

BEHOLD GOOD NEWS GREAT JOY

A Christmas Service for Hope Community Church

Use this Christmas service with friends, family or as a personal devotional to celebrate and reflect. It is intended as a guide to spark conversations, remember the Good News and move us to worship Jesus.



Pray

Adore God (tell Him how wonderful He is) & **Ask God** (to encourage and lift up your heart)



Sing and/or Listen to a Christmas hymn

Some available on [hopecc.com/christmas](https://www.hopecc.com/christmas) or use your favorite music app or record player.

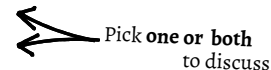
Suggested Hymns - O Come All Ye Faithful, The First Noel, O Come O Come Emmanuel, O Holy Night



Discuss

What do you share when asked at holiday gatherings, "What's new"?

When have you had really good news and how did it make you feel?



Read

Luke 2:8-20

8 And there were shepherds living out in the fields nearby, keeping watch over their flocks at night. 9 An angel of the Lord appeared to them, and the glory of the Lord shone around them, and they were terrified. 10 But the angel said to them, "**Do not be afraid. I bring you good news that will cause great joy for all the people.**" 11 Today in the town of David a Savior has been born to you; he is the Messiah, the Lord. 12 This will be a sign to you: You will find a baby wrapped in cloths and lying in a manger." 13 Suddenly a great company of the heavenly host appeared with the angel, praising God and saying, 14 "Glory to God in the highest heaven, and on earth peace to those on whom his favor rests." 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." 16 So they hurried off and found Mary and Joseph, and the baby, who was lying in the manger. 17 When they had seen him, they spread the word concerning what had been told them about this child, 18 and all who heard it were amazed at what the shepherds said to them. 19 But Mary treasured up all these things and pondered them in her heart. 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.



A Little Christmas Bible Study

Take a few minutes to walk through these questions. The goal is to be reminded why would the shepherds be afraid? v.9 that the good news can bring great joy to all who encounter Jesus.

In v.10 & 11, the angels proclaim the gospel to the shepherds. What is the good news? What does it bring? Who is it for?

What is the reaction of the angels, shepherds, Mary, and anyone else who heard it? v.10-20

Why would the "good news" bring joy, peace, amazement, treasuring, singing, praising, glorifying?

What have you seen the Gospel (Good News) bring to your life or others?

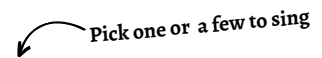
What would you like to see Jesus do in your life this year?

Let's sing and respond to this good news like the angels and shepherds



Sing and/or Listen to a Christmas hymn(s)

Suggested Hymns - O Come All Ye Faithful, The First Noel, O Come O Come Emmanuel, O Holy Night, Joy to the World



Pray

Confess your need for a savior & **Give Thanks** to Jesus, who loves us so much he'd come to us, even while sinners, to save us.

You may want to pray, sing, or discuss more. We're not stopping you. We have added a prayer from **Every Moment Holy**. Use it when feeling the tension of great joy in a still-broken world.

Do not be distant, O Lord, lest I find this burden
of loss too heavy, and shrink from the
necessary experience of my grief.

Do not be distant, O Lord, lest I become so
mired in yesterday's hurts, that I miss entirely
the living gifts this day might hold.

Let me neither ignore my pain, pretending all
is okay when it isn't, nor coddle and magnify
my pain, so that I dull my capacity to experience
all that remains good in this life.

For joy that denies sorrow is neither hard-won,
nor true, nor eternal. It is not real joy at all.
And sorrow that refuses to make space
for the return of joy and hope, in the end
becomes nothing more than a temple
for the worship of my own woundedness.

So give me strength, O God, to feel this grief
deeply, never to hide my heart from it. And give
me also hope enough to remain open to
surprising encounters with joy,
as one on a woodland path might stumble
suddenly into dapplings of golden light.

Amidst the pain that lades these days,
give me courage, O Lord; courage to live them
fully, to love and to allow myself to be loved,
to remember, grieve, and honor what was,
to live with thanksgiving in what is, and
to invest in the hope of what will be.

Be at work gilding these long heartbreaks
with the advent of new joys, good friendships,
true fellowships, unexpected delights. Remind
me again and again of your goodness, your
presence, your promises.

For this is who we are: a people
of The Promise—a people shaped
in the image of the God whose
very being generates all joy
in the universe, yet who also
weeps and grieves its brokenness.

LITURGY FOR
EMBRACING

Both Joy & Sorrow

FROM THE BOOK
EVERY MOMENT HOLY,
VOL 2: DEATH, GRIEF,
& HOPE
COPYRIGHT © 2020
DOUGLAS MCKELVEY

So we, your children, are also at liberty
to lament our losses, even as we
simultaneously rejoice in the hope
of their coming restoration.

Let me learn now, O Lord, to do this
as naturally as the inhale and exhale
of a single breath:

To breathe out sorrow,
to breathe in joy.

To breathe out lament,
to breathe in hope.

To breathe out pain,
to breathe in comfort.

To breathe out sorrow,
to breathe in joy.

In one hand I grasp the burden of my grief,
while with the other I reach
for the hope of grief's redemption.

And here, between the tension of the two,
between what was and what will be,
in the very *is* of now,
let my heart be surprised by, shaped by,
warmed by, remade by,
the same joy that forever wells within
and radiates from your heart, O God.

Amen.