

# Christmas religious holy day — clergy

## God celebrates His son's birth

by Rev. John Cooper  
Christian Reform Church

The birth of Jesus was witnessed by only Mary and Joseph. And God directed widespread notice.

Dr. Luke records Joseph and Mary's trek to Bethlehem for census purposes as decreed by Caesar Augustus. After their arrival she came full term. "And she brought forth his firstborn son." Luke 2:7.

God had seems before promised this child, Isaiah 7:14 "Behold a virgin will be with child and will give birth to a son, and they will call him, Immanuel, which means 'God with us.'" Matthew 1:22.

More recently God had given notice to Zachariah, on duty as priest in Jerusalem. The angelic messenger promised that his son would be herald to Jesus, the promised Messiah. He doubted how he and his wife Elizabeth, who were far beyond child-bearing years, could have a son. The angel Gabriel, with stand-in-the-presence-of-God credentials, declared that he would be unable to speak until this son was born.

Then God gives notice by the same angel or messenger, Gabriel, to Mary in Nazareth. "Hail, you are highly favored, the Lord is with you. . . you shall conceive. . . bring forth a son. . . Jesus. He will be great and will be called the Son of the Most High." "How can this be," Mary asked the angel, "since I am a virgin." The angel answered, "The Holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the Most High will overshadow you. So the holy one to be born will be called the Son of God. Even Elizabeth your relative is going to have a child in her old age, and she who was said to be barren is in her sixth month. For nothing is impossible with God."

"I am the Lord's servant," Mary answered. "May it be to me as you have said." Then the angel left her. Luke 1:21-

38. The Lord immediately continues to have us take note as follows. Mary hurries to Elizabeth, some 80 miles south, in Judah. "When Elizabeth heard Mary's greeting, the baby leaped in her womb and Elizabeth was filled with the Holy Spirit," Dr. Luke writes. "In a loud voice she exclaimed: 'Blessed are you among women, and blessed is the child you will bear! But why am I so favored, that the mother of my Lord should come to me? As soon as the sound of your greeting reached my ears, the baby in my womb leaped for joy. Blessed is she who has believed that what the Lord has said to her will be accomplished!'" Luke 1:39-45.

Spirit-blessed Mary responds in her original song-poem praising the lord. "my spirit rejoices in God my Savior." Luke 1:46-55.

By the time she returns to Nazareth she is noticeably with child. Joseph, Mary's betrothed, assumes the worst and thought about canceling marriage plans. Then an angel of the Lord appeared to him in a dream and said, "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." Matthew 1:20,21.

Then he takes her to his home and does not have union with her until after Jesus was born.

Meanwhile Elizabeth gives birth to a son. Neighbors and relatives rejoice and expect him to be named Zachariah. But mother said, "No! He is to be called John." They check with father who is supplied with a writing tablet. "To everyone's astonishment he wrote, 'His name is John.' Immediately his mouth was opened and he began to speak, praising God." Filled with the Holy Spirit, father

Zachariah speaks on behalf of God in grandiloquent Hebrew poetry:

"Praise the Lord, the God of Israel, because He has come and has redeemed His people. He has raised up a horn of salvation for us in the house of His servant David (as He said through his holy prophets of long ago) see Luke 1:67-79.

Having returned from Nazareth, Mary gives birth to her firstborn, a son, in a stable in Bethlehem. "She wrapped Him in strips of cloth and placed Him in a manger. . . Again the Lord gives notice, this time to shepherds keeping watch over their flocks at night. "An angel of the Lord appeared to them, and the glory of the Lord shone around about them, and they were terrified. But the angel said to them, '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 strips of cloth and lying in a manger.'"

"Suddenly a great company of the heavenly host appeared with the angel, praising God and saying, 'Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace to men on whom His favor rests.'"

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.' "So they hurried off and found Mary and Joseph, and the baby, who was lying in the manger. When they had seen him, they spread the word concerning what had been told them about this child, and all who heard it were amazed at what the shepherds said to them. But Mary treasured up all these things and pondered them in her mind. The shepherds returned glorifying and praising God for all the things they had heard and seen, which were just as they had been told." Luke 2:9-20.

Only God can direct such stupendous events. His angels and evangelists witness to His love gift. The faithful have through the ages adored Him.

Such majestic celebrating of the birth of our Savior and Lord is unique and inimitable. Yet He savors all our Spirit-filled adoration until the Day of full Redemption and the shadows of present grace flee before the grandeur of God's final gift: His perpetual presence on a new, never to be corrupted, earth, where as sons of God and daughters of the Almighty, we will enjoy Him forever.

by Rev. Len Ewing  
St. Alban's Anglican Church

"Christmas comes but once a year." So said the poet! But in another sense, it comes more than once a year. It is an annual and a daily event. On that first Christmas, God gave His only Son to the world, and He has been giving Him ever since.

When God first gave His Son, very few people wanted Him. He offered His most precious treasure, but the world at large had no room to receive Him. When Mary and Joseph arrived in Bethlehem, "there was no room for them in the inn." That is the tragic sentence from the Gospel of Luke.

The inn was booked for the weekend. It was filled with people. But it was probably a very lonely place, for the guests were strangers to each other, and everyone was busy, preoccupied with their own concerns and fleeting diversions. "There was no room in the inn." For this reason, King Jesus was born in a cattle shed. Bethlehem was asleep when God offered His Son.

It was the same during the life of Jesus. Very few people had time for Him. Even His own people did not want Him. We read: "He came unto His own, and His own received Him not."

Him not."

Are not we in the same predicament? Only a few have time for Jesus. God still offers His gift, but few accept Him. As the hymn says, the world has "Room for pleasure, room for business, but for Christ the Crucified, not a place that He can enter, in the heart for which He died!"

Few have time, even to laugh, or be courteous. We become irritated when someone crosses our path. Our entertainment is artificial. There is no room for the enjoyment of simple pleasures. There are so many trivial things to do. We have to work harder to buy the things we cannot afford. We never seem to find time to know and appreciate our friends, let alone some of the marvelous people in the world around us. We never find time to talk about the things that matter, or even the things that don't matter.

This is an age that has very little time for God. He might interfere too much with our plans. Finding God a bit of a bother, it is easier to forget Him. So we say that He is irrelevant and a little obsolete. We have time to make war,

but no time to love God and our fellow man. We have time to be busy, but no time to worship. We have no room for God.

Are you asleep to God's offer? Have you received God's gift? The scripture says: "as many as received Him, to them gave He the power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on His name." Christmas may come to you today. This is a time of giving and receiving. God is offering you His gift, won't you receive it? The poet says:

"It isn't far to Bethlehem town!

It's anywhere that Christ comes down

And finds a welcome friendly face,

Who gives Him an abiding place.

The road to Bethlehem runs right through

The hearts of folks like me and you."

To really enjoy the spirit of Christmas, make room for Christ in your hearts today.

## No room for Christ



## Christmas

... and we wish you the best of gifts: peace on earth, good will toward men! Thanks for your kindness and loyalty.

BETTY and CHARLIE CHEYNE

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## The wonder of it all

by Rev. Chuck Beaton  
Trinity United Church

Of all the players in the unfolding drama of Christmas, the shepherds are my favorites. They were simple men, startled by a great light on the hillside. An angel calmed their fears and told them of a baby who had been born. Hurrying to Bethlehem, they worshipped Jesus, becoming the first persons on earth to celebrate Christmas. Moreover, they were awed by the wonder of it all.

At Bethlehem, they discovered an inner warmth. When they returned to their fields with a song in their hearts, they were joyfully convinced that something great would come from the life of this child. Something has.

It is remarkable how Christmas still warms the coldest hearts. People who have been hard to get along with all year often mellow a little during the Yuletide season. Human beings seem to be in tune with one another, more at Christmas than at any other time of the year.

The shepherds found someone to worship. In these days, when we are discovering that many people have followed and worshipped false gods and false people, it's important to remember the shepherds worshipped someone in whom the eternal truth was found. They bowed, not to a God whom they feared, but knelt before a crib which bore God's love for all people. At Bethlehem, the eternal God has stepped from his celestial framework and come close to us.

In one way or another, all of

us will celebrate Christmas. Many will enjoy the long weekend packed with food, fun and festivities. Many will get a new load of debt. Some will have a dandy headache and others will have a week-long hangover. But if that's all that happens to us, we've missed what Christmas is all about.

May you find in your Christmas the blessings the shepherds found - of wonder, warmth and worship. It's the real thing!



## CHRISTMAS GREETINGS

In the hush of the holiday we quietly say thanks and hope you have a simply wonderful holiday!



## ELK'S LODGE

## A Christmas Wish

We join those who sing out the many praises of this special season, and wish you and yours have a most memorable Christmas holiday!



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To wish you joy and happiness for Christmas . . . and to extend sincere thanks to all our good friends.

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*hearty greetings*

and thanks are coming your way . . . have a Merry Christmas!

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**GREETINGS** for a Christmas filled with happy moments shared with loved ones. Thanks to all. From Elsie at the

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48 Mill Street — Acton

It's Christmas again and time to say how much it means to have the friendship and good will of folks like you. Accept our sincere thanks and warm wishes for a

**Happy Holiday**

Huisman  
**HOLLAND SHOP**

**NOTICE**

The schedule for refuse pick-up during the coming Christmas and New Year's season will be as follows:

**RESIDENTIAL**

Monday December 25, 1978, will be picked up on Thursday December 28, 1978

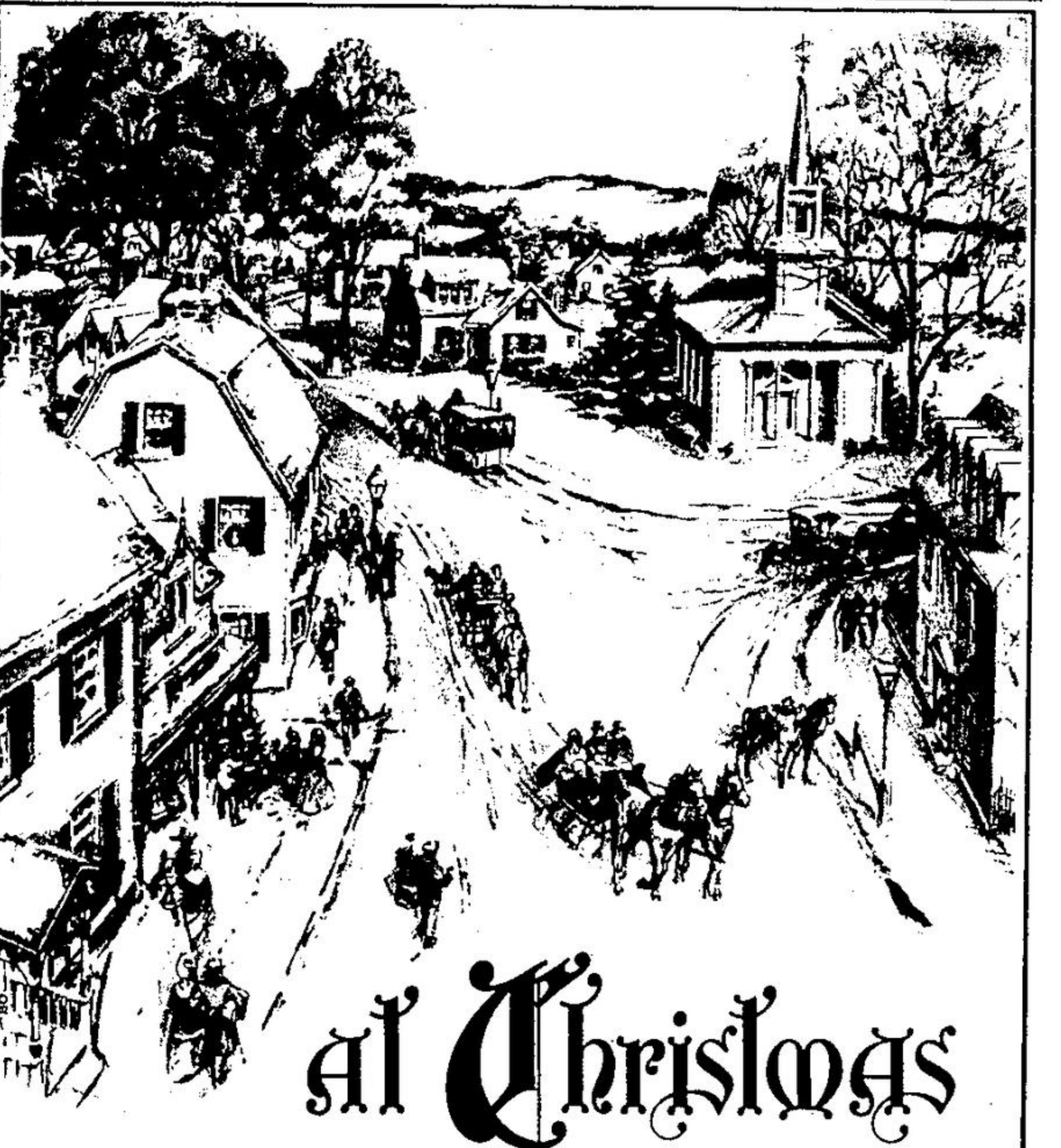
Tuesday, December 26, 1978, will be picked up on Friday, December 29, 1978

Monday, January 1, 1979, will be picked up on Thursday, January 4, 1979

**COMMERCIAL**

Tuesday, December 26, 1978 will be picked up on Wednesday, December 27, 1978

Works Dept.  
Town of Halton Hills



# at Christmas

Old-fashioned ways of warm cordiality have a special meaning at Christmas. In this old-time spirit, we wish you holiday joy, ever-new, rich in the blessings of home, family, friends. Merry Christmas!

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