

20/12/2020 Advent 3 Totland Carol Service Readings: Is.9, 2,6&7: Micah 5,2-5a: Lk.1, 26-38: Lk. 2, 1-20  
.Carols: Angels from the realms; O little town of Bethlehem; Silent night; once in royal David`s city.

## Carol Service.

### Intro.

Have you ever been asked: Why do we have Christmas? Why did Jesus come?

Let`s look at today`s readings to try to answer WHY.

### ISAIAH 9, 2, 6&7.

9,2 People walking in darkness & living in the shadow of death:

How did darkness & death come? It came from the very 1<sup>st</sup> people`s rebellion against a kind loving God who is concerned for people`s well being. Their rebellion was sin & hurtful to God. It severed their loving relationship, bringing death to all humans ever since.

The Bible tells us the story of how God acted to restore that relationship. He is the God of salvation Who rescues us. Jews celebrate at Passover His rescue from slavery in Egypt.

9, 6&7 The light dawns ....with the promise of a special Son called by extraordinary divine names: the Almighty, then the Trinity: Everlasting Father, Prince of peace, Wonderful counsellor. He will come from David`s descendants & reign with righteous justice for ever & ever.

### MICAH 5, 2-5a

5,2 Bethlehem Ephrathah – where do these names come from?1 Chron. 2&4, show Judah`s family line. Judah, meaning praise, was the 4<sup>th</sup> son of Jacob, & married Tamar. Their son Hezron had 2 sons, Caleb & Ram. Caleb`s 2<sup>nd</sup> wife was Ephratha. Their grandson was Hur whose son was Bethlehem. So Ephratha, which means fruitful, was the notable great grandmother of Bethlehem, ancestor of Caleb, Moses spy. Places were often named after people. Judah`s grandson Ram`s descendant Boaz, was an Ephrathite as was Naomi, his mother-in-law. Boaz & Ruth were the grandparents of Jesse, father of David. They all lived in Bethlehem, birthplace of David & Jesus.

5,2 The ruler to come came from eternity. 5,4: He will be the King fulfilling all the promises God made to King David; He will be the true Good Shepherd, laying down His life for the sheep.

5,5He will be their peace & security.

### LUKE 1, 26-38

Well! What an extraordinary encounter! A supernatural being startled this ordinary young girl & told her in fact she was very special. She pleased God immensely. Naturally she was afraid of this mighty angel. He calmed her down & told her the surprising news that she was to give birth to the long promised Messiah. She was to name Him, Jesus, which means Rescuer. He will inherit David`s throne, & be King for ever & ever. Mary was astonished as she was engaged but still single. The angel told her the child would be fathered by God through the Holy Spirit`s life giving power, & be called the Son of God. He also told her of old Elizabeth, now 6/12 pregnant.

Mary understood, & happily accepted that this was from God who did impossible things! She wasted no time. She hurried to Elizabeth who strangely became her pregnancy test`s +ve confirmation as she greeted Mary as the mother of her Lord!

Mary bursting with good news, joyfully sang her famous magnificat, praising God Who turns the world`s values upside down, & keeps His promises that He made to Abraham 2000 years before, that in his seed, all nations would be blessed.

### LUKE 2, 1-20

This last reading brings us to the birth of Jesus, to a homeless couple in a town seething with people there to register for Roman taxes. Joseph, Mary`s fiancé, had been assured by God through an angel, that it was OK for him to marry Mary. He was there in his home town, as he was descended from David. Because all the relatives` guest rooms (an alternative meaning of the word translated inn) were full, the couple were given the downstairs storeroom, used to house animals in winter. So Mary used a manger for her baby`s cot. He was the bread from heaven given to feed the world in a town called “House of Bread”.

Amazingly, it wasn`t to the spiritual shepherds of Israel, the lawyers & Pharisees who taught the scriptures, but to smelly outcast shepherds##Those# reared the sacrificial lambs for the Temple. God burst into the dark night & scared them stiff! They were blinded by the sudden light of the glory of overpowering angels. They were amazed at their joyful message: good news of a Saviour in a manger, born that night in Bethlehem. He was the Messiah, Christ the Lord, long expected by all in Israel. Then came a fantastic fanfare of thousands of angels glorifying God Who was bringing peace, that shalom good well being, a reconciliation between God & the people who pleased Him, after a long separation.

Once they`d gone, the shepherds ran excitedly to see this Wonder Babe, the sacrificial Lamb of God. Then they could not stop telling everyone their story, & people were amazed at this joyful news that God had come to rescue them.

Mary happily accepted the visit of these rough men & treasured their strange story which she later related to Luke.

**To Conclude.** 5 reasons

Why did Jesus come?^ You may quote John 3, 16: what tremendous love & compassion God had!

1. Through His great rescue plan foreseen in Eden, He fulfilled promises made 4000 years ago to Abraham, Isaac & Jacob & then to David to bless all nations through a Saviour, a servant King, an anointed Messiah to save us all from Satan`s power when we had gone astray.

Just as vaccination defeats the Covid virus, so Jesus` death on the cross defeated sin.

2. Jesus came to adopt us by grace into God`s family, like Joseph adopted Jesus as his son. In Eph 1,5 God predestined us to be adopted as His children through Jesus Christ....

3. Jesus came to divide people; those who turn to Him & accept Him as Lord, & those who reject Him.

4. Jesus came to serve. He is the servant King whose whole life was serving others, bringing wholeness of body, mind & spirit, through his ministry of healing, teaching, miracles, & casting out demons. In gratitude, we are to serve Him by serving others in need, with kindness.

5. Lastly, Jesus came to give us Holy Spirit life in all its fullness now & forever. The Good Shepherd enfolds us in his loving arms, as He has promised to be with us always, in this life & the next, our Emmanuel.

**Amen.**

**Let`s Pray.**

Thank you, Heavenly Father for loving us so much that at Christmas, His birthday, You sent us your fantastic precious Son, Our Lord & Saviour Jesus Christ who also amazingly loved us to death to take away our sins & bring us back to you forever. You broke into history & changed the world.

Please give us grace so to pass on your loving kindness to others that they will want to come to know you too. We ask in Jesus` precious Name. **Amen.**

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Messianic Jews believe it was in September during the Feast of Tents, that Jesus was born, taking on the tent of human flesh. That was probably when the shepherds were out in the fields. In winter, the sheep would be inside shelters overnight.