

“Good News of Great Joy”

-A Christmas Worship Service

Opening Song (everyone): **Joyful (The One Who Saves)** by Brenton Brown

Welcome and fellowship (briefly as music still plays)

Wrap up song: **Joyful (The One Who Saves)** -everyone

“The News” -Screen Presentation (make video or use presentation software)

1. Project various bad news headlines from past year (with harsh noise)
2. Then put up these words (one word at a time) “death”, “evil”, “sorrow”, “unrest”, “fear”, “despair”. Then project this question: “Why doesn’t God do something?” (noise stops) Project: “He has!”

Music of next song starts. (Use bells ...ring in good news)

3. Then project “Do not be afraid. I bring you good news of great joy that will be for all the people. A Savior has been born to you; He is Christ the Lord.”

Song (everyone): **We Have a Savior** by Hillsong

Narrator 1: Because of sin, life on earth is not as God created it to be. Adam and Eve did not trust that God’s ways were best and rebelled against Him. The human race continues to distrust God and pursue the things of this world without Him. The headlines show just how good we are at life on our own, don’t they? Sin results in chaos and fear and death

But don’t be afraid. We bring you good news of great joy that is for all people! God has given us what is needed to overcome evil, sin, despair, sorrow and fear- even though we don’t deserve His gift. He has given us Jesus! Today we are here to celebrate the hope and salvation that God sent to earth on Christmas. We are here to worship Him together as His people. We want you to sing with us, respond when the words are on the screen. Feel free to stand or sit or kneel. Let us praise Him! He has not left us alone in our sin. He has given us Himself!

Song (everyone): **Joy to the World**

Narrator 1: How is Jesus the answer and help we need? Let's look to the Scriptures.

Reader 1: Matthew 1:18-25

Narrator 2: (on screen = "Jesus, Emmanuel") Betrayal, heartbreak, questioned reputations, and misconstrued appearances were just a few of the earthly problems that Joseph and Mary faced. Yet in light of God's revelation to each of them, they chose to believe and trust that God knew what He was doing. Jesus' name means "the Lord saves". Emmanuel, God with us, has come to earth to save us. He has come to heal the broken hearted and to set the captives of sin free. Don't be afraid. I bring you good news of great joy that is for all people!

People Respond: Jesus is with us. (Put these responses on the screen)

Song (everyone): **Emmanuel- Hallowed Manger Ground** by Chris Tomlin

Reader 2: Luke 2:1-7

Narrator 3: (on screen = "Light of the World") Talk about something not going as you would have planned! Today we would call this a new parent's nightmare: forced by an overpowering government to travel away from home; no vacancy at the hotel, when you really needed a place to stop; giving birth without your mom or a midwife on hand; going through labor in a dirty stable with smelly animals and a lot of germs. Makes you wonder if Joseph muttered "what else could go wrong today?" Our expectations and dreams of how things should be are often broken with the reality of circumstances, opportunities, and other people's choices. God wants us to trust Him in all circumstances. He is sovereign and has a plan. Jesus is the light in our darkness. He came to illuminate His truth to this world and to give us life. Don't be afraid. I bring you good news of great joy that is for all people.

People Respond: Jesus is the Light of the World.

Song (everyone): **O Little Town of Bethlehem**

Reader 3: Luke 2:8-12

Narrator 4: (on screen “The Promised One”) These shepherds would have heard of God’s promise before this night. A promised one would come--the Messiah, the Christ, the Anointed One. The Promised One would save and rule God’s people forever. But why had God been silent? His promise probably seemed like an empty wish passed down from generation to generation. In a broken, hopeless world, doubt and skepticism would have crept in, just like it does today. But God does not forget His promises and in His time, He will fulfill each one.

Responsive Reading with a leader: (on the screen)

Leader: Don’t be afraid. I bring you good news of great joy that is for all people. Unto us a child is born.

People: Unto us a son is given

Leader: And the government will be on His shoulders.

People: And He will be called Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace

Leader: Of the increase of His government and peace there will be no end.

People: He will reign on David’s throne and over His kingdom.

Leader: He will establish His kingdom and uphold it with justice and righteousness from that time on and forever. The zeal of the Lord Almighty will accomplish this.

People: Jesus is the Promised One

Special Music: **Unto Us** (Ladies Trio) by Hillsong

Reader 4: Luke 2:13-14

Narrator 5: (on screen “Prince of Peace”) Can there really be peace on earth? Well, it all comes down to the state of our hearts. Peace is a heart issue. God tells us to love our enemies and pray for those who hurt us. In this world that is hard! And how can we truly love all when our own hearts are in rebellion

against God? Jesus came to reconcile our hearts to Him. Our sins deserve God's wrath, so God came to take the wrath that we deserve upon Himself as He died on the cross. When we look to Him in faith, we are not striving against God anymore. We are reconciled and our hearts are now at peace with Him and the Holy Spirit gives us the power to love others. Peace begins with Jesus. So don't be afraid. I bring you good news of great joy that is for all people!

People respond: "Jesus is the Prince of Peace"

Song (everyone): **Silent Night** (2 verses/then scripture from Micah...)

Reader 5 (on stage): Micah 5:2,4,5 "But you, Bethlehem, though you are small among the clans of Judah, out of you will come for me One who will be ruler over Israel. He will stand and shepherd His flock in the strength of the Lord, in the majesty of the name of the Lord His God. And they will live securely, for then His greatness will reach to the ends of the earth. And He will be their peace.

Song (everyone): **Silent Night** (3rd verse)

Worship Leader- Prayer: Dear God, Thank you for being our peace. Thank you that through your death, we can be at peace with You. We also ask for you to give us peace in our messed up world. Calm our hearts. Help us to rest and trust in You. Amen

Worship Leader-(Scripture segue from 2 Thessalonians 3:16/ Colossians 3:15-16- put on screen) "Now may the Lord of peace Himself give you peace at all times and in every way." "Let the peace of Christ rule in your hearts, since as members of one body we were called to peace. And be thankful!"

Song (everyone): **Glory to God** by Lincoln Brewster

Reader 6: Luke 2:15-17

Narrator 6: (on screen "Lamb of God") The angel said that this baby lying in the manger was the Savior born to you. Did that mean the shepherds and others would be saved from the oppression of the Roman government, or saved from their poverty, or freed from the hardships of this world? Well, yes and no... or I should say, not yet. Jesus will come a second time to rule over

this physical earth. But before freedom from these earthly woes could be given, atonement had to be made. Mankind needed a way for our sins to be forgiven. A price must be paid for our redemption. Our sins' consequence is death, so God came to earth and died our death for us. Jesus became the Lamb of God, our sacrifice, and our substitute. On the cross, He took upon Himself our sin and gave us the way to be forgiven. When by faith we believe in the Lamb of God, we are declared righteous- free from sin and its consequences. That is good news! However, that is not all. Jesus did not only die. He also arose from the grave. God, in Christ, stepped into our chaos with a deliverance that everyone can share in His resurrection victory over death and the grave. Praise to the Lamb who is alive for us. Don't be afraid. I bring you good news of great joy that is for all people.

People respond: Jesus is our Savior, the Lamb of God.

Song (everyone): **This is Amazing Grace** by Phil Wickham

Reader 7: Colossians 1:19-22

Special Music: **Behold the Lamb of God** by Andrew Peterson/Laura Story

Communion Prayer: Dear God, thank you for being our sacrifice. Because of your justice, our sins deserve your wrath; yet because of your love, you did not want us to die that death. You became our substitute. Every tragedy in the world is nothing compared to the tragedy of the Holy God dying for guilty sinners. Thank you for giving your life. Thank you that through the power of Your death and resurrection, we have victory over the sin and death that burdens our hearts and world. Amen.

Communion

Special Music by Kids Choir: **O Lamb of God**

Reader 8: Matthew 2:1-3

Narrator 7: (on screen "King of kings, Lord of lords") Some people think this "good news of great joy" is actually bad news. Jesus is King of Kings and Lord of lords, but not all make the choice to bow to Him. Many, like Herod, feel threatened by someone else ruling their lives. Many hearts feel unrest. How

will a new king change things for me? So some, reacting like Herod, get angry and deceive themselves into thinking that they need to remain king of their hearts and not to trust in the Lord. But God wants all to respond to Jesus' birth as the good news that it is by bowing and confessing His Lordship. Like the Magi who desired to find Him and worship Him, we can give God our adoration and our treasures. Jesus is the worthy recipient of our trust and praise. You can trust Him to be King of your heart. Don't be afraid. I bring you good news of great joy that is for all people.

People Respond: Jesus is King of kings and Lord of lords.

Minister: God has given us life through His Son. And while His salvation is a free gift, it is a gift that must be received. You need to look to Jesus in order to overcome sin and have eternal life. If God is impressing upon your heart to believe in Him, we have people stationed around the room for you to talk to today. While we sing this next song, please go to one of them and share your decision. Or if you are overwhelmed with and fearful of the problems of this world and you desire to pray with someone, please use this time in song to go to one of these people and they will pray with you. Let us bow our hearts to the Lord.

Song (everyone): **Turn Your Eyes Upon Jesus/ O Come Let Us Adore Him**

Prayer for Offering: Lord in Heaven, thank you for giving yourself to us. Your love is extravagant and generous. Like the Magi gave of their treasures, we want to love you by giving of our self and our treasures today. Thank you for all that you have done for us. Amen.

Offering Collection /Preschool sings a Christmas song/ poem

Reader 9: Luke 2:17-20 and Matthew 2:10-11

Narrator 1: (on screen put "Good News") A life of joy and praise is the most appealing witness you and I will ever display to this lost and hurting world. This news of Jesus that brings us joy is for all people! When we can face the bad news of the world with a calm assuredness in God and with a peace that comes from trusting Him, the door opens for us to share this message of a Savior who came to give new life. Be joyful! Evil has been overcome! God has

intervened! Jesus has conquered sin and death and this world is not the end. God is with us. He is the light in our darkness. He is the promised Prince of Peace and Lamb of God. He is King and Lord! God is at work in our lives, even in the midst of chaos, and promises to bring us through. This is good news for today and everyday! Don't be afraid. I bring you good news of great joy that is for all people!

People Respond: A Savior has been born to us; He is Christ the Lord.

Closing Song (everyone): **Joyful (The One Who Saves)**