

From our Churches

Church: Springstein Mennonite Church

Date:

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Christmas Choir Program

- *While people are coming into the church, there will be a caroling group singing for 10-15 minutes. If the weather is suitable, they will sing outside or in the balcony and then enter into the sanctuary—and continue singing: inviting the congregation to join in the carol singing.*
- *After the last official caroler song, the people will be thanked for joining in with the carolers with the following words:*

Welcome all to this evening, where once more, we want to remember the reason for Christ's birth. For some the tradition of singing German songs at Christmas is filled with many memories, so let us continue by singing along as the choir is led in a medley of Christmas songs.

- Choir Stands

Call to Worship

Sopranos: From the distant time comes the whisper;

Altos: [*very softly*] The Messiah will be born.

Sopranos: Even the slightest hint heartens us;

Altos: [*quietly*] A Saviour will come to us.

Sopranos: Our expectation grows and grows;

Alto & Tenors: He shall be called Wonderful, Counsellor, Prince of Peace.

Sopranos: Soon our confidence is secure;

Sopranos, Altos
& Tenors: [*very loudly*] Emmanuel, God-with-us now!

All, including Bass Rejoice! Give thanks! Alleluia!
Voices: [*joyfully with conviction*]

- Choir *Glory, Glory Hallelujah*

[Narrator enters and takes his/her place]

Narrator: Welcome to the beauty and wonder of Christmas. Together let us celebrate the gift of God's love. May we find ourselves filled anew with that love, and experience again the joy of the good news that angels sang so long ago.

- Choir *Soon a Tiny Child*

Narrator: In telling the old story, it is difficult not to become careless with the familiar. We hear, year after year, of Jesus' birth. We know about the shepherd, the angels of stable and about Mary and Joseph, as they experienced the joyous birth of their special child. Can we clear our minds and pretend that we're hearing the story for the first time, from the scriptures, as it might have been told by the people themselves.

Reader 1: Luke 1:26-33

[Enter Mary and Joseph]

Mary: I need to talk to someone! This message is so strange. This news is too overwhelming! I know I'll go see my cousin Elizabeth. The angel said she is going to have a baby as well, maybe, she'll help me understand.

Narrator: And so Mary went to the hill country of Judah to see Elizabeth. As soon as she arrived and greeted her cousin, Elizabeth's child leapt in her womb, and Elizabeth was filled with the Holy Spirit. She knew that Mary's baby was to be the Saviour of the world. And Mary finally began to understand and was overwhelmed with joy and praise to God.

- Solo *My soul doth magnify the Lord*

Narrator: But what about Joseph. How did he feel about this very strange yet wonderful news that had been whispered in his ear?

Joseph: There is so much that makes no sense. First of all, I know Mary loves me. She loved long before we were officially betrothed. Second, in this small town, I would know if another man had come into her life. Thirdly, Mary is known for her purity, almost divine in nature. It simply isn't possible that she could do anything that violates God's laws. The strange fact is, she told me about the pregnancy, she didn't even act guilty. She did seem to be in a state of shock and wasn't rational. She kept saying, "How can I make you understand, when I don't". And then, as if I wasn't confused enough she said, "If my parents send me, I want to visit my cousin Elizabeth." In a kind of daze, she turned away from me

and almost mumbled to herself, “When I’ve seen Elizabeth, I’ll know more.”

Now God has turned his face away, and I no longer know what he wants. Should I just be quiet and let her go?

Reader 2: Matthew 1:18-21

• Male Choir *Watchman, Watchman of the Night*

Narrator: And so it began to make sense. It even began to sound exciting and awesome—really awesome; and when the call for the census came and all had to return to the town of their birth, Mary and Joseph traveled together, to the town of Bethlehem.

[Together Mary and Joseph leave the stage]

Reader 1: Luke 2:1-7

Narrator: But their troubles were still not over. When they asked the Innkeeper for a room, the place was already full. What were they going to do?

[Innkeeper comes on stage as Narrator is speaking]

Innkeeper: I hate to turn people away. For one thing, I lose business. And for another, that young woman is obviously pregnant, and close to her time. Perhaps they’ll be happy with a place in the stable. At least she will be able to lie down.

Narrator: And so the Baby was born – in a manger, lying on a bed of hay.

• Choir *Hurry, Hurry now to Bethlehem*

Reader 2: Luke 2:8-14

• Duet *Angel theme*

Narrator: This was almost too much to take in. The shepherds couldn’t believe what they had heard. But it didn’t take them long to leave their flocks and go. They had to see for themselves. But the shepherds themselves were the most amazed of all. Amazed at the angels’ message, amazed at the baby, amazed most of all that this had been revealed to them.

Reader 1: Luke 2:15-18

• Male Choir *Who is He in Yonder Stall?*

[Enter Shepherds]

Shepherds: You can't imagine how we felt. We usually get our excitement from fighting lions and wolves, but this was excitement of a different kind. And you know, seeing the baby lying there, in a bed of hay, with the animals all around, made us think that he was one of us. A heavenly angel may have brought the news, but he was one of us. And suddenly, we felt really good inside, like we knew he would understand even simple folk like us, that he would really care.

Reader 2: Luke 2:20

- Choir *A Holy Child is Born*

Narrator: Jesus Christ is Born—born as a baby in a manger, but born too, within each one of us...if we give him room. Truly he had brought joy to our lives, a joy that we cannot keep to ourselves. Joy to the world, the Lord is come.

- Congregation & Choir *Joy to the World*

Narrator: Let us take some time to reflect on this story told to us.

- Musical Interlude
- Lighting of candles

As the musical interlude begins, the carolers and all the characters involved in the drama slowly get up. He first two candles are lit from the BIG white candle, and then the other two candles are lit; the candle lighters forming a semi-circle in the front of the church. When this is finished, one verse of 'Silent Night' is played, and then the Congregation will sing all verses.

- Congregation *Silent Night*
- Closing Prayer and invitation for continuing the celebration in the fellowship hall.