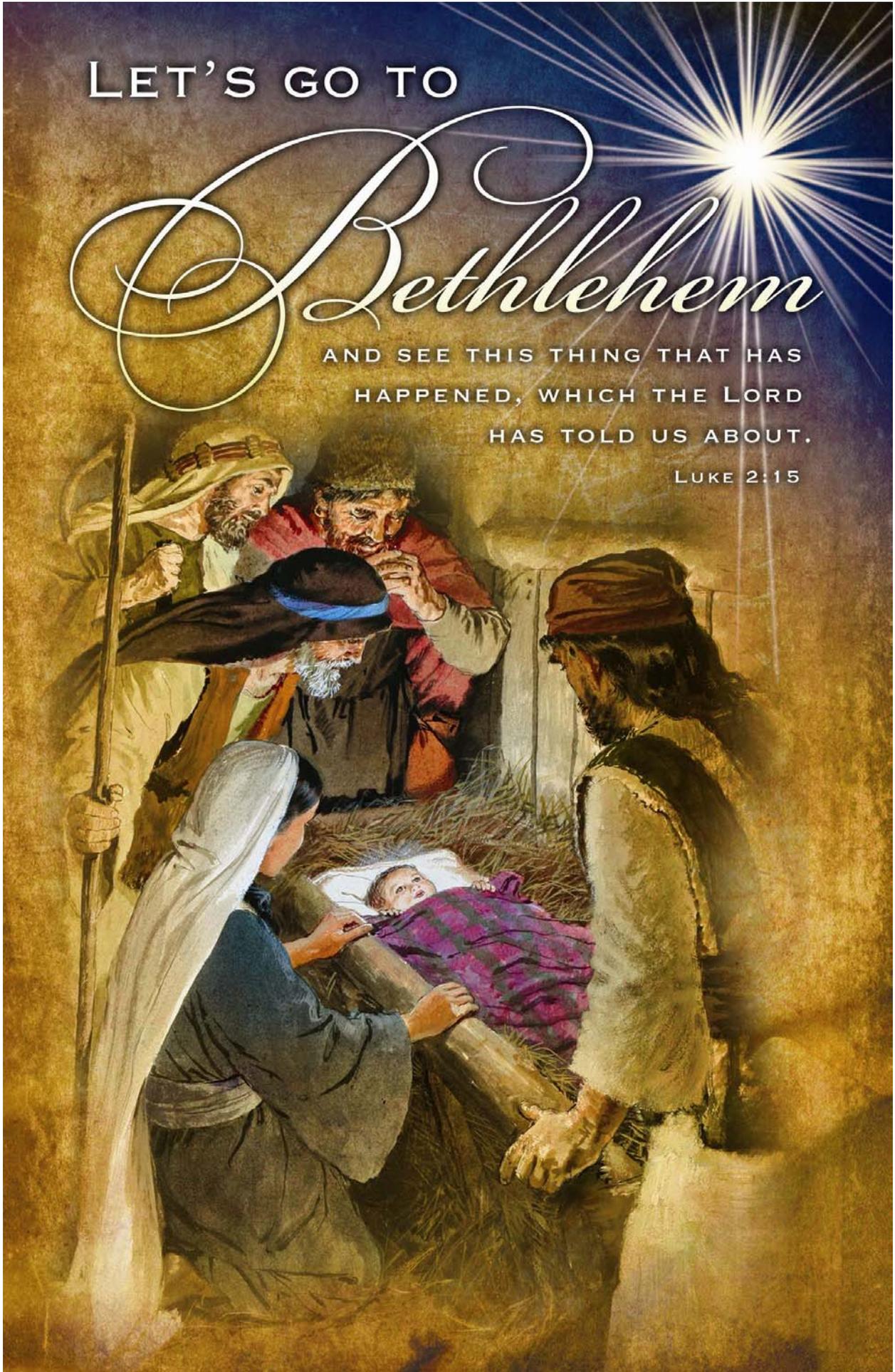


LET'S GO TO

Bethlehem

AND SEE THIS THING THAT HAS
HAPPENED, WHICH THE LORD
HAS TOLD US ABOUT.

LUKE 2:15



LET'S GO TO *Bethlehem*

Let's Go to Bethlehem takes listeners on a number of interesting journeys. We travel with Abraham to Canaan, with Moses back to the Promised Land, with Mary and Joseph from Nazareth to Bethlehem, with the angels from heaven to the skies above the Bethlehem fields, with the shepherds from the Judean hillside to the manger, and with the Holy Spirit into the hearts of people everywhere.

EDITING: All materials in this worship service have been edited by WELS educators.

AGE LEVEL: This worship service will work well with any size group, preschool to eighth grade.

FREE ADVENT SERVICE OUTLINES: The theme of this service may be expanded to include your Advent Sunday or evening vesper services. Here we will travel with Ruth, David and Rachel to Bethlehem. These outlines may be adjusted to your needs. The outlines are included on this disk.

NARRATION AND SPEAKERS: The service is designed to include narrators throughout. These may be students, teachers or pastors. Sections marked RECITATION always include Scripture readings and recitations.

SONGS: Besides the congregation hymns suggested, there are four songs on the special Sing-Along/Accompaniment CD (and on sheet music with this disk). Songs include: "Let's Go to Bethlehem" (theme song); "Bethlehem Is Busy Today" (sent to us especially from England by writer Steve Case); "One Night in Bethlehem"; and "Sleep, My Little Jesus" (a delightful carol dating back to the 1800s.) For the service recessional we suggest using "O Little Town of Bethlehem."

ITEMS AVAILABLE:

REPRODUCIBLE TEACHER/STUDENT SCORE

These pages include all text and sheet music for both students and teachers and are fully reproducible. The disk is in PDF and Word.

SING-ALONG/ACCOMPANIMENT

This CD may be used for practice and performance.

COMBO OF THE ABOVE TWO

Churches and schools can save by ordering both the program CD and the music CD.

WORSHIP BULLETINS

The worship bulletins are designed especially for this worship service.

BANNER KIT: A special banner has been designed for this program that includes a 2'x3' parchment map. Banner kits are ordered separately.

HANDOUT BOOKLETS: Special eight page full-color booklets have also been prepared for this service. These booklets reinforce the travels mentioned in the service. The handout booklets include Scripture, photos and maps. These are ordered separately.

SPECIAL THANKS: Special thanks are in order to Mr. Steve Case (writer of "Bethlehem Is Busy Today", Charles Cushinery (music arranger and accompaniment recorder), Mr. Arlyn Boll (editor), Sandy Rathke and Tina Smith (soloists), and James Petermann (taping session).

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LET'S GO TO *Bethlehem*

PROCESSIONAL: (All children) *"Let's Go to Bethlehem Town"*

1. Let's see the crude manger
With hearts filled with joy.
Let's see the first throne
Of this new Baby Boy.
It's all there as God said:
The stable, the hay.
Let's see the crude manger;
Let's go there today.

REFRAIN:

Let's go to worship our Bethlehem King;
Our gifts and our prayers and our praises we bring.
Let's look for the Baby God's love has sent down;
Let's go now and hurry to Bethlehem town.

2. Let's hear the glad sound
Come from Bethlehem's sky.
Let's hear angels sing
From the heavens on high.
It's a song to behold;
That the angels relay,
Let's hear the glad sound
Come from Bethleh'm today.

REFRAIN

3. Let's tell the Good News
Of a Savior being born.
Let's send out the word
Of that first Christmas morn.
It's a story to share;
Tidings we can't delay.
So let's tell the Good News,
And let's tell it today.

REFRAIN

Pastor: We join our hearts and voices here, in words so pure and warm
As we fix our sight, on that Christmas night, and the place where Christ was born.

Children: We may be meek, we may be young, but this we know is true,
That a baby small, in a cattle stall, was born for me and you.

Congregation: Please tell us then what happened there that brings you so much joy.
Through word and rhyme, take us back in time, to the birth of that baby Boy.

Children: We'll map the story out for you, we'll lead you all the way
To where Bethlehem's Son, the Anointed One, slept on a bed of hay.

Pastor & Congregation: Then let's go on to Bethlehem and see this noble place,
Where a heavenly birth, happened here on earth, through God's abundant grace.

Children: We'll follow the trail that takes us now to a story way back when
So please listen well, as we start to tell, of our trip to Bethlehem.

PRAYER: Dearest Lord God, our Creator, Redeemer, and Sanctifier, be with our words and songs today as we once again visit the wonderful story of your Christmas gift to us. Give us a renewed appreciation for the grace and mercy you have shown us, a renewed hope of the glory that will be ours, and a renewed zeal to share this wonderful message with the world. We ask this in the name of him who will return to earth again not as a helpless child in Bethlehem, but as our risen Savior and King. Amen.

PASTOR'S INTRODUCTION: Today we live in what's called a mobile society. In other words, we love to travel. Many of us drive or fly long distances for a well-deserved vacation. Others travel many miles back and forth to work. We purchase comfortable automobiles and enjoy snacks on airplanes as we travel from one place to another. I don't doubt that many of you traveled some distance to get here today, and many of you have your travel plans already laid out for this Christmas season. Yes, we are truly a mobile society.

Today we ask that you get comfortably seated because our children will be taking you on several trips. So buckle up because we're going back to Bethlehem.

Part 1: FROM EVERYWHERE TO DAVID'S TOWN

Narrator or Teacher: Bethlehem! The name means "House of Bread". In Jesus' day it probably had no more than a few hundred people. If you travel by car or bus today to modern day Biet Lahm, you could see many famous Bible places in a short time. Just northeast is the town of Bethany, the home of Mary and Martha and Lazarus. Ten miles southwest is Gibeon, where Joshua fought the battle where the sun stood still, and fifteen minutes southwest is the valley where David killed Goliath. Bethlehem is the where we find Rachel's tomb, and it's the town where Naomi and Ruth lived. But it was David who made it his town. So it's frequently called the Town of David.

Narrator: Did you ever wonder why Jesus was born in Bethlehem? Why not Damascus, or Jerusalem, or Nineveh, or Rome? It was not by chance, and it was not by mistake that Bethlehem was the exact place for Jesus to be born. God had a plan— a detailed plan. And it all began in a place called the Garden of Eden where the first man and woman committed the first sin, and heard the first word about a Savior.

Recitation: "I will put enmity between you and the woman, and between your offspring and hers; he will crush your head, and you will strike his heel." Genesis 3:15.

Narrator: These words say that God would send an offspring from Eve who would destroy the power of Satan. But where and when was this offspring to come into the world? Would he come as a man or a baby boy? Would he come to earth somewhere near Eden between the Tigris and Euphrates Rivers? God had a plan for this too. Slowly he would work out each detail, one by one.

Narrator: First God set aside a special country where his Son was to come to earth. This plan was carried out first by choosing Abraham to be the father of his people. He lived deep within a country that today is called Iraq. God wanted to place him in the land where he was going to send his Son.

Recitation: "The Lord said to Abraham, 'Leave your country...and go to the land I will show you...All peoples on earth will be blessed through you...and they set out for the land of Canaan.'" Genesis 12:1, 3, 5.

Narrator: Abraham and his family and flocks settled in Canaan. God's plan was beginning to unfold. It was Canaan that God chose for the coming of his Son. But Canaan would be abandoned only a few years later. It was during the life of Jacob, Abraham's grandson, that a terrible famine forced God's

people to leave Canaan and settle in Egypt. They lived away from Canaan for nearly 400 years until God was ready to have them return once again. The Lord told his servant Moses:

Recitation: "I am the Lord. I appeared to Abraham, to Isaac and to Jacob as God Almighty. . . I established my covenant with them to give them the land of Canaan." Exodus 6:3, 4

Narrator: And so after forty years of wandering about in the wilderness, God's people were once again back in God's land of promise. But now that we have the country, what about the city? Did God have in his plans the exact city chosen for his coming to earth? Years after Moses died, David became king of Israel. He was a great king, and he loved his Lord very much. God promised that Jesus was to be born from David's descendants. And where was David from? Listen to what the Bible says in John 7:42:

Recitation: "Does not the Scripture say that the Christ will come from David's family and from Bethlehem, the town where David lived?"

Narrator: And so God's plan was unfolding. Even the details of the very city were decided long before Jesus was ever born. What a startling comment we hear from the prophet Micah, who wrote hundreds of years before Jesus' birth:

Congregation and Children: "But you, Bethlehem Ephrathah, though you are small among the clans of Judah, out of you will come for me one who will be ruler over Israel, whose origins are from of old, from ancient times." Micah 5:2

CONGREGATION SONG: "*Once in Royal David's City*"

Part 5: FROM THE FIELDS TO A MANGER

Narrator: The announcement had been made. The plan that God had designed in the Garden of Eden thousands of years earlier was now being fulfilled. God's timing was perfect. It was so precise that it fulfilled every single Old Testament prophecy spoken about Jesus' birth.

Recitation: "When the time had fully come, God sent his Son, born of a woman, born under the law, to redeem those under the law." Galatians 4:4

Narrator: The shepherds heard the news. They were given exact directions where to find the Baby Jesus. There was little hesitation whether they should stay with their sheep or run to find their Savior. They headed immediately in the direction of Bethlehem.

Recitation: "When the angels had left them and gone into heaven, the shepherds said to one another, "Let's go to Bethlehem and see this thing that has happened, which the Lord has told us about." So they hurried off and found Mary and Joseph, and the baby, who was lying in the manger. When they had seen him, they spread the word concerning what had been told them about this child, and all who heard it were amazed at what the shepherds said to them. But Mary treasured up all these things and pondered them in her heart. The shepherds returned, glorifying and praising God for all the things they had heard and seen, which were just as they had been told."
Luke 2:15-20

CONGREGATION SONG: "*Silent Night*"

OFFERING AND PRAYERS:

Part 6: FROM GOD'S THRONE TO MY HEART

Narrator: We've done a lot of traveling today. We traveled with Abraham and Moses to the Promised Land. We traveled with David to his own city. We traveled with Mary and Joseph from Nazareth to Bethlehem. We saw the angels sending their praises from heaven to earth. We ran with the shepherds from the fields to the manger. And we haven't even mentioned the long, long journey of the magi who brought Jesus gifts of gold, frankincense, and myrrh. That special visit we will celebrate a few days from now. Their pilgrimage took months to make. Yes, there has been a lot of traveling today.

But the trip is not over. It never is. The traveling continues as the Holy Spirit seeks out the hearts of people everywhere. What a glorious message we have to tell. Let us take that message and share it with the world.

CONGREGATION SONG: *"O, Come, All Ye Faithful"* verse 1 only

BENEDICTION

RECESSIONAL: *"O, Little Town of Bethlehem"*