

CHRISTMAS DAY

# Our Dear CHRIST Enters In

In Our  
Hearts



- The **New Testament Reading**, Galatians 4:1-7, is spoken by the pastor or other worship leader:
- ¶ I mean that the heir, as long as he is a child, is no different from a slave, though he is the owner of everything, but he is under guardians and managers until the date set by his father. In the same way we also, when we were children, were enslaved to the elementary principles of the world. But when the fullness of time had come, God sent forth his Son, born of woman, born under the law, to redeem those who were under the law, so that we might receive adoption as sons. And because you are sons, God has sent the Spirit of his Son into our hearts, crying, “Abba! Father!” So you are no longer a slave, but a son, and if a son, then an heir through God.
- The **Gospel Reading**, Luke 2:15-20 (NIV), is spoken by the pastor or other worship leader:
- ¶ 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.
- The **Sermon Hymn** is sung by the congregation to the tune Greensleeves 87 87 68 67, or a selection from the contemporary music song suggestions list at the end of the music guide for this service can be sung instead:

What child is this, who, laid to rest, on Mary’s lap is sleeping?  
 Whom angels greet with anthems sweet, while shepherds watch are keeping?  
 This, this is Christ, the King, whom shepherds guard and angels sing:  
 Haste, haste to bring him laud, the babe, the son of Mary!

Why lies he in such mean estate, where ox and ass are feeding?  
 Good Christian, fear; for sinners here the silent Word is pleading.  
 Nails, spear shall pierce him through, the cross be borne for me, for you;  
 Hail, hail the Word made flesh, the babe, the son of Mary!

So bring him incense, gold and myrrh, come, peasant, king to own him.  
 The King of kings salvation brings; let loving hearts enthrone him.  
 Raise, raise the song on high, the virgin sings her lullaby;  
 Joy, joy, for Christ is born, the babe, the son of Mary!

- The **Sermon** is delivered by the pastor:

**P** Our dear Christ enters in—this has been our proclamation for Advent and Christmas Eve. In our journey we have considered aspects of home life such as family trees, hurts and struggles, gender reveals and baby names, and the ever-flowing joy of coming home to Christ. On this day of our Lord’s birth, we will ponder fond memories associated with home that we feel in our hearts, much like Mary did on that first Christmas when the Bible says, “But Mary treasured up all these things, pondering them in her heart” (Luke 2:19).

All that being said, I have a guessing game for you to help you consider the special memories of this day. Here’s the first item I want you to consider. See if you can guess what I am from these clues.

- Clue #1: I love shelves and clouds. *(pause)*
- Clue #2: Sometimes I’m a random mess; other times, I’m quite organized. *(pause)*
- Clue #3: I bend and break, stare and glare. *(pause)*
- Clue #4: Don’t judge a book by its cover. *(pause)*
- Clue #5: Turn me or flick me and see. *(pause)*

What am I? A photo album!

Photo albums harbor fond memories of home that we feel in our hearts. Wedding nights and honeymoon trips. Getaways and graduations. Former residences and reunions. Grandparents and grandbabies. Planes, trains and automobiles. Nature and pets. Sunrises, sunsets and all kinds of weather in between.

I dug out an old photo album of mine and brought a few pictures of my own fond memories of Christmas, fond memories that we ponder in our hearts. *(Show examples from your own life.)*

- *(Show a photo from a Christmas play or Advent church event you were in as a child, if you have one, and describe.)*
- *(Show a photo of a favorite Christmas present you received, if you have one, and describe.)*
- *(Show a photo of a Christmas tradition in your family, if you have one, and describe.)*
- *(Show a photo of a pet of some kind you had, if you had one, and describe.)*
- *(Show a photo of your confirmation, if you have one, and describe.)*

- *(Show a photo of your first car, if you have one, and describe.)*
- *(Show a photo from your wedding day, if you are married, or a picture of your immediate family, if you are single, and describe.)*
- *(Show a photo from a memorable vacation and describe.)*
- *(Show a photo of you engaging in a favorite hobby and describe.)*
- *(Show a photo of the first church you served as pastor or your current church and describe.)*
- *(Show a photo of a family member who has passed away and describe.)*

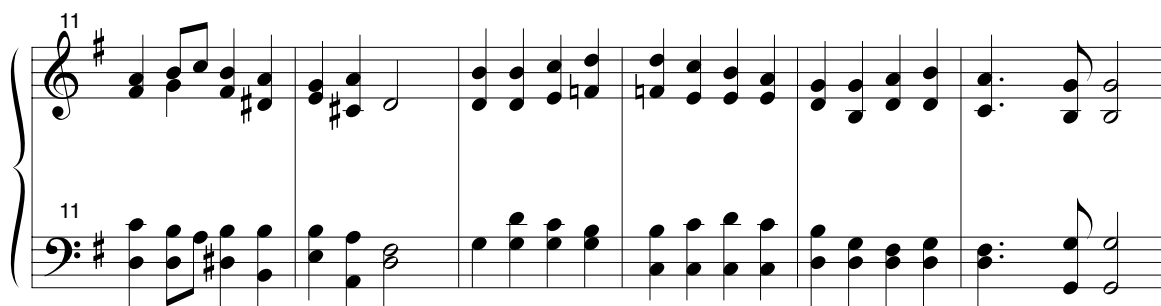
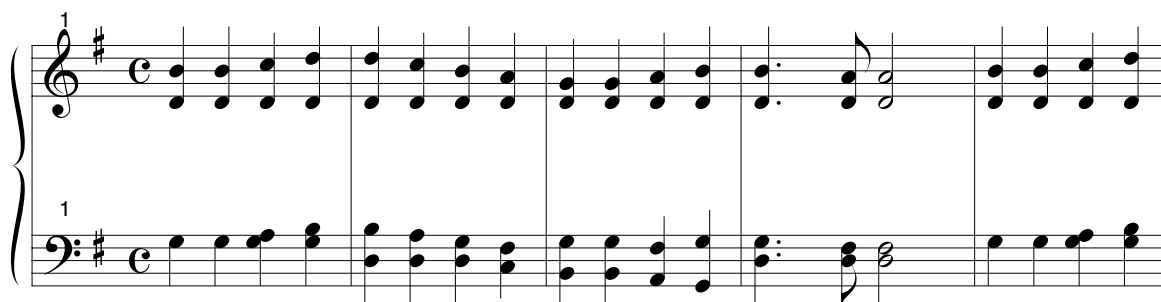
Even in hard and challenging times, God's gift of earthly life produces many fond memories.

What fond memories you feel in your hearts would you share from your own photo album? Share a fond memory of Christmas with the person next to you. *(Allow worshippers time to share a fond Christmas memory with someone next to them.)*

In our text today, we honor the final verses of Luke's Christmas account: Luke 2:15-20. If we are not careful, the significance of one detail can be overlooked—even missed. Let me read the passage again, noting each verse number. Luke records, starting with verse 15: 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." Verse 16 reads: So they hurried off and found Mary and Joseph, and the baby, who was lying in the manger. Verse 17: When they had seen him, they spread the word concerning what had been told them about this child. Verse 18: And all who heard it were amazed at what the shepherds said to them. Verse 19: But Mary treasured up all these things and pondered them in her heart. Verse 20: The shepherds returned, glorifying and praising God for all the things they had heard and seen, which were just as they had been told.

Did you catch the stark contrast between verses 18 and 19? When the surprise guests reach the manger and relay everything they had heard and seen about this Child from the angels, those gathered are "amazed" by what the shepherds have described. The word *amazed* (or *marveled*) is a favorite one of Luke's. He uses some form of *amazed* or *marveled* thirteen times in his gospel. The people *marvel* when Zachariah remains in the temple so long, knowing something special must be happening (Luke 1:21). They are *amazed* when Elizabeth nine months later gives birth to a baby boy in her old age and Zechariah writes on a tablet: "His name is John" (Luke 1:63-66). Joseph and Mary *marvel* at what Simeon speaks over their son at the temple (Luke 2:33). The crowds *marvel* at the gracious words that fall from Jesus' lips (Luke 4:22). The disciples *marvel* when Jesus calms the wind and waves (Luke 8:25).

Tune.....Hymn to Joy 87 87 D



- The **Hymn of Response** is sung by the congregation to the tune Hymn to Joy 87 87 D, or a selection from the contemporary music song suggestions list at the end of the music guide for this service can be sung instead:

Joyful, joyful, Christmas morning,  
Hail the Savior come to earth.  
Worshipping we come before thee,  
Praise-fully extol your worth.  
As the angels long before us,  
Sang the wonder of this day,  
We exclaim the joyous chorus,  
“Grace and peace have come to stay!”

Joyful, joyful, we adore thee,  
Lamb of Bethl’em’s manger stall.  
We have heard the heav’nly message,  
“Born a Savior for us all.”  
Like the shepherds coming to thee,  
We have found the King of Life.  
Manger Lamb once slain to save us,  
Risen Lord and Reigning Christ.

Joyful, joyful, we adore thee,  
King of kings and Lord of lords.  
On this Christmas Day we offer  
All the praise our heart affords.  
Holy Spirit, overflow us,  
Free our tongues to help us praise.  
Give new gifts for praising Jesus,  
Laud we him this Day of days!