

Christmas Worship At the Feet of Jesus

By The Rev. Theresa
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Call to Worship

One: All of us gather,

All: At the feet of Jesus.

One: The angels and the shepherds,

All: At the feet of Jesus.

One: The lambs and the donkeys,

All: At the feet of Jesus.

One: The magi and the camels,

All: At the feet of Jesus.

One: Mary and Joseph,

All: At the feet of Jesus.

One: All of us,

All: At the feet of Jesus.

Hymn: #139 – Hark! the herald angels sing

Prayer of Approach and Confession

This is a season of wonder, O God.
We are so grateful to hear Christmas songs on the radio and put up decorations.
We are glad for the good food and thoughtful gifts.
We love to see loved ones at parties and in our homes.
But may we not forget to spend time in wonder.

Help us to sing songs with the angels.
Help us to slow down.
Help us to share from our bounty.
Help us to find the lonely.
Bring us once again to the stable.
Sit us down at Jesus' feet to worship.
This is the time for wonder and love and hope.
Help us to choose the better part.

When we wander, draw us back.
When we tire, give us rest.
When we falter, give us strength.
When we make mistakes, grant us forgiveness.
When we despair, offer us hope.
When all else fails, bring us back to Jesus' feet.
In his holy and precious name, Amen.

Assurance of Grace

Friends, at Jesus' feet, we are loved, we are known, we are forgiven, and we are held. Thanks be to God.

Hymn: #133 – Go, tell it on the mountain

Scripture

Experience the Christmas story anew! Find a children's Bible or storybook that tells the story of Christmas. If you have access to a computer and wifi, watch the Camp Kintail staff as they retell the story of Christmas.

Hymn: #150 – Jesus, our brother, kind and good

Sermon

My children helped me see the gift of Christmas. I had a beautiful nativity set from Ghana that I placed high above their reaching hands. I purchased them a Fisher Price nativity set and put it under the tree. But it did not take long before my children grew, and they started adding the Fisher Price characters into the wooden set. Then one year, one of my children made a woolen hat for every person and animal at the stable. Additional animals were often added – including many who would not have been in Bethlehem. Another year, other Christmas decorations were added to the nativity. I eventually stopped fighting these additions after a while. For who wouldn't want to be at the stable that night?

For in the end, don't we all end up at the feet of Jesus?

Don't we all need that child in the manger?

Don't we – shepherds and magi and camp directors and farmers and bankers and bakers and teachers and children – all want to be in that stable?

The glorious pageants of childhood tell the best truth of all – the crowded manger reminds us that we all need Jesus.

It might not be biblically correct to have the wise men and the shepherds together, but it does tell the story of love that both Matthew and Luke were trying to convey. They wanted us to know that this child, this tiny babe, was important for all. This child was here for kings and shepherds and you and me. Telling this story in more than one way, reminds us that we all come from different places to the manger. What is important is that we end up at the stable, that we bring those we love, and that we sit at Jesus' feet.

We sit there and we linger.

We gaze on the brand-new face and see God shining through.

We see the swaddling cloths and know of a mother's love.

We search out the animals and know that they will keep Jesus warm.

We hear the angels' songs and wonder anew.

We see the gifts of the magi and add our own.

We look around and we see our neighbours, strangers, people who look like us and many who do not.

We see offerings from around the world and hear different languages and feel the crowd around us.

We are all here, at the manger, at Jesus' feet.

We will follow Jesus and sit at his feet.
On the mount as Jesus tells stories.
In the boat as Jesus calms the sea.
In Mary and Martha's home.
At the temple, with the pharisees.
By the cross and then in the garden.
We will follow and sit at Jesus' feet.

We know how the story will end, but we also want to be there at the beginning.
We want to be a part of this story, and glory be, there is enough room for us all.
Shepherds and magi, saints and sinners, donkeys and camels, mothers and fathers, those from nearby and those from afar – we are all gathered to see Jesus.
Gathered and now made family by the child.
Together, for this sweet time, at the feet of Jesus.

Hymn: #164 – O little town of Bethlehem

Prayers of the People

Jesus, at your feet, we offer you our joys.

We give thanks for our families...

- For the young ones who give us such delight.
- For the elders who offer us perspective.
- For the middle-aged who are finding a way through.

We give you thanks for our friends and communities...

- For front-line workers in hospitals, nursing homes, schools, grocery stores, farms, packing plants, factories, and so many more places.
- For Christmas lights and window displays.
- For those working to keep the roads safe.

We give you thanks for this season of new life...

- For our churches who find new ways to share the old story of good news.
- For the community organizations ensuring that everyone has Christmas.
- For renewal we find in the story of the nativity.

Jesus, at your feet, we lay our sorrows.

We ask you to be with our loved ones who are not well...

- For those with compromised immune systems.
- For those who are living with cancer and other challenging health situations.
- For those who are anxious or depressed.

We ask you to be with our loved ones who are far away...

- For those unable to travel in this season and must celebrate alone.
- For those who are in the military and are stationed far from home.
- For those who live in places where war disrupts and frightens.

We ask you to be with children during this special time of year...

- For those whose every wish was granted and those who are without.
- For those children who are lonely and scared.
- For those children who do not know how loved they are by you.

Jesus, we bring these joys and sorrows, and lay them all at your feet, for that is where they belong.

In your holy name, Amen.

Hymn: # 149 – Away in a manger

Benediction

At the feet of Jesus, all are welcomed and loved.

At the feet of Jesus, all are known and held.

At the feet of Jesus, all are forgiven and made new.

At the feet of Jesus, all are given grace and told to share.

And now may the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God, and the communion of the Holy Spirit be with us, now and forevermore.

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