



DREAMS OF A NEW DAY

AN INTERGENERATIONAL ADVENT PAGEANT LITURGY

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FOREWORD

St Francis of Assisi said the whole world is pregnant with God, and “expressed a wish to be pregnant with Christ, to bear Christ as a mother bears a child, to spiritually birth the Son of God”. And, as my beloved mentor Herbert Brokering wrote in [Unto Us Is Born: Christmas Conversations with the Mother of Jesus](#),¹ “St Francis is right, we can be pregnant with Christ.”

In [Seasons of Hope: Readings for the Liturgical Year](#)², David E. Butler highlights the fact/idea that:

Only those few shepherds were there for the birth of a light that banishes the shadows, for the coming of a new kind of leader. Everyone else in town slept through it or never noticed. The rest of the world just went about its business. They never heard any angels. They never felt any magic. But the shepherds were ready for a miracle. The shepherds were waiting and watching and willing to follow. We too must ready ourselves for wonder. We must open our minds for mystery. We must widen our eyes for awe and clear our ears for the music of God’s world. Miracles await those with watchful hearts.

At several points in our Narrative study, high schooler Nikkole Collins echoed this sentiment, pointing out that key figures - Joseph, Mary, the Shepherds - needed to “have faith”, they “had to believe” - in order for these amazing events to unfold: none of the joy of this drama would exist without each of them tapping into a bedrock of faith - in God, in themselves, in others.

This idea of seeing miracles in unlikely places and difficult circumstances is embedded in the Japanese art of [kintsugi](#), a practice of repairing broken ceramics with gold or other precious metals. Kintsugi (kin = golden; tsugi = repair) is the basis for the golden threads/ribbons/yarns that connect the characters of this pageant - each is a broken vessel carrying part of God’s Dream while radiating their light as part of God’s New Day. The golden yarn is also what binds us together, mending our broken relationships and making them more beautiful, holding us as One.

“The world is pregnant with God” - we have only to “open our minds for mystery” and “widen our eyes for awe” - we have only to believe - to perceive the miracles happening all around us. We have only to open our hearts and souls to the “Yes” of Mary - to have faith - and we, too, can birth Christ in the world, today. God’s Dream of a New Day is unfolding and becoming real as we share it with one another. Today we wonder together: What part do we play in the Divine Dream?

Thank you to Pastor Karen Larson, her friend Cathy Pino, and especially Nikkole Collins. This pageant is based on their wisdom and wonder.

Rev. Emily P. L. Meyer

¹ Brokering, Herbert. *Unto Us Is Born: Christmas Conversations with the Mother of Jesus*. Minneapolis, MN; Augsburg Fortress, 1999; 8.

² Butler, David E. *Seasons of Hope: Readings for the Liturgical Year*. Cleveland, OH; United Church Press, 1998; 21.

CAST, COSTUMES, (PROPS) - in order of appearance

EVERYONE: gold cord [[yarn](#), [ribbon](#), [curling ribbon](#)], readily visible on their person

DREAMERS need two additional gold cord pieces: one to “give” the INFANT and one for the blessing.

Six-inch lengths of the same gold cord should be available for all worshipers.

Please avoid costumes that place this story in “Biblical” times.

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MUSICIAN - adequately skilled to lead congregational singing; everyday attire

LEADER - congregational leader; everyday/clergy attire

ROVING REPORTER - one or many; dressed for field reporting; (microphone)

ANCHOR - anyone; news-anchor business attire; (paper stack)

VOICE - one person or many; strictly a voice-over, we never see their person

FIELD CORRESPONDENT - one or many; dressed for field reporting; (microphone)

JOHN - no need to genderize the name; psychedelic, hippy attire

ELDER DREAMER - one or many; everyday attire; (2 extra gold cords)

WREATH LIGHTER - one or many; everyday attire - we may see only their arms; (candle lighter)

REFINER - a smithy, forge worker, welder, miner, etc. or actor to that effect; clothes smudged with black, heavy apron; (metal tongs/tool of the trade)

ZECHARIAH - a grandparent-ly figure who can sing; everyday attire

GRANDPARENT DREAMER - one or many; everyday attire (2 extra gold cords)

ANGEL - anybody; everyday attire/might designate with headpiece or collar

MARY - young girl or non-binary person - 12-16 years old; everyday attire

PARENT DREAMER - one or many; everyday attire; (2 extra gold cords)

JOSEPH - middle-aged man/non-binary person; everyday attire

YOUTH DREAMER - one or many; everyday attire (2 extra gold cords)

NIGHT SHIFT WORKER - any number (numbered lines are suggestions only); everyday attire, work uniforms, or coveralls; (maybe phones; whatever folx carry home from the local night shift)

CHILD DREAMER - one or more; everyday attire (2 extra gold cords)

IAU - all ages and identities; as many as you want; numbered lines are suggestions only; astronomer attire, traveling clothes, or sleepwear/nightclothes

INFANT - an infant or toddler; everyday attire (parents; the INFANT will receive a gold cord at the end of every DREAM; as they are “received”, the INFANT’s PARENTS should tie them on the INFANT’s wrists, ankles, blanket, buttons, etc. By the end, the INFANT should be blanketed in gold cord.)

## SETTINGS

*This is a sketch of God's dream unfolding in the here and now.*

*Set all scenes in locations indicated by the texts: where would this part of the story happen in your community, today? Who would be the main characters, if these events happened now? Find a four-week group discussion for discerning this [here](#).*

*The premise is a newscast covering Daybreak.*

*ACT 1; SCENE 1 begins in darkness with each subsequent ACT becoming only minutely lighter until we get to daybreak in the final conversation with the IAU.*

### ACT ONE

SCENE 1: Darkness; east of town; a place that emphasizes gloom

SCENE 2: [GATHERING LITANY]  
Background: a single image of lament, or a sequence of images suggested by the text. Include the litany text on the screen.

SCENE 3: Still dark; anywhere with pouring water or wind

SCENE 4: Still dark; inside with a strobe or disco ball

SCENE 5: [ELDER DREAM] - the ELDER's home

SCENE 6: [INVOCATION / WREATH LIGHTING] - your sanctuary or LIGHTER'S home

### ACT 2

SCENE 1: Quite dark. Workplace with high heat, melting, or reshaping things

SCENE 2: Quite dark. Out in public: a public spectacle/service announcement

SCENE 3: [GRANDPARENTS DREAMS] - GRANDPARENT's home

SCENE 4: [CONF./HEALING / WREATH LIGHTING] - your sanctuary or LIGHTER'S house

### ACT 3

SCENE 1: Mostly dark; place associated with government or institution

SCENE 2: Mostly dark; wherever a teenager might be found.

SCENE 3: PARENTS home

SCENE 4: [WREATH LIGHTING] - your sanctuary or LIGHTER'S home

### ACT 4

SCENE 1: Still dim. Anywhere.

SCENE 2: A mattress store  
OR  
Sleep-associated space - [be mindful of safe space and boundary concerns]

SCENE 3: YOUTH'S home

SCENE 4: [WREATH LIGHTING] - your sanctuary or LIGHTER'S home

### ACT 5

SCENE 1: Vague light. Anywhere

SCENE 2: Vague light. Place with unhoused people; OR outside a night shift workplace; OR the streets of town

SCENE 3: [CHILD(REN)'S DREAM]  
CHILD's home or out on a street

SCENE 4: Full light only at scene's end; streets of town

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ANCHOR SCENES: The ANCHOR can record entirely from their “news desk”; this is not always noted in scene changes; the idea is that we “cut back” to the ANCHOR from out in the field.

INFANT SCENES: The INFANT might be recorded in each of the designated sites so we see the INFANT in the middle of the “action”; OR at home; OR in your sanctuary

DREAM SCENES: As each DREAMER shares their DREAM from whatever location, clarify with a split-screen or other device that the DREAMER is speaking to the INFANT.

PREPARATORY NOTES

~This script is written to be recorded. Adaptations for hybrid or in-person use are simple. Consult with Emily Meyer for ideas.

~This pageant is designed to be prepared week-by-week throughout Advent. Each segment contains a DREAM from a different age-group. See this [study guide](#) for specific steps to a unique production.

~To share this full worship service on the 4th Sunday in Advent, merge two weeks of study and filming. OR, share on a Sunday after Christmas.

~Hymn suggestions are from The New Century Hymnal (Pilgrim Press). Different translations may or may not reflect or support the pageant content in the same way. Please substitute musical selections with an eye to flow and content.

~Follow all copyright and usage laws for sharing this script, and any music, video, or still images. Musical selections are suggestions for planning purposes only.

~ANCHOR, ROVING REPORTER and FIELD CORRESPONDENT should share their first and last, or first name only, as prompted. They should sound like news reporters, passing the dialogue back and forth, acknowledging each other every time.

**FUN IDEA: Practice by listening to news reports about issues mentioned in the script and have actors discuss using their reporter voices/persona.*

~To simplify: follow the [study guide](#); discern filming location(s); record a reading of that week’s texts in that location; record the DREAM and any liturgical pieces from that segment in an appropriate setting; splice them all together for a complete worship.

DREAMS OF A NEW DAY

ACT 1

HOPE

PRELUDE

WELCOME

Let a pastor or other regular leader bring a word of welcome, offer gratitude for all those who created this time of worship as leaders, readers, actors, musicians and tech support.

Invite people to share in the call and response litanies as indicated on the screen; to sing along as they are able; and light at-home Advent wreaths at appropriate times.

SCENE 1 EAST OF TOWN

[Isaiah 9:2](#)

ANCHOR: We interrupt our regular programming with this break-of-dawn story. We're receiving multiple reports that night may finally be over and a New Day may be on the horizon. Here to tell us whether day will ever break again is ROVING REPORTER [RR's first and last name].

[RR's first name], what can you tell us?

ROVING REPORTER:

In excited, morning-news-reporter tones - but hushed, because this report is so important, and it's still gloomy, so it's hard to be too boisterous.

Good morning, my good people - or, at least, good *pre*-morning. I'm here in the east side of town and, [ANCHOR's first name], hope started with a person - or persons - known only as "ISAIAH", who tweeted,

The people who walked in gloom
have seen a great light;
those who lived in a land of deep gloom—
on them light has shined.

Simultaneously cryptic and clear: according to ISAIAH, there's reason to hope that a New Day is on its way.

Back to you in the studio, [*ANCHOR's first name*].

SCENE 2 GATHERING LITANY

ANCHOR: Thanks, [*RR's first name*].

We turn now to our eye in the sky who got the pulse of the people on this developing story, with this call and response:

VOICE: It's gloomy, my people, it's gloomy right now.

ALL: Our eyes are weary; our burdens heavy.

VOICE: We've known anxious heights and ravines of despair - cut by rivers of fear.

ALL: The future feels very insecure.

VOICE: We lament the loss of life...

ALL: ...the strife of families, the sick and dying...

VOICE: ...the fatigue of essential workers, clergy, protestors, who keep trying to haul us out of the grip of diseases...

ALL: ...there has been so much unease.

VOICE: So today we join hands across generations - acknowledging the trauma that has been - and dreaming what may be.

ALL: We look for God-with-us, God within us, God here, by our side.

Introduce INFANT [and PARENTS].

VOICE: Come, now, to this humble sight:

An INFANT - real: fretting, wetting, eating, sleeping.

ALL: We come to see and to dream the Dreams of God.

SCENE 3 AN OUTPOURING

FIELD CORRESPONDENT:

[Joel 2:26b-29](#)

Good almost-morning, folks, [*full name*] here with the latest on this dawn-breaking story. I've just spoken with a fella known only as "JOEL", who humbly admits to being only a minor prophet, but still, that would make him an expert on visions from God, and according to him, God did say - and I quote:

²⁶ My people will never again be put to shame.

²⁷ You will know that I am right in the middle of [you],

and that I AM the Holy One; I AM your God: there is no other.

²⁸ So, then!

I will pour out my spirit on all living things;
your [children] will prophesy,
your elders will dream dreams,
and your young people will see visions.

²⁹ Even enslaved peoples will be filled with my spirit.

So, it sounds like just about everybody is going to start seeing things - and that's going to be a good thing!

Over to you, [*ROVING REPORTER's first name*].

SCENE 4 PSYCHEDELIC JOHN

ROVING REPORTER:

[Revelation 21:1-5](#)

That's right, [*FIELD CORRESPONDENT's first name*], and we've had our first vision over here in the [*wherever this is being filmed*], where neighbors reported that their friend JOHN was seeing things.

JOHN, what exactly is it that you claimed to have seen?

JOHN [*Excited, disbelieving. Let this be breathy and exhilarated.*]:

Oh, it was terrifying and amazing, I saw wars and corruption and fires and pandemics - I thought it was the end of the world, man, but...

Moving into a more reverential, awed tone:

Then I saw a new heaven and a new earth; 'cuz everything that used to be... (*dramatic pause*) ...had gone away... *poof!*

²And I saw a holy city, like, coming down out of the sky, like God was gently dropping it to earth. It was all decked out, you know, like a bride on her wedding day - beautiful and golden and glittery.

This may sound a little frightened:

³And I heard a really loud voice from this throne-thingy saying,

'Open up your eyes! God is alive and living among mortals.

The Holy One lives with humanity;

Everyone is Sacred -

'cuz the Divine Mystery is like, in them, and totally with them, you know?

And the voice went on and said,

⁴ God's gonna wipe away all the tears.

There won't be any more death.

There won't be any more mourning or crying or pain
'Cuz what used to be is going to die off.

5 And the One sitting on the throne-thingy said, 'See, I am making all things new.'
And then that One said I was supposed to, 'Write this stuff down, 'cuz it's all trustworthy
and true.'

So, I guess sharing it with you is sorta the same thing...

ROVING REPORTER:

Clearly stunned - and perhaps a little incredulous:

Wow. That is quite the vision, JOHN. I think we're all going to need some time to mull
that one over.

In the meantime, I understand there's another vision being shared, right now...

SCENE 5 ELDER'S DREAM

ANCHOR: That's right, [*RR's first name*]. Our candid camera caught this ELDER talking
to a little BABY. Let's listen in..

ELDER: Little ONE, I've had a lot of time to mull God's vision over, and my dream has
become...

Share the ELDER DREAM.

The ELDER hands a golden cord to/ward the INFANT and concludes with these words:

Beloved CHILD of God; this DREAM binds us together with a golden bond of HOPE.

SCENE 6 INVOCATION & ADVENT WREATH LIGHTING

VOICE: The tiniest spark is all it takes:

A tiny spark that rests, briefly, on a wick of faith.

And hope is born:

Hope for those who ache.

Hope for those who lament.

Hope for those who are unconsolable.

Hope for those who listen.

Hope for those who wait.

Hope for those who watch - for a glimmer on the horizon.³

Light the first Advent Wreath Candle as the following or another piece of music is sung/shared.

SONG

[Those Who Dream](#), The Many (If you can share legally, this is the perfect song here.)
It may or may not be covered by your licenses. Please remember to check before using any artist's work.

OR

NCH #103, Watcher, Tell Us of the Night

NCH #112, Keep Awake, Be Always Ready

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## **ACT TWO PEACE**

### **SCENE 1 REFINING FIRE**

[Malachi 3:1-3](#)

ANCHOR: We interrupt this program for more on our Day-breaking story as we join our intrepid FIELD CORRESPONDENT [*FC's full name*], outside the [*name of location*] to get an in-depth take on yet another vision.

FIELD CORRESPONDENT: [*ANCHOR's first name*], I'm here with [*name of REFINER*], [our local [*profession/artistry form*]].

[*REFINER's name*], we recently heard from a reliable source that before the New Day dawns it's going to get hot - really hot - like a refiner's fire hot. What can you tell us about this kind of heat?

REFINER: Well, a refiner's fire is, indeed, really, really hot. That really hot fire melts the metal down, so all the impurities get separated out. They can then be siphoned off and what's left is the real, pure gold or silver.

FIELD CORRESPONDENT: So, who do you think will be able to endure that kind of heat?

REFINER: It's going to take folk with some resilience, to be sure: and endurance and a whole lot of faith to hold the good, the real, and the pure stuff together.

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<sup>3</sup> Inspired by Butler, David E. *Seasons of Hope: Readings for the Liturgical Year*. Cleveland; United Church Press; 10.

And it'll take a willingness to let go of what's not helpful: you gotta let the crud go, or you'll end up getting washed away with it.

And flexibility: heat makes metal more pliable; I gotta think this current hot mess of a global dumpster fire is being used to refine and remold us, is what it seems like to me.

FIELD CORRESPONDENT: Refined and remolded... It sounds uncomfortable, but that's the vision from here, folx.

What are you seeing, back in the studio [*ANCHOR's first name*]?

## SCENE 2 PUBLIC SPECTACLE

[Luke 1:5ff](#)

ANCHOR: Well, [*first name of FIELD CORRESPONDENT*], there is a TikTok gone viral from a guy named ZECHARIAH who's a first-time dad - but old enough to be the kid's great grandpa!

I guess he got so excited about the baby being born healthy that he literally burst into song.

Here it is:

*ZECHARIAH sings - either NCH #110, Now Bless the God of Israel.*

*OR*

*The following lyrics can be sung to that same melody<sup>4</sup>*

ZECHARIAH:

Oh, my word and glory be to God whose power is love.

Come dance a jig and sing with glee for One who'll come to gov'n

As holy dreamers from long past have oft' declared as true:

This One will free us from the hate that separates "me" from "you".

That mercy promised long ago is now on full display

As, without fear, we serve God here in healthy, holy ways.

And you, blessed child, with dreams so bold will lead us to repent:

To turn from harming neighbors dear by healing what's been rent.

Now here we see, God's blessed ones, the dawn of a New Day:

It breaks with golden beams so bright to chase the gloom away.

So, let us follow where our dreams might lead us to increase

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<sup>4</sup> *Forest Green CMD; Traditional English melody; public domain*

The pace with which our feet move down this loving road t'ward peace.<sup>5</sup>

### **SCENE 3 GRANDPARENTS' DREAMS**

ANCHOR: And vision-sharing appears to be trending like crazy! Here's another vision, we just picked up from a CCTV feed...

GRANDPARENT: Blessed Baby, I've had plenty of time to mull God's vision over, and my dream today is...

*Share the GRANDPARENT DREAM.*

*The GRANDPARENT hands a golden cord to/ward the INFANT and concludes with these words:*

Beloved CHILD of God; this DREAM binds us together with a golden bond of PEACE.

### **SCENE 4 REPENT & RELEASE**

ANCHOR: This is getting touching, folks; here again with public response is our eye-in-the sky:

#### **CONFESSION**

VOICE: The refiner's fire is sufficient to melt us down - and to reshape us.

Let go of the dross and experience God's mercy:

ALL: We are broken.

We are weary.

We are heavy with grief.

Mend us, gracious One.

Make from our barren brokenness a beautiful new creation.

Open our eyes to see the Dawn of hope on the horizon.

Bind us back together with your golden cords of peace and love.

Grant us your grace for this New Day.

#### **FORGIVENESS & ADVENT WREATH LIGHTING**

VOICE: We are not consumed, but melted down;

Our dross removed; our essence holds -

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<sup>5</sup> Lyrics, Emily Meyer © 2021

And peace is found.  
Peace of the Divine Mystery:  
Peace at the core of our being;  
Peace within, a still, small space;  
Peace to calm fears.  
Peace to quiet hearts.  
Peace to dispel desperation.  
Peace that offers rest in God's luminous grace.<sup>6</sup>

*Light the second Advent Wreath Candle as the following or another piece of music is sung/shared.*

### **SONG**

Erci Whitacre's Sing Gently [International Choir](#) (SATB; *this video inspired the Kintsugi references and is visually significant to the confession and healing texts*)

*It may or may not be covered by your licenses. Please remember to check before using any artist's work.*

OR

NCH #116 (especially vss. 1, 2, 6, & 7) - O Come, O Come Emmanuel

NCH #101 (especially vs. 1), Comfort, Comfort, O My People

## **ACT THREE**

### **JOY**

## **SCENE ONE**

### **AND THE GOVERNMENT...**

[Isaiah 9:1a, 6-7](#)

ROVING REPORTER: Good nearly-morning, folks!

Speaking of peace:

I'm here at the [*location*] with this breaking report about a drastic change in governmental authority.

Local reports say that ISAIAH is igniting controversy again with this post - and I quote:

"There will be no gloom for those who were in anguish...

For a baby is going to be born

A tot to topple systems

To reshape structures

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<sup>6</sup> Inspired by Butler, David E. *Seasons of Hope: Readings for the Liturgical Year*. Cleveland; United Church Press; 10-11.

To overturn the government.  
You will call this little One Wonderful and Mighty and Eternal and Ruler.  
You will reverence this One as Counselor, God, Parent and Peace-Bringer.  
The greatness of the culture this baby will create and the peace this babe will bring will never end.”

That sounds like a lot of weight to put on the shoulders of one little baby!  
But I have to say, it sounds pretty exciting! If new systems would bring us some daylight, I'm all for it!  
What's your take, [*ANCHOR's first name*]?

ANCHOR

It does sound heavy, [*first name of RR*], but amazingly, I'm hearing that that baby may be on its way!  
I am elated to say that we just scooped this story - and we go to the Annunciation, live!

## SCENE TWO ANNOUNCEMENT OR INVITATION?

[Luke 1:26-38](#)

*The ANGEL appears with suddenness.*

ANGEL: Hey, Mary! What's up? If you've got a minute, I've got an important message from God.

MARY *clearly uncomfortable and slightly afraid*: What? Who are you?

ANGEL: Who I am isn't really important - you probably wouldn't believe me anyway. But who you are is really important: God thinks you're amazing. God is with you, BTdubs.

MARY: What? What are you talking about? Who are you?

ANGEL: Oh, no need to be afraid; I didn't mean to overstep any boundaries, it's just, God gave me a message to give you, so I kinda have to give it, you know?

MARY: What are you talking about? This is so weird.

ANGEL: Okay, before you get too freaked out by the situation, let me say what I gotta say: God thinks you're amazing, so you're going to get pregnant and have a baby boy. You're supposed to call him "Jesus" which - FYI - means - God Saves.

This baby is going to be *really* amazing and some people will even call them the Child of the Most High. They'll take over ruling where David left off - you know, #expandingtherealm of justice and peace....

MARY: Hold on. What are you talking about? How can I get pregnant? I mean, that's not physically possible... at this point... if you know what I mean...

ANGEL: Oh, that's easy: God makes new life out of all kinds of situations that seem barren and dead. Even your cousin ELIZABETH - you know how they never had kids? Well, she's pregnant now! God's not really into idle chatter: if God says it, God does it. And God said it, so...

MARY: So, you're saying that I could bring justice and peace for the whole world? Me? That seems like doing a lot, but I mean, if God really trusts me to do it - crazy as it sounds. *She thinks about it briefly...* I say, okay, let's go for it!

*And the ANGEL disappears.  
We cut back to the ANCHOR.*

### **SCENE THREE PARENTS' DREAM**

ANCHOR: You saw it here, first, folks: What a bizarre interaction! We've got our own PARENT in the studio with some thoughts about this crazy idea of amazing babies and peace and justice coming from God. Thanks for being with us, [*PARENT's name*], how do you see this amazing-babies-from-God story playing out?

PARENT: Beautiful Baby, I've had some time to mull God's vision over, and my dream is...

*Share the PARENT DREAM.*

*The PARENT hands a golden cord to/ward the INFANT and concludes with these words:*

Beloved CHILD of God; this DREAM binds us together with a golden bond of JOY.

### **SCENE FOUR ADVENT WREATH LIGHTING**

VOICE: One quick breath, a "Yes", ignites

A bright dance, a pure delight:

A joy which stutters broken hearts toward new rhythms.

Joy - fluttering from the cover of gloom.

Joy - bursting into flight.

Joy - breaking into song.

Joy - undoing knots of discord.

Joy - binding, with golden threads of possibility,  
Longing souls to eternity.<sup>7</sup>

*Light the third Advent Wreath Candle as the following is sung/shared:*

### **HYMN OF PRAISE**

[Ode an die Freude](#) / Ode to Joy (Beethoven); (here's a fun [Flashmob](#) version - watch the Joy spread from one little flame!)

*It may or may not be covered by your licenses. Please remember to check before using any artist's work.*

OR

NCH #106, My Heart Sings Out with Joyful Praise

NCH #132, Joy to the World! (especially vss. 1 & 2)

## **ACT FOUR LOVE**

### **SCENE ONE IMMANUEL**

[Isaiah 7:14](#)

ANCHOR: Hope. Peace. Joy. We've got to be moving toward the crack of dawn, any minute, now.

And I do think we're onto something - that nefarious group, ISAIAH, recently tweeted out this little bit of craziness:

Open your eyes!

God is giving us a sign.

Wake up and take a look:

There's a pregnant young woman.

She's going to have a baby.

And that baby - representing all babies - will be known as GOD-WITH-US; Immanuel.

So, are we supposed to guess which baby?

Or do you suppose they mean that all babies are God-with-Us?

We've contacted a soon-to-be dad who should be able to shed some light on this.

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<sup>7</sup>Inspired by Butler, David E. *Seasons of Hope: Readings for the Liturgical Year*. Cleveland; United Church Press; 12.

FIELD CORRESPONDENT [*full name*] has this exclusive interview:

## SCENE TWO CAN'T SLEEP

[Matthew 1:18-25](#)

FIELD CORRESPONDENT: I'm here with JOSEPH. We're not sharing his last name for safety purposes as he's already received some threats.

JOSEPH we appreciate your courage in sharing your story with us.

I understand that MARY, the young woman you're engaged to marry, has informed you that she's already pregnant.

JOSEPH: She has.

FIELD CORRESPONDENT: And what was your first response?

JOSEPH: Well I was stunned at first, you know? I didn't know what to say or do.

Well, that's not quite true, actually: at first I thought I would have to cut off the engagement, you know? I mean, that's what I'm supposed to do, innit? Call her out; let everybody know she's been unfaithful?

FIELD CORRESPONDENT: Totally understandable. But you didn't do that, so what changed your mind?

JOSEPH: Well, I don't know how to explain it other than to say I had a dream: a really vivid, clear, and completely real dream. And in that dream God said that I shouldn't break up with her. I should go ahead and get married.

FIELD CORRESPONDENT: Uh huh... And do you have dreams like that often?

JOSEPH: Never before. But I'm not making it up.

It didn't make any sense: I didn't sleep much that night.

I didn't sleep much for a lot of nights, for a while.

But then I realized that there's something more important than what's comfortable or normal; there's something more important even than doing everything the way it's always been done, the way the law says it's supposed to be done.

FIELD CORRESPONDENT: And what's that? What is more important than law and order and personal comfort?

JOSEPH: It's love. Simple as that: I couldn't slam her in public for getting pregnant. My dream made it clear that Mary's pregnancy wasn't a mistake or her being unfaithful, it was about God. And I couldn't help it: I realized that I couldn't just throw her to the social media wolves, you know? They'd eat her alive.

I don't even know if I love her or the baby in a real "romantic" sort of way, you know? I mean, we barely know each other.

But I do know that love means I can't just let her go fend for herself. Love means she and the baby are mine to care for and protect and, well, love.

FIELD CORRESPONDENT: And did your dream say anything else about this baby? Or this big vision of God's?

JOSEPH: It did, actually: I'm supposed to name the baby JESUS, if you can believe that.

FIELD CORRESPONDENT: And what's that supposed to mean?

JOSEPH: It literally means "God Saves". Crazy name for a baby, innit?

FIELD CORRESPONDENT: It sounds hauntingly like that ISAIAH tweet that was just trending, that was all: '...new baby ...and ...EMMANUEL' and '..."God-Is-With-Us"'. Pretty similar...

JOSEPH: Yeah, I had that rolling around in my head when I woke up; couldn't shake it. In a way, that's what convinced me to do what the dream said to do. So... Mary and I got married. And it feels pretty good to know that she and the baby are safe - and I helped to do that.

*He gives a sheepish smile and could flash a wedding ring.*

FIELD CORRESPONDENT: Well, you heard it here first folks: Love wins over comfort, normalcy, even law and order - and it feels pretty good, too.

### **SCENE THREE YOUTH DREAM**

ANCHOR: Thanks, [*FIELD CORRESPONDENT's first name*]. That's a lot to think about. Here to tell us more about it is another young person - about MARY's age, if my sources are accurate - to give us some perspective from that angle.

YOUTH: Sweet little kid: I've had a little while to mull God's vision over, and here is what I dream...

*Share the YOUTH DREAM.*

*The YOUTH hands a golden cord to/ward the INFANT and concludes with these words:*

Beloved CHILD of God; this DREAM binds us together with a golden bond of LOVE.

### **SCENE FOUR PRAYERS OF THE PEOPLE & ADVENT WREATH LIGHTING**

VOICE: As a flame is strengthened in its sharing,  
We boldly risk to touch the Divine heart,  
Inviting Love to intervene:  
Love for the "Other" who shares our holy soul.

Love for all who suffer; bearers of the mask of God.  
Love for those distressed, distraught.  
Love for those distrusted and despairing.  
Love for this good creation; God's first self-revelation.  
Love for those now unloved.  
Love wastes no time - yet lingers, as it spreads like rosy rays of morning.<sup>8</sup>

*Light the fourth ADVENT WREATH CANDLE as the following is sung/shared:*

When We Love, Elaine Hagenberg ([purchase music](#); hear it [sung](#))

OR

NCH #105, Gentle Joseph, Joseph Dear

NCH #146, Nu Oli (Glad Tidings)

ELW<sup>9</sup> #261, As the Dark Awaits the Dawn (really good one)

## **ACT FIVE CHRIST**

### **SCENE 1 ANYWHERE**

[Micah 5:2](#)

ANCHOR:

It has been a long, long night, folx, but I truly believe we are beginning to see a glimmer of daylight.

I just received word that in an obscure little town, somewhere out in the middle of nowhere, a game-changer is about to be born - a baby who will bridge the ancient past to the here and now.

And I *believe*... (*waiting for confirmation through an earpiece*)... Yes, our intrepid ROVING REPORTER [*RR's full name*] is on the scene...

What's the word, [*first name of RR*]?

### **SCENE 2 AN OBSCURE LITTLE TOWN**

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<sup>8</sup>Inspired by Butler, David E. *Seasons of Hope: Readings for the Liturgical Year*. Cleveland; United Church Press; 13.

<sup>9</sup> Evangelical Lutheran Worship (Augsburg Fortress)

[Luke 2:1-20](#)

ROVING REPORTER *in hushed tones, as though giving play-by-play for golf*.  
[ANCHOR's first name], I'm here [*in/at the backwaters of name of your town/city/neighborhood*] where only a few minutes ago I would have said that tensions were high: the town is packed with displaced peoples, shelter is scarce, this nonsensical counting and registering and processing has people feeling disempowered and completely disillusioned. I understand at least one family was forced to find shelter in a stable where they were treated like animals - even though the woman was about to give birth!

But the mood seems to be swinging significantly - and not where we'd expect: while a lot of essential workers and disgruntled employees across the nation are quitting in droves, at least one bunch of night shift workers seems to be pretty excited! I managed to track a few of them down for these eye-witness accounts.

*The NIGHT SHIFT WORKERS are exhausted from working the night shift, but still rambunctious. So long as their words can be understood, they can interrupt each other, shout, play this up like the biggest event of their lives.*

ROVING REPORTER *Not having a ton of success getting the NIGHT SHIFT WORKERS to settle down*: Folks, folks... Thanks for taking time to... Yes, it's really exciting; I wonder if we might... I wonder, can you tell me...  
Yes, thank you, yes, can you tell me, what is it, exactly that's happened here tonight? What did you see?

NIGHT SHIFTER 1 *barely able to contain themselves*: Wow! I mean, Wow!

NIGHT SHIFTER 2 *with equal enthusiasm*: Right? I'm pretty sure the whole universe just blew up and came back together. I mean, WOW!

ROVING REPORTER: Right, so it was really, "Wow!" - but can you tell us what "it" was?

NIGHT SHIFTER 3 *still enthused; slightly out of breath*: Not really!

NIGHT SHIFTER 4: It was just awesome, man!

NIGHT SHIFTER 1: It was like the Northern Lights met the world's best gospel choir...

NIGHT SHIFTER 2: ...and they sent us to look for a baby...

NIGHT SHIFTER 3: ...and when we got there, well, that's when words fail.

NIGHT SHIFTER 4: I've got some: It was completely awesome!

*They become slightly more reminiscent:*

NIGHT SHIFTER 1: There was straw...

NIGHT SHIFTER 2: And it smelled like home.

NIGHT SHIFTER 3: And there was a baby.

NIGHT SHIFTER 4 *still enthusiastic!*: Yeah... (*thinking a bit, but unable to come up with anything other than:*) ...it was, umm, completely awesome!

ROVING REPORTER *the enthusiasm is infectious; slightly amused and starting to get swept up in the cheer*: Okay - so it was awesome. But what was it?? What did you see?

NIGHT SHIFTER 1 *looking around for confirmation from the others*: Well, it was just a little brown baby, living rough.

NIGHT SHIFTER 2 *wistfully*: Yeah - the precious little lamb - so tiny; I mean, the room was so small, but for a second, it seemed like every single thing ever was in there with us; and then it was just this really frail, new baby, and it was like every breath was a new possibility.

NIGHT SHIFTER 3: It was the sweetest thing I've ever seen.

NIGHT SHIFTER 4: No doubt; I mean, it was awesome!

*And the NIGHT SHIFTERS run off to tell their story to anyone else who'll listen. You might include some footage of them sharing their good news with "random" passers-by on the street or posting to their media.*

### SCENE 3 CHILD(REN)'S DREAM

ANCHOR: Thanks, [*name of RR*]. I think [*name of FIELD CORRESPONDENT*] has another eye-witness who was able to shed a little more light on the situation. [*FIELD CORRESPONDENT's first name*] what have you learned?

FIELD CORRESPONDENT: I am here, folks, with [*name of CHILD(REN)*]. [*CHILD(REN)'s name*], you say you were there and saw the whole thing, is that right?

CHILD(REN): Yep!

FIELD CORRESPONDENT: So what can you tell us? What did you see?

CHILD[REN]: Oh, cute Baby: I've had very little time to mull God's vision over, but what I dream is...

*Share the CHILD DREAM.*

*The CHILD hands a golden cord to/ward the INFANT and concludes with these words:*

Beloved CHILD of God; this DREAM binds us together - with a golden bond - as ONE.

FIELD CORRESPONDENT *a little choked-up*: Wow. Thank you. That was beautiful...  
*Then, distracted by a band of roving IAU:*  
Hold the presses, there's another band of vagabonds roaming around. Let me see if I can move in for a closer look...

*We "lose the feed" and ANCHOR has to intervene.*

ANCHOR: Sorry about that folks; it seems we're experiencing some technical difficulties. We'll keep you up to speed with the latest, after this short break.

### **SONG**

Angels We Have Heard on High, [Association of Lutheran Church Musicians](#)<sup>10</sup>

OR

NCH #125, Angels We Have Heard on High

ELW<sup>11</sup> #292, Love Has Come

## **SCENE 4 OUT ON THE STREET**

[Isaiah 60:2-3](#)

ANCHOR: And we're back and in case you're just tuning in, we've been covering the Break of Day story since well before first light. But before we head back to the scene, we've just received word that this is it!

ISAIAH, that nebulous network, has just tweeted:

Gloom will cover the earth,  
thick gloom will surround people;  
but God will rise up!  
The brilliant rays of God's glory will shine over you.  
Nations will come to your light,  
and rulers will be drawn to the brightness of your dawn.

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<sup>10</sup> Copyright free and free downloadable virtual choir/orchestra/organ version. Go ahead and use it!

<sup>11</sup> Evangelical Lutheran Worship (Augsburg Fortress)

And as it happens, ROVING REPORTER [*first and last name of RR*] has managed to wrangle a bunch of wandering INTERNATIONAL ASTRONOMERS, so we go back, now, for the latest there, just outside of [*your community*].

ROVING REPORTER: That's right, [*ANCHOR*], I've just connected with these folks from the [International Astronomical Union](#) and do they have a tale to tell!

IAU 1 *astutely; these are learned people*: Ah, yes, ah, greetings from the West. We've been traveling for some time now, toward the East, but dawn has been elusive.

IAU 2: There was a star, you see. A star that had to be followed.

IAU 3: Indubitably.

IAU 1: We needed to know why it was there... Where it would take us...

IAU 2: But it just kept leading us on...

IAU 3: Indubitably.

IAU 1: ...under bridges, over borders, out on the margins...

IAU 2: ...the star we're following seems to shine a little bit everywhere.

IAU 3: Indubitably.

IAU 1: Until now! We think we've finally found the Morning Star!

IAU 2: It's a very exciting discovery.

IAU 3: Indubitably.

IAU 1: Yes! A "first", some might say.

IAU 2: Definitely worthy of further observation.

IAU 3: Indubitably!

IAU 1: It could take years and years of study to come up with any definitive explanation.

IAU 2: Agreed. Most certainly!

IAU 3: Indubitably.

ROVING REPORTER: So, what is it, exactly, that you say you found?

IAU 1: Well, haven't you seen?

IAU 2: Haven't you heard?

IAU 3: It's a baby!

*Let them indicate the INFANT, covered now in golden cords.*

ROVING REPORTER *clearly still confused*: A baby? Um... yes... but... What does it mean?

IAU 1 *A little flustered*: Well, I'm certainly not one to speculate. I'll need to confer with my colleagues before I can fully respond to that line of inquiry.

IAU 2: Most certainly.

IAU 3: Indubitably.

*The IAU confer with the ELDER(S), GRANDPARENT(S), PARENT(S), YOUTH, and CHILD(REN). After a short huddle (or zoom conference - you could put them in a breakout room!), the entire group returns with the BLESSING.*

*Invite WORSHIPERS to engage by tying golden cords around one another's wrists throughout the BLESSING.*

## **BLESSING**

IAU 1: The star of our longing and need shines a golden light.

*Tie a golden cord on the wrist of IAU 2.*

IAU 2: Go now, and follow that gentle beam of faith.

*Tie a golden cord on the wrist of IAU 3.*

IAU 3: Follow the gleam of God's wild DREAM:

*Tie a golden cord on the wrist of the ELDER.*

ELDER: A DREAM of hope for the future...

*Tie a golden cord on the wrist of the GRANDPARENT.*

GRANDPARENT: A DREAM of peace for the world...

*Tie a golden cord on the wrist of the PARENT.*

PARENT: A DREAM of joy in believing...

*Tie a golden cord on the wrist of the YOUTH.*

YOUTH: A DREAM of love for all creation...

*Tie a golden cord on the wrist of the CHILD.*

CHILD: A DREAM of a New Day where all are ONE...

*Tie a golden cord on the wrist of IAU 1.<sup>12</sup>*

ANCHOR: And there we have it, folx, a New Day dawns!

REPORTERS: Go into the New Day in peace.

ALL: Thanks be to God

## **POSTLUDE**

Sing for Our World (Nusantara; Indonesian tune) sung by [Libera](#)

*It may or may not be covered by your licenses. Please remember to check before using any artist's work.*

OR

Awake, Awake and Greet the New Morn, NHC #107

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<sup>12</sup> Inspired by Butler, David E. *Seasons of Hope: Readings for the Liturgical Year*. Cleveland; United Church Press; 23.

## **BIBLIOGRAPHY**

Cover photo by [Grant McIver](#) on [Unsplash](#)

[Sing Gently](#), Eric Whitacre; includes 17,572 singers - from 129 countries. Whitacre's [explanation of the video](#) inspired the [kintsugi](#) references of the golden cord throughout this pageant, particularly in the Confession & Forgiveness pieces and the DREAM deliveries.

Liturgical elements were inspired by Butler, David E. *Seasons of Hope: Readings for the Liturgical Year*. Cleveland; United Church Press, 1998.