



**Mennonite  
Church  
Canada**

Resource Centre

# From our Churches

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*Church: Zion Mennonite Church*

*Date: Christmas Eve 2000*

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## A Child of Hope

*This script was written for the use at Zion Mennonite Church, Swift Current, SK, and in some ways reflects that context. I think, however, it is easily adapted to other settings. For example, your choir may want to sing different songs. If you make changes I ask that you respect the integrity of the script that is.*

*Using two male narrators worked well for us. You may want to change that. It is important that Reader 3 be female. All three readers were off to the side, basically out of sight of the audience.*

*In our setting the choir was in the traditional choir loft, behind the stage area. The lights of the choir were turned on for their songs and off the rest of the time.*

*We had the same woman taking the parts of Sarah, Jochebed, Hannah and Mary. She used a different shawl for each character. We had the same person play Abraham and Joseph.*

*In our presentation the actors were mute, taking their place with minimal action – enough to lend credibility to the presentation.*

*We have two sets of flood lights (of sorts) that allowed us to light two different parts of the stage as required. We had the rocking chair in one circle of light – for the mother with the baby, for Mary when the angel visits and for the grandfather reading the Christmas story. The other scenes took place in the other circle of light.*

*At our Christmas Eve service people bring candles. At the end (as indicated) the wisemen and shepherds light their candles with the Christ candle (burning throughout the service) and then light the candles of the people in the congregation. The carol sing is done without books by candlelight.*

*The manger is near the back of the staging area till the time for the nativity scene. It is present – a reminder of what is to come and the baby is all about – but at the back until it is centre stage.*

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Cast:

- Narrator 1 (male)
- Narrator 2 (male)
- Voice 3 (female)
- Mother with baby
- “actress” (female) with 3 different shawls
- “actor” (male) Abraham
- Mary and Joseph
- Shepherds and Wise men
- Angel
- Grandpa/Grandma
- Singer bringing children to manger

Props:

- Costumes for Mary and Joseph, shepherds, wise men, angel, Abraham
- 3 or 4 shawls
- manger
- wooden rocking chair

**Hymn – Angels from the Realms of Glory**

**Welcome**

**Hymn – Come, thou long-expected Jesus**

**Sanctuary lights off**

Narrators: Reader 1 and Reader 2

1 It's a story

2 It's an old story, a long story; a story that has taken centuries to tell.

1 It's a story,

2 a new story, a short story; a story that can be told in one evening.

1 It's the story of God.

2 It's the story of people.

1 It's the story of God.

2 It's the story of one person.

1 It's the story of God.

2 It's the story of a baby.

SONG – Prairie Gospel Quartet – “Wonderful Story of Love”

- 1 It's the story of a people longing for hope.
- 2 It's the story of a God hearing their cry and sending – a baby.
- 1 A baby?
- 2 A baby.
- 1 it's the story of hope in despair, life in the midst of dying, new energy in the struggle.  
It's the story of God hearing a cry and sending a crying baby.
- 2 That's hope?
- 1 That's hope!!
- 2 Listen to the story.

SONG – Choir – Comfort, comfort O my people (#176)  
(Mother and baby take their place during this song)

- 1 (Isaiah 9:6) “For unto us a child is born, to us a son is given, and the government will be on his shoulders. And he will be called Wonderful Counselor, Might God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace”

BABIES (mother with baby sitting in rocking chair)

- 3 Babies, so small, so wonderful, so tiny, so helpless, so lovable.  
Babies, a miracle of love, a miracle of God.  
Its hair – so soft, its cheeks – so rosy, its mouth – so lovely, its hands – so tiny.  
To think God has given us this baby, trusted us with this life.  
Could such a tiny baby be ever more than just a baby, a helpless baby needing all my care and attention?  
Could a crying baby really be the voice of God?

SONG – Choir – “A tiny Child will Come”  
(Mother and baby leave, Abraham and Sarah take their places)

- 2 (Isaiah 7:14) “Therefore, the Lord Himself will give you a sign: A woman is with child and will give birth to a son...”
- 1 It is 2000 BC, late on a Friday night, in a land filled with strange gods and strange ways of worship. It is a land filled with sin and longing, with hurt and dying, a land in need of God. Abraham and Sarah, a couple now old and alone, no children to care for them and dying an ever more present reality.

ABRAHAM & SARAH (sitting around the campfire, Sarah is talking, Abraham is listening)

- 3 Abraham, do you really think it's possible, that we will have a baby? For so many years we prayed, and no baby. I thought God had forgotten us, sending us out here to where our people have never been and then forgot about us, left us to go to other people. Still, you said God would hear and I prayed. But no answer. And then the way

of older women came on me and I knew it would not be. God had forgotten. Or, God had not heard. Or, God did not care.

And now this word from these strangers you insist came from God. Do you really think it can be—that we will have a baby? Us? Me, an old woman?

What did you say you had dreamed? Okay, okay, you didn't dream it. God spoke to you in a vision. What did you say god said? Our baby will be more than a baby? He will be the start of God doing wonderful things, great things, things that will shake up all history?

Do you really think it will be so, Abraham, our baby?

SONG – Choir – “Little One, Tiny One”  
(Abraham and Sarah leave. Jochebed takes her place)

1 (Isaiah 7:14) “Therefore, the Lord Himself will give you a sign: A woman is with child and will give birth to a son...”

2 1300 BC. In another land filled with strange gods and strange ways of worship. In a land filled with sin and longing, with hurt and dying, a land in need of God. God's people are slaves to the mighty Egyptians. The texts of history tell us:

And the Egyptians compelled the sons of Israel to labor rigorously; and they made their lives bitter with hard labor in mortar and bricks and at all kinds of labor in the field, all their labors which they rigorously imposed on them...

And the sons of Israel sighed because of the bondage, and they cried out, and their cry for help because of their bondage rose up to God. So God heard their groaning; and God remembered his promise, and God took notice.

And Amran, of the clan of Levi, took a wife of the tribe of Levi—Jochebed, and they had a baby boy.

JOCHEBED (Jochebed is spreading pitch on the outside of a basket)

3 What a sweet baby Moses had been, such a gift. And for three months I've been able to hide him. No soldiers heard him cry. He's been safe, but now, I can no longer keep him here. (silence as Jochebed cries)

God, take care of my baby Moses. I'm afraid if I keep him any longer the soldiers will come and take him. So, God, I give him to you to take care of. I'll put him in the river. I don't know what will happen but I can't bear to have the soldiers come and kill him. He's your baby now.

God, I can't tell any one this, not even Amran, but sometimes, as I rocked him, I dreamed he would be the one to set us free. I know it sounds silly, but what else is there to dream in this cursed land of hard work, beatings and death? “It could happen” I figured.

Take care of my baby, God, and someday soon, please come take care of us.

SONG – Choir - #189 To us a child of hope vs. 1 or Still, Still/For unto us  
(Jochebed exits, Hannah enters)

- 1 (Isaiah 7:14) “Therefore, the Lord Himself will give you a sign: A woman is with child and will give birth to a son...”
- 2 1020 BC. God’s people are in their own land but still, it is a land filled with strange gods and strange ways of worship, a land filled with sin and longing, with hurt and dying, a land in need of God. In the temple of the One True God a woman is praying.

HANNAH (on her knees in prayer)

- 3 Three years ago I came here to pray in desperation, O God. Though I had been a good wife, you had given me no children, not even one son. But then, a miracle, and there I am today, giving you back what you gave me. My son is your son. I leave my son here today to serve you, to work for you, to be your child. Thank you for giving him to me.

And God, make him truly your son. Fill him with our spirit. Our land is so full of darkness, lies, hatred, violence, people worshipping anything but you. God, if it is your will, may my son help bring our people back to life, to love, to worship, to living like they are your people.

I leave it all in your care.

One more thing, God. I will be hard to go home without little Samuel. Give me strength. Comfort me. Let me not weep for what I do not have but be happy that you gave me a son. I will look forward to seeing him next year, and the year after that, and every year that you give me to come here for Passover.

Take care of little Samuel.

SONG – “Carol of Hope”  
(Hannah exits, Mary enters)

- 1 (Isaiah 7:14) “Therefore, the lord Himself will give you a sign. Look, a virgin will be with child and shall bear a son...”
- 2 4 BC. The land is filled with strange gods and strange ways of worship. It is filled with sin and longing, with hurt and dying. It is a land in need of God. On a quiet side street in the village of Nazareth a young woman is busy with her sewing, day dreaming about her wedding day and the handsome young man who will claim her as bride. Suddenly, the peace is shattered by a visitor:

SONG – Ladies (choir) - #180 The Angel Gabriel vs. 1 & 2

- 2 Mary was thoroughly shaken, wondering what was behind a greeting like that. But the angel assured her, “Mary, you have nothing to fear. God has a surprise for you: You will become pregnant and give birth to a son and call his name Jesus. He will be great, be called ‘Son of the Highest.’ The Lord God will give him the throne of his father David; He will rule Jacob’s house forever-no end, ever to his kingdom.

- 1 Mary said to the angel, “But how? I’ve never slept with a man.” The angel answered, “The Holy Spirit will come upon you, the power of the Highest hover over you; Therefore, the child you bring to birth will be called Holy, Son of God.”

SONG – Ladies (choir) - #180 The Angel Gabriel vs. 3  
(Mary stays in rocking chair, Joseph enters)

- 2 A week later, in the same village, a few blocks over, a young man tossed and turned, unable to sleep, for his dreams of marriage to the prettiest girl in the village lay shattered like a clay pot thrown from the window. How could she have done this? What hope was there now for them, for her, for him? His life was as hopeless as the life of his people. God had not only forsaken the country, God had forsaken him? He fell into a fitful sleep, and had a dream. An angel came and spoke to him:

- 3 Joseph, son of David, don’t hesitate to get married. Mary’s pregnancy is Spirit-conceived. God’s Holy Spirit has made her pregnant. She will bring a son to birth, and when she does, you Joseph, will name him Jesus – ‘God saves’ – because he will save his people from their sins.” This would bring the prophet’s embryonic sermon to full term:

“Watch for this – a virgin will get pregnant and bear a son; They will name him Emmanuel” (Hebrew for “God with us”).

- 2 Joseph woke with a sense of relief. He and Mary would get married. They would have the baby, God’s baby.

- 1 And they did?

HYMN - #189 To Us a Child of Hope

- During the singing of this song the Nativity scene is set up. Lights on in sanctuary.
- Move manger forward into spotlight area on side, people come in.
- Grandpa/Grandma takes his/her place in rocking chair.
- Lights out in sanctuary, both sets of floodlights on.
- Standing at the back or the sanctuary, a soloist invites the children and singing “O Come All ye Children”. (MH 470)

Grandpa/Grandma – read Luke 2:1-20

SONG – children – “Away in a Manger”

SONG – Choir – “O Holy Night”

- Sanctuary lights on

SONG – Congregation - #318 Joy to the World

- Choir and children leave, scene stays
- Sanctuary lights off, rocking chair floodlights off

- 1 And so hope springs eternal with each baby born.  
Each baby is a miracle of God

A gift of God,  
Each baby is a reminder of 'God with us.'

2 With each baby born,  
each baby held and rocked,  
each baby fed and changed,  
Christmas enters our lives again.  
God visits us.  
God speaks to us.  
God becomes real to us.  
Hope is renewed.

1 And we, our hope renewed, can share that hope with others. As one small candle can set a thousand lights ablaze and drive back the darkness of winter, so one small baby speaking hope to us can become a thousand messages of hope as we share the Word and transform the winter of life into the blazing brightness of Christmas, "God with us."

SONG "We light 1000 candles"  
(Mary, Joseph and angel leave)

LIGHTING OF CANDLES by 2 wise men, 2 shepherds

CAROL SINGING

BENEDICTION

MERRY CHRISTMAS!