

Emmanuel, “God with Us”!

(Based on the first 6 chapters of the book *The Desire of Ages*, Ellen White)

Intro: Today, along with the music department, we will be presenting a narrative of the birth of Jesus with a few songs in between.

1. The text is based on the Scriptures and the first 6 chapters of the classical *The Desire of Ages* by Ellen White; and
2. The songs presented by various members are
 - i. Joy to the World – Randy Minnick
 - ii. Silent Night – Lily
 - iii. His Banner over me is Love – Children’s Sabbath school class
 - iv. The First Noel – Sofia Ellen
 - v. O Come all Ye Faithful – Shella, Jeane, Jessica, Kayla, and Giancarlo.
3. Prayer for the spirit of Christmas to come into our hearts.

Body:

“His name shall be called Immanuel, ... God with us.” ... From the days of eternity the Lord Jesus Christ was one with the Father; He was “the image of God,” “the outshining of His glory.” It was to manifest this glory that He came to our world. To this darkened earth He came to reveal the light of God's love,—to be “God with us.”

“When the fullness of the time was come, God sent forth His Son”

Humanity, becoming more degraded through ages of transgression, called for the coming of the Redeemer.

With amazement the heavenly messengers beheld the indifference of that people whom God had called to communicate to the world the light of sacred truth. The priests and teachers of the nation knew not that the greatest event of the ages was about to take place.

Only a few were longing to behold the Messiah.

Angels attend Joseph and Mary as they journey from their home in Nazareth to the city of David. The decree of imperial Rome for the enrollment of the peoples of her vast dominion has extended to the dwellers among the hills of Galilee... Caesar Augustus is made the agent for the fulfillment of God's purpose in bringing the mother of Jesus to Bethlehem. She is of the lineage of David, and the Son of David must be born in David's city. Out of Bethlehem, said the prophet, “shall He come forth ... that is to be ruler in

Israel; whose goings forth have been from the days of eternity.” But in the city of their royal line, Joseph and Mary are unrecognized. Weary and homeless, they traverse the entire city, in vain seeking a resting place for the night. **There is no room for them at the crowded inn. In a rude building where the beasts are sheltered, they at last find refuge, and here the Redeemer of the world is born.**

Joy to the World – Randy Minnick

Men know it not, but the tidings fill heaven with rejoicing. With a deeper and more tender interest the holy angels from the world of light are drawn to the earth. The whole world is brighter for His presence. Above the hills of Bethlehem are gathered an innumerable throng of angels.

In the fields shepherds were still keeping watch by night. Through the silent hours they talked together of the promised Saviour, and prayed for the coming of the King to David's throne. “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 Saviour, which is Christ the Lord.” “This shall be a sign unto you,” he says; “Ye shall find the babe lying in a manger.”

The whole plain was lighted up with the bright shining of the hosts of God. Earth was hushed, and heaven stooped to listen to the song:

“Glory to God in the highest, And on earth peace, good will toward men.”

“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, and Joseph, and the babe lying in a manger.”

Silent Night, Holy Night – Lily

About forty days after the birth of Christ, Joseph and Mary took Him to Jerusalem, to present Him to the Lord, and to offer sacrifice.

The offerings presented to the Lord were to be without blemish. These offerings represented Christ, and from this it is evident that Jesus Himself was free from physical deformity. He was the “lamb without blemish and without spot.” 1 Peter 1:19.

This was Shiloh, the peace giver. It was He who declared Himself to Moses as the I AM. He was the Desire of all nations, the Root and the Offspring of David, and the Bright and Morning Star. The name of that helpless little babe, inscribed in the roll of Israel, declaring Him our brother, was the hope of fallen humanity.

There was a man in Jerusalem whose name was Simeon that was waiting for the Consolation of Israel, and he, led by the Holy Spirit, recognized baby Jesus as the Messiah. There was there also a prophetess called Anna who spoke of Jesus to all those who looked for redemption in Jerusalem. These humble worshipers had not studied the prophecies in vain. But those who held positions as rulers and priests in Israel, though they too had before them the precious word of prophecy, were not walking in the way of the Lord, and their eyes were not open to behold the Light of life.

Simeon's words called to Mary's mind the prophetic utterances of Isaiah: "There shall come forth a rod out of the stem of Jesse, and a Branch shall grow out of his roots: and the Spirit of the Lord shall rest upon Him" ... "For unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given: and the government shall be upon His shoulder: and His name shall be called Wonderful, Counselor, The mighty God, The everlasting Father, The Prince of Peace." Isaiah 11:1-5; 9:2-6.

His Banner over me is Love – Children's Sabbath school class

"Now when Jesus was born in Bethlehem of Judea in the days of Herod the king, behold, there came wise men from the East to Jerusalem, saying, Where is He that is born King of the Jews? for we have seen His star in the East, and are come to worship Him."

The wise men learned with joy that His coming was near, and that the whole world was to be filled with a knowledge of the glory of the Lord.

The wise men had seen a mysterious light in the heavens upon that night when the glory of God flooded the hills of Bethlehem. As the light faded, a bright star appeared, and lingered in the sky. That star was a distant company of shining angels, but of this the wise men were not aware. Yet they were impressed that the star was of special import to them. They consulted priests and philosophers, and searched the scrolls of the ancient records. The prophecy of Balaam had declared, "There shall come a Star out of Jacob, and a Scepter shall rise out of Israel."

The wise men did not set out empty-handed. It was the custom to offer presents as an act of homage to princes or other people of rank, and the richest gifts the land afforded were borne as an offering to Him in whom all the families of the earth were to be blessed. It

was necessary to journey by night in order to keep the star in view; At every pause for rest they searched the prophecies; and the conviction deepened that they were divinely guided. For their surprise, at Bethlehem they found no royal guard stationed to protect the newborn King. None of the world's honored men were in attendance.

“When they were come into the house, they saw the young child with Mary His mother, and fell down, and worshiped Him.” Beneath the lowly guise of Jesus, they recognized the presence of Divinity. They gave their hearts to Him as their Saviour, and then poured out their gifts,—“gold, and frankincense, and myrrh.” What a faith was theirs! If we have given our hearts to Jesus, we also shall bring our gifts to Him. **Our gold and silver, our highest mental and spiritual endowments, will be freely devoted to Him who loved us, and gave Himself for us.**

The First Noel – Sofia Ellen

The story of Bethlehem is an exhaustless theme. In it is hidden “the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God.” Romans 11:33. We marvel at the Saviour's sacrifice in exchanging the throne of heaven for the manger, and the companionship of adoring angels for the beasts of the stall. Human pride and self-sufficiency stand rebuked in His presence. Yet this was but the beginning of His wonderful condescension. God permitted His Son to come, a helpless babe, subject to the weakness of humanity.

The deception of sin had reached its height. All the agencies for depraving the souls of men had been put in operation. The Son of God, looking upon the world, beheld suffering and misery... But instead of destroying the world, God sent His Son to save it.

None but Christ can fashion anew the character that has been ruined by sin. He came to expel the demons that had controlled the will. He came to lift us up from the dust, [and] to reshape the character.

In that baby laying in a manger is found the hope for the world. He is inviting you today to place your perplexities in His hands. He longs to restore your life. In Him we find love, peace, forgiveness, healing and redemption.

O Come all Ye Faithful – Shella, Jeane, Jessica, Kayla, and Giancarlo.

Closing Prayer: Michael Fisher

O Come all Ye Faithful – Shella, Jeane, Jessica, Kayla, and Giancarlo.