

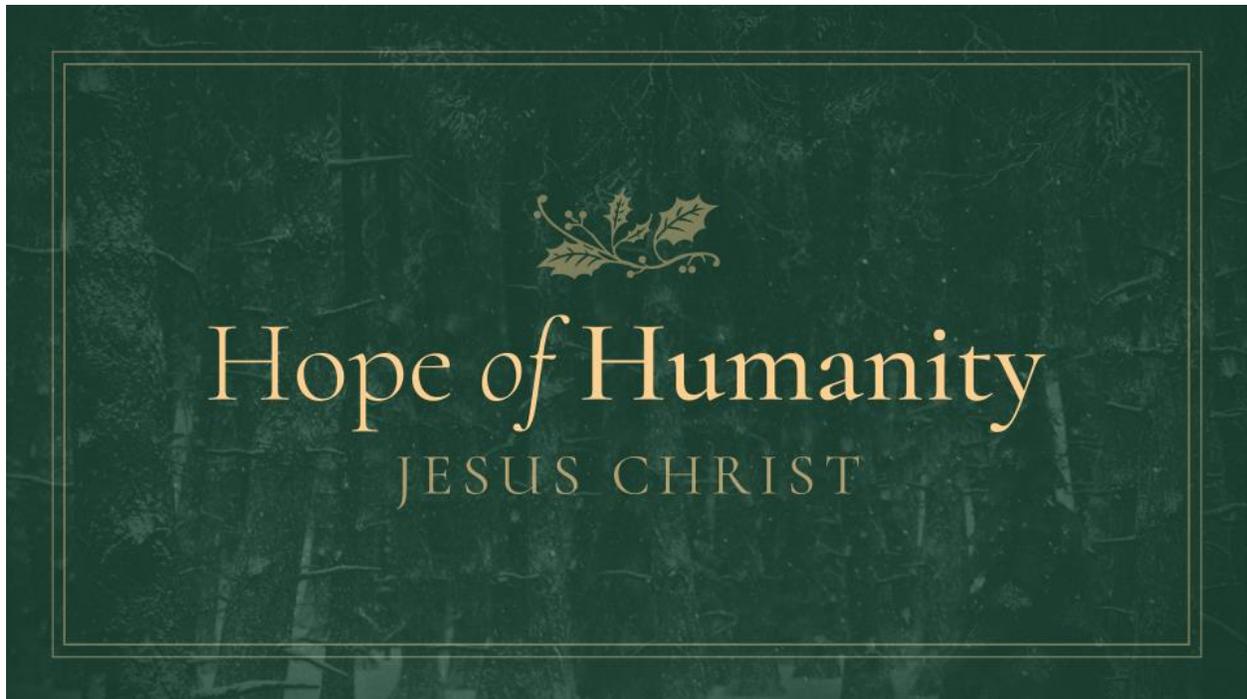
# HOPE

## CHRISTMAS WORSHIP SERIES

*Developed by Caleb French*  
*for Northwest Valley Baptist Church*  
*December 2019*

# HOPE OF HUMANITY

SCRIPTURE		MUSIC
SERVICE	Genesis 3:14–15; Matthew 1:18–21	Come, Behold the Wondrous Mystery Good Christian Men, Rejoice Joy to the World
DAILY	Genesis 3:1–19 Psalm 51:1–12 Luke 3:23–38 Luke 2:1–7 Romans 3:10–18 Romans 5:12–21 1 Corinthians 15:20–28	My Jesus, Fair O Love Divine See Amid the Winter Snow Thou Who Wast Rich What Wondrous Love Is This <b>Carol of Joy (Forrest) SATB</b>



# INTRODUCING THIS THEME

## *Didactic Reading*

The Bible tells us that God designed the human race to enjoy a relationship with Him. That's what you were made for. But the very first people, Adam and Eve, broke the command of God. The Enemy of God tempted them, and they *sinned*. Adam was God's appointed head of creation, so his sin dragged all of creation into a curse. We call this sad moment in our history "the Fall."

We are all descendants of Adam, so we are all born with that same sinful heart—a heart that wants to break laws and be our own god. Psalm 51 says we are sinners *from the womb*! No wonder our world is such a violent, selfish mess! We're "born that way." And since it's in our nature, we all make thousands of sinful choices. According to Romans 3, "all [of us] have sinned." The natural consequence of all of this will be an ongoing, eternal death; that's what happens when people designed to commune with God are separated from Him forever. This is bad news for us.

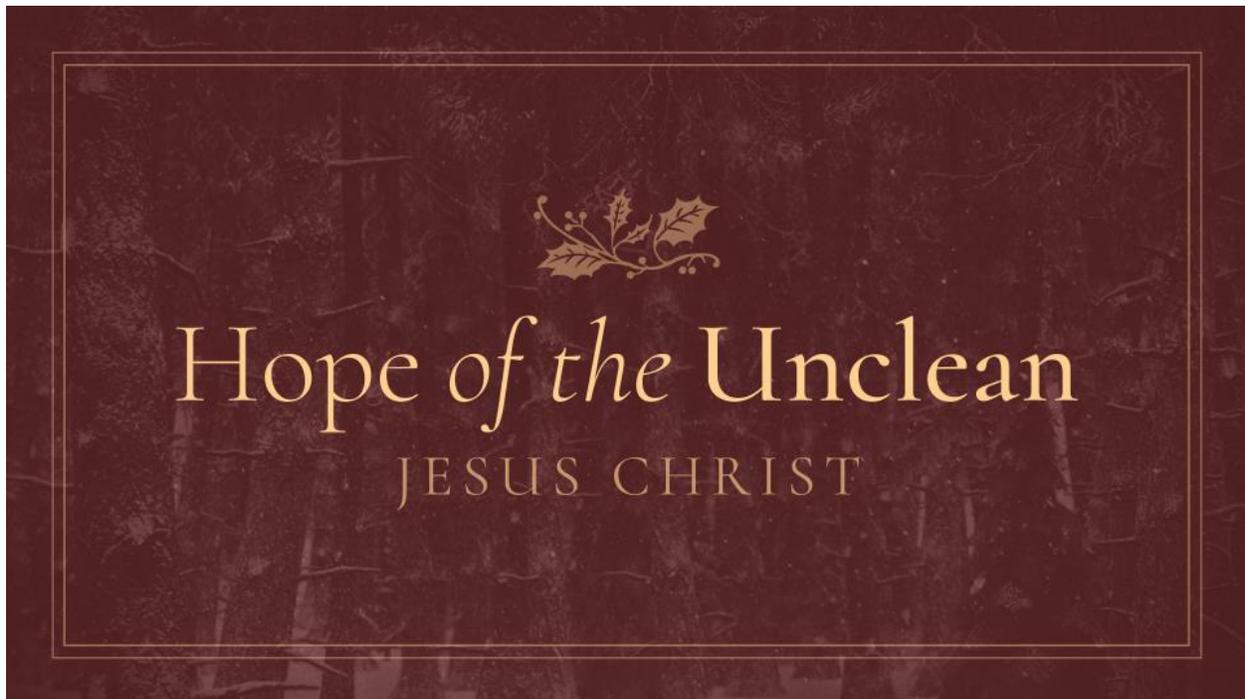
But at the very moment Adam dragged sin into God's world, God also made a hope-filled promise: a Man will be born of a woman into this same human race to crush God's Enemy, Satan, and rescue mankind from their inborn sin and resulting death.

That Man did eventually appear. Many Christians celebrate His miraculous birth every December. He was born of a virgin, the Bible says; He did not inherit from Adam the sinful nature you and I have. The last part of the Bible, the New Testament, presents Jesus as a Second Adam who succeeds where Adam failed. "As in Adam all [died]," 1 Corinthians 15 says, "in [Jesus] Christ shall all be made [to live]."

*Does the human race look like a big mess? Do you cringe at the darkness in your own heart? There is hope for us—for you. Jesus is the one member of the human race who can turn death and darkness into life and light. Today we worship Him—the Hope of Humanity.*

# HOPE OF THE UNCLEAN

SCRIPTURE		MUSIC
SERVICE	Galatians 4:1-7	Angels From the Realms of Glory Come, Ye Sinners, Poor and Needy <sup>1</sup>
DAILY	Exodus 40:22-35 Leviticus 11 Galatians 4:1-5 Luke 2:21-24 Matthew 5:17-20 Hebrews 10:11-18 Galatians 3:21-25	Lamb of Glory His Robes for Mine <sup>2</sup> There Is a Fountain Filled with Blood Come, Behold the Wondrous Mystery <sup>3</sup> Stricken, Smitten, and Afflicted <sup>4</sup> <b>Come, Thou Long-Expected Jesus</b> <b>(arr. French) SATB</b> <b>Holy Child (Schram) SATB</b>



<sup>1</sup> “If you tarry till you’re better, you will never come at all.” (Law shows our sinfulness and need for a Savior.)

<sup>2</sup> God’s daunting Law, Christ mastered in my stead.

<sup>3</sup> “Christ, the great and sure fulfillment of the Law—in Him we stand.”

<sup>4</sup> Isaiah 53 prophesies are fulfilled in Jesus. “Mark the sacrifice appointed.”

## INTRODUCING THIS THEME

### *Didactic Reading*

After Adam sinned and humanity fell, God promised that a son of Eve would be born to defeat God's Enemy. Centuries later, in fulfillment of another hope-filled promise, the descendants of Abraham gathered at the foot of Mount Sinai. There, amid fire and thunder, Moses their leader received divine instructions to govern Israel, this new nation chosen to be God's unique people. This Law divided animals and activities into two categories: lawful and unlawful—clean and unclean.

God also gave plans for a special Meeting Tent, or "Tabernacle"—a place for God's glory to dwell in the midst of His people. But when God's glory filled the newly constructed Tabernacle, Moses himself could not enter—*he was unclean*. So God gave more laws; He set up a system of solemn blood sacrifices that could cover the sins of the unclean. A permanent Temple eventually replaced the Tabernacle; here priests continued to offer sacrifices for the sins of the people.

But decades of disobedience turned to centuries of unfaithfulness. It seemed no sacrifice could ever completely cover the uncleanness of the nation. The Law given to govern them had become their indictment of death as, year after year, one after another, Israel violated God's Law.

The Bible tells us this was actually one of the Law's primary purposes—to quantify our wickedness. The moral laws of God condemn us all as unclean, unfit to fellowship with Him. We may console ourselves that we are "better than those people," but the Law we have broken crushes us with the real verdict: unclean! Like Moses, we cannot go into God's presence as we are, no matter how hard we try.

*But what if someone did keep the Law to the letter? What if there was a permanent sacrifice that would shed atoning blood and declare us permanently clean? "Thanks be to God for His unspeakable gift!" "When the fullness of the time was come," the Scriptures say, "God sent forth His Son, made of a woman, made under the Law, to redeem them that were under the Law." Jesus entered the world under this impossible weight of the Law's demands, and one by one, He obeyed them all. He was clean.*

Luke's gospel records the first act of obedience to the Law: the infant Jesus is brought to the Temple to be dedicated according to the Law. But the story continues. His sinless blood flowed for the unclean: you and me. At Christmas, we celebrate the appearance of God's Son, Who did not leave the unclean in our filth but came to keep the Law perfectly in our place and to atone for our sins with His blood. Praise God for sending the Fulfiller of the Law! Today, worship Jesus Christ, the Hope of the Unclean.

# HOPE OF ISRAEL

SCRIPTURE		MUSIC
SERVICE	Luke 1:26–33	Come, Thou Long-Expected Jesus O Come, O Come, Emmanuel
DAILY	2 Samuel 7:1–29 1 Chronicles 17:1–27 Isaiah 9:1–7 Luke 1:26–33 Luke 2:1–12 Matthew 2:1–6 Mark 15:1–28	O Little Town of Bethlehem (FOR. GREEN) The Birthday of a King There Is a Redeemer <sup>5</sup> <b>A Spotless Rose (Greer) SATB</b> <b>Emmanuel Shall Come (Forrest) SATB</b>



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<sup>5</sup> “precious Lamb of God, Messiah”

## INTRODUCING THIS THEME

### *Didactic Reading*

At the time God called Israel to be His special nation, most of the surrounding nations were ruled by human kings. These ancient kings were usually larger-than-life military heroes their people looked to for economic success, military might, and justice in their land.

In the Law, God presented very different guidelines for Israel's kings. He forbade them all the things that the surrounding nations looked for in a king: taking military census, making strong alliances with foreign powers, and multiplying wives and wealth. Instead, God's role for the Israelite kings was to execute *God's* justice in the nation and lead the people in faithfulness to Him.

But as you might guess, Israel's kings did not fulfill their role well at all. Most had major flaws, and many even led the people *away* from God. But early on, God made a hope-filled promise to one of the first kings, David. One of his descendants would finally do what Israel's king was supposed to do: He would lead the people in perfect justice and loyalty to Jehovah. This king would be the Lord's "Anointed"—*Messiah*—and would establish David's kingly line forever.

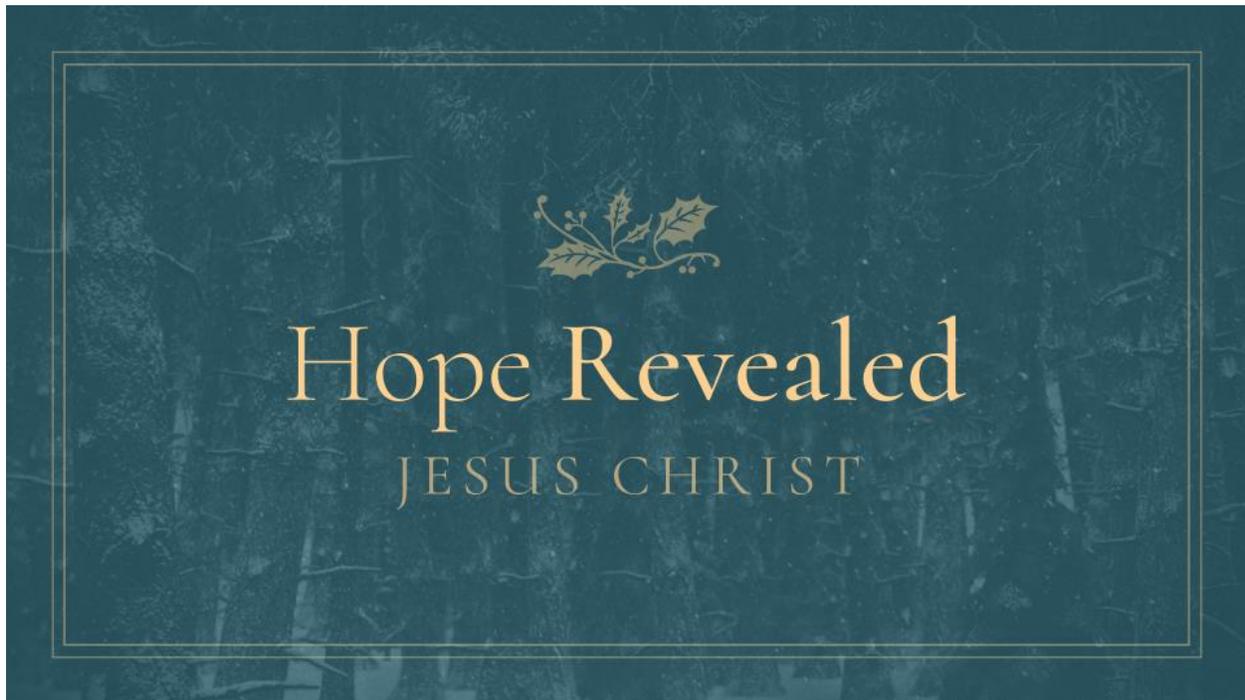
After God's promise to David, the prophets continued to foretell this Messiah's with incredible precision and detail. The famous words of Isaiah said He would be born "a child." "Of the increase of His government and peace there [would] be no end upon the throne of David." His birth would follow a sign in the heavens, and He would be born in "David's city, Bethlehem."

But when Messiah did arrive, His appearance was almost imperceptible to the nation. He was born into poverty, not the palace. But every detail of His appearance matched the prophecies of Messiah to the letter. The angel Gabriel was clear to Mary: her Son *was* the Anointed Messiah who would rule His people, the rightful King of the Jews.

*But why do we non-Jewish people celebrate the appearance of the Jewish Messiah?* The prophet Isaiah also foretold that God would send the Messiah to die a great sacrificial death to bear the sins of the people. By His obedience, the Lord's Anointed would be given kingly authority. After His resurrection, Jesus claims this universal authority when He sends His disciples to preach the good news of His kingdom to all nations.

We who have received Jesus as Lord and Savior are still in the middle of this story. Today we worship in gratitude that Israel's Messiah came to be our Savior, too. And we worship in hope that we will share in His eternal reign of peace and justice one day. Today, worship Jesus *Christ*, the Hope of Israel.

# HOPE REVEALED



SCRIPTURE		MUSIC
SERVICE	John 1:1–4, 10–14 (Corporate)	Be Thou Exalted <sup>6</sup> Fairest Lord Jesus <sup>7</sup> Hark! The Herald Angels Sing <sup>8</sup> In Christ Alone <sup>9</sup> O Come, All Ye Faithful <sup>10</sup> See the Christ Silent Night, Holy Night <sup>11</sup> Thou Didst Leave Thy Throne <sup>12</sup> Thou Who Wast Rich <sup>13</sup> What Child Is This <sup>14</sup> <b>Fullness of Grace (Getty, Getty, Townend) SATB</b>
DAILY	John 1:1–13 John 1:14–18 Matthew 1:18–25 Luke 2:15–19 John 2:1–11 Colossians 1:15–20 2 Corinthians 4:1–7	

<sup>6</sup> “One with the Father, co-equal in glory.”

<sup>7</sup> Son of God and Son of Man

<sup>8</sup> “Veiled in flesh, the Godhead see. Hail the Incarnate Deity. etc.”

<sup>9</sup> “my hope is found” / “Who took on flesh, fullness of God in helpless Babe”

<sup>10</sup> “Word of the Father, now in flesh appearing”

<sup>11</sup> “Son of God, love’s pure light.”

<sup>12</sup> “Camest ... with the Living Word”

<sup>13</sup> “God beyond all praising ... becamest man” / “stooping so low, thus sinners raising heav’n-ward”

<sup>14</sup> “Hail, hail the Word made flesh”

# INTRODUCING THIS THEME

## *Didactic Reading*

The Gospel of John describes Jesus' appearance differently than the other gospels. Instead of telling us the facts about Jesus' birth, John tells us who He is: the "Word" from God. That may seem like an unusual title. What does John mean?

God had spoken words to Moses about creation and Adam's Fall and had given the Law at Mount Sinai. God had spoken promises to Adam, to Abraham, to Moses, and to David. He had revealed Himself and spoken to the prophets. So many of God's words pointed in hope to the future, toward the final piece of the story—the final expression that would fully explain His purposes and character to the world.

The whole Old Testament builds our excitement and desperation for this final Word to appear and reveal God to us in His fullness, without the limitation of flawed messengers and Divine distance.

Then Jesus appears. He is the Message—the final Word of God. John says, "the Word [Who] was God" Himself "was *made* flesh and dwelt among us." Though there is much fondness for the Baby Jesus this time of year in our society, the Christmas story in Scripture faces us with a wondrous miracle central to our faith: that Jesus is the Creator God of the universe, come into the world as a human being. Yet, as a man, Jesus' life and work reveal God in His fullness to us. In the beautiful Person of Jesus, "we [can behold] the glory of God" in its fullness and live.

All through His ministry, Jesus continually made this claim. If you wanted to disprove His claim, the first person you would ask is the person who knew Him best: His mom. She would know whether He consistently evidenced a divine nature. From the famous moment of His humble birth, to His childhood and teen years, to His taking on the family trade, she watched Him.

And for the skeptic, Mary is no help; after all she had seen of Him, she was one of Jesus' most devout disciples—*she believed* His claim to be God. At a wedding feast she and her son attended, when the servants have miscalculated and run out of wine to serve, Mary goes straight to Jesus to report the need. Then she tells the servants: "Whatever He is about to tell you, do it." She is confident He has power as God to work a miracle.

At Christmas, we join Mary in worshipping Jesus. We celebrate that Jesus and His work complete the revelation of God. He is God Himself, come to be a human baby like all of us. Worship in wonder! Jesus' birth is the fulfillment of all hopes—He is Hope Revealed, God Himself.

# HOPE OF THE LOWLY

SCRIPTURE		MUSIC
SERVICE	[Incorporated into Readings]	Angels We Have Heard on High
DAILY	[None]	Away in a Manger Go Tell It on the Mountain Infant Holy, Infant Lowly Joy Has Dawned O Come, All Ye Faithful O Little Town of Bethlehem (ST. LOUIS) Silent Night, Holy Night The First Noel Thou Who Wast Rich What Child Is This While Shepherds Watched Their Flocks <b>He Shall Save (Morgan) SATB</b>



*The following is a complete Christmas Eve carol service with readings, Scripture, and congregational carols. Service is designed for a male and female reader. In its current form, the service lasts about 40 minutes.*

O COME, ALL YE FAITHFUL (3)

PRAYER

## READING I: “INTO POVERTY” (LUKE 2:1-7)

**Male Reader:** Luke 2:1-7 – “And it came to pass in those days, that there went out a decree from Caesar Augustus, that all the world should be taxed. (And this taxing was first made when Cyrenius was governor of Syria.) And all went to be taxed, every one into his own city. And Joseph also went up from Galilee, out of the city of Nazareth, into Judaea, unto the city of David, which is called Bethlehem (because he was of the house and lineage of David) to be taxed with Mary his espoused wife, [who was] great with child. And so it was that, while they were there, the days were accomplished that she should be delivered. And she brought forth her firstborn son, and wrapped Him in swaddling clothes, and laid Him in a manger; because there was no room for them in the inn.”

**Female Reader:** Some of us are so familiar with these verses that we don’t hear them anymore. Did you miss it? We just found out that Jesus was born *below the poverty line*. Mary and Joseph are part of an occupied territory. When Rome says to relocate for a census, they have no freedom to refuse. This couple is from Nazareth; we know elsewhere in Scripture it was a *poor, rural village*. Mary and Joseph are also temporarily *homeless*; not even the inn has room for them. So they make do with what shelter they can find outdoors—maybe a stable or a partial cave, as best we can tell. Then in what was probably a discouraging turn of events, Mary goes into labor. When she delivers her son, they find a padded box—a feeding trough—for him to get his first night’s sleep. No money for a room, for a midwife, for a crib.

Can we tell this story Arizona-style? Imagine Mary and Joseph are from Globe, traveling by public transit to Queen Creek. When they arrive, no hotel they can afford has any rooms left, so they find shelter in an alley; their tiny apartment back home seems like a palace compared to this. While they are there, Mary goes into labor; somehow, with Joseph’s help, Mary delivers their son. Joseph finds an old plastic bin; they clean it out as best as they can, pad it with their winter coats and some nearby shrub leaves, and settle in for the night.

This is how the God of Creation chose to enter our world. Jesus was born into poverty.

O LITTLE TOWN OF BETHLEHEM (3)

AWAY IN A MANGER (1)

THOU WHO WAST RICH (2)

## READING 2: “TO THE POOR” (LUKE 2:8-14)

**Male Reader:** Luke 2:8-14 – “And there were in the same country shepherds abiding in the field, keeping watch over their flock by night. And, lo, the angel of the Lord came upon them, and the glory of the Lord shone round about them, and they were sore afraid. And the angel said unto them, ‘Fear not. For, behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy, which shall be to all people. For unto you is born this day in the city of David a Savior, which is Christ the Lord. And this shall be a sign unto you: ye shall find the babe wrapped in swaddling clothes, lying in a manger.’” And suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly hosts praising God, and saying, ‘Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good will toward men.’”

**Female Reader:** Did you miss it? When the announcement of Jesus’ birth could have gone to anyone in the area surrounding Jerusalem and Bethlehem, God announced it to shepherds. He announced it to blue-collar, minimum-wage, outdoor workers. And they were terrified! That’s why the angelic messenger had to calm them down: “Fear not!” This angel came with a good-news message—a “gospel message” of joy for all people, even the *night-shift shepherd* kind of people. A Savior had been born to *their kind of people*. “You will find this baby in a feeding trough.” The sign they were given confirmed it: this Savior isn’t rich. He cares about the poorest, and everyone on up—*all* people.

Arizona-style: God did not send angels to announce Jesus’ birth to the millionaire on a gated lot in Paradise Valley, though the gospel is for them, too; God announced it to the crew who does their landscaping in the wee hours of the morning. And He tells them they will find this Baby in a storage bin. Then these poor men got a glimpse into a majestic heavenly celebration. *They* are the ones who get to see the “big show” for the birth of the Savior of the world. God has come to dwell with ordinary people. He has come, in Jesus, to the poor.

THE FIRST NOEL (2)

ANGELS WE HAVE HEARD ON HIGH (3)

JOY HAS DAWNED (2)

## READING 3: “A CHILD FOR ALL” (LUKE 2:15-20)

**Male Reader:** Luke 2:15-20 – “And it came to pass, as the angels were gone away from them into heaven, the shepherds said one to another, ‘Let us now go even unto Bethlehem, and see this thing which is come to pass, which the Lord hath made known unto us.’ And they came with haste and found Mary, Joseph, and the [Baby] lying in a manger. And when they had seen it, they made known abroad the saying which was told them concerning this child. And all they that heard it wondered at those things which were told them by the shepherds. But Mary kept all these things and pondered them in her heart. And the shepherds returned, glorifying and praising God for all the things that they had heard and seen, as it was told unto them.”

**Female Reader:** The shepherds responded to the angel’s news and went to find Jesus. Sure enough, there was a child in Bethlehem who was sleeping in a feeding trough. But they didn’t stop there. They also shared this news with everyone; after all, the angel had said the joy of this Savior was for “all people.”

We are some of those people He came to save. The gift He offers is still being offered today: peace and acceptance with God by the sinless life, sacrificial death, and miraculous resurrection of Jesus. At Christmas, we celebrate the moment He entered human history as a poor child to a poor family, announced to poor shepherds. He is the hope of people who tend to be overlooked and forgotten. He is the Hope of the Lowly. He is *your* hope.

WHAT CHILD IS THIS (3)

PREPARED MUSIC: HE SHALL SAVE<sup>15</sup>

MESSAGE

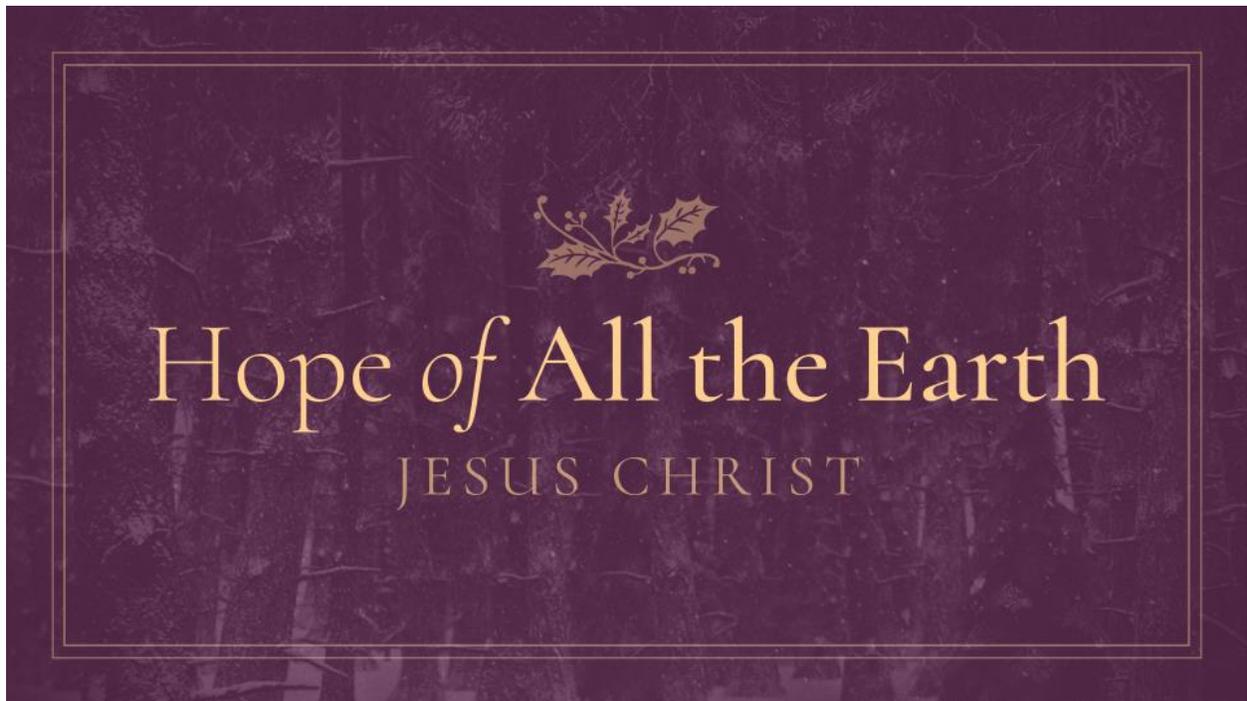
SILENT NIGHT (3)

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<sup>15</sup> Majesty Music vocal anthem by Megan and Adam Morgan

# HOPE OF ALL THE EARTH

SCRIPTURE		MUSIC
SERVICE	Revelation 21:1–7	Come, Thou Long-Expected Jesus Fairest Lord Jesus <sup>16</sup> Jesus Shall Reign Joy Has Dawned Joy to the World O Holy Night The First Noel We Three Kings Who Is He in Yonder Stall <b>On Christmas Night (Arr. Forrest) SATB</b>
DAILY	Luke 2:25–22 Colossians 1:19–20 1 Corinthians 15:20–28 Romans 8:18–25 Revelation 11:15–18 Revelation 21:1–7 Revelation 21:9–27	



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<sup>16</sup> Lord of the nations

# INTRODUCING THIS THEME

## *Didactic Reading*

In the Christmas story, we see one more way that the hope of Jesus reaches so much further than first-century Israel. Remember the wise men from the east? They were not Jews, and they were not living in Israel. But they had read and believed the hopeful promises of God in the Hebrew Scriptures, and they followed the star to seek the Christ Child. In their three gifts, we see beautiful symbols of Jesus' atoning death and royal destiny.

But what happened to them after this? The Bible doesn't say. "Being warned in a dream" of Herod's evil intent, they seem to rush out of Bethlehem and out of the story. It seems that God would have rewarded their seeking with an opportunity to put faith in Jesus Christ for a relationship with Him. One of two things likely happened: either they understood Jesus' identity from the start and put faith in Him right away, as His future disciples did; or the good news of Jesus Christ reached them in their homeland several decades later, as the first generation of disciples "turned the world upside down" with the gospel.

It's remarkable to imagine: about 40 years after an Israeli child was born in poverty, nation after nation of the Gentile world were hearing His name and the message of reconciliation with God through Jesus' atoning blood. The message of Jesus was bound to spread to the whole earth. For this Child was God, and in His coming He was on a worldwide mission to call people from all nations to Himself.

In His resurrection, Jesus was the beginning, the Firstborn, of a new creation. He is our hope that, not only our mortal bodies, but *all of creation* will one day be made new. In His glorified body, Jesus is seated now at the Father's right hand, awaiting God's appointed time to be united with His people from every tribe and tongue and nation, and to bring His reign of justice to the world.

But in the meantime, even now the gospel of Christ's kingdom is spreading through the earth. Imagine this plot of land 2000 years ago when Jesus was born. Now, centuries later, we gather to worship our unseen King Jesus. His message still spreads!

And one day His realm will fill this earth, remade for His eternal reign. One day the dwelling of God will be with man. One day the curse will be lifted, and all sorrows shall cease. We cannot fathom the unbridled, unfiltered joy of that kingdom. But we can try. And we can worship our true King: He is the Hope of All the Earth.



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