

Children's Christmas Eve Pageant

Saint Barnabas Episcopal Church

Narrator 1 | *Narrator 2*

Gabriel | Mary | Angel of the Lord | Herod

Narrator 1: Welcome to the Saint Barnabas Christmas Pageant!

The first part of our service this evening will be acted out by our children. Our children's Christmas Eve pageant is one of the most important Christian formation events of the year.

This is the children's opportunity to offer a Christmas Eve story – [slight pause] their gift to their church family.

Cantors from our Children's Choirs will lead us in Christmas hymns and carols. We invite you to sing along.

O Come O Come Emmanuel (verses 1, 4) **[Cantors]**

*O come, O come, Emmanuel, and ransom captive Israel,
That mourns in lonely exile here until the Son of God appear.
Rejoice! Rejoice! Emmanuel shall come to thee, O Israel!*

*O come, O King of nations, bind in one the hearts of all mankind.
Bid all our sad divisions cease and be yourself our King of Peace.
Rejoice! Rejoice! Emmanuel shall come to thee, O Israel!*

Narrator 2: [Slowly and clearly] Now hear the words of the prophet Isaiah and join with the faithful throughout the world who celebrate the coming of Light and Life with us:

Arise, shine; for your light has come, and the glory of the LORD has risen upon you.

For darkness shall cover the earth, and thick darkness the peoples; but the LORD will arise upon you, and his glory will appear over you.

Nations shall come to your light, and kings to the brightness of your dawn.

Then you shall see and be radiant; your heart shall thrill and rejoice, because the abundance of the sea shall be brought to you, the wealth of the nations shall come to you.

Lo How A Rose E'er Blooming plays in background.

Stage Directions: [Angel Gabriel and Mary stand in conversation. When finished, Angel Gabriel joins other Angels on floor and Mary walks out the side door and then to the back of the church to join Joseph.]

Narrator 1: The angel Gabriel was sent by God to a town in Galilee called Nazareth, to a virgin engaged to a man whose name was Joseph, of the house of David.

The virgin's name was Mary. And he came to her and said,

Angel Gabriel: 'Greetings, favored one! The Lord is with you.'

Narrator 1: [Slowly and clearly] But she was much perplexed by his words and pondered what sort of greeting this might be.

The angel said to her,

Angel Gabriel: 'Do not be afraid, Mary, for you have found favor with God. And now, you will conceive in your womb and bear a son, and you will name him Jesus.

He will be great, and will be called the Son of the Most High, and the Lord God will give to him the throne of his ancestor David.

He will reign over the house of Jacob forever, and of his kingdom there will be no end.'

Narrator 1: Then Mary said,

Mary: 'Here am I, the servant of the Lord; let it be with me according to your word.'

Narrator 1: Then the angel departed from her.

O Little Town of Bethlehem [Cantors]

O little town of Bethlehem, how still we see thee lie! Above thy deep and dreamless sleep the silent stars go by; yet in thy dark streets shineth the everlasting Light; the hopes and fears of all the years are met in thee tonight.

Stage Directions: [As Narrator reads, Mary and Joseph walk up aisle. They stand behind the manger.]

Narrator 2: [slowly and clearly] In those days a decree went out from Emperor Augustus that all the world should be registered.

All went to their own towns to be registered.

Joseph also went from the town of Nazareth in Galilee to Judea, to the city of David called Bethlehem, because he was descended from the house and family of David.

He went to be registered with Mary, to whom he was engaged and who was expecting a child.

Stage Directions: [Animals enter and sit to right in front of manger.]

Narrator 1: In the center of the village of Bethlehem there was a small inn. On this night it was overflowing with people seeking a place to sleep and a place to eat.

Behind the inn was a dark stable with animals.

A gray donkey chewed on his barley and broken straw while a weary cow leaned and rested after a day of plowing.

A sheep nearby was nearly asleep.

Stage Directions: [Angel and Jesus come up center aisle and stand behind manger, Mary, and Joseph – wait until they get to the middle of the church.]

Narrator 2: While they were there, the time came for her to deliver her child.

[Pause]

Mary gave birth to her firstborn son and wrapped him in bands of cloth, and laid him in a manger, because there was [slower] no place for them in the inn.

Away in a Manger [Cantors]

Away in a manger, no crib for a bed. The little lord Jesus laid down his sweet head. The stars in the bright sky looked down where he lay, the little lord Jesus asleep on the hay. The cattle are lowing the baby awakes. But little lord Jesus no crying he makes. I love thee Lord Jesus look down from the sky, and stay by my cradle till morning is nigh.

Stage Directions: [Shepherds walk halfway up the aisle. Angel enters north side of altar at the top of steps.]

Narrator 1: In that region there were shepherds living in the fields, keeping watch over their flock by night.

[Pause – wait until shepherds get close to center of church]

[more energy and volume] Then an angel of the Lord stood before 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; for see—I am bringing you good news of great joy for all the people: to you is born this day in the city of David a Savior, who is the Messiah, the Lord.

This will be a sign for you: you will find a child wrapped in bands of cloth and lying in a manger.’

Stage Directions: [Angels enter from both sides and find places on risers.]

Narrator 2: [with lots of energy and slowly] And suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host, praising God and saying, [boldly] 'Glory to God in the highest heaven, and on earth peace among those whom he favors!'

Stage Directions: [Shepherds walk towards manger, south side.]

Narrator 1: [wait until shepherds are mostly in place] When the angels had left them and gone into heaven, the shepherds said to one another, [more energy] 'Let us go now to Bethlehem and see this thing that has taken place, which the Lord has made known to us.'

So they went with haste and found Mary and Joseph, and the child lying in the manger.

When they saw this, they made known what had been told them about this child;

and all who heard it were amazed at what the shepherds told them.

[slower and thoughtfully] But Mary treasured all these words and pondered them in her heart.

The shepherds returned, glorifying and praising God for all they had heard and seen, as it had been told them.

***Angels We Have Heard on High* [Cantors] v. 1-3**

Angels we have heard on high sweetly singing o'er the plains and the mountains in reply echoing their joyous strains: Gloria, in excelsis Deo

Shepherds, why this jubilee? Why your joyous strains prolong? What the gladsome tidings be Which inspire your heavenly song? Gloria, in excelsis Deo

Come to Bethlehem and see him whose birth the angels sing, Come, adore on bended knee, Christ the Lord, the newborn King. Gloria, in excelsis Deo

Stage Directions: [Herod and all Wise Ones start to walk up the aisle and meet at the middle.]

Narrator 2: All this took place in the time of King Herod.

After Jesus was born in Bethlehem of Judea, wise men from the East came to Jerusalem, asking, [slower and more energy] ‘Where is the child who has been born king of the Jews?’

For we observed his star at its rising, and have come to pay him homage.’

When King Herod heard this, he was **frightened**, and all Jerusalem with him; and calling together all the chief priests and scribes of the people, he inquired of them where the Messiah was to be born.

They told him, ‘In Bethlehem of Judea; for so it has been written by the prophet:

[slowly with more volume] “And you, Bethlehem, in the land of Judah, are by no means least among the rulers of Judah; for from you shall come a ruler who is to shepherd my people Israel.”

Narrator 1: Then Herod secretly called for the wise ones and learned from them the exact time when the star had appeared.

Then he sent them to Bethlehem, saying,

King Herod: ‘Go and search diligently for the child; and when you have found him, bring me word so that I may also go and pay him homage.’

Stage Directions: [Herod exits south door. Star begins to walk from Narthex. Wise Ones follow star up to manger. Wise Ones kneel and then turn out toward pews.]

Narrator 2: [wait until Herod exits – very slowly] When they had heard the king, they set out; and there, ahead of them, went the star that they had seen at its rising,

[Pause – wait until Star gets to magi]

until it stopped over the place where the child was.

When they saw that the star had stopped, they were overwhelmed with joy.

[Pause – wait until Star stands in front of the manger]

On entering the house, they saw the child with Mary his mother;
and they knelt down and paid him homage.

Then, opening their treasure-chests, they offered him gifts of gold,
frankincense, and myrrh. [Pause]

And having been warned in a dream not to return to Herod, they left for their
own country by another road.

We Three Kings [Cantors]

v. 1

*We three kings of orient are, bearing gifts we traverse afar. Field and fountain, moor and
mountain, following yonder star. O star of wonder star of night, star with royal beauty
bright, westward leading, still proceeding, guide us to thy perfect light.*

Narrator 1: This is where our Christmas story ends, but it is not the end of the
story.

We know that Jesus' story continues to touch people of all backgrounds,
just as it touched the people in Bethlehem and the Magi from far away.
Jesus' story is a gift, not of gold nor wrapped in paper and bows,
but of Light and life.

The light that shone for the Magi shines for us still, guiding us towards Jesus,
towards hope, towards new life.

Narrator 2: [Pause] Now we will share with you a simple star.

Lift up your gift of Light represented by the golden stars.

The stars will be passed out now to all the children to help us remember the
light that the Christ Child brings.

Let us sing together for this night is holy. [Step down and stand next to angels]

Hymn: **Silent Night [Cantors]**- v. 1 & 3

Silent night, holy night, all is calm, all is bright, round yon virgin mother and child. Holy infant, so tender and mild, sleep in heavenly peace, sleep in heavenly peace.

Silent night, holy night, Son of God, love's pure light, Radiant beams from thy holy face, with the dawn of redeeming Grace. Jesus, Lord, at thy birth. Jesus, Lord, at thy birth.