

LET US GO NOW TO BETHLEHEM

Our family follows a ritual each Christmas Day. Before the turkey is carved, we participate in child-friendly devotions. We keep the service brief, realizing that the grandchildren are hungry and excited. Moreover, everybody, especially the cook, wants the turkey to be steaming hot.

Believing that a role of father and grandfather is to pass faith to descendants, I rehearse with the grandchildren while other adults prepare the meal. When our grandson was six years old, he sounded out both syllables of the word *shepherd* in order to read his verse. Our four-year-old granddaughter had three words: "The angel said . . ." She recognized two words but had to learn the word *angel*. Our two-year-old grandson memorized one word, *amen*, which he said emphatically at the end of the prayer. Each of the adults—sons-in-law, daughters, and grandparents—read one sentence from Luke 2:8-16, which I simplified and printed out for everyone.

Lighting candles is the grandchildren's favorite part of the devotion. During rehearsal with them, we practice safety, tilting the unlighted candle, not the burning one. Our granddaughter remembers to keep her long blond hair out of the flame. A photograph of our granddaughter as she lit the big red candle recalls for us the wonder in her eyes and her angelic expression in the glow of the candle, in keeping with the line she had read.

That glowing candle at the center of our table on Christmas Day symbolizes the presence of the Prince of Peace.

—Guy Wampler, retired pastor
Lancaster, Pennsylvania

Text for Today

Luke 2:1-14, (15-20) (15)

When the angels had left them and gone into heaven, the shepherds said to one another, "Let us go now to Bethlehem and see this thing that has taken place, which the Lord has made known to us." So they went with haste and found Mary and Joseph, and the child lying in the manger.

CHURCH OF THE BRETHREN LIVING WORD BULLETIN 12/14/02



*Let us go now to
Bethlehem*



Sheldon Church of the Brethren
Ministers - All Members
December 24, 2005
6 p.m. Worship



CHRISTMAS EVE CANDLELIGHTING SERVICE

Prelude - Donna Brinkman on piano and Emily
Knudsen's special music on flute

Call To Worship

Opening Hymn #318 *Joy To The World* (ALL 4 VERSES)

Advent Candle Lighting

- One Candle Symbolizes Hope
- One Candle Symbolizes Peace
- One Candle Symbolizes Love
- One Candle Symbolizes Joy

These four candles are gathered around one large candle in the center. That candle symbolizes Jesus, whose birthday we are celebrating tonight.

- CAROL #191 *O Little Town of Bethlehem* (Verse 1)
- CAROL #201 *Hark, The Herald Angels* (Verse 1)
- CAROL #199 *The First Noel* (Verse 1)

BIBLE READING: Luke 2: 1-7

CHRISTMAS PRAYER (Unison)

Loving Father, help us remember the birth of Jesus, that we may share in the song of angels, the gladness of the shepherds, and the worship of the wise men. Close the door of hate and open the door of love all over the world. Let kindness come with every gift

and good desires with every greeting. Deliver us from evil by the blessing which Christ brings, and teach us to be merry with clear hearts. May the Christmas morning make us happy to be children, and the Christmas evening bring us to our beds with grateful thoughts, forgiving and forgiven, for Jesus' sake. Amen.

CAROL # 184 *Away In A Manger* (All 3 Verses)

CAROL # 197 *Angels We Have Heard On High* (Verse 1)

CAROL # 196 *While Shepherds Watched Their Flocks* (Verse 1)

BIBLE READING: LUKE 2: 8-20

UNISON PRAYER

Jesus, Light of the world, when I am afraid and unsure, comfort me with the light of your presence. When loneliness chills me, warm me with the light of your love. When the road ahead seems dark, guide me with the light of your way. When I don't understand and my thoughts are unclear, fill me with the light of your wisdom. When I seem spent like a candle consumed, replenish me with the light of your life. Then, so filled with your light use me, so that I, with You, may be a light for the world. (Father Wally Hyclak)

LIGHTING OF CANDLES

CAROL #193 *Silent Night, Holy Night* (Verses 1 & 2)

POSTLUDE