

Thank you for visiting with us!
We're so glad you've come to see
the Mount Laurel Living Nativity.

This file is intended for the deaf
and hard of hearing. We hope that
it enhances your experience of the
nativity!

Scene 1: Genesis

(Music Intro)

Narrator: From Eternity to
Eternity, You are God. And,
stepping between eternities, God
set in motion his plan to create
the cosmos, to dispel the darkness
with his great light so that all of
his creation would shine with the

depth of his love. He energized matter by creating the atom, which combined into millions and trillions of atoms, until he had stretched his light to the vast reaches of outer space. The one, true living God is before all things, and in him all things hold together. Then, God placed his prized creation, the earth, in a special spot in the cosmos, as if to give his creation a magnificent view of his handiwork. The earth was empty, a formless mass, cloaked in darkness. As the Spirit of God hovered over its surface, he cast his light to the earth at just the right wavelength and frequency so that it would

sustain life.

Next, God separated the waters, creating the oxygen rich atmosphere to blanket the earth's sky, while the remaining waters below covered over the earth's surface. Then, God gathered the seas into one place, and the dry land appeared. With great artistry, he landscaped the earth with all manner of grasses, flowering shrubs and bushes, and fruit-bearing trees.

God declared, "Let there be lights." He gave the earth life-sustaining warmth by creating the sun at just the right distance to anchor the earth in its orbit around the sun.

He created the moon, with just the right amount of gravitational pull to tilt the earth at the angle that would cause distinct seasons and produce a moderate climate. He decorated the cosmos and earth's sky with an infinite number of stars, and countless galaxies.

Next, he filled the seas and the oceans with teeming schools of fish and great sea creatures, and the sky with birds. With wonderful creativity, God brought forth an amazing variety of animal life: domestic animals and wild animals of every shape and size. Some ran gracefully on the earth, while others crawled close to the ground.

All of creation sparkled with the glory of God, with the brilliance of a God-shaped design, for the purpose of reflecting his glory, in design and living.

But his plan, was not yet complete. In fact, it was just beginning. God had saved his most cherished creation for last. So with great care, a loving and personal God created man in his image and likeness, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life. And man and woman became living beings.

And the LORD God planted a garden toward the east, in Eden. And there, the Redeemer Creator of all mankind placed Adam and

Eve.

(quiet sounds of birds and crickets)

Scene 1: Genesis, continued

(The following is taken from Genesis 2 and 3)

God took the man, and put him into the garden of Eden to dress it and to keep it. God commanded the man, saying, “Of every tree of the garden you may freely eat; but of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, you shall not eat of it; for in the day that you eat of it you will surely die.”

Now the serpent was more subtle than any animal of the field which Yahweh God had made. He said to the woman, “Has God really said, ‘You shall not eat of any tree of the garden?’” The woman said to the serpent, “Of the fruit of the trees of the garden we may eat, but of the fruit of the tree which is in the middle of the garden, God has said, ‘You shall not eat of it, neither shall you touch it, lest you die.’” The serpent said to the woman, “You won’t surely die, for God knows that in the day you eat it, your eyes will be opened, and you will be like God, knowing good and evil.” When the woman saw that the tree

was good for food, and that it was a delight to the eyes, and that the tree was to be desired to make one wise, she took of its fruit, and ate; and she gave some to her husband with her, and he ate.

They heard the voice of God walking in the garden in the cool of the day, and the man and his wife hid themselves from the presence of God among the trees of the garden. God called to the man, and said to him, “Where are you?” The man said, “I heard your voice in the garden, and I was afraid, because I was naked; and I hid myself.” God said, “Who told you that you

were naked? Have you eaten from the tree that I commanded you not to eat from?” The man said, “The woman whom you gave to be with me, she gave me of the tree, and I ate.” God said to the woman, “What is this you have done?” The woman said, “The serpent deceived me, and I ate.”

God said to the serpent, “Because you have done this, you are cursed above all livestock, and above every animal of the field. On your belly you shall go, and you shall eat dust all the days of your life. I will put enmity between you and the woman, and between your

offspring and her offspring. He will bruise your head, and you will bruise his heel.”

Narrator: Though Adam and Eve were cast out of the garden forever, even then, God’s plan to restore fellowship with his children was unfolding.

Introduction from Pastor Mark

Scene 2: The Prophets

(Music Intro: O Come Emmanuel)

Narrator: Through the centuries, God spoke through his prophets to remind the people that the Savior was coming. Isaiah, writing in 700 BC, proclaimed that the Savior

would be God himself and would be miraculously born to a virgin. Isaiah: The Lord himself will give you a sign, the virgin will be with child and will give birth to a son and will call him Emmanuel: “God with us.”

Narrator: The prophet Micah predicted the specific town in which He would be born.

(music)

Micah: But you, Bethlehem, though you are small among the clans of Judah, out of you will come from me one who will be ruler over Israel, whose origins are from of old, from ancient times.

Narrator: Each of the hundreds of

prophesies heightened the world's expectation for this coming Savior, who God promised would one day come.

(music)

Scene 3: The Annunciation

(Music Intro)

Narrator: As the time neared for the promised Savior to come, God sent an angel to a young virgin girl names Mary.

Angel of the Lord: Do not be afraid, Mary. You have found favor with God. You will be with child and give birth to a son, and you are

to give him the name Jesus. He will be great and be called the Son of the Most High.

Narrator: The Angel of the Lord also appeared to Joseph, Mary's fiance.

Angel of the Lord: Joseph, son of David, do not be afraid to take Mary home as your wife, because what is conceived in her is from the Holy Spirit. She will give birth to a son, and you are to give him the name Jesus, because he will save his people from their sins.

**Walk from
Annunciation Scene**

(3) to the Shepherd

Scene (4)

(Music Intro)

Narrator: Shortly before the baby was due, God intervened in the course of human history, causing the emperor of Rome to conduct a worldwide census. Because of this, all the population of Palestine had to return to their ancestral home to be counted. 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.

He went there to register with Mary. All this took place to fulfill

what the Lord had said through the prophet Micah.

(music)

Scene 4: The Shepherds

(Shepherds murmur to each other.)

Narrator: And there were shepherds living out in the fields nearby, keeping a lonely watch over their sheep. Suddenly, the night was interrupted by a brilliant light, and an angel of the Lord appeared to them, and the glory of the Lord shone around them, and they were terrified. But the angel said to them...

Angel of the Lord: Do not be afraid. I bring you good news of great joy that will be for all the people. Today in the town of David a Savior has been born to you; he is Christ the Lord. This will be a sign to you: You will find a baby wrapped in cloths and lying in a manger.

Narrator: And there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host praising God and saying,
“Gloria, gloria, in Excelsis Deo..”
(Glory to God in the Highest)
(music: Angels We Have Heard on High)
(Shepherds excitedly talk about going to find the baby.)

Scene 5: The Town of Bethlehem

(Shepherds walk around the town asking about a newborn baby.)

Guests are encouraged to walk around the town of Bethlehem (whose citizens wear period-accurate clothing) and explore its market. You may see some Roman soldiers, a census taker, and other travelers coming to their ancestral home for the census.

The shepherds make their way to Jacob, the village elder (you can't miss him!), who points them to the nearby inn. The innkeeper directs

the shepherds around the back, to the stable, where he remembers he may have sent a man and pregnant woman because there was no more room in the inn. The shepherds are treated impolitely, as they are not viewed as positive members of society.

Scene 6: The Stable

(Music Intro: Silent Night)

Narrator: And so it came to pass that in the humble stable, in the presence of donkeys and sheep, that Jesus, the Son of God, came into the world as a tiny baby. There he lay, God clothed in human flesh: the Savior, the King of Kings, the

Lord of Lords. And they called his name Jesus, for he would save his people from their sins.

(music)

Scene 7: The Wise Men

(music intro)

Herod: Who are these 3 men in Jerusalem, asking about a child, born to be King of the Jews. Rabbi, what do you know of this?

Religious Leader: This is according to the Prophecy.

Herod: I need to know more of this Prophecy and when their Journey began. Send for these men at once.

Herald: Welcome to Jerusalem and to King Herod's palace in all it's

splendor!

Wise Man 1: Herod's palace at last! We have been invited by the King.

Herald: Ah Gentlemen, yes we are expecting you. Please wait here, allow me to see if the King will see you now.

Wise Man 2: Why would the king invite us here?

Wise Man 3: Perhaps he knows the whereabouts of the Child?

Wise Man 1: I do not know, but I know that we are close, I can feel it...Can you?

Herod: The Magi! Excellent; Bring

them to me at once! Herald bows and goes to wise men.

Herald: The king has given you an audience, please follow me...

Herod: Gentlemen, welcome to my Kingdom .

Wise Man 1: Why have you invited us here Herod? Do you know where He who is born King of the Jews is?

Herod: (ignores those questions) Tell me about the circumstances of your journey. What brings you to Jerusalem and what interest do you have in a Jewish child?

Wise Man 1: We are here because of a Prophecy. A Prophecy foretold that a star would appear at

a time when a Great King would be born. We saw that star.

Wise Man 2:

And we will not stop until we find Him.

Wise Man 3: And bow down and worship him!

Herod: When did you first see this star?

Wise Man 1: Almost two years ago.

Herod: (angrily) So you expect a two year old to be king of the Jews! (more politely) Gentlemen, perhaps you are mistaken?

Wise Man 1: We are not mistaken. We saw His star. If not here in Jerusalem where should we look?

Herod: There is a Prophecy that

speaks of Bethlehem. Now go and find this child and when you do, bring me word that I might worship him as well.

Herald: Gentlemen the road to Bethlehem is this way.

Herod: Rabbi, if these men do not return, then send the guard to Bethlehem and have them kill every male child under the age of 2!

Scene 7: The Wise Men, continued

Wise Man 2: That king Herod, I do not trust him.

Wise Man 1: Neither do I.

Wise Man 3: Where do we go now. Surely this is the road to Bethlehem.

Wise Man 1: Yes but which house?

Wise Man 2: Behold! The star has reappeared! It shines on that house!

Wise Man 3: Can it be?

Wise Man 1: Let us ask! Shalom.

We have come to worship the Jewish Child King. Is he here?

Joseph: Yes. Mary, bring Jesus, he has visitors.

(Mary leads toddler Jesus out to see the Wise Men. The Wise Men

lay down gifts, and kneel down to worship Jesus.)

Scene 8: Jesus and the Children

(Music Intro: Let the Little Children Come)

Narrator: At the age of 30, Jesus began his public ministry. He came to offer himself to everyone: Jews and Gentiles, men and women, adults and children. One day, the people were bringing little children to Jesus. His disciples attempted to send the children away from him, but Jesus did not allow this to happen. He said to them:

Jesus: Let the little children come to me, and do not hinder them, for the kingdom of God belongs to such as these.

Narrator: And he took the children in his arms and blessed them.

He told the people that unless someone comes to him with the faith and dependence of a small child, he cannot enter his kingdom.

(music)

Scene 9: The Storm

Narrator: One night, a great storm engulfed the small boat Jesus and his disciples sailed in.

(sound of the storm and crashing waves)

(The disciples panic about the storm. They worry that they are about to die. Jesus sleeps, and the disciples wake him, wondering if he cared if they lived or not.)

Narrator: He arose and rebuked the wind, and the sea was calm. Everywhere he went the miracles he performed provided undeniable evidence that he was indeed the Son of God. He made the lame walk and the blind see. He healed lepers and raised the dead.

(The disciples are astonished at Jesus' power, and remark that he must truly be the Son of God.)

Scene 10: Lazarus

(Music Intro)

Narrator: Nowhere was Jesus' power more displayed than at the graveside of his friend, Lazarus. Word had been sent to Jesus that Lazarus was sick. When Jesus finally arrived at the grave, Lazarus had been dead and buried for four days. After the stone was moved from the opening, Jesus cried out in a loud voice:

Jesus: Lazarus, come forth!

(Family and friends of Lazarus are astonished when Lazarus walks out of the tomb.)

Narrator: The dead man came out at the command of Jesus. Even the power of Life and Death rested in

the hands of the Son of God.

(music)

Scene 11: The Cross

Speaker: Have you heard of Him? Jesus, I mean? The One they just took down from this cross? I have been following Him - following from a distance, like you... in the crowds. I can't believe how angry they were today: They beat him and killed Him. Just hours ago. Right here on this cross. They did this To HIM!

I was beginning to understand some of His teaching... Did you know that... He was the one who created the whole universe! He was

the one the prophets foretold of in the Scriptures...He was the one the angels proclaimed to shepherds in Bethlehem where He was born...He was the one, kings worshiped with gifts...He even told his disciples to let the children come to Him... because 'such is the kingdom of heaven.' He was the one who calmed the raging seas with a single word... And they say He raised his friend- Lazarus??- from the dead...

And yet ... (slow) Jesus was also the one who came to Jerusalem, today, to carry this cross He didn't deserve; and from that cross he looked out into the crowd ...where

I was... and said, 'Father forgive them, they know not what they do.' Then I heard from his disciple that Jesus did this on purpose ... **ON PURPOSE!** This had been God's plan all along ... **ALL** people were trapped in fear and sin ... Separated from God. Jesus is the rescue plan. This day and this sacrifice: once-for-all will restore our relationship with God...if we would only believe...believe... This must have been what He meant, when He said '...God so loved the world that He sent His only Son, that whoever **BELIEVES** in Him will not die but have eternal life.'

A God that good! A love that great!
Perhaps this cross is NOT the end
of His story!

Scene 12: The Tomb

(Music Intro)

Narrator: The followers of Jesus took his body and put it in a tomb. For three days, his body lay there. A large stone barred the entrance to the tomb, and soldiers stood guard. Very early on the third day, there was a violent earthquake, for an Angel of the Lord came down from heaven and rolled back the massive stone.

(sound of an earthquake)

The guards were so afraid that they

shook with fear and fainted.

(music)

Narrator: Some women who loved Jesus arrived at the tomb and found it empty. Jesus had risen from the dead! He was victorious over even death, and offers forgiveness and eternal life to all who repent of their sins and put their trust in him as Savior and Lord. He is alive!

(music)

(Women talk excitedly about how Jesus has risen from the dead.)

Scene 13: The Ascension

(Music Intro)

Narrator: Our story concludes tonight with the return of Jesus to heaven forty days after his resurrection from the dead. His work on earth was finished.

He had come as the promised Savior to die in the place of sinful people, the righteous for the unrighteous, receiving in himself the punishment for our sins. He now returned to his Father.

(Music: Hallelujah Chorus)

(Jesus ascends into heaven while his disciples look on.)

Narrator: An angel spoke to his followers at his departure.

Angel: Why do you stand here, looking into the sky? This same

Jesus, who has been taken from you into heaven, will come back in the same way you have seen him go into heaven.

Narrator: So a new story was promised, the story of Jesus Christ's return to earth in the future: a second coming to earth. We look to that day with excitement and anticipation. Jesus is coming back. He came as a savior who suffered for our sins- he will return as the King and Lord of all.

(The disciples of Jesus celebrate the news that Jesus will come back.)

(music)

Pastor Mark

(And, of course, the hot chocolate and cookies!)

Pastor Mark: Welcome back. Feels good to be out of the cold, doesn't it? I hope you enjoyed the nativity tonight. It may be as you were out there at the scenes, that along the way you found yourself having some questions about spiritual stuff. Maybe questions as diverse as, "Why do Christians say Jesus is the way to God, when there are so many other religions in the world?" or "How can Jesus be God, when it's obvious that he is a man?" or maybe even, "If God is so good,

why is there so much evil and suffering in the world?” or “How can a person get to know God personally?” Starting in January, here at FCC, we’re going to be offering a really exciting course. It’s called Alpha. It’s designed to be a place where you can come with any questions and talk about them together in a very free and inviting environment with each other. I want to invite you to consider being a part of the Alpha course which is going to meet on an evening once a week and start with a simple dinner. There’s a table right in the refreshment area tonight that has a presentation

about the Alpha course, and if you have some questions, and if you'd enjoy talking about them with others, you might find Alpha a real cool place to start. Now I hope you and yours have a very Merry Christmas.

Please enjoy some hot chocolate and cookies, and remember that we do not accept donations in any form. The Mount Laurel Living Nativity is our gift to you, your family, and our community.

We'd like to hear from you! There are "Greeters" in the gym that would love to talk with you and

hear your story. Also, when talking to us or sharing about our nativity via social media, you can use the following:

#livingnativitymtl

Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/fellowshipmtlaurel/>

Instagram: @fellowshipsj_mtl

Twitter: @livingnativity

Email: info@fellowshipsj.org

Church website: fellowshipsj.org

Nativity website: livingnativity.org