindly ask that you refrain from taking photographs or video during the service. You are invited to take photographs after the service.
CHILDREN’S SERVICE

+ In Nomine Jesu +

PRESERVICE MUSIC   Away in a Manger

PROCessional       Joy to the World

Joy to the world, the Lord is come!
    Let earth receive her King;
Let ev’ry heart prepare Him room
    And heav’n and nature sing,
    And heav’n and nature sing.
    And heav’n and nature sing.

Joy to the earth, the Savior reigns!
    Let men their songs employ,
While fields and floods, rocks, hills, and plains
    Repeat the sounding joy,
    Repeat the sounding joy,
    Repeat, repeat the sounding joy.

No more let sins and sorrows grow
    Nor thorns infest the ground;
He comes to make His blessings flow
    Far as the curse is found,
    Far as the curse is found,
    Far as, far as the curse is found.

He rules the world with truth and grace
    And makes the nations prove
The glories of His righteousness
    And wonders of His love,
    And wonders of His love,
    And wonders, wonders of His love.
Psalm 24:1, 3–5
Refrain Isaiah 35:10a; 11:6b
(The Psalmody may be deleted according to time constraints and the number of children involved.)

Choir:

L. O Lord, o pen my lips,*
and my mouth shall declare your praise.

C. Who shall ascend the hill of the LORD?*
And who shall stand in His holy place?

Congregation: repeat Refrain

L. The earth is the LORD’s and the full ness thereof,*
The world and those who dwell therein.

C. Who shall ascend the hill of the LORD?*
And who shall stand in His holy place?
L. He who has clean hands and a pure heart,*  
   Who does not lift up his soul to what is false and does not swear deceitfully.
C. He will receive blessing from the LORD*  
   And righteousness from the God of his salvation.  
   Glory be to the Father and to the Son*  
   And to the Holy Spirit;  
   As it was in the beginning,*  
   Is now, and will be forever. Amen.

Refrain.

COLLECT
L. O God, You make us glad with the yearly remembrance of the birth of Your only-begotten Son, Jesus Christ. Grant that, as we joyfully receive Him as our Redeemer, we may with sure confidence behold Him when He comes to be our Judge; through the same Jesus Christ, our Lord, who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.
C. Amen.
AWAY IN A MANGER

CATECHISM
L.  [I believe] in Jesus Christ, [God’s] only Son, our Lord, who was
conceived by the Holy Spirit, born of the Virgin Mary . . .

C.  I believe that Jesus Christ, true God, begotten of the Father
from eternity, and also true man, born of the Virgin Mary, is
my Lord.

READING  Luke 2:1–5
(Readings may be combined to accommodate fewer readers.)

Reader 1: In those days a decree went out from Caesar Augustus that all
the world should be registered.

Reader 2: This was the first registration when Quirinius was governor of
Syria.

Reader 3: And all went to be registered, each to his own town.

Reader 4: And Joseph also went up from Galilee, from the town of
Nazareth, to Judea, to the city of David, which is called Bethlehem,
because he was of the house and lineage of David, to be registered with
Mary, his betrothed, who was with child.

(Joseph and Mary walk down the center aisle to the front of the church.)

HYMN  O Little Town of Bethlehem
Stanzas 1–2

Choir
O little town of Bethlehem,
   How still we see thee lie!
Above thy deep and dreamless sleep
   The silent stars go by.
Yet in thy dark streets shineth
   The everlasting light.
The hopes and fears of all the years
   Are met in thee tonight.

5
Congregation
For Christ is born of Mary,
And, gathered all above
While mortals sleep, the angels keep
Their watch of wond’ring love.
O morning stars, together
Proclaim the holy birth,
And praises sing to God the king
And peace to all the earth.

Reader 1: And while they were there, the time came for her to give birth.
(Joseph brings out the manger with baby Jesus. Other objects are hidden under the doll.)

Reader 2: And she gave birth to her firstborn son and wrapped Him in swaddling cloths and laid Him in a manger, because there was no place for them in the inn.

Hymn  Silent Night

Silent night, holy night!
All is calm, all is bright
Round yon virgin mother and child.
Holy Infant, so tender and mild,
Sleep in heavenly peace,
Sleep in heavenly peace.

Silent night, holy night!
Shepherds quake at the sight;
Glories stream from heaven afar,
Heav’nly hosts sing, Alleluia!
Christ, the Savior, is born!
Christ, the Savior, is born!

Silent night, holy night!
Son of God, love’s pure light
Radiant beams from Thy holy face
With the dawn of redeeming grace,
Jesus, Lord, at Thy birth,
Jesus, Lord, at Thy birth.
READING Luke 2:8–14
(Readings may be combined to accommodate fewer readers.)

Reader 1: And in the same region there were shepherds out in the field, keeping watch over their flock by night.

(Shepherds come forward.)

Reader 2: And an angel of the Lord appeared to them, and the glory of the Lord shone around them, and they were filled with fear.

(Angel comes forward. Shepherds act scared!)

Reader 3: And the angel said to them, “Fear not, for behold, I bring you good news of a great joy that will be for all the people. For unto you is born this day in the city of David a Savior, who is Christ the Lord.

(Angel raises hands over head.)

Reader 4: “And this will be a sign for you: you will find a baby wrapped in swaddling cloths and lying in a manger.”

(More angels come forward.)

Reader 5: And suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host praising God and saying,

(NOTE: This may be said by ALL ANGELS or ALL CHILDREN.)

“Glory to God in the highest,
and on earth peace among those with whom He is pleased!”

(Angels leave.)

HYMN Angels We Have Heard on High

Angels we have heard on high,
Sweetly singing o’er the plains,
And the mountains in reply,
Echoing their joyous strains.

Refrain:
Gloria in excelsis Deo.
Gloria in excelsis Deo.
Shepherds, why this jubilee?  
Why your joyous strains prolong?  
What the gladsome tidings be  
Which inspire your heav’nly song?
Refrain.

Come to Bethlehem and see  
Him whose birth the angels sing;  
Come, adore on bended knee  
Christ the Lord, the newborn King.
Refrain.

READING Luke 2:15–20
(Readings may be combined to accommodate fewer readers.)

Reader 1: When the angels went away from them into heaven, the shepherds said to one another, “Let us go over to Bethlehem and see this thing that has happened, which the Lord has made known to us.”
(Shepherds stand.)

Reader 2: And they went with haste and found Mary and Joseph, and the baby lying in a manger.
(Shepherds walk to manger.)

Reader 3: And when they saw it, they made known the saying that had been told them concerning this child. And all who heard it wondered at what the shepherds told them. But Mary treasured up all these things, pondering them in her heart.
(Shepherds knee; Mary holds her hands over her heart.)

Reader 4: And the shepherds returned, glorifying and praising God for all they had heard and seen, as it had been told them.
(Mary picks up the baby. Mary, Joseph, and the shepherds leave down the middle aisle, perhaps declaring, “Jesus is born!”)
HYMN  Gentle Mary Laid Her Child
(During the introduction, the children stand and turn to face the congregation. The young students may go to the steps of the chancel.)

Choir
Gentle Mary laid her child
  Lowly in a manger. (Hold arms in front as if holding a baby.)
There He lay, the Undefiled. (Extend arms in front of body, palms up.)
  To the world a stranger. (Cover eyes with hands.)
Such a babe in such a place. (Right palm raised as if asking a question.)
  Can He be the Savior? (Left palm raised, too, as if asking a question.)
Ask the saved of all the race (Swing arms apart in front, palms up, indicating the assembly.)
  Who have found His favor. (Make the sign of the cross.)

Congregation
Angels sang about His birth,
  Wise Men sought and found Him;
Heaven’s star shone brightly forth
  Glory all around Him.
Shepherds saw the wondrous sight,
  Heard the angels singing;
All the plains were lit that night,
  All the hills were ringing.

Gentle Mary laid her child
  Lowly in a manger;
He is still the Undefiled
  But no more a stranger.
Son of God of humble birth,
  Beautiful the story;
Praise His name in all the earth;
  Hail the King of glory!

MEDITATION  The Baby in the Manger
Reader: In the manger we find true God from eternity, humbled as a tiny baby!
(Mary returns down the middle aisle and places the baby back in the manger.)
Reader: “He had to be made like His brothers in every respect, so that He might become a merciful and faithful high priest in the service of God, to make propitiation for the sins of the people.” Hebrews 2:17

CHOIR

Away in a Manger

(Stanza 1)
(During the introduction, the children stand and turn to face the congregation. The young students may go to the steps of the chancel, then return to their seats when finished.)

Away in a manger, no crib for a bed, (Place hands, palms together, on one side of head.)
The little Lord Jesus laid down His sweet head. (Switch sides with hands.)
The stars in the sky looked down where He lay, (Extend fingers out, making “stars,” then shield eyes for “looking.”)
The little Lord Jesus asleep on the hay. (Hold arms in front as if holding a baby.)

(During the singing, banner #1 is brought forward.)

CATECHISM

L. [He] suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, died and was buried. He descended into hell. The third day He rose again from the dead.

C. [He] has redeemed me, a lost and condemned person, purchased and won me from all sins, from death, and from the power of the devil; not with gold or silver, but with His holy, precious blood and with His innocent suffering and death.

READING

Isaiah 11:1–10
(Readings may be combined to accommodate fewer readers.)

Reader 1: There shall come forth a shoot from the stump of Jesse, and a branch from his roots shall bear fruit.

Reader 2: And the Spirit of the LORD shall rest upon Him, the Spirit of wisdom and understanding, the Spirit of counsel and might, the Spirit of knowledge and the fear of the LORD.

Reader 3: And His delight shall be in the fear of the LORD. He shall not judge by what His eyes see, or decide disputes by what His ears hear,