

I celebrate because of *Luke 2:1-20*

In those days Caesar Augustus issued a decree that a census should be taken of the entire Roman world.² (This was the first census that took place while Quirinius was governor of Syria.)³ And everyone went to their own town to register.⁴ So Joseph also went up from the town of Nazareth in Galilee to Judea, to Bethlehem the town of David, because he belonged to the house and line of David.⁵ He went there to register with Mary, who was pledged to be married to him and was expecting a child.⁶ While they were there, the time came for the baby to be born,⁷ and she gave birth to her firstborn, a son. She wrapped him in cloths and placed him in a manger, because there was no guest room available for them.⁸ And there were shepherds living out in the fields nearby, keeping watch over their flocks at night.⁹ An angel of the Lord appeared to them, and the glory of the Lord shone around them, and they were terrified.¹⁰ But the angel said to them, "Do not be afraid. I bring you good news that will cause great joy for all the people.¹¹ Today in the town of David a Savior has been born to you; he is the Messiah, the Lord.¹² This will be a sign to you: You will find a baby wrapped in cloths and lying in a manger."¹³ Suddenly a great company of the heavenly host appeared with the angel, praising God and saying,¹⁴ "Glory to God in the highest heaven, and on earth peace to those on whom his favor rests."¹⁵ When the angels had left them and gone into heaven, the shepherds said to one another, "Let's go to Bethlehem and see this thing that has happened, which the Lord has told us about."¹⁶ So they hurried off and found Mary and Joseph, and the baby who was lying in the manger.¹⁷ When they had seen him, they spread the word concerning what had been told them about this child,¹⁸ and all who heard it were amazed at what the shepherds said to them.¹⁹ But Mary treasured up all these things and pondered them in her heart.²⁰ The shepherds returned, glorifying and praising God for all the things they had heard and seen, which were just as they had been told.

Singing the Songs of Christmas

Nurturing our Faith

Bible Study Group 2021



<http://pleasanthillchurch.org/sermons/songs-of-christmas-a-song-of-praise/>

6th December 2021

Fleet URC & Beacon Hill URC



Singing the Songs of Christmas

Singing is a part of Christmas for all of us! The music in shopping centres, on the radio, on the TV and included in school plays is all pervasive with that special 'sound of Christmas'. Perhaps that isn't surprising as songs have been part of the narrative from the very beginning. This time together gives us the opportunity to revisit a couple of those songs – the very first Christmas songs - found in Luke's Gospel.

Opening prayer led by Karen

We begin:

- There are 5 songs in Luke's Christmas narrative. Can you identify them?
- William Phillip says: "it is the work of God that leads to song." What do you think?

Scripture text: He who did not believe.....

Luke 1: 67 - 79

- What is the back story to this song?
- What has Zechariah learned?

- What references to the Old Testament can you see in this song?
- What are the images, memories or associations that come to mind when you hear the word 'salvation'?

Scripture text: The heavenly proclaimers.....

Luke 2: 8 – 15

- The angel opens with 'Fear not'. Why do you think this is the first thing said?
- The angels sing of peace: what does this mean to you – a peaceful earth or peace between humankind and God?
- Who is the message actually about?
- How can we respond to this message today?

Scripture text: A song of great joy

Luke 1: 39 – 43

- What impact does this song have?

Do you recognise any elements of songs from Luke's Gospel in any Christmas carols?

A prayer for an Advent evening:

Living God, you have rescued us: help us to serve you without fear. You have saved us: help us to go out before you, preparing the way for you in the hearts and minds of your people. You are the dawn that enters the darkness of night: guide our feet in peace until morning. Amen (Amy Scott Robinson)