

**December 24: Christmas Eve, 4:30p service** **Fourth Sunday of Advent**

Message: Song of Trust

Scripture: Luke 1:46-55 (Mary's Magnificat)

Text: Luke 2:14 "Glory to God in highest heaven, and peace on earth to those with whom God is pleased."

Memory Verse: "For my eyes have seen your salvation, which you have prepared in the sight of all nations." -Luke 2:30-31

Incorporated Carol: What Child is This? #219

**Opening Song:** *Emmanuel* Michael W. Smith -Sanctify

**Welcome:** -David

**Memory Verse:** -David

"For my eyes have seen your salvation, which you have prepared in the sight of all nations." - Luke 2:30-31

**Worship Music Set:** -Sanctify

*Once in Royal David's City*

*Come, Thou Long-Expected Jesus*

Worship Prayer -Andrew

**Offering:** -Andrew

**Advent Candle & Kid's Time** -Andrew

**Prayers & Lord's Prayer:** -Andrew

**Bumper:** Songs of Christmas

**Message:** Songs of Christmas: Song of Trust

**PP#1:** Songs of Christmas: Song of Trust

"Glory to God in highest heaven, and peace on earth to those with whom God is pleased." -Luke 2:14

Songs of Christmas: Song of Trust. Luke 2:14 "Glory to God in highest heaven, and peace on earth to those with whom God is pleased."

**PP#2: What Child Is This? UMH#219**

Let's take a look at a Christmas carol that goes back 500 years. Turn in your hymnals to number 219. This is a carol written to the tune of *Greensleeves*. Allegedly written in England by King Henry VIII in the 1500s, *Greensleeves* is one of those endearing melodies that captures the heart of each new generation. A hundred years after its composition, it was already famous, as Shakespeare mentioned it twice in his *Merry Wives of Windsor*.

This tune was used at Christmas in many ways over the years, and during the time of the American Civil War, the tune inspired William C. Dix in England to put Christmas words to it. It has endured because as a carol, it's music conveys the inner mystery and longing expressed in the words, "What child is this?"

This is the question we have when we finally arrive now at Christmas. With all the planning, and busyness, preparations that bring us to this point—Christmas is one of the most hectic and crazy times of the year. Don't you feel exhausted?, scattered? anxious? worried how things will go? details still swirling around in your head? uneasy about your finances? With all that finally brings us to this moment, when we leave all that at home and come out to worship, to look into the face of the baby born at Christmas, to remember again what it's all really about, this question becomes our deepest question: "What child is this?"

Take a look at the words. They are a poem, a song. As we've been learning, poetry is a higher form of communication. It's not just about making cognitive sense. It's trying to capture the cry of the heart. And so, we need to listen slowly, let the words seep in deeply. We need to experience it.

Verse 1 starts out with the pervasive question, of our minds, and our hearts: Who is this baby, really? Mary is cradling Him, and over head angels sing about Him ("Glory to God in highest heaven, and peace on earth to those with whom God is pleased"), and the shepherds gather around. The answer comes in the chorus: *This* is the Messiah, the Christ, the Savior! He is the King of heaven! Our response? Come in close, and bring Him our praise, honor, our worship.

Verse 2: Why would this King of heaven come in such humility? In a stable? We need to fear and tremble, because this baby is the Word of God. This baby came to die for our sins, so this baby, unable to speak, is God's Word, pleading for forgiveness and redemption for all of us sinners. This is Christ the King! Quickly, urgently, bring Him your glory, laud, and honor.

Verse 3: Like the magi, our response is to recognize that He is God, that He is King, and that He is sacrifice. We are spiritual peasants, without ability to secure salvation. And yet, because of Christmas, we peasants get to come and receive—to own for ourselves—the salvation that the King of Kings brings.

**PP#3: Image of the Grinch's growing heart breaking the viewer when it grew to 3X.**

One of our family's traditions for Christmas day to watch *How the Grinch Stole Christmas*. Remember the scene of his transformation? His heart grows three times in size...and breaks the little viewer! The baby born at Christmas does this to us! He grows our hearts, making us able to love again, transforming our dried up, hopeless hearts into living, beating, throbbing hearts full of love for Jesus, and for others. We invite this Jesus in to be enthroned in our lives, in our hearts.

This is Christ the King! Hurry, bring Him your hearts. Turn to Him, trust Him with your life.

**PP#4: What Child Is This? UMH#219**

As an act of worship, it is suggested that this song be sung by a solist singing the verses, who asks the questions. Then, the whole congregation answers the questions by singing the refrain. So, I'm

going to ask Rebekah to come and lead this song, asking the questions that are on our hearts. Then, we all answer her questions, in singing the refrain. Rebekah?

[Sing through the song.]

**PP#5: Songs of Christmas: Song of Trust**

Our song today is a song of trust. Trust is faith that is more simply accepting a truth. It is faith that is more than just acknowledging or accepting. Trust is faith that opens our heart's door and invites the baby in. It is trusting in this Jesus for our salvation. It is giving Him our sin, our need, our brokenness. It means not fearing whatever we may face. It is being at peace, inner peace, because the Prince of Peace rules in our hearts. We need not fear even death, because this Jesus came to die our death and earn for us resurrection. This is why we can have peace...peace like only Jesus can give. Even death is safe when we trust Jesus to take us through it. So, trust is choosing to align our lives to His plan: living His way, giving Him our days ahead to do and be as He recreates us to do and be.

**PP#6: Luke 1:39-45 (CEB)**

39 Mary got up and hurried to a city in the Judean highlands. 40 She entered Zechariah's home and greeted Elizabeth. 41 When Elizabeth heard Mary's greeting, the child leaped in her womb, and Elizabeth was filled with the Holy Spirit. 42 With a loud voice she blurted out, "God has blessed you above all women, and He has blessed the child you carry. 43 Why do I have this honor, that the mother of my Lord should come to me? 44 As soon as I heard your greeting, the baby in my womb jumped for joy. 45 Happy is she who believed that the Lord would fulfill the promises he made to her."

This Christmas song of trust was first sung by Mary, Jesus' mother, some months *before* Christmas. It comes when Mary first worships because of Christmas. It's the moment that the pregnant Mary invites her yet unborn baby into her heart as her Savior. Mary and her cousin Elizabeth celebrate Christmas early!

The angel announces to Mary that she has been chosen to be the mother of the savior. She willingly accepts, in wonder and awe. But it was when she visits Elizabeth that it becomes real for her, and she puts her heart's trust in her baby.

**PP#7: Luke 1:39-45 (CEB)**

46 Mary said [sang],  
 "With all my heart I glorify the Lord!  
 47 In the depths of who I am I rejoice in God my savior.  
 48 He has looked with favor on the low status of His servant.  
 Look! From now on, everyone will consider me highly favored  
 49 because the Mighty One has done great things for me. Holy is His name!

If you look in your Bibles to Luke 1, you can see that Mary's response, what she said, is written in the shape of poetry. That's because it's a song! It has rhythm and rhyme in the original language. She doesn't just *think* or *say* these words, she expresses them with her whole being! She bursts out in song of trust!

In Church Tradition, this is called the Magnificat, because the first word, in Latin, is "magnify the Lord" or *magnificat*.

Turn to verse 46, so we can let it seep into our souls.

“Mary said [sang, ‘I magnify the Lord...],

‘*With all my heart* I glorify the Lord!’” Do you see how these are no mere words coming out of her mouth? It is a song of trust effusing from her whole being!

“‘*In the depths of who I am* I rejoice in God my savior. He has looked with favor on the low status of His servant. Look! From now on, everyone will consider me highly favored because the Mighty One has done great things for me. Holy is His name!’”

This was Mary’s Christmas! She was already there! Have you ever wondered what was going through Mary’s head that night in Bethlehem, a few months later when she was holding her new baby? I can tell you: she was still singing this song!

Tonight is our Christmas. And to celebrate our Christmas, let’s join with Mary singing this song of trust. Make this be the cry of your heart tonight. “With all my heart [–your heart–] I glorify the Lord! In the depths of who I am I rejoice in God my savior. [Merry Christmas!] He has looked with favor on the low status of [you] His servant. Look! From now on, everyone [around you, who knows you] will consider [you] highly favored because the Mighty One has done great things for [you]. Holy is His name!” Say that with me, “Holy is His name!” Ready?

“**Holy is His name!**” Again, “**Holy is His name!**” Say it not just with your words, but from the depths of your heart! “**Holy is His name!**”

**PP#8:** Luke 1:46-55 (CEB)

50 “He shows mercy to everyone,  
from one generation to the next,  
who honors Him as God.

51 He has shown strength with His arm.

He has scattered those with arrogant thoughts and proud inclinations.

52 He has pulled the powerful down from their thrones  
and lifted up the lowly.

This is your song of Christmas, too!

Let’s keep singing! Verse 50, “He shows mercy to everyone, from one generation to the next, who honors Him as God. [By showing up as our savior,] He has shown strength with His arm. He has scattered those with arrogant thoughts and proud inclinations.” Those who think highly of themselves, who think they are okay on their own, who trust in themselves and who don’t believe they need God’s help, they are scattered. They experience defeat. They cannot make it. Verse 52, “He has pulled the powerful down from their thrones and lifted up the lowly.” The powers on earth that use and manipulate people, who wield control for their own benefit, who seem so strong and in charge, who get to call the shots and say what we can and can’t do, these abusive powers in our lives Jesus breaks. They no longer control us. We have a new King, a new Lord.

God’s saving work is to rescue His downtrodden and subjugated people, from their sin, from death, from the mighty powers of this world. He lifts us up, and gives us a new life. We still must spar with the mighty powers of this world, but they no longer claim control. We put our trust in a new Master, and His name is Jesus!

**PP#9:** Luke 1:46-55 (CEB)

53 “He has filled the hungry with good things  
and sent the rich away empty-handed.

54 He has come to the aid of His servant Israel,  
     remembering His mercy,  
 55 just as He promised to our ancestors,  
     to Abraham and to Abraham's descendants forever."

Verse 53, "He has filled the hungry with good things and sent the rich away empty-handed." They have their reward already. They put their trust in themselves, what they have, what they can control. But they are empty, and end life with nothing! We are hungry for Jesus, and we are filled!

Keep singing! Verse 54, "He has come to the aid of His servant Israel [through Jesus we are made a part of the chosen people!], remembering His mercy [Merry Christmas!], just as He promised to our ancestors, to Abraham and to Abraham's descendants forever." Through Jesus we are made a part of Abraham's line. Because of Christmas, we are also Abraham's descendants! And we have God's mercy, God's aid, God's rescue!

This is our song of Christmas. Mary started singing it before Christmas—and put her eternal trust in the baby she bore—and as she pondered these things in her heart all during the miracle of Christmas. The baby she delivered, was her Deliverer!

The song that Mary started, we also sing. It is our song of Christmas! We put our hope and trust in this Jesus. This is our response to Christmas. This is our worship. This is our heart's cry. The baby that Mary delivered, is our Deliverer, too! Holy is His name! "Haste, haste to bring Him laud, the babe, the son of Mary!"

We're going to usher in our Christmas celebration by singing.

You each have a candle. We're going to make this a candlelight service.

Take and hold your candle. As you do, consider how you need the light of God's salvation in your life. You are like this candle, able to burn, but you are without the light of Jesus. Then, in your mind's eye, go to Bethlehem. Position yourself at the entrance to the stable. Hear the animals. Feel the cold. As an unlit candle, look to the horizon, looking for hope, for life, for light. And then see, the weary couple: Joseph, leading Mary on a donkey. They come, Joseph is wide-eyed, frantically pulling on the reign. Mary's eyes are closed in pain as she moans through a contraction.

The donkey clops up near, and Joseph scurries into the inn. With a minute, he comes out and pulls Mary into the stable. The innkeeper hurries in next, they dash around, making a place, making ready. Mary lies down, with a face mixed in pain and joy, hope and anticipation. She hoarsely whispers to Joseph, "It's time! He's coming!"

And you take your unlit candle and go in. You lean in to catch a glimpse of the birth of salvation.

**PP#10:** *Image of Joseph holding the newborn Jesus.*

You know, it struck me for the first time this year: Joseph was not a direct part of Jesus' birth. He did not father the baby. His role was protection and provision. The baby was from Mary's own flesh. Joseph was a bystander. But then, when it came time for Jesus' birth, it was Joseph who reached down and was the first human to hold the Son of God in his arms...even *before* Mary! Joseph cleaned off the baby who came to clean him from sin.

We can place ourselves in this story in the person of Joseph. God worked the miracle of salvation on Christmas. We are bystanders, holding dark candles. But in faith, we get to receive Jesus, hold Him. And when we sing our song of trust, He lights our candles.

Look at your unlit candle, and as you hear the story once again, see Joseph and Mary coming into the village. Begin the Christmas song of trust.

**PP#11-12:** Luke 2:1-8

1 At that time the Roman emperor, Augustus, decreed that a census should be taken throughout the Roman Empire. 2 (This was the first census taken when Quirinius was governor of Syria.) 3 All returned to their own ancestral towns to register for this census. 4 And because Joseph was a descendant of King David, he had to go to Bethlehem in Judea, David's ancient home. He traveled there from the village of Nazareth in Galilee. 5 He took with him Mary, to whom he was engaged, who was now expecting a child.

6 And while they were there, the time came for her baby to be born. 7 She gave birth to her firstborn son. She wrapped Him snugly in strips of cloth and laid Him in a manger, because there was no lodging available for them.

**PP#13:** *Image for lighting the Christ Candle in the Advent Wreath.*

The Advent Wreath shows that we are ready, waiting, expectant. And on Christmas, the Savior, the Light of the World was born. We light the Christmas Candle as a sign of the birth of Jesus!

**PP#14:** *Image for lighting our individual candles in a Candlelight service.*

Jesus became our Savior, and He comes to each of us, offering us His Light. We respond in faith, in trust, by asking Him to forgive our sins, to be with us forever and making Him our personal Lord and Savior. As a symbol that Jesus shines in our hearts, everyone is invited to circle around the front of the church, and we will light our candles from the Christ candle. We will then continue to stand in a circle around the sanctuary—lit only with candle light—as a witness to the circle of faith of which we are all a part. Come, let's make a circle.

[The light is shared.]

Let us sing! [*Silent Night, Holy Night* #239, on the screens]

**PP#15-17:** Silent Night

1. 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.
2. Silent night, holy night, shepherds quake at the sight; glories stream from heaven afar, heavenly hosts sing Alleluia! Christ the Savior is born, Christ the Savior is born.
3. 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.

**PP#18:** *Image for sharing our light with others.*

Jesus is the light of the world. And we invite Him to be our Light as we receive Him in trust. Since we have His light in our hearts, we can blow out our candles.

As His followers we are called to receive His light and carry Him into the darkness of our world. We leave tonight, going into the world to be witnesses to the Good News of Christmas to all we meet. Others will come to know the life and light of Christ through us. As you go, please wish one another a Merry Christmas!

Go in peace. Merry Christmas!