



And So It Was...

Hymn Sabbath

December 24, 2005

Glendale City

Seventh-day Adventist Church

Hymn Sabbath

10:55 am – 12:00 pm

Prelude Christmas Medley *arr. K. Smeal*

Entering of the Light Ellee & Vivian Lee Posner

Prayer, Welcome, and Greeting Mitchell Henson

The noise and the bustle began earlier than usual in the village. As night gave way to dawn, people were already on the streets. Vendors were positioning themselves on the corners of the most heavily traveled avenues. Store owners were unlocking the doors to their shops. Children were awakened by the excited barking of the street dogs and the complaints of donkeys pulling carts.

The owner of the inn had awakened earlier than most in the town. After all, the inn was full, all the beds taken. Did anyone mention the arrival of the young couple the night before? Did anyone ask about their welfare? Did anyone comment on the pregnancy of the girl on the donkey? Perhaps. Perhaps someone raised the subject. But, at best, it was raised, not discussed. There was nothing that unusual about them. They were, possibly, one of several families turned away that night.

Besides, who had time to talk about them when there was so much excitement in the air? Augustus did the economy of Bethlehem a favor when he decreed a census should be taken. Who could remember when such commerce had hit the village?

No, it is doubtful that anyone mentioned the couple's arrival or wondered about the condition of the girl. They were too busy. The day was upon them. The day's bread had to be made. The morning's chores had to be done. There was too much to do to imagine that the impossible had occurred.

*God had entered the world as a baby.**

Hymn (Standing) "Away In A Manger" **No. 124**

Away in a manger, no crib for a bed,
The little Lord Jesus laid down His sweet head.
The stars in the bright sky looked down where He lay,
The little Lord Jesus asleep on the hay.

The cattle are lowing, the baby awakes,
But little Lord Jesus no crying He makes.
I love Thee, Lord Jesus! look down from the sky,
And stay by my side till the morning is nigh.

Be near me, Lord Jesus; I ask Thee to stay
Close by me forever, and love me, I pray.
Bless all the dear children in Thy tender care,
And fit us for heaven, to live with Thee there.

He looks like anything but a king. His face is prunish and red. His cry, though strong and healthy, is still the helpless and piercing cry of a baby. And he is absolutely dependent upon Mary for his well-being.

Majesty in the midst of the mundane. Holiness in the filth of the sheep manure and sweat. Divinity entering the world on the floor of the stable, through the womb of a teenager and in the presence of a carpenter.

Meanwhile, the city hums. The merchants are unaware that God has visited their planet. The innkeeper would never believe that he had just sent God into the cold. And the people would scoff at anyone who told them the Messiah lay in the arms of a teenager on the outskirts of their village. They were all too busy to consider the possibility.

*Those who missed His Majesty's arrival that night missed it not because of evil acts or malice; no, they missed it because they simply weren't looking.**

Carol "Lo, How A Rose E'er Blooming" **No. 131**
Kemp Smeal, piano

Children's Corner Denise Kasischke

Worship by Giving Denise Kasischke
Morning Offering
Offertory "Mary, Did You Know?"
Susan Mills, soloist *M. Lowry*

The omnipotent, made himself breakable. He who had been spirit became piercable. He who was larger than the universe became an embryo. And he who sustains the world with a word chose to be dependent upon the nourishment of a young girl.

God as a fetus. Holiness sleeping in a womb. The creator of life being created.

God was given eyebrows, elbows, two kidneys, and a spleen. He stretched against the walls and floated in the amniotic fluids of his mother.

God has come near.

He came, not as a flash of light or as an unapproachable conqueror, but as one whose first cries were heard by a peasant girl and a sleepy carpenter. The hands that first held him were unmanicured, calloused, and dirty.

No silk. No ivory. No hype. No party. No hoopla.

Were it not for the shepherds, there would have been no reception. And were it not for a group of stargazers, there would have been no gifts.

*Angels watched as Mary changed God's diaper. The universe watched with wonder as The Almighty learned to walk. Children played in the street with him. Pushed him, held his hand, danced with him. Jesus may have had pimples. He may have been tone-deaf. Perhaps a girl down the street had a crush on him or vice-versa. It could be that his knees were bony. One thing's for sure: He was, while completely divine, completely human.**

Anthem

"Sing We Now of Christmas"

arr. F. Prentice

But some question the story. They just can't or won't believe it. How could it be they wonder? Surely it's a nice tale. Much like the stories of the Brothers Grimm. Something to comfort ourselves with when things go badly. A way to escape a sometimes bleak reality. Surely there is no harm in such a tale.

"But is it true?" some persist. "Can you prove it?" Let's be honest—no we can't! We can't prove that the birth of Jesus as both human and divine actually took place anymore than we can prove that love exists. There is plenty of evidence for both, but prove it?

Perhaps a better question is, "Do you want to believe? Do you want it to be true?" In the course of history, billions of people have believed and have been blessed by that belief. When you think of it, most of the things we choose to believe are not subject to proof.

Ministry of Music

"Christmas Fanfare"

Brass Quintet

Craig Mohr, Rich Ramsey, *trumpet*;
Rachel Berry, *horn*; Dave Ryan, *trombone*;
Scott Sutherland, *tuba*

Carol Medley (Standing)**"O Little Town of Bethlehem"****No. 135**

O little town of Bethlehem,
How still we see thee lie!
Above thy deep and dreamless sleep
The silent stars go by;
Yet in thy dark streets shineth
The everlasting light;
The hopes and fears of all the years
Are met in thee tonight.

How silently, how silently
The wondrous gift is given!
So God imparts to human hearts
The blessings of His heaven.
No ear may hear His coming;
But in this world of sin,
Where meek souls will receive Him still,
The dear Christ enters in.

"Angels from the Realms of Glory"**No. 119**

Angels from the realms of glory,
Wing your flight o'er all the earth;
Ye, who sang creation's story,
Now proclaim Messiah's birth;
Come and worship, Come and worship
Worship Christ, the newborn King.

Sages, leave your contemplations,
Brighter visions beam afar;
Seek the great Desire of nations;
Ye have seen His natal star;
Come and worship, Come and worship
Worship Christ, the newborn King.

"Hark! the Herald Angels"**No. 122**

Hark! the herald angels sing,
"Glory to the newborn King;
Peace on earth, and mercy mild,
God and sinners reconciled!"
Joyful, all ye nations, rise,
Join the triumph of the skies;
With th'angelic host proclaim,
"Christ is born in Bethlehem!"

Refrain:

Hark! the herald angels sing,
"Glory to the newborn King!"

Christ, by highest heaven adored,
Christ the everlasting Lord;
In the manger born a king,
While adoring angels sing,
"Peace on earth, to men good will;"
Bid the trembling soul be still,
Christ on earth has come to dwell,
Jesus, our Immanuel!

City Church Announcements

Anthem "Hallelujah Chorus" *G.F. Handel*

And so it was...Said without any self consciousness or doubt. And so it was...A fact of history for those who need facts. And so it was...for those who love the story, those who want to believe, who need to believe. Faith and belief are words we stake our lives on every day.

When you took your last airline flight or rode a bus or a taxi, did you ask the pilot or driver for his certification? While under the surgeon's knife were you sure that she was well rested, sharp, dexterous? Of course not! We hope they were; we believe they were; we trust they were all that we believed about them. Competent, well trained, emotionally sound, committed to their profession, on top of their game, doing their best for us. We believe. We trust. And so it was....invites us to believe, to accept, to have faith and to live the life of faith.

Harp Duet Carol Medley
"Jesu, Joy of Man's Desiring" *J.S. Bach*
Duquessa & Monique McGuffin

From this Christmas Story, this faith, this belief, this yearly reminder, let us take confidence. Let us devote ourselves anew to live an active, vibrant faith. For if the Christmas Story is true and today we say we believe—it is. Then everything is different; the way we record history in B.C./A.D.; the way we approach death; the way we live on a daily basis; the way we think.

We are not just shepherds tending sheep—we are messengers. We are not just star gazers—we are truth seekers. We are not just workers going about our routine—we are people of faith who believe the most wonderful thing has happened: God became one of us, one with us, and nothing will ever be the same. Everything is different.

And so it is...

Special Music "My Grown Up Christmas Wish" *A. Grant*
Jesse Martin, *soloist*

Benediction Mitchell Henson

Postlude "In Dulci Jubilo" *J.S. Bach*

** Excerpts from "God Came Near" by Max Lucado*

Flowers. Today's flowers are given in honor of Warren Dale's birthday.

Year End Contributions. If you are planning to make a contribution to the church before the end of the year please drop it off to the church office mail slot by Sunday night, January 1st or by appointment (818) 244-7241.

Interested? in a noonday Bible Study and discussion group from 12:00 p.m. to 1:30 pm....give us your name on a pew card and give us a day of your choice: Monday or Wednesday. Or call the church office.

Thanksgiving 2005. Glendale City Church this holiday responded with much love. Our generosity allowed the Pathfinders to deliver over forty food baskets to needy families in Glendale. A large portion of the families were from Cerritos Elementary School. We received a thank you letter from its principal, Janice Hanada. This letter is posted in the Narthex.

Rose Parade. The Glendale Pathfinders will again host guests in first-class style at the Tournament of Roses Parade on Monday, January 2nd. This very special day includes round trip transportation from Glendale, a hot gourmet breakfast on the parade route and seats very close to the beginning of the parade. Departure time is 6:15 a.m. Seating is limited. Contact Warren Dale at 818/384-2820.

Share Your Memories. Throughout 2006 as a part of our Centennial Celebration, we invite individuals and families to share their pictures and mementos from their time at City Church in the display case located in the Narthex. This case will be made available on a first-come, first-served basis. Sign up now! Contact Victoria at the church office.

Churches Without Walls

Recruitment Notice

There have been ten families that have volunteered for Disaster Training so far. Thank you for your willingness to participate in this multi-church effort. On behalf of Vallejo Drive, Eagle Rock, Sunland-Tujunga, Glendale Adventist Medical Center, and Glendale City Churches, thank you.

Event Calendar

Today	Elder of the Day Denise Kasischke
January 27	Christian Edition Concert
January 28	Special Guest Speaker: Gordon Bietz

Sunset tonight – 4:43 p.m. Sunset next Friday – 4:48 p.m.