***The christmas Code***

**Advent Worship Series – Week 3**

***Code Word:* Incarnation**

**December 11, 2022**

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| **WORSHIP SERVICE OUTLINE**SEach worship outline contains all elements needed for your worship service. The order of each service presented is only a *suggestion*. No doubt changes will be needed to accommodate the flow and worship style of your corps. The outlines are flexible and allow opportunities to “cut and paste” as needed. If you are blessed with instrumental or vocal music resources, you may find there is more structured material here than needed. Sermon manuscripts are included as a *sample* and not to be preached verbatim. |

**[*Project* “Week 3.QRCode”***(in Graphics file)* ***or below words on screen as people enter*]**

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| **Code Word: Incarnation** ***The Son left his place in heaven so that God’s sons and daughters*** ***would be guaranteed their inheritance in heaven. Amazing grace!*** |

**Announcements and Offering**

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| **Drama – Global Positioning** |

**Call to Worship**

The Christmas story is a destination story. It’s about an amazing journey that changed everything. It’s a story about a place left and a place guaranteed. Only God could write this amazing story of the two destinations of grace. If Jesus hadn’t been willing to make earth his destination, we would have no hope whatsoever of the new heavens and the new earth being our final destination. Today our Christmas Code word is **Incarnation.** Consider how Paul summarized the Christmas story.

(*Come Let Us Adore Him*, p. 85)

**[scripture on screen, have congregation read]**

***5****In your relationships with one another, have the same mindset as Christ Jesus:*

***6****Who, being in very natureGod,
    did not consider equality with God something to be used to his own advantage;****7****rather, he made himself nothing
    by taking the very natureof a servant,
    being made in human likeness.****8****And being found in appearance as a man,
    he humbled himself
    by becoming obedient to death—
         even death on a cross!*

(Philippians 2:5-8, NIV)

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| **SB#108/HC#270/SS#191/CF#1– Hark! the herald angels sing**  | TB-270 – sameHC-270SS-191CF-1 | HTD4-T5 (3 vs.)HCD25-T20 |
|  **Additional Optional Songs** |
| **SB#73/HC#141/SS#28 – All hail the power**  | TB-306 – CoronationHC-141SS-28 | HTD5-T5 (4 vs.)HCD13-T11 |
| **SB#103/CF#41 – Christians awake, salute the happy morn** | TB-476 – sameCF-41 | HTD10-T1 (3 vs.) |
| **SB#104 – Come, Thou long expected Jesus** (sing 2 vs. together; no chorus) | TB-370 – Hyfrydol | HTD1-T14 (3 vs.) |
| **SB#107 – Hark the glad sound! the Savior comes** | TB-87 – Joy to the World! | HTD4-T9 (3 vs.) |
| **SB#113/SS#193/CF#2 – Joy to the world!**  | TB-87 – sameSS-193CF-2 | HTD4-T9 (3 vs.) |
| **SB#114/HC#146/SS#137 – Light of the world (Here I am to worship)**  | TB-653 – Here I am to worshipHC-146SS-137 | No HT CDHCD13-T16 |
| **SB#116/HC#140/SS#194/CF#6 – O come, all ye faithful** | TB-496 – Adeste FidelesHC-140SS-194CF-6 | HTD3-T1 (3 vs.)HCD12-T20 |
| **SB#358/HC#241/SS#30 – Crown Him with many crowns** | TB-162 – DiademataHC-241SS-30 | HTD1-T8 (4 vs.)HCD23-T11 |

*The Candle of Joy*

**Lighting of Advent Candle**

**[The first and second (purple) Advent candles should be lit prior to the service.]**

**Reader 1:**  Mary, a simple peasant girl, was looking forward to the greatest day of her life so far—her wedding day. Then, without warning, without preparation, she was looking directly into the eyes of an angel. What news did Gabriel bring?

**Reader 2:** “Greetings, you who are highly favored! The Lord is with you.” (Luke 1:28)

**Reader 1:**  And then Gabriel shared the most amazing information of all: The Holy Spirit of God would bring about the birth of a child who was His own Son. This would happen even while Mary remained a virgin.

**Reader 2:** And how did she respond? In an act of complete yielding, she knelt and said,

**Reader 1:** “I am the Lord’s servant. May your word to me be fulfilled.” (Luke 1:38)

**Reader 2:** And so, the greatest miracle of all began. Mary was favored by God for a task that would finally allow each of us to be favored. Gabriel said, “The Lord is with you,” and as a result, the Lord is with us all. In that way, God sent the ultimate Christmas gift not just to Mary but to all of us.

**Reader 1:**  On this third Sunday of Advent, we light the Candle of Joy. May we respond as

Mary did: “My soul glorifies the Lord   and my spirit rejoices in God my Savior. Holy is his name.” (Luke 1:46-47, 49)

(*Why the Nativity?* pages 15-17, 19-20)

**[Lighting of the third (pink) Advent candle.]**

**Prayer:**

Lord, we cannot comprehend that you, the creator of the universe, took on flesh and were born of

a peasant girl. You, the one who spoke galaxies into existence became a speechless newborn

baby. You, the one who gave the stars their light, veiled your own glory and slipped unnoticed

into the human race. The miracle of your incarnation is all too unexpected, too mysterious, too holy for us to understand. In expectation and joy, we worship you now and each day until Jesus returns to claim his own. In the name of Jesus we pray. Amen.

(*The NIV Worship Bible*, p. 1374)

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| **Children’s Moment – Incarnation** |

**[Have children stay in place to sing Silent Night.]**

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| **SB#124/SS#196/CF#25 – Silent night! Holy night!**  | TB-842 – Stille NachtSS-196CF-25 | HTD4-T15 (3 vs.) |

**Pastoral Prayer**

**Sermon – Code Word: Incarnation**

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| **SB#439/HC#139 – There is a message** | TB-879 – same HC-139 | No HT CDHCD12-T19 |
|  **Additional Optional Songs** |
| **SB#32/HC#127 – How deep the Father’s love for us** | TB-663 – same HC-127 | No HT CDHCD11-T17 |
| **SB#129/CF#7 – We three kings of Orient are** | TB-915 – sameCF-7 | HTD11-T12 (3 vs.) |
| **SB#376/HC#219 – King of kings, majesty** | TB-722 – same HC-219 | No HT CDHCD20-T19 |
| **HC#120 – In the Manger** | HC-120 | HCD10-T20 |
| **HC#136 – We All Bow Down** | HC-136 | HCD12-T16 |
| **HC#169 – Hallelujah** | HC-169 | HCD15-T19 |
| **HC#220 – Incarnate** | HC-220 | HCD20-T20 |

**Advent Blessing**

Be people of joy.
Let joy live in your heart and share the joy of Christ with all you meet.
Share joy by seeing the good in each other.
Share joy by remembering good times and hoping for good times to come.
Share joy by praying for our world.
In this Advent season, we need to see, feel, and share joy.
As you go out into the wonder of God’s creations, share joy, peace, and hope with those you meet. Amen.

*(Submitted by Rev. Susannah DeBenedetto, Christ Congregational Church &*

*Takoma Park Presbyterian Church, Takoma Park MD, LiturgyLink.net)*

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| **SB#112/HC#180 – It was on a starry night** | TB-535 – A starry nightHC-180 | No HT CDHCD16-T20 |
|  **Additional Optional Songs** |
| **SB#73/HC#141/SS#28 – All hail the power**  | TB-306 – CoronationHC-141SS-28 | HTD5-T5 (4 vs.)HCD13-T11 |
| **SB#77/HC#151/SS#31 – Fairest Lord Jesus** | TB-206 – Ascalon HC-151SS-31 | HTD5-T1 (3 vs.)HCD14-T11 |
| **SB#106/HC#260/SS#189/CF#43 – Go, tell it on the mountain** | TB-631 – sameHC-260SS-189CF-43 | HTD11-T4 (2 vs., start with chorus)HCD24-T20 |
| **SB#116/HC#140/SS#194/CF#6 – O come, all ye faithful** | TB-496 – Adeste FidelesHC-140SS-194CF-6 | HTD3-T1 (3 vs.)HCD12-T20 |

**NOTE:** Unless otherwise noted, scripture quotations are taken from the New International Version (NIV). © 2011 by Zondervan. Used by permission. All rights reserved.

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| **Advent 2022 Week #3** |
| **DRAMA****Global Positioning****By Martyn Scott Thomas**© Copyright 2006 by Martyn Scott Thomas. All rights reserved. Used by permission. |
| **Topic:** | Relationships |
| **Scripture:** | Luke 24:13-35 |
| **Synopsis:** | A husband and wife get lost while driving and must turn to outside help. |
| **Characters:** | Hank Waterford – a lost driver unwilling to seek helpWendy Waterford – his wifeOffstage voice– female voice (Hank’s mother) |
| **Props/Costumes:** | Casual dress. Two chairs to simulate the front seat of a car. |
| **Setting:** | The Waterford’s car. |
| **Running time:** | 4 minutes |

[*Hank and Wendy are seated in the car, looking around, trying to figure out where they are.*]

**Wendy:** None of this looks familiar.

**Hank:** I think the turn is just up ahead.

**Wendy:** You said that five miles ago. Face it, we’re lost.

**Hank:** We’re not lost. I know exactly where we are [*pause*] mostly.

**Wendy:** Why don’t you ask her?

**Hank:** I don’t need to ask for directions. I just talked to John this morning. He said, “One left, two rights, another left, a dog leg right and two more lefts.”

**Wendy:** You haven’t turned either direction in over ten minutes.

**Hank:** [*thinking*] Maybe it was three rights.

**Wendy:** Face it, Hank, we’re lost.

**Hank:** We’re not lost.

**Wendy:** [*emphasizing her point*] Hank!

**Hank:** Okay, we’re lost. But I can find our way back. See, there’s Riley Street. [*a bit confused*] Riley Street? I thought that was on the other side of town.

**Wendy:** Why don’t you just ask her?

**Hank:** But that’s only supposed to be for emergencies.

**Wendy:** [*pointing out the window*] We just crossed the state line. I think this qualifies.

**Hank:** But . . .

**Wendy:** [*asserting herself*] Hank!

**Hank:** Fine. I’ll ask her. I don’t see how this is going to help.

**Wendy:** Just ask her!

**Hank:** [*speaks out loud*] Call for directions!

**Offstage:** Hello, Hank. What’s the problem?

**Hank:** Wow! How did you know it was me?

**Offstage:** It’s my job to know. Now, what can I do for you?

**Wendy:** [*cutting in*] We’re lost.

**Hank:** We’re not lost.

**Wendy:** Oh, we are *so* lost. Why can’t you ever admit you don’t know where you’re going?

**Hank:** [*arguing*] Oh, I know where I’m going – to John’s house.

**Offstage:** I’m still here.

**Wendy:** [*apologizing*] Sorry.

**Hank:** [*conceding*] Well, I guess we are a little off track.

**Offstage:** Where are you trying to go?

**Hank:** John’s house. I mean, 1742 Pheasant Trail.

**Offstage:** Can you confirm your present location?

**Wendy:** [*cutting in*] We’re in the middle of nowhere.

**Hank:** I think we’re on Highway 25 and we just passed Riley Street.

**Offstage:** Are you near the lake?

**Hank:** Yes, there’s water on the right side of the road.

**Offstage:** Your next intersection should be Watkins Avenue – turn left at the light.

**Hank:** Okay, I can see the light just up ahead.

**Offstage:** Once you turn on Watkins, follow it three lights to Hunt Club Lane and turn right. Pheasant Trail will be the next left.

**Hank:** Wow, that’s amazing. You know right where we are.

**Wendy:** [*asking Offstage*] Is this service available for other things?

**Offstage:** Other things?

**Wendy:** Yeah, do you think you can help my husband remember where he put the spare house keys?

**Hank:** I told you. They’re in the garage.

**Wendy:** Along with every other piece of useless junk you’ve collected over the past eight years.

**Offstage:** I’m still here.

**Wendy:** [*apologizing*] Sorry.

**Offstage:** And I’m afraid I can’t help you find the spare keys. But you may want to consider hanging a key rack in your laundry room, so you’ll always know where your keys are.

**Wendy:** This is an amazing service.

**Offstage:** It’s all part of the job.

**Wendy:** Can you send reminders?

**Offstage:** Reminders for what?

**Wendy:** I don’t know. [*looking at Hank*] Birthdays, anniversaries . . .

**Hank:** I know when my birthday is.

**Wendy:** How about my birthday?

**Hank:** June 12.

**Wendy:** Nice try. It’s October 3.

**Hank:** But I do know our anniversary.

**Wendy:** Then why did you miss it last week?

**Hank:** [*shocked*] Our anniversary was last week?

**Wendy:** No, it’s June 12.

**Hank:** See, I had one of them right.

**Offstage:** I’m still here.

**Hank:** [*apologizing*] Sorry.

**Offstage:** Is there anything else I can help you with?

**Hank:** No, I think we’re almost there. I can see the light at Hunt Club Lane.

**Wendy:** I think we can make it from here.

**Offstage:** Alright, I’ll let you go. And I’ll see if I can get you a reminder on those dates.

**Wendy:** Thank you.

**Hank:** Yeah, thanks for your help.

**Offstage:** It’s really no problem. Call anytime.

**Hank:** Bye, Mom.

**Offstage:** Bye, Sweetie.

[*Blackout*]

*\*Optional segue*

It’s always good to know where we’re going and what our final destination is. It’s easy to get distracted and lose our place. Don’t be afraid to check in and ask for directions.

***The christmas Code***

**Children’s Moment – Week 3**

***Code Word:*** **Incarnation**

**December 11, 2022**

**Written by Katie Laidlaw**

**Synopsis:** *The Christmas Code* Children’s Messages are given from the perspective of Gabriel, the angel. Gabriel’s perspective is meant to help children understand the narrative of the Christmas story, while encouraging application, and remembrance of the true meaning of Christmas.

**Set-Up/Staging:** Invite children to come to the front, either having them stand or sit for the lesson. (I personally recommend having the children stand, as this helps keep them attentive, engaged, and involved in the lesson—especially with the dynamic of the congregation watching them. In this more public/formal setting, sitting provides a more relaxed/informal mindset, allowing the children to disengage and merely be present in the moment.)

**Props:** Halo, wings, white shirt

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| **Week 3 – Incarnation** |

[**NOTE:** Incarnation is a difficult concept for children to grasp. Even as adults, we cannot fully comprehend the mysteries of God, especially concerning the dual nature of Jesus. Therefore, this lesson will incorporate an object lesson. The provided object lesson is not fool-proof, due to the complex nature of incarnation, but it provides a helpful image and intentional thought process to understand this crucial aspect of Christian faith/theology.]

**Supplies:** 2 clear glasses/cups

1 large, clear pitcher/vase

Oil in one glass/cup

Water in one glass/cup

***Script:***

It’s me again! Just doing my angel duties – being a messenger! I’m Gabriel (if you didn’t remember), the famous angel of the Christmas story. I know all the details about this fantastic story. After all, God chose ME to share the coolest news of all time.

We know that Jesus, God’s son, was going to be born as a human baby to Mary. I know what you’re thinking – how can the Son of the Almighty, all-powerful God be born as a human baby?! Jesus is not half-man, and half-God. Jesus is fully man and fully God. But how does this work?

There is a word to describe Jesus becoming a full human, while also still being fully God. It is called “incarnation.” Can you say that? [*Allow children to repeat*]

Have you ever had a cup of grape juice? It is simply and completely grape juice. What would happen if I added some apple juice to the grape juice? Your cup of juice would become half grape juice and half apple juice.

Jesus is completely God, and completely human. He isn’t half and half. He is fully both. Because of the incarnation, we can fully see and realize both Jesus as a man, and Jesus as God.

Let’s make some more sense of this. Do you see this glass of water? This glass of water is 100% water. When I pour it into the pitcher, it is still 100% water. Do you see this glass of oil? It is 100% oil. When I pour this glass of oil into the pitcher, what do you think will happen? [*Allow children to answer*]

Watch this! When I pour the oil into the water, it will stay separate from the water, while still existing with the water. 100% water, 100% oil, existing together. When Jesus was born to earth as a human, His Godliness was poured into a human body! The Godliness and humanity of Jesus do not mix together but remain unique within the being of Jesus. This is what makes the birth of Jesus so amazing! Jesus (God, Savior, King) understands and has lived as a human on the same earth we live on today. Jesus experienced human emotions, temptations, and hardships.

The book of Philippians explains why and how Jesus came. It says:

*“In his very nature he was God.*

*Jesus was equal with God. But Jesus didn’t take advantage of that fact.*

*Instead, he made himself nothing.*

*He did this by taking on the nature of a servant.*

*He was made just like human beings.*

*He appeared as a man.*

*He was humble and obeyed God completely.*

*He did this even though it led to his death on a cross.”*

(Philippians 2:6-8, NIRV)

Jesus did not come to earth to show off His Godly power – He came to save, bring freedom, and forgive. We can see how much God truly loves us through learning about the incarnation, God’s gift to us.

**[Have children stay in place to sing *Silent Night*.]**

**Main Points:**

* Jesus is fully God and fully human
* The humanity and Godliness/deity of Jesus exist uniquely within the being of Jesus
* The incarnation expresses the sacrifice, servanthood and deep love of God
* Jesus did not come to earth to show off His Godly power – He came to save, bring freedom, and forgive. We can see how much God truly loves us through learning about the incarnation, God’s gift to us.

***The christmas Code***

**Advent Sermon – Week 3**

***Code Word:* Incarnation**

**December 11, 2022**

**By Lieutenant Amanda Hines**

***The Son left his place in heaven so that God’s sons and daughters***

***would be guaranteed their inheritance in heaven. Amazing grace!***

**TITLE: *Incarnation***

**SCRIPTURE**: Philippians 2:5-8

**CHARACTER:** Mary

**OPENING ILLUSTRATION**:

[Share a story about a time you were rescued, or examples of how people need to be rescued. If the drama was performed, you could include a comment about how the lost couple needed to be saved by getting directions.]

**TRANSITION:**

We've all had some moments in our lives where we have needed to be rescued, and today we are going to talk about the ultimate rescue mission. It was prophesied and anticipated throughout the Old Testament. Every year at Christmas, we celebrate the journey that set it in motion.

**FOR JESUS TO FULFILL THIS RESCUE MISSION, HE HAD TO LEAVE HIS HEAVENLY HOME**

We know that Jesus' birth on this earth was not when he came into existence; he had always existed as God. He made a choice to enter our world as a human and leave behind the glory of heaven for a place filled with pain, suffering, and death. This truth means a great deal for us because if Jesus had not made this journey—if He had not chosen to come to earth to live as one of us—we would have no hope of anything better than this world. Heaven would be entirely out of our reach if He had not come.

But He did come! *The all-powerful, all-knowing, all-present* God chose to leave the splendor of heaven and live life among His creation in this broken and sinful world so He could bring the hope of heaven to us (Tripp, 87).

**FOR JESUS TO FUFILL THIS RESCUE MISSION, HE HAD TO EMPTY HIMSELF** (Philippians 2:6-7)

For Jesus to make the journey to Bethlehem and live out a human life, He had to empty Himself. [As we saw in the children's moment today,] the idea of Jesus being both fully God and fully man is difficult for us to comprehend or explain. In verses 6-7 of Philippians 2, speaking of Jesus, Paul writes: *“who, though he was in the form of God, did not count equality with God a thing to be grasped, but emptied himself, by taking the form of a servant, being born in the likeness of men”* (Philippians 2:6-7, ESV).

Verse 6 begins speaking of Jesus as being “in the form of God,” and the Greek word translated to *form* here refers to “the kind of form that fully expresses the being that underlies it.” In other words, this isn't saying that He merely looked like God, or was God in part, but that the “form of God” fully expressed who Jesus was to the core of His being (Wilson et al., 2007).

Then, in verse 7, Paul writes that Jesus “emptied Himself, by taking the form of a servant, being born in the likeness of men” (Philippians 2:7, ESV). Jesus *emptied* Himself, the verb translated *to empty* can carry a meaning of “pouring out” (Wilson et al., 2007).

He poured Himself out by taking on the form of a servant and being born in the likeness of men. In this verse, Paul writes that Jesus took on the form of a servant; again, *form* refers to the kind of form that fully expresses the being that underlies it. Here, he did not just take on the appearance of a servant; He became a servant in the fullest sense of the word.

**TO FULFILL THIS RESCUE MISSION, JESUS SUBMITTED TO DEATH** (Philippians 2:8)

The third thing Jesus had to do to fulfill this rescue mission for us was to resign Himself to death. For God to become human was humbling; taking on the nature of a servant was even more so, but Jesus took it even further than that. We cannot understand the fullness of the gift of Christmas without thinking ahead to Easter. Jesus’ voluntary humbling of Himself went to the extent of allowing Himself to die. And it wasn't just any death, but execution as a common criminal on a cross.

**APPLICATION:**

When we look at Jesus’ choices here, what does that mean for us as Christ-followers? Going back to our passage, verse 5 states: *“Have this mind among yourselves, which is yours in Christ Jesus”* (Philippians 2:5, ESV). To have the mind of Christ means to have the same nature or temperament that Jesus had. Paul shares these truths about the Savior to give the Philippian believers the highest standard of behavior that they should follow.

While we as Christians can't suffer and pay the price for others’ sins as Jesus did, we **can** have the same disposition and attitude of our Lord. We can be **moved** by the same motives that drove Him. We need to ask ourselves: What is it about Jesus’ self-emptying that we can imitate in our own lives as we grow to be more Christlike, more holy, by following His example? Are we following the example of our Lord in humility?

“Jesus left what was His right, to guarantee for us a place that is not our right but is a gift from His humble hands” (Tripp, 88).

**CONCLUSION: JESUS’ HUMILITY IN INCARNATION IS OUR HOPE**

“Jesus’ humility is our hope. His willingness to leave glory unleashed glory on us and guaranteed that we could live with Him in glory forever. He made this broken world his destination so that our final destination would be a place where every form of brokenness has ended and where we would live with him in a complete peace and harmony that will never end” (Tripp, 87).

And we do not have to wait for heaven to take part in God’s Kingdom. Jesus came to this earth and brought the Kingdom of God to us, and we are actively a part of that Kingdom now because the redemption that Jesus bought for us is not merely a redemption ***from*** sin but ***to*** a new way of life. The rescue mission that was set into motion on that first Christmas day with the birth of our Savior so many years ago is still ongoing. We have the incredible privilege to work as part of the rescue team alongside our Savior.

**REFERENCES**

Tripp, P. D. (2017). *Come, let us adore him: A daily Advent Devotional*. Wheaton, IL: Crossway.

Wilson, Earle L., Alex R. G. Deasley, and Barry L. Callen. [*Galatians, Philippians, Colossians: A Commentary for Bible Students*](https://ref.ly/logosres/wescom69ga?ref=Bible.Php2.5-11&off=6707&ctx=utward+appearance%2c+%E2%80%9C~but+it+may+refer+to+). Indianapolis, IN: Wesleyan Publishing House, 2007. Print.

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