

# **A Seasonal All Age Worship Service**

(SAAW024)

## **Christmas Day: Good News of Great Joy!**

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## CHRISTMAS DAY: GOOD NEWS OF GREAT JOY!

### Service Aim:

To enable all ages on Christmas Day to respond to the “good news of great joy” that Jesus has been born to be our Saviour and to invite us into His kingdom.

### Biblical Reference(s):

Luke 2:1-20, Psalm 40:1-3

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### Outline of Service:

Welcome:	Include lighting the Christmas candle
Opening Prayer:	
Opening carols:	<u>Opening carols</u> (See Appendix 1)
Warm up:	“What brings you joy?” with party poppers <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Sharing of gifts received</li> </ul>
Dramatized Reading 1:	Luke 2:1-12 in the style of a news report
Carol:	<u>Song of worship</u> (See Appendix 1)
Link:	A Saviour being born is the cause of great joy
Drama:	2 cameos exploring the question: “What is a Saviour?”
Talk 1:	Jesus is our Saviour; rescuing us from the consequences of sin
Songs:	<u>Couple of songs of worship</u> (See Appendix 1) with party poppers
Link:	What did the shepherds do after hearing the good news?
Dramatized Reading 2:	Luke 2:13-18 in the style of a shepherd monologue
Talk 2:	Joy comes from meeting Jesus. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Invitation to respond to Jesus</li> </ul>
Response:	Prayer of confession and inviting Jesus into our lives.
Prayers:	Prayers and Lord’s Prayer
Offer:	Offer people a copy of Luke’s Gospel
Carol(s):	<u>Final Carol(s)</u> (See Appendix 1)
Blessing:	
On the door:	Hand out Luke’s Gospels and “Celebration” chocolates

## Notes for the service:

General notes and instructions for the service are in black font.

**Prayers or responses said by the congregation together are in bold purple font.**

The full script of a talk or other activity is in purple font.

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## Welcome:

Begin by welcoming everyone to the Christmas Day service. If your church has a Christmas candle, either light it yourself or invite a child to light it. Then say:

*"I bring you good news that will cause great joy for all the people. Today in the town of David a Saviour has been born to you; he is the Messiah, the Lord."* (Luke 2:10b-11)

## Opening Prayer:

You may choose to use either:

- an informal prayer
- a prayer from the Church of England's "Time and Seasons"<sup>1</sup> material
- or the following acclamation:

Joy to the world, the Lord has come!

**We receive our King**

Let every heart prepare Him room,

**We will rejoice and sing**

## Opening Carols

Opening Carols as per Appendix 1

## Warm up:

You will need at least 10 party-poppers<sup>2</sup>, that either you or someone else lets off for you at the appropriate points of this talk.

I wonder what brings you joy.

- How about being given something special that you have wanted for ages!  
(Let off party popper and as you do so give a whoop!)

Some of you will have received gifts today that have brought you joy.

- Who would like to come and show or tell us what they have been given?  
(Children/adults show what they have been given to the rest of the congregation)
- Thank you for sharing with us what has given you joy today.

As well as receiving gifts, all sorts of other things can bring us joy.

- How about passing an exam that you have worked really hard for! (Let off party popper and as you do so give a whoop!)
- Or hearing the good news that you have been chosen to be part of the school football team or to take the lead part in the school play (Let off party popper and as you do so give a whoop!)

<sup>1</sup> "Times and Seasons" material can be found at <https://www.churchofengland.org/media/41153/tandschristmas.pdf>

<sup>2</sup> You can purchase "party poppers" from ebay at [www.ebay.co.uk](http://www.ebay.co.uk) by putting "party poppers" in the search bar or from Amazon at [www.amazon.co.uk](http://www.amazon.co.uk) or from many supermarkets.

How about being asked out on a date by someone you really fancy? *(Let off party popper and as you do so give a whoop!)*

Sometimes it is the smaller things that can bring us joy like a beautiful summer's day, *(Let off party popper and as you do so give a whoop!)*

- or a delicious cake *(Let off party popper and as you do so give a whoop!)*
- or the smell of freshly cooked bread *(Let off party popper and as you do so give a whoop!)*
- or going for a run *(Let off party popper and as you do so give a whoop!)*
- or listening to an inspiring piece of music *(Let off party popper and as you do so give a whoop!)*
- or even decluttering! *(Let off party popper and as you do so give a whoop!)*

All of these things and many other things that I haven't mentioned have the possibility of bringing us joy.

- But if we are honest, most of these things, will bring us joy for only a short period of time.

I wonder if there is something that we could receive that would bring us joy all year long; year after year after year?

- I wonder if there is something that could bring everybody in the world joy; however old or young?

Let's go over to our news desk now and hear what they have to say.

### **Dramatized Reading 1:**

The reading is Luke 2:1-12. This can be read straight from the Bible or you could use the dramatized reading in Appendix 2 which is written in the style of a news report.

### **Carol:**

A song of worship as per Appendix 1

### **Link:**

Who can tell me from the Bible reading we have just seen presented, what the angels told the shepherds would cause great joy for everyone? *(Receive answers)*

- A Saviour being born is the cause of great joy, according to the angels.
- So, what is a Saviour and why do we all need one?

### **Drama:**

The purpose of the drama is to answer the question: "What is a Saviour?" You can find the script in Appendix 3.

### **Talk 1:**

You will need a cross for this talk. It needs to be large enough for everyone to see.

So, a Saviour is someone who rescues people when they are in difficulty;

- saving them from getting hurt or even from dying.
- But why do we need a Saviour?
- No one here is trapped in mud or isolated on an island after a cliff fall.

Or maybe we are?

You see You and I were created by Father God to be His children;

- children who are loved, cherished and at peace with their Heavenly Father,
- children with the responsibility of ruling over the earth that He has created.

BUT.....each one of us has chosen to reject Father God.

- Instead of walking with Him and obeying Him, we have wandered off;
- ignoring Father God and doing what we want to do.
- The Bible calls this SIN.
- The problem with sin is that it is hard to get out of, a bit like getting stuck in the mud. *(Stand on brown material)*

For example, we all know what happens when we tell a lie.

- We often have to tell more and more lies to cover ourselves and before we know it, we are really trapped. *(As you talk gradually sink down into the mud)*
- Who can rescue us from this mess? *(Lift up arms as if asking for help)* PAUSE

*(Wrap the brown material around your shoulders)*

Having turned our backs on God and allowed ourselves to “roll around in the mud of sin” we shouldn’t be surprised that we find ourselves separated from our holy Heavenly Father,

- both now and for all eternity.

*(Go and stand on green material that has separated from other green material)*

- It is like there is a great big chasm between Father God and us, and no matter what we do we can’t cross the chasm.
- Who can rescue us from this mess?
- Who can set us free from sin and bring us back into relationship with our Heavenly Father? *(Step off the green material and return to the front of church)*

That is where today’s Bible reading is such good news.

- The angels told the shepherds that God has sent us a Saviour.
- His name is Jesus, and He is God’s Son.
- That is really incredible news!

After Jesus had been born in Bethlehem, which is what we are celebrating today, He grew up to be a man who lived an amazing life,

- perfectly obeying His Heavenly Father in every way,
- showing His love for people by healing them and teaching them.

But then 3 years after Jesus began His ministry, He was arrested and crucified for crimes He had not committed. *(Produce a cross)*

- You might wonder how Jesus can save us by dying on a cross.

The thing is Jesus didn’t stay dead.

He was raised from the dead 3 days later and many people saw Him alive, before He re-joined God in heaven,

- which is where He is reigning today.

The good news of great joy for each one of us is that when Jesus was crucified, He wasn't paying for His own sin, because He was sinless.

- Jesus was actually paying for all of our sins.
- It was as if all the sin in the world was placed upon Jesus. (*Wrap brown material around the cross*)
- We can now be forgiven and washed clean and given a fresh start in life.

Not only that but Jesus makes it possible for us to come back into relationship with our Heavenly Father. (*Pick up the plank of wood and place between the 2 pieces of green material on the floor*)

- When we turn to Jesus, believing that He died for us, He brings us into God's family, (*Walk across the plank*)
- where we can enjoy knowing Father God and receiving the blessings that He longs to give us.

Jesus coming as Saviour for us is the news of great joy that the angels brought to the shepherds.

- That is what we are celebrating today.

## Songs:

A couple of songs of worship as per Appendix 1. You might choose to invite the children to come and celebrate by waving flags or setting off more party poppers as you all sing!

## Link:

After the angels had told the shepherds the good news that Jesus, our Saviour had been born, I wonder what the shepherds did.

- Let's find out what happened next.

## Dramatized Reading 2:

The reading is Luke 2:13-18. This can be read straight from the Bible or you could use the dramatized reading in Appendix 4 which is written in the style of a shepherd's monologue.

## Talk 2:

After the angels had left the shepherds what did the shepherds do? (*Receive responses*)

- They went to look for baby Jesus until they found Him.
- And then having met Jesus, the shepherds rushed around telling everyone about Him.
- They had to share the good news of great joy that our Saviour has come.

You know joy, real lasting joy comes from meeting Jesus, our Saviour, and allowing Him to rescue us from the mess our sins have got us into,

- and allowing Him to restore us into God's family.

The joy that comes from knowing Jesus doesn't just last for a few moments, but it lasts a lifetime.

- This joy isn't just for a select few people, but is for everyone,
- so I wonder how you will respond.

I wonder if you will think to yourself:

- "nice story but not for me."

I wonder if you will think to yourself:

- "I have already gone looking for Jesus like the shepherds did.
- He has rescued me from the mess my sins got me into, and I am now enjoying a relationship with Him as a member of God's family"

Or I wonder if you will think to yourself:

- "I want to be rescued too but I don't know what to do!"

If you are crying out in your heart to be rescued by Jesus then in a moment we are going to turn our hearts towards Him.

- We will declare our belief in Him and in what He has done for us.
- We will then ask Jesus to come and rescue us from the mess of sin and restore our relationship with Father God.
- I will then pray for you all.

## Response:

So, let's be still and quiet for a moment.

- You may find it helpful to shut your eyes and hold your hands open. PAUSE

As we are silent, let's be aware that Jesus is here with us. We can't see Him, but His presence is here. PAUSE

So please respond as you choose to, using the responses that will come up on the screen/on your service sheet.

We believe that Jesus came into the world to be our Saviour; to rescue us.

**We believe**

We believe that when Jesus died and rose again from the dead, He paid the price for our sins.

**We believe**

We turn to Jesus as our Saviour, asking Him to forgive us for the things that we have done wrong and the ways that we have ignored our Heavenly Father.

**We turn to Jesus and say sorry**

We ask you Jesus to reign over our lives as Lord and restore our relationship with our Heavenly Father.

**Come and reign Lord Jesus, Amen** (PAUSE)

Thank you Father for your wonderful promise that when we turn to Jesus, and confess our sins, You are faithful and just and forgive us our sins. You wash us clean of our guilt and give us a fresh start.

Thank you too that you welcome us into your family where we can know you as our loving Heavenly Father.

Please come and fill us with your Holy Spirit, that we may all grow in knowing how much you love us and be filled to overflowing with joy.

In Jesus' name we pray.

**Amen**

### **Prayers:**

You may want to continue with a short time of prayer ending with the Lord's prayer.

You may choose to use either:

- Informal prayers
- Prayers from the Church of England's "Time and Seasons"<sup>3</sup> material (see below),
- or the following short prayers

The response to these prayers is, "**Come and bring your joy**"

For those who, like Mary and Joseph, find themselves away from their homes and families this day.

**Come and bring your joy**

For those who, like the shepherds, find themselves on the fringes of society this day.

**Come and bring your joy**

For those who are struggling to make ends meet and who need to hear the good news of their Saviour's birth.

**Come and bring your joy**

For those who are suffering with illness, pain or bereavement.

**Come and bring your joy**

For those who need the hope that their lives can get better.

**Come and bring your joy**

Lord Jesus, You are the joy giver. On this Christmas Day as we celebrate your birth.

**Come and bring your joy**

**Amen**

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<sup>3</sup> "Times and Seasons" material can be found at <https://www.churchofengland.org/media/41153/tandschristmas.pdf>  
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**Offer:**

You need to purchase copies of Luke's Gospel<sup>4</sup> and Celebration chocolates to hand out as people leave the building.

As a church we are here to help you with your daily walk with God, so I have some copies of Luke's Gospel to give away to anyone who would like to take one on the door.

Read a portion of Luke each day and you will discover more about what it means to follow Jesus.

We also have "Celebration"<sup>5</sup> chocolates for you as you leave church today.  
Happy Christmas!

**Carol:**

Final carol as per Appendix 1.

**Blessing:**

You may like to end by saying something like:

As we come to the end of the service today, go out rejoicing that God so loved the world that He sent His Son, Jesus, to be our Saviour.

And the blessing of God Almighty, the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit be among you and remain with you always. Amen.

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<sup>4</sup> You can purchase copies of Luke's Gospel cheaply from Eden at [www.eden.co.uk](http://www.eden.co.uk) by putting, "NIV Gospel of Luke" into the search bar

<sup>5</sup> You can purchase "Celebration" chocolates from most supermarkets

## Appendix 1 - Ideas for Songs and Hymns:

i) Opening Carols. Ideas include:

- Angels from the realms of glory (J.Montgomery)
- Come and join the celebration (Valerie Collison © 1972 High-Fye Music Ltd)
- O come all ye faithful (John Francis Wade)
- Once in Royal David's city (Cecil Frances Humphreys Alexander, Henry John Gauntlett)
- See Him lying on a bed of straw (Michael Perry © 1965 Mrs B.Perry/Jubilate Hymns)

ii) Song of worship. Ideas include:

- Away in a manger (John Thomas McFarland, Martin Luther, William James Kirkpatrick)
- Good news, good news (G.Kendrick © 1988 Make Way Music)
- Mary had a little baby (Andy Silver © 1986 Andy Silver)
- Songs of gladness (Michael Perry © Michael Perry/Jubilate Hymns)
- While shepherds watched (Nahum Tate)

iii) Songs of Worship. Ideas include:

- Everyone needs compassion (Reuben Morgan & Ben Fielding © 2006 Hillsong Publishing)
- Joy to the world (I.Watts)
- My Jesus, my Saviour (Darlene Zschech © 1993 Darlene Zschech / Hillsong Publishing)
- O little town of Bethlehem (Phillips Brooks)
- What a beautiful name (Ben Fielding, Brooke Ligertwood © 2016 Hillsong Music Publishing Australia)

v) Final Carol(s). Ideas include:

- Christmas, it's Christmas (Alan Price © 1995 Daybreak Music Ltd)
- Hark the herald angels sing (Charles Wesley, George Whitefield)
- Unto us a boy is born (Puer Nobis nascitur © OUP)

## Appendix 2 – Dramatized Reading 1: Luke 2:1-12

**Cast:** Newsreader 1 (NR1) and Newsreader 2 (NR2) and Person (P) who has a non-speaking part.

**Props:** 2 chairs, table, 2 clipboards, 2 copies of the script below and 2 pieces of paper. You will also need the BBC news theme tune<sup>6</sup> recorded and ready to play as the 2 Newsreaders enter.

**Directions:** The 2 Newsreaders need to sit side by side at a table. They can have their scripts attached to a clipboard, so that they don't need to learn the words

.....  
*(Enter both Newsreaders with their clipboards. They sit behind the table and as they do so the BBC news start up theme is played)*

NR1: Good morning on this 25<sup>th</sup> day of December. We are bringing you news from the Province of Judea.

NR2: There are crowds everywhere in Bethlehem after Caesar Augustus ordered that a census should be taken of the entire Roman world.

NR1: And of course, with crowds of people flooding the streets we have the same old problems:

NR2: Stolen donkeys,

NR1: Drunken fights in inns,

NR2: Accidents from people slipping on the smelly messes on the streets,

NR1: and a massive accommodation crisis.

NR2: Yesterday we caught up with a young couple, Joseph and Mary, who had come up to Bethlehem to register, from the town of Nazareth in Galilee.

NR1: They told us that there was no room in any of the inns, so they were going to have to stay in a room that animals had lived in.

NR2: *(Turns and speaks to NR1)*  
 I felt so sorry for Mary. She was expecting her first baby and it is due any day.

NR1: Moving on to news of increasing temple tax in Jerusalem.....

*(P enters with 2 pieces of paper in their hands. They give the papers to NR1 and NR2, then walk off)*

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<sup>6</sup> You can find the BBC news theme tune on You Tube at [www.youtube.com](http://www.youtube.com) by putting "BBC news start up theme" in the search bar.

- NR1: We have just received a newsflash following on from yesterday's story that Mary had her firstborn baby last night, a son. Apparently, she wrapped her baby in cloths and wrapped him in a manger.
- NR2: We have some breaking news from our reporter out in the fields who has been talking with some shepherds. Last night while they were keeping watch over their flocks, an angel of the Lord appeared to them and the glory of the Lord shone around them and they were terrified.
- NR1: *(Turns and speaks to NR2)* How amazing. It was all happening last night.
- NR2: The angel had a message for the shepherds. He said: *"Do not be afraid. I bring you good news that will cause great joy for all the people. Today in the town of David a Saviour has been born to you; he is the Messiah, the Lord. This will be a sign to you: you will find a baby wrapped in cloths and lying in a manger."*
- NR1: Good news that will cause great joy for all the people. That's what we need in times like these!
- NR2: What a nice change to have some good news to end our programme with.
- NR1 & NR2: Goodbye

*(Exit NR1 and NR2 to the sound of the BBC news start up theme)*

### Appendix 3 – Drama – “What is a Saviour?”

**Cast:** Narrator (N), Anyone (A) and Saviour (S)

**Props:** 1 piece of brown material, 2 pieces of green material, a piece of rope and a plank of wood.

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*(Enter Narrator who says:)*

N: What is a Saviour you might well ask?

Imagine for a moment that one day a person called Anyone decided to go for a walk along a beach.

*(Enter A who walks from the back of the church to the front of the church.)*

The sun was shining, the tide was out, and it was a perfect day for a walk.

*(Narrator shakes out the piece of brown material and deliberately lays it on the floor at the front of church)*

Anyone was so happy searching for shells that when they saw the sign that said: “DANGER – MUD – KEEP OFF” – they ignored it!

Before they knew what had happened, Anyone had strayed onto the mud flats.

*(A walks onto the brown material and then stands still facing the congregation)*

Anyone started to slowly sink down into the mud.

*(A slowly bends down until they are kneeling on the floor).*

As Anyone was sinking and sinking down into the mud, they shouted out:

A: Help, help! Please help me.

N: Fortunately, there was someone else walking on the beach that day.

*(Enter S from the back of the church carrying a rope)*

When they heard the cries of Anyone, they ran back to their car, grabbed a rope and then ran down the beach towards the mud flats.

*(S runs towards A and stops at the edge of the brown material)*

They threw the rope to Anyone who grabbed hold of it.

*(S throws the rope to A who grabs hold of the end of it)*

Anyone was rescued from the sinking mud.

*(S pulls the rope and A stands up and gets off the brown material, which is left in place)*

The name of the person who rescued Anyone was Saviour.

*(Exit S and A)*

N: Or imagine for a moment that another day Anyone decided to go for a cliff walk.

*(Narrator shakes out the 2 pieces of green material together and deliberately lays them on the floor down the middle of the Church next to each other. A walks along it slowly)*

They passed a sign that said: “DANGER – UNSTABLE CLIFFS– KEEP OFF” – but Anyone chose to ignore it!

Suddenly there was a large noise as a very large piece of cliff came away from the land. Anyone found that they were now standing on an island, completely surrounded by dangerous rocks.

*(Narrator moves one of the pieces of green material away from the other piece of material to create a “chasm”)*

There was a large chasm between the land and the island that Anyone was now stuck on. Anyone was separated from their home and family, food and water and there was no way that they can cross the chasm. They shouted out:

A: Help, help! Please help me.

N: Fortunately, someone heard Anyone’s cries. They ran and got a plank of wood and laid it across the chasm.

*(S runs on carrying a plank of wood that they lay between the 2 pieces of green material)*

They walked across the plank of wood and helped Anyone to cross back onto safe ground.

*(S walks across the plank, takes A’s hand and together they walk back over the plank. S picks up the plank and lays it away from the green material on the floor so that it can be used later on during the talk)*

The name of the person who rescued Anyone was Saviour.

*(Exit S and A)*

N: So, what is a Saviour you might well ask? A Saviour is a rescuer.

*(Exit N)*

## Appendix 4 – Dramatized Reading 2: Luke 2:13-18

**Cast:** Shepherd

**Props:** Dressing gown for the shepherd to wear. Tea towel and headband for the shepherd's head-dress. The shepherd could also carry a toy lamb and a crook.

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*(Enter shepherd who stands centre stage. You might have them leaning against a lectern so that they can have their script in front of them.)*

Shepherd: Oh, what a night that was. An angel appearing, a message of a Saviour's birth, a heavenly choir of angels singing.....

Ah.... I don't think that you have heard about the choir of angels singing have you? Well, I can tell you that I have heard some choirs in my time, but none of them have sounded anything like the angel choir we heard on that night. God's choir was something else!

After the angel told us the good news about Jesus being born, it was like the sky lit up with light and sound. Me and my other shepherd friends were almost blinded by the light.....but what a beautiful song the angels sang.

*"Glory to God in the highest heaven and on earth peace to those on whom His favour rests."*

I could have listened to that song all night, but sadly after a while the angels left us and returned to heaven.

You can well imagine that me and my mates were a bit shell shocked. How come we were the ones to hear of our Saviour's birth? After all, we are poor, smelly shepherds who most people despise. And yet, we had been chosen by God to hear this wonderful news.

When we came to our senses, Benji said, *"Come on, let's go to Bethlehem and see this thing that has happened which the Lord has told us about."*

We were so excited that we dropped everything and ran to Bethlehem. When we found Mary and Joseph and baby Jesus lying in a manger, we knew that what God had told us was true; the Saviour of the world had been born.

When we left the baby, we told everyone we could find about the good news of His birth.....how could we not?

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