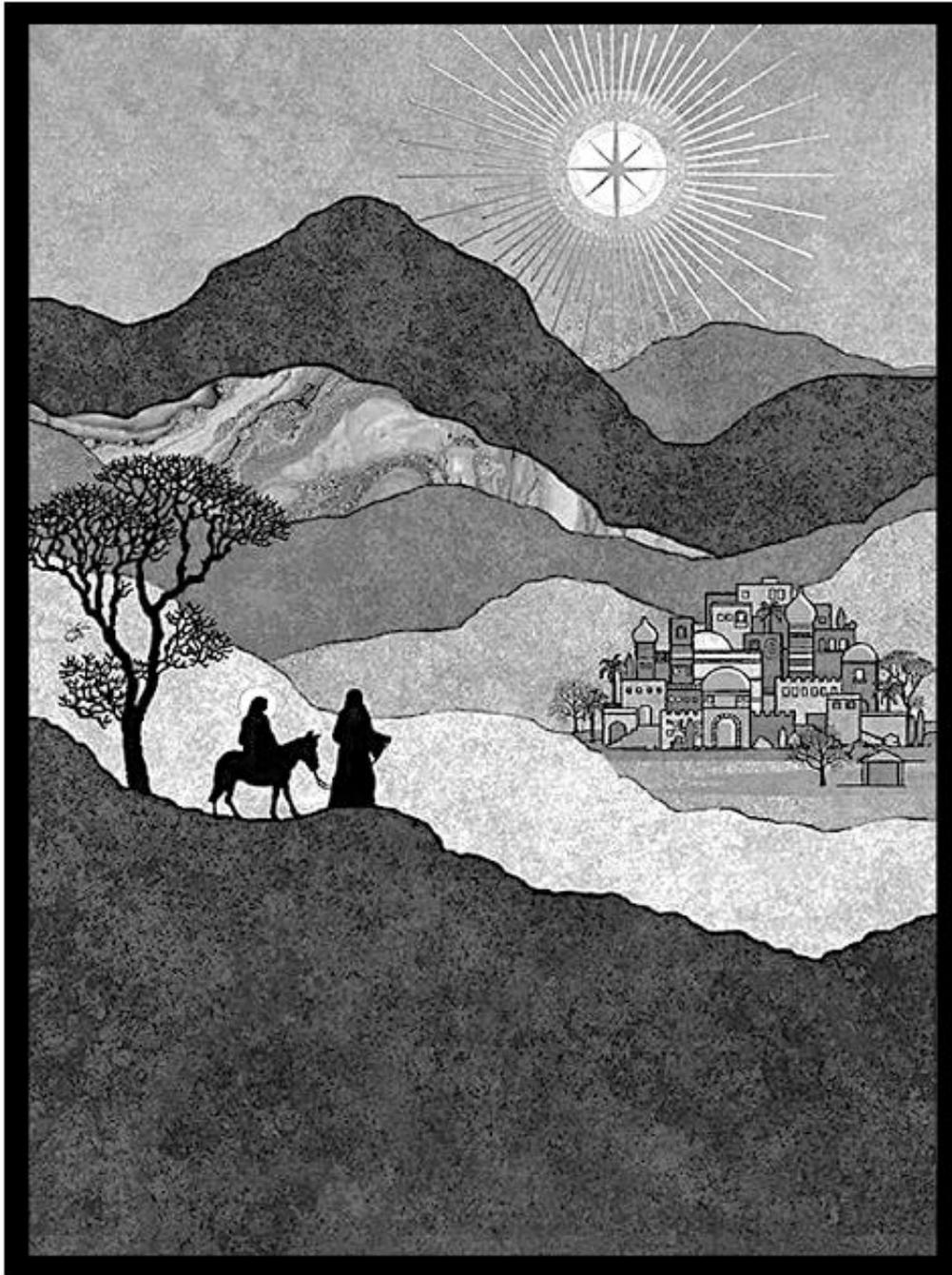


1ST SUNDAY AFTER CHRISTMAS

December 31, 2023



Christ Lutheran Church in St. Catharines

140 Russell Avenue
St. Catharines, Ontario L2R 1W1
Church: 905-685-8294
www.christlutheransc.ca

Office Hours: Thursday to Friday—9 a.m. – 12 noon
Bulletin Announcements: Please send to secretary@christlutheransc.ca.
Deadline for submission is Thursday at 9 a.m.

Pastor: Pastor Todd Hoeffs (289-362-0113) sr.pastor@christlutheransc.ca
Parish Assistant: Louise Gondosch (905-329-8579) parish.assistant@christlutheransc.ca
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Secretary: Pat Kimpel secretary@christlutheransc.ca
Facebook: Lisa Gall www.facebook.com/ChristLutheranChurchSC
Bulletin by email: chairman.outreach@christlutheransc.ca

A recording of Sunday's service will be uploaded to YouTube at:
https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCpING_TKT19c_OIBbMqGwLw

Prayer: Direct us, O Lord, in all our actions by Your gracious favour, and further us with Your continual help that in all our works, begun, continued, and ended in Your name, we may glorify Your holy name and finally by Your mercy receive eternal life; through Jesus Christ, Your Son, our Lord, who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. Amen.

DAILY SCRIPTURE MEDITATIONS:

Monday: Luke 2: 25-32 Wed.: Isa. 63: 7-16 Friday: John 12: 44-50
Tuesday: Gal. 4: 1-7 Thurs: John 12: 35-43 Saturday: Luke 12: 35-40

Musicians: 10 a.m. – Mayumi Munoz
Readers: 10 a.m. -- Gloria Meyer



JANUARY 2024

SUN	SUN	SUN	SUN
7 Epiphany & Jesus' Baptism Baptismal Remembrance Service	14 2 nd Epiphany LSB setting 1 Communion	21 3 rd Epiphany Scripture Service – Praise Band	28 4 th Epiphany. LSB DS setting 4 Communion

EVENTS THIS WEEK:

Today: 10:00 a.m. – New Year’s Eve Day Worship
Wednesday: 7:30 p.m. – Worship Committee Meeting
Thursday: 7 – 9:00 p.m. – Youth/Confirmands Night—friends welcome!!

COFFEE HOUR: Please note there will be **no** coffee hour until Sunday School resumes January 7.

THE WORSHIP COMMITTEE will meet on Wednesday, January 3rd at 7:30 p.m.

CONFIRMAND/YOUTH NIGHT: Thursday, January 4th from 7:00-9:00 p.m. Come enjoy a fun evening together. Friends are welcome to join us!

PRECIOUS MOMENTS will resume Tuesday, January 9 from 9:30-11:00am.

CONFIRMAND & YOUTH CHAT will resume in January on the second & fourth Sundays with youth leader Dan Figueroa. We will meet in the youth room during Sunday School from 9 - 9:50 a.m.



Take Down the Tree and Decorations

Saturday, January 13, 4:30 p.m. followed at 6:00 pm by supper at Coppola’s Ristorante, 203 Carlton St.

(Please sign up in the Narthex if you will be attending so we can make reservations)

HOPE TO SEE YOU THERE!!



Please join the Mary Martha/LWML-C on Tuesday, January 16th – 7- 8 p.m. – “Staying Safe Presentation”

Please join us for a presentation by Constable Michael Matwijow and his partner Constable Daryl Landry of the Niagara Regional Police, Community Oriented Response and Engagement unit (CORE). They will be speaking about what they do and the services they provide as well as providing us with information regarding current crime trends in our area and the preventative measures that we can take to reduce the chances of us being victimized. Everyone is welcome to attend!!

VOTERS MEETING: Save the Date! Our next congregational voters meeting will be **Sunday, February 4, 2024**, immediately following Worship Service. Main item for discussion/approval will be the 2024 budget.

Last Sunday Attendance: Attn: Dec. 24th, 2023 10 a.m. – 96, 7 p.m. –124, 10 p.m. – 44; Dec.25: 39

	<u>Budget</u>	<u>Weekly Need</u>	<u>Last Sunday</u>	<u>Year To Date</u>	<u>+ or – (--)</u>
Current	297,841.00	5,840.02	4,971.00	279,476.91	(12,636.38)
LCC Missions	17,000.00	333.33	212.00	17,099.00	425.92
Property Improvement:			142.00	6,900.00	

2024 DONATION ENVELOPES: Your 2024 donation envelopes are in your mailbox for pick-up! If you do not have a mailbox, please check the table in the Narthex. If you don't have a mailbox, and you would like one, please contact our secretary Pat at secretary@christlutheransc.ca.

TECHNOLOGY ENTHUSIASTS – The Worship Committee is seeking individuals who would be interested in learning how to operate the recording equipment used for our worship services. Training will be provided. Should you have any questions or require more information please speak to either Tom Kuhl, Theresa Mason or Pastor Todd.



Granny Squares still needed: This is an ongoing project we will gratefully accept more completed 6 inch knitted or crocheted Granny Squares in any pattern or colour. We would also appreciate any yarn that you may have, leftover yarn or full balls of yarn. In the narthex there is a white cube with yarn and hooks that you are welcome to take (or donate). There is another basket for completed squares. It has been about 6 months that we have been able to show Christ's love in our Caring Squares blankets. (22 blankets to date!) Thank you for donating yarn or completed squares as we continue with this project! Praise

God! If you have any questions, call Lorraine at 905 964 5837)

USED STAMPS: Start saving and collecting your used stamps now! They will be gathered at the LWML-C Convention and donated to a charity who will in turn use them to purchase spiritual resources like Bibles.



CHRISTMAS CAROL SERVICE

The 1st Sunday after Christmas
December 31, 2023 + 10 AM worship

OPENING HYMN: *"Hark the Herald Angels"*

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

**Christ, by highest Heav'n adored; Christ the everlasting Lord;
Late in time, behold Him come, Offspring of a virgin's womb.
Veiled in flesh the Godhead see; Hail th'incarnate Deity,
Pleased as man with man to dwell, Jesus our Emmanuel.
Hark! The herald angels sing, "Glory to the newborn King!"**

**Hail the heav'n born Prince of Peace! Hail the Sun of Righteousness!
Light and life to all He brings, ris'n with healing in His wings.
Mild He lays His glory by, Born that man no more may die;
Born to raise the child of earth, born to give them second birth.
Hark! The herald angels sing, "Glory to the newborn King!"**

Charles Wesley, 1739, public domain

INVOCATION & CHRISTMAS SCRIPTURE SENTENCES:

In the name of the Father and of the Son † and of the Holy Spirit.

Amen.

The Word became Flesh, and we have seen His glory.

Oh, come, let us worship Him! Alleluia!

Today Christ is born! Today salvation has appeared!

**Today the righteous worship and say, "Glory to God in the highest!"
Alleluia!**

Come, all you peoples of the earth, and drink from the wells of the Saviour!

For He is our Maker! Alleluia!

CONFESSION & FORGIVENESS:

Dear Heavenly Father:

**We confess that we are sinful by our very nature, conceived and born in sin.
And death. We rebel against You in whatever we think, say, and do, by what
we have done and by what we have left undone. Even our righteous deeds are
filthy rags. We have not let Your Word have its way with us. We have made
other created things become gods in place of You, the Almighty God. Forgive
us, renew us, and lead us, that we may be hearers and doers of Your Word, live
out Your holy Will, and walk in Your ways, through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.**

Receive the forgiveness Christ Jesus Himself has won for you by His passion, death and resurrection. In the place of Christ and by His Holy Command I forgive you all of your sins in the name of the Father and of the Son + and of the Holy Spirit. **Amen.**

RESPONSIVE SUNG KYRIE:

Infant Holy tune

Lord have mercy, Christ have mercy, on Your people Christ, we pray.

Lord have mercy, Christ have mercy, for Your favour, Christ we pray.

Lord have mercy, Christ have mercy, help Your people, Lord, we pray;

Give us grace, O Lord, we pray; In Your Light, show us the Way.

CHRISTMAS HYMN OF PRAISE:

"It Came Upon the Midnight"

**It came upon the midnight clear, that glorious song of old,
From angels bending near the earth, to touch their harps of gold:
"Peace on the earth, goodwill to men, from heavens all gracious King!"
The world in solemn stillness lay, to hear the angels sing.**

**For lo! The days are hastening on, by prophets seen of old,
When with the ever-circling years, shall come the time foretold,
When the new heaven and earth shall own, the Prince of Peace, their King,
And the whole world send back the song - which now the angels sing.**

PRAYER OF THE DAY:

Let us pray: Almighty Father, we humbly and confidently ask of You, help and strengthen us, that we may know and praise Your dear Son as did Simeon, who took Him up in his arms and faithfully knew and confessed Him as Saviour of the Nations; We ask this through Your Son, Jesus Christ our Lord, Who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. **Amen.**

THE SCRIPTURES: The Old Testament: *Isaiah 61:10 – 62:3*

I will rejoice greatly in Lord. My soul will be joyful in my God. For He has clothed me with garments of salvation, He has wrapped me in a robe of righteousness— like a bridegroom wearing a priestly turban, like a bride adorning herself with her jewels. For as the earth brings forth its sprouts, and as a garden causes things sown to spring up, so the Lord God will cause justice and praise to spring up before all the nations... For Zion's sake I will not keep silent, for Jerusalem's sake I will not rest, until her righteousness shines out brightly, and her salvation as a blazing torch. Nations will see Your righteousness, and all kings your glory. You will be called by a new name, which the Lord's mouth will bestow. You will also be a crown of beauty in the hand of the Lord and a royal diadem in the hand of your God.

This is the Word of the Lord. **Thanks be to God.**

The Epistle: *Galatians 4:4-7*

[St. Paul writes:] But when the fullness of time had come, God sent forth his Son, born of a woman, born under the law, in order to redeem those who were under the law, so that we might receive adoption as sons and daughters. And because you are sons and daughters, God has sent the Spirit of his Son into our hearts, crying, 'Abba! Father!' So you are no longer a slave but a child, and if a child then also an heir, through God.

This is the Word of the Lord. **Thanks be to God.**

CHRISTMAS GOSPEL VERSE: *Away in a Manger VS 3*

**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 take us to Heaven to live with Thee there.**

The Holy Gospel: *St. Luke 2: 22-32*

The Holy Gospel, according to St. Luke, the 2nd chapter: **Glory to You, O Lord.**
When the time came for their purification according to the Law of Moses, Mary and Joseph brought Jesus up to Jerusalem to present him to the Lord (as it is written in the Law of the Lord, 'Every firstborn male shall be designated as holy to the Lord'), and they offered a sacrifice according to what is stated in the law of the Lord, 'a pair of turtledoves or two young pigeons.' Now there was a man in Jerusalem whose name was Simeon; this man was righteous and devout, looking forward to the consolation of Israel, and the Holy Spirit rested on him. It had been revealed to him by the Holy Spirit that he would not see death before he had seen the Lord's Messiah. Guided by the Spirit, Simeon came into the temple; and when the parents brought in the child Jesus, to do for him what was customary under the law, Simeon took him in his arms and praised God, saying, 'Lord, now you are dismissing your servant in peace, according to your word; for my eyes have seen your salvation, which you have prepared in the presence of all peoples, a light for revelation to the Gentiles and for glory to your people Israel.' This is the Gospel of the Lord. **Praise to You, O Christ.**

CHILDREN'S MESSAGE

GOSPEL HYMN: *"What Child Is This?"* *Greensleeves*

**What Child is this who, laid to rest on Mary's lap is sleeping?
Whom angels greet with anthems sweet, while shepherds watch are keeping?
This, this is Christ the King, Whom shepherds guard and angels sing;
Haste, haste, to bring Him laud, The Babe, the Son of Mary.
Why lies He in such mean estate, where ox and ass are feeding?
Good Christians, fear, for sinners here the silent Word is pleading.
Nails, spear shall pierce Him through, the cross be borne for me, for you.
Hail, hail the Word made flesh, The Babe, the Son of Mary.**

**So bring Him incense, gold and myrrh, come peasant, king to own Him;
The King of kings salvation brings, let loving hearts enthrone Him.
Raise, raise a song on high, the virgin sings her lullaby.
Joy, joy for Christ is born, The Babe, the Son of Mary.**

William C Dix, 1865, public domain

MESSAGE

CREEDAL HYMN:

[Tune: "From Heav'n Above"]

**God's gift descends from Heav'n on High.
The Baby in the Manger lies.
Our Father has sent us His Son
That we with Him might now be one.**

**Christ Jesus is our Holy King!
To Him glad praises we shall sing!
Upon a cross deep sorrows bring;
He lives, so death has lost its sting!**

**The Spirit comes, the Church's seal!
Christ comes, in Water, Word and Meal!
With angels let us now proclaim
We do believe God's Saving Name!**

M. Luther, adapted by A. Meade © 1975 Wheatridge Ministries USA

THE OFFERINGS *are gathered.*

THE PRAYERS

Lord God, heavenly Father, you have made us glad through the birth of Your Son and The celebration of Christmas this year. We thank you that your holy church has been honoured to share in the praise of angels in these days. Graciously accept all who enter your house over this festival. When people come into your church, wherever it may be, help them to see your Son Jesus: to receive his presence, to listen to and keep his teaching, to behold the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world.

Lord in Your Christmas joy: **hear our prayer and bless us.**

As your Son grew in wisdom and grace before you and all people, help all the children and young people of the church to learn your word and call upon you in prayer. Protect them from the evil one, and help them make the faith they have received their own. Be with parents as they seek to pass on the faith in those they meet who need the Good News of salvation. Give them grace not to give up in this tiring task.

Lord in Your Christmas joy: **hear our prayer and bless us.**

We give you thanks for our land and the blessings we receive from it. Bless and guide our leaders: his gracious Majesty our King, our Prime Minister and the government, the Parliament and all who hold office. May they promote justice and goodness, both for this generation and for the future. May all citizens have the will to serve their community, helping through their daily lives show how all spiritual hunger can find satisfaction in your newborn King.

Lord in Your Christmas joy: **hear our prayer and bless us.**

Have mercy on the nations of the world, and all places that suffer violence, natural disasters, and daily hardship. May good people and peacemakers prosper. May evil doers repent before they perish.

Lord in Your Christmas joy: **hear our prayer and bless us.**

Lord, you know our needs – we now commit to you those among us who are sick, dying or distressed. We especially name today [...names added..] .Let the light of Christmas shine into their hearts, and may they accept your fatherly will with peace and joy. Comfort those who mourn the passing of loved ones.

Lord in Your Christmas joy: **hear our prayer and bless us.**

God our Father, we give you thanks for all you have done for us. Hear our prayers, in the name of Jesus Christ our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. **Amen.**

THE LORD'S PRAYER:

Our Father, Who art in Heaven, hallowed be Thy name, Thy Kingdom come, Thy will be done on earth as it is in Heaven. Give us this day our daily bread and forgive us our trespasses as we forgive those who trespass against us. And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil. For Thine is the Kingdom and the power and the glory, forever and ever. Amen.

CHRISTMAS CLOSING PRAYER:

Loving God, we thank you for being with us – for sending your Son to walk with us and to lead us. As Christ Jesus was born of Mary, so may he be born in us and through us revealed to the world. Grant that the hope, the peace, the joy, and the love of which we have heard and spoken may be fully realized in us as we worship and serve you in faith, now and forevermore. **Amen.**

GREETING & BLESSING:

Let us praise the Lord!

Thanks be to God.

The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God and the Communion of the Holy Spirit + be with you all. **Amen.**

CLOSING HYMN: *“Lord, Let Your Servant Go”* [Tune: “God Rest Ye Merry”]

**Lord, let Your servant go in peace, Your Word has been fulfilled.
My eyes have seen Your saving work which for the world You willed;
The glory of Your Israel as Light for all revealed.
Oh tidings of comfort and joy, comfort and joy.
Oh tidings of comfort and joy!**

**From God our Heav'nly Father a Blessed Angel came,
And unto certain shepherds brought tidings of the same.
How that in Bethlehem was born the Son of God by name.
Oh tidings of comfort and joy, comfort and joy.
Oh tidings of comfort and joy!**

**Now to the Lord sing praises, all you within this place,
And with true love and brotherhood each other now embrace;
This holy tide of Christmas All others may deface.
Oh tidings of comfort and joy, comfort and joy.
Oh tidings of comfort and joy!**

Verse 1, A Meade, © 1975 Creative Communications for the Parish USA; Verses 2-3, public domain 1650

REV. TODD HOEFFS

1st Sunday after Christmas

Scripture: Galatians 4:4-7

December 31, 2023

An ancient Greek poet once wrote: "You can never put your foot into the same river twice." The water comes and goes, flows away and new water always replaces it. Time is like that. No 2 minutes are exactly the same

And time can't be saved or retrieved.

The past is gone. The future is unknown. We only have the present. All of which is in God's hands.

Holidays used to demark time and help organize our lives. Post Covid retail stores begin each season 3 months ahead to ensure they sell enough. [This is why Christmas items could be seen as early as late September]. Boxing day sales become boxing week promotions.

The church uses time to not only mark our calendars but prepare for the end of all time.

"When the fullness of time came, God sent forth His Son..."

"The fullness of time" speaks to the all powerful, all present, all knowing God...waited... and waited and waited for that one particular night in Bethlehem. The fullness of time began once Adam and Eve left the Garden of Eden. Every second of every day prepared humanity for the great renewal.

In the ancient Hebrew world, the time could be seen as ripe like harvest fields. Many, resenting all foreign rule, kept waiting for the Messiah's appearance And restoration of their land, culture and former glory. Religious leaders craved a more purer observance of the Torah and law. Waiting for that fullness of time required centuries of patience because God works according to His own calendar and measures time differently than we.

While God works in a heavenly time, where a day is as an hour, and an hour like a day— Apostle Paul's writing of "fullness of time" is chronological time, like a clock. The miracle of God's Son comes down into human history. It was meant to be so we say, When things happen that have a divine intervention to it.

Over 300 passages of the Bible have prophecies about this fullness of time. God chose a Roman world governing over Israel for His Son to live. A Roman world which developed roads, establishing an infrastructure that the precious Gospel travelled on. Rome also expanded its power through military might and brutality.

People needed to hear the voice of the Saviour. He Who created the world is born into the world. "Born of woman, born under the Law..."

Jesus has a human mother, and human father, plus a brother and sisters.

This makes Jesus human, but He is also God. His Godly Father is in Heaven, and the Holy Spirit send the seed into Virgin Mary. Like us, but without any inkling of sinning. The government is on His shoulders and He is born under the Law of God and the Law of Moses; Law that shows us our sin, locking up all humankind in sin because no person is without sin.

Born under the Law, Jesus satisfies every single demand by going under the arrest of sinful men, is nailed to a curses cross, goes under the earth, entering death and then rising back to life through the Easter miracle of time. This redeems all of us who are also under the Law.

Any person born human, with sin woven into the fabric of our being, Is born under the law. That is our heritage from Adam. To receive the Heavenly Inheritance with God, We must be redeemed. A Greek Marketplace term for buying back a product. In a bargaining style of shopping, haggling, dickering, you may lose an item too cheaply that holds more value. So you buy in back.

Each of us are chained to the marketplace of living against God. Jesus redeems us, buys us back with the price of His very own life. This should move us forward in peace, joy and humility. But we tend to look down on parts of life that are not easy. We warp time, neglecting the present day in favour of a life in the past and future. We yearn for our own way in the good ol' days when things were easier and better. So we tell the grieving and the down trodden, "Don't worry things will get better you just wait and see." Then we drive away in our cars back to our homes leaving them to fend for themselves and treat their own wounds.

Through Jesus' birth, the Alpha and Omega comes to us in the fullness of our time. He didn't pop out of the womb and take the throne or go straight to the cross. He was raised day by day. He was potty trained, he learned to love his parents and community, he learned the aramaic ABC's, he heard scripture... learned carpentry. He learned about His own Heavenly Father in the fullness of time.

Christ's coming has not ushered in a new time Or an epic era Or a golden age of Christianity but it's showing us how to live into the fullness of time, a time when everything happens at once, the past and future are folded onto the present.

Jesus urges us not to dwell in, but to remember, our past and to not worry about what the future will bring but to have hope for it. It draws us to love our neighbours. Present beside those who grieve the spouse, the child, the job loss, the homeless. To live into the fullness of time Christ enters is to "...have life, and to have it in the fullest."

The birth God into the flesh frees us from the shackles of our past and the worries tomorrow will bring. We become free to dwell where Christ is, in the here and now; on the streets, under the bridges, in the hospitals, in the high rises, in our pain, in our joys, within us.

Jesus' birth in a rough manger shelter makes Him accessible to those who saw Him that day and to us who see Him by faith. Jesus' birth mirrors of the same humility that marks His death.

The manger reflects the cross; the stark cold reality of a crib is visible in the rough wood holding Him up on the cross for all to see. Jesus is born in anonymity, now He comes openly, publicly, in glory, and one day in the same way that lightning is seen as it flashes across the sky from east to west proclaiming His power and presence. Because God has come to dwell among us, the fullness of time is counted in every second and every heartbeat.

So fully dwell where you are so we may see the fullness of Christ in our midst. In all of this we are adopted in as sons and daughters. Adoption here is literally "God appointed children." The equivalent term God used for choosing Israel in the Old Covenant. Apostle Paul, well-schooled in the Law as once a devout Pharisee, knows full well what this means. It isn't land or culture that makes one a child, but full adoption as God's Own.

Israel, then through this promise ALL NATIONS For Jesus is our stand in – ONE man for all. Such adoption, once marked with lamb's blood and burning offerings, Once marked by a bloody cross, now is marked by Water and this Word of God in Baptism.

All in the fullness of time And in this timing of God's we are free. Free to live underneath the protective covering of Heaven as inheritors. No longer slaves to sin or to our stubborn ways or reliance upon our past. We've always been a part of God's plan. We've been loved from the beginning!

So each one of us finds our place in this story and our real identity. Time is a gift, and a gift to share. Days are lengthened so that other people can enjoy this kind of peace. We have time, we make time, we take time, and we thank God For the time He offers and we look forward to the final completion of Times' fullness.

Amen

New Year's Celebrations Around the World

N	O	I	S	E	P	J	A	T	C	I	T	O	K	P	L	A	T	E	S	E	L
R	O	A	Y	W	H	I	P	P	E	D	C	R	E	A	M	T	Y	A	E	R	N
G	S	S	M	I	N	E	R	C	R	A	A	M	G	R	A	P	E	S	R	I	D
O	A	H	B	C	S	R	I	R	M	T	T	A	S	A	I	T	S	C	E	N	W
O	O	A	O	H	U	R	S	T	R	E	T	S	O	D	N	F	L	E	U	G	A
D	R	P	L	B	I	E	J	E	M	R	U	F	N	E	E	R	C	L	O	C	K
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B	L	A	C	K	E	Y	E	D	P	E	A	S	G	L	T	E	T	A	C	N	R

TRADITIONS	CELEBRATIONS	FOOTBALL	MIDNIGHT	PARADES
BELLS	FIREWORKS	JANUARY	NOISE	SUITCASE
GRAPES	CLOCK	GOOD LUCK	COSTUME	DRAGON
HAPPINESS	NEW YEAR	PLATES	FAMILY	FRIENDS
DATE	SYMBOL	WHIPPED CREAM	BLACK EYED PEAS	RING CAKE

