

Oh Come, All Ye Faithful

Christmas Musical Script

“But without faith it is impossible to please God:
for he that comes to God must believe that he is,
and that he is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him.”

Hebrews 1:6

Script by Dave Therit

For Catawba Springs Christian Church

Song List

Introit on O Come, All Ye Faithful – Nix (Lorenz)

Carol of the Angels – Larter and Nix (Lorenz)

Gentle Mary Laid Her Child – Hamilton, Nix (Soundforth)

Tidings of Joy! – Larson (Lorenz)

Down in the City of David – Stratton and Courtney (Hope)

Hark! The Herald Angels Sing/Angels We Have Heard
– Althouse (Hope)

Joy to the World! – Raney (Hope)

Shines the Light – Dengler and Dengler (Flammer)

Joy to the World! – Raney (Hope)

Cast List

Narrator 1, Narrator 2

Abel, Abraham, Isaiah, Micah, Anna, Manaen, Peter

Oh Come, All Ye Faithful

CHOIR - Introit on O Come, All Ye Faithful - Nix

Narrator 1

One of the loveliest and most captivating thoughts expressed in song during the Christmas Season is the one conveyed by the joyful call to all the faithful, to come to Bethlehem and behold God's Son, Christ the Lord. And truly, what a joy it is to draw near to him: that we might worship and adore him who is worthy of our praise!

Narrator 2

It is for that reason "O Come, All Ye Faithful" is one of most loved and cherished of all Christmas Hymns. The song was first written in Latin with the title, "Adeste Fideles", which literally means, "Be Near Ye Faithful". For Christians, that longing to be near him is a God-given desire and is the heartbeat of our new nature, created in us by his Spirit.

Narrator 1

This and other time-honored Christmas hymns and carols, filled with themes whose truths and sentiments are grounded in the Scriptures, are elevated, and cherished in the hearts of the faithful throughout the Christmas Season. In the song just sung, our theme song for today's program, faith becomes a most important theme for it is the key element in the lives of the faithful. Faith is foundational to our relationship with, and our worship of the Lord. Without it, the song's call to the faithful would only fall upon deaf ears.

Narrator 2

Along with the familiar themes, Christmas songs are also filled with imagery that sparks our spiritual imagination.

Have you ever pictured in your mind's eye what's described in the second verse of this song? In it, choirs of angels and all the citizens of heaven are called on to sing and glorify God for what he has done. Ponder now in your imagination the sight of all the faithful of the past who once lived upon this earth and who are now in heaven, with the angels, singing glory to God as they exalt Christ the Lord!

Narrator 1

In today's Program, we too will be using imagery to stir our spiritual imagination as we follow the theme of faith. Today we have surrounded ourselves in this place with a cloud of faithful witnesses, the imagery of which we borrowed from the book of Hebrews.

Narrator 2

Our seven witnesses represent the many nameless citizens of heaven that are spoken of in our theme song. They are here to tell their stories of faith and point us to Christ, just as the angel pointed the shepherds to the Christ Child on the night he was born while the heavenly hosts were glorifying God for the miracle of the incarnation.

Narrator 1

When we consider that they were once just like us - citizens of the earth in the flesh, we begin to understand the immensity of God's longsuffering and love toward us, for they, just like us, were imperfect human beings. Yet our cloud of witnesses who are seated among you, who I will now ask to stand, starting with those from Old Testament times, (motioning w/his hands to stand -- pause briefly as necessary; Note: the witnesses should remain standing.),

through the eye of faith, were able to see from afar that which was a mystery to them. And our witnesses from the days of the New Testament (motioning w/his hands to stand -- pause briefly as necessary), who actually saw and touched that mystery, through faith were able to receive it. That mystery, of course, is the indescribable gift of Christ that was given to the world on that first Christmas morning.

Narrator 2

Today, as the timeless songs of Christmas are sung, and as our special visitors minister to us, we invite you to come and draw near with faithful hearts to worship with us, Christ the Lord!

Choir - Carol of the Angels - Larter and Nix, Lorenz

Narrator 1

Our first four witnesses today were all prophets in Old Testament times. In his first epistle, the apostle Peter said that the Spirit of Christ that was in the prophets of old . . . revealed to them that they were ministering not to themselves, but to you the things preached of the gospel by the Holy Spirit sent from heaven - things which (concerning the end of your faith, even the salvation of your souls) the angels desire to look into.

Narrator 2

The first two witnesses, Abel and Abraham, are not usually thought of by us as prophets; but Christ, in the gospel account of Luke, called Abel a prophet; and in the book of Genesis, God spoke of Abraham as a prophet. The second two witnesses are Isaiah and Micah. These names we recognize as ones that have been counted among the prophets of old from the days of antiquity.

Narrator 1

“Through faith we understand that the worlds were framed by the word of God, so that things which are seen were not made of things which do appear.

Now without faith it is impossible to please God: for he that comes to God must believe that he is, and that he is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him.” He that has an ear to hear, let him hear!

Abel

Though dead, I yet speak of the righteousness which is of faith, without which no man shall see God. My name is Abel.

On the day my parents, Adam and Eve, sinned against the living God and Creator of us all, the human race fell from its position of favor with God and was plunged into a state of sin and death. Moving from goodwill with God to enmity, our race was then at war with the very God who gave us life and breath; yet he, by his great mercy gave his promise that the seed of the woman would one day come to save fallen man from the power of Satan and the curse of sin to which the human race is now in bondage.

When I was but a youth I was taught of God’s promise to our race at the knees of my parents and learned that God desired to reconcile our sinful race back to himself. When I became a man I offered unto the Lord a sacrifice from the firstborn of my flock that pleased him, for it spoke of the righteous one who was to come, whose blood would speak of better things than the blood of my sacrifice, which was only temporal, but his sacrifice was eternal. The Lord counted my sacrifice to be more excellent than my brother’s, who had offered unto the Lord from his harvest of the fruit of the fields. When God testified that my gift pleased him and that Cain’s did not, my own brother, who chose to remain at enmity against God, murdered me, because his works were evil.

You should not think it strange then if the world should hate you, because the world is at enmity with God, and his Son is still a stranger. But our God is greater than the world and is faithful to all who place their trust in his promise, which was fulfilled in his Son. He that has an ear to hear, let him hear!

Abraham

I am Abraham the patriarch. When I was called by God to go out into a place that I had never seen, and not even knowing where I was going, I went. How did I do that, you might ask? And why did I do that? It was by faith that I did it. And I did it because I looked for a city with foundations, whose builder and maker was God and not man. It was all part of God's all wise and gracious plan to raise up a people for his name's sake and to bring many souls to himself through the seed that he had promised to me, which was Christ.

The God of all mercies, who called me and made me the father of many nations, did great and mighty things for me and through me in that he declared me to be righteous and made me the spiritual father of the household of faith because I believed his promise.

Now if you can receive it - if you have the heart to believe it - then be wise and listen carefully to what I have to say. In my day, with the eye of faith, I saw Christ. From everlasting, he was before me. And yet, he came after me and through me. In the fullness of time, nearly two millennia after my day, he was born of the seed of a woman and was made manifest to the world. Oh, how my heart rejoiced to see his day, and I was glad! He that has an ear to hear, let him hear!

Choir - Gentle Mary Laid Her Child - Hamilton, Nix, Soundforth

Isaiah

I too saw Christ in my day when I saw his glory fill the temple. On that day my life was changed forever for I saw my sin as I had never seen it before. For you see, I was a man of unclean lips - lips that spoke out of the abundance of the hidden things of the heart. Living in the midst of a people of unclean lips I had begun to think and to talk like them. But I do not blame them, for I was responsible for the choices that I had made. I still stand in awe when I consider God's great love to me, for when I called out to him and confessed my sin the Lord in his mercy cleansed me and called me into the ministry to prophecy of his coming judgment and salvation. I am the prophet Isaiah.

During my ministry, God, through the Spirit of Christ that was in me, used me to prophesy of Messiah's birth seven hundred years before he was born. Of his birth I prophesied, "Therefore the Lord himself shall give you a sign; Behold, a virgin shall conceive, and bear a son, and shall call his name Immanuel." At another time I prophesied, "The people that walked in darkness have seen a great light: they that dwell in the land of the shadow of death, upon them hath the light shined. . . . For unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given: and the government shall be upon his shoulder: and his name shall be called Wonderful, Counsellor, The mighty God, The everlasting Father, The Prince of Peace." Though I was unworthy of the privilege, God would use me to prophesy not only of Christ's birth but also of his sacrificial death for our sins, and of his Kingdom which shall have no end.

But my people, who were stiff-necked and hard of heart, descended ever lower in their sin and ever deeper in their unbelief; they no longer desired to hear God's word. They said to me, "Do not prophesy to us right things; Speak to us smooth things, prophesy deceits." But I spoke unto them the word of the Lord! How could I speak anything else? Why should I speak men's words according to their own thoughts? Man is but grass that today is and tomorrow withers away, but the word of our God shall stand forever! God, at last, gave them the desire of their hearts when he closed their eyes and shut up their ears so that they could no longer see and hear the truth. They had sealed their own doom. The heart of God must have wept when he, through my lips, cried out, "Who hath believed our report? and to whom is the arm of the Lord revealed?"

When God uttered his prophetic message through me to generations yet unborn you were in his thoughts. You might think that your generation is altogether different from the one in which I lived, but yours is quite the same. My generation called good evil and evil good, light darkness and darkness light, all for which God would bring them into judgment. Your enlightened age, in its attempt to avoid accountability before God, sees truth as something that is relative and ever changing with many shades of gray. Now I ask you, what is the difference between your generation and mine except for your countless inventions that are often more a distraction to you than they are a benefit? At the end of the day, have they brought you one bit closer to your God?

As we stand before our God, to whom we must all give account, I fear that God in his justice will also judge your generation if they do not change their course. I caution you - yea, I warn you - do not allow your thinking to become a reflection of the fashion of the age in which you live for it is the pathway to destruction. I know whereof I speak for I was completely undone by my sin, and nigh unto ruin, when I saw his glory in the temple.

My friends, sin is the very reason Christ left heaven's glory and made his abode with man. Sin is the reason for Christmas, and it is the greatest issue of the hour. Man cannot accept this by his own reasoning. He needs the help of the divine reasoning of God! "Come now, and let us reason together, saith the LORD: though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be as white as snow; though they be red like crimson, they shall be as wool."

Hear now what I have to say and then I will be done with my much speaking! Christ is the greatest promise and the greatest gift that God has ever given to our race! For when we all like sheep had gone astray, everyone to his own way, the Lord laid on him the iniquity of us all. Won't you with the eye of faith fix your gaze upon him? For he is the good news of Christmas!

A child is born unto us! A Son is given! How then shall we not believe on Him? How then shall we not in faith draw near to him and worship him? How then shall we not tell our own generation of this good news? He that has an ear to hear, let him hear!

Choir - Tidings of Joy! - Larson, Lorenz

Micah

The prophet Isaiah and I were contemporaries in exceedingly troubled times. If it is of any comfort to you, I was and still am a man of fewer words than he. I am the prophet Micah.

In our time God's judgment hung over the land like an angry storm ready to unleash its fury. But our faith stood firm because God was faithful. Listen carefully to what I say.

In our day I saw things that I would never wish upon any people: things wicked and ungodly, things horrible and inhumane. My people chose men of falsehood for their prophets and wine and strong drink for their companions. Bribery was everywhere; morality and justice were exceedingly rare. In Jerusalem, the city of God, King Ahaz sacrificed some of his own sons to Molech to appease a god that is no god in order to save us from our enemies. Yet a man's worst enemies were not those from without but from within: those of his own household, for sons dishonored their fathers, and daughters their mothers. And yet, my people thought that God would not judge them!

I said to my people: "Will the LORD be pleased with thousands of rams, or with ten thousands of rivers of oil? shall I give my firstborn for my transgression, the fruit of my body for the sin of my soul? He hath shewed thee, O man, what is good; and what doth the LORD require of thee, but to do justly, and to love mercy, and to walk humbly with thy God?"

But they would not heed my words. And so, God began to judge my people. Many villages - including my own, and cities were destroyed by the Assyrians. When I looked around me, I saw nothing but death and destruction. Women were ravaged and children dashed to pieces. I would have fainted had God not been my strength, I said, "Therefore I will look unto the LORD; I will wait for the God of my salvation: my God will hear me." "He will turn again, he will have compassion upon us; he will subdue our iniquities; and thou wilt cast all their sins into the depths of the sea."

With the eye of faith, I looked to the future and saw the salvation of the Lord. In his great mercy the Lord revealed to me that his salvation would come from a most unlikely place. It would come from none of the places in which men trusted: not from the king's palace in Jerusalem, neither would it come from Egypt or Syria. No! From none of those places! "But thou, Bethlehem Ephratah, though thou be little among the thousands of Judah, yet out of thee shall he come forth unto me that is to be ruler in Israel; whose goings forth have been from of old, from everlasting." He that has an ear to hear, let him hear!

Choir - Down in the City of David - Stratton, Courtney, Hope

Narrator 1

The saints of Old Testament times, to which our first four visitors belonged, all died in faith, not having received the promises, but having seen them afar off, and were persuaded of them, and embraced them, and confessed that they were strangers and pilgrims on the earth.

Narrator 2

Our last three visitors today lived during the time of Christ. Unlike the Old Testament saints this second group all died in faith having received the promise of Christ. They were privileged to live in the time that the apostle Paul called the Fullness of Time, when Christ was born of a woman in order that he might redeem us from our sins. Our three New Testament witnesses and those whom they represent were also given to us as examples of faith, just as the saints of the Old Testament were given to both them and us, that we by faith might walk after their example.

Narrator 1

Our first New Testament witness is Anna, the prophetess who saw Christ in the Temple when he was but an infant. The second is Manaen, a man whom we will allow to remain a mystery for the moment except to say that his name is recorded in the book of Acts. And the third is the Apostle Peter, a former fisherman whom the Lord used to establish his Church on the Day of Pentecost by his Holy Spirit after he ascended into heaven. He that has an ear to hear, let him hear!

Anna

My name is Anna. When I was a young girl I had dreams, as did most girls of my generation. I dreamed of marriage one day and of having children of my own. That dream was especially fitting for the girls of the Tribe of Asher from which I came, for Jewish tradition celebrated the beauty of the women of Asher and of their suitability to be wed to high priests or even kings. Whether I was beautiful or not I cannot say. If I did have any outward beauty it had long since vanished by the time I saw the baby Jesus.

When I was young, many girls my age hoped that they might be the chosen of God, the one through whom the Messiah would come to bring redemption to his people. I was no different. I was willing to be God's chosen vessel and prayed that it would be so. But the Lord had other plans for me. And his way is always best.

As a young virgin I was betrothed to a fine and godly man, and we married. But after seven short years he died. I would never love another man and would spend the rest of my years in the temple of God in Jerusalem, serving where I could and praying for the long-awaited Messiah. During those years I was betrothed to God and to him alone. By the time I saw the baby Jesus there in the temple I had been a widow for many, many years and was 84 years old.

When I came into the temple that day I saw a young mother and her husband. Her name was Mary, and his was Joseph. She was the young woman that I, as a girl, had always hoped to be. Oh how she glowed with such peace and joy - a picture of serenity, a picture of humility, a picture of faith. I saw Simeon, an old man; righteous toward his fellow man; devout toward his God; one who looked for the Messiah; Spirit-anointed, to whom it was revealed that the child in his arms, though humble of birth, was God's long awaited promise to us, the one whom all the angels of God worship. In that one moment, I, through the eye of faith, saw the glory of God on earth, and I confessed to all that would hear it that this was the Christ. I would never see him grow up to be a man for my days were at their end. But Simeon spoke to Mary of a day when her son would be pierced by a sword, and her own soul also; and still I saw her faith stand firm, and so did mine. For this was not just any child: this was the Son of the Highest, the promised Savior and King! He that has an ear to hear, let him hear!

Choir - Hark! The Herald Angels Sing/Angels We Have Heard - Althouse, Hope

Manaen

In life I was a child of privilege for I grew up in a family of great wealth and power. We were known in high places in Israel and in Rome. My name is Manaen.

Luke, the Church's earliest historian, made mention of me very briefly in one verse in the Book of Acts in connection with the sending of Barnabas and Saul (later known as Paul) on their first missionary journey from the church at Antioch. I stand in awe of the grace of God when I consider that my name was mentioned in the same sentence as theirs. And so, it's understandable that my name, though known to God, is nearly concealed in that one verse, almost forgotten because of those men's well-deserved notoriety. For they went forth from our church in Antioch in the power of the Holy Spirit and began to turn the world upside down for Christ.

Luke recorded in the Book of Acts that I was “brought up with Herod the Tetrarch”, that is, Herod Antipas, the son of King Herod the Great. I grew up with and was like a brother to Antipas who would become tetrarch of Galilee and Perea after his father died, only a few years after Jesus was born. We weren’t just friends or neighbors, we were, as Luke wrote in the Greek, “suntrophos”: that is, we were like foster brothers. We grew up together from the earliest years of our youth. As boys we were educated together in Rome by the best teachers that money could buy. I don’t say any of this to brag, but to show you the depths of the love and mercy of God.

When our education in Rome was finished at about the age of sixteen, we returned to Israel. Now Antipas and I learned very quickly to always stay clear of King Herod and his wrath whenever his countenance was dark and moody. It really didn’t matter whether or not you were his most favorite or least favorite son, or servant, or wife for he might have you killed indiscriminately if he wished. He was a man with absolute power and unbridled wrath. He killed the most favored of his ten wives, Miriamne, and their son when he began to suspect that she might be plotting his undoing. His fears were mostly unfounded, but that was of no comfort to his wife and son. And so, when the news came to the palace along with the wise men from the east, that a new king of the Jews had been born, the soon-to-come slaughter of the innocent young boys of Bethlehem would come as no great surprise to those of us who knew the king.

When Antipas became the Tetrarch of Galilee and Perea following his father’s death, our fears greatly subsided. However, Antipas was an immoral man, and at times showed traces of wrath like his father. His descent into decadence started when he took his brother’s wife and was enticed by her into licentious living. She lured him into her web of iniquity through sensual parties, the details of which I am too embarrassed to share. I must admit that my flesh had an attraction for the lifestyles of the rich and powerful, but I saw the emptiness and ugliness of it all from within. Like Moses in Egypt, the hour was coming when I would have to make a choice. Would I enjoy the pleasures of sin for a season, or would I take my stand and suffer with the people of God?

I cannot overstate the tremendous impact that John the Baptist had on our nation when he came preaching in the wilderness, for many people from Jerusalem and Galilee went out to hear him. Antipas himself heard him, and heard him gladly! In fact, John was Antipas' favorite preacher, except for the fact that John had pierced him through his heart concerning his adulterous liaison with his brother's wife. As was true with his father, so it was with Antipas: the victims of their wrath could find no solace in being a favorite, for at the bidding and trickery of Herodias, his wicked wife, Antipas had John, his favorite preacher, beheaded.

Now once the ministry of John ended and that of Jesus had begun in Galilee many in Galilee began to believe on him. His person and ministry could not be ignored - neither by Antipas, by me, or anyone in Antipas' palace or dominion. Joanna, whose husband, Chuza, was the steward over Antipas' household, became a follower of Jesus. She and others even gave of their substance to support his ministry. She was the same Joanna that would later report to the disciples, along with the other women who had gone to Jesus' tomb, that he had indeed risen from the grave. I say all of this to show to you that these things were not done in a corner where no one could see what was taking place. These things were done out in the open so that every man and woman would be accountable to God for their response to the Christ whose name was Jesus!

The day came when the hour of decision weighed so heavy upon me that I saw clearly, through the light given to me, the divergence of two paths before me. Would I choose the pleasures of sin that I had learned within the dark shadows of the palace, or would I by faith choose Christ? By God's mercy, I chose Christ, and for that I would never be sorry! I learned what true wealth and power really are. In exchange for a world filled with darkness and emptiness I gained Christ who is the brightness of God's glory, God's indescribable and unspeakable gift to us! He that has an ear to hear, let him hear!

Choir - Shines the Light - Dengler and Dengler, Flammer

Peter

In life I was a fisherman who became a fisher of men, a servant and an apostle of Jesus Christ. I was named Simon at birth but the Lord renamed me Peter. While on this earth it seemed that I was often the first to speak out on most any matter, and so in death it seemed fitting that I should wait for the others and be the last to speak. Now speaking of death: it is true that those who have spoken here today represent those who are dead, yet we and they live, for our God is not the God of the dead, but of the living! And because our life is in him we testify of the Son and not of ourselves.

Now a witness is bound by an oath to tell the truth. And we have told you the truth. You can verify what we have said to you today about Jesus from the Scriptures. Now listen carefully for I have something more to say to you that is also true. It is not new truth but the same truth that I have testified of before which you can read for yourselves in the Scriptures in my second epistle where I wrote, "For we have not followed cunningly devised fables, when we made known unto you the power and coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, but were eyewitnesses of his majesty. For he received from God the Father honor and glory, when there came such a voice to him from the excellent glory, this is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased. And this voice which came from heaven we heard, when we were with him in the holy mount."

My friends, it is good and right to celebrate the birth of the Holy Child, Jesus, because his first coming was indeed glorious. Yet his first coming was but a foretaste of that which is to come. When Jesus was transfigured on the holy mount, James and John and I saw the brightness of his glory that was unlike anything we had ever witnessed. How it was possible for mere mortals to see his unveiled glory only God knows. But with our own eyes we saw his coming in power and glory. It is therefore with utmost certainty that I say to you, that the day is coming when he will come with power and great glory in his kingdom, just as we saw him on the holy mount. For that which we saw spoke of things to come. And when he comes, oh, what joy unspeakable, what fullness of glory! The promises that God gave through all the prophets, starting with righteous Abel, will at last and forever be met in him! For he will rule the world with truth and grace, and his blessings will flow as far as the curse is found when the earth at last receives her king. Our celebration today, then, ought to be as much about his second coming as it is about his first as we look for him with the eye of faith and wait for his coming from heaven.

And so, my friends, why do some here still tarry and delay to believe on him? Are you looking and waiting for another Messiah? If so, your waiting is in vain. If Jesus is not the Messiah, how is it that he did the Messiah's work? There has never been another like him, either before or after him. I say to you, if he is not the Messiah, the world has not, and never can have, a Messiah! Again, I give to you the same truth that I testified of and confessed to in life, that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of the Living God! To him all the prophets bear witness that everyone who believes in him receives forgiveness of sins through his name. Come to him in faith; and all ye faithful, come, draw near to him, for this same Jesus is coming again! He that has an ear to hear, let him hear!

Choir - Joy to the World! - Raney, Hope