Love God
Love Others
Share the Good News

SUMMIT CHURCH

Being Jesus Christ to the World

Theme: The Carols of Christmas

"Hark, The Herald Angels Sing"

Jeff Huber, November 28-29, 2026, at Summit Church, Durango

Weekly Memory Verse:

> ***6 For a child is born to us, a son is given to us. The government will rest on his shoulders. And he will be called: Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace.***
> Isaiah 9:6

SLIDE Hark, the Herald Angels Sing

We're beginning a new series of sermons as we begin this season of advent, which is the 4 weeks before we get to Christmas. The season is meant to be a time of preparing and waiting for the coming of the Christ child, and for his second coming. The word Advent comes from the Latin word, "Adventus."

SLIDE "Advent" in Latin is *adventus*, meaning "coming," "approach," or "arrival."

The word was used often in the Roman Empire to talk about the emperor traveling to far off places in the Roman world. This was seen as a special occasion and talked about as an "adventus." People would get ready and they would be excited and anticipating this coming of such an important person into your village. All the houses would be

painted, and the streets would be cleaned. You would get rid of all the garbage and prepare special celebrations and meals preparing for this momentous occasion. People want to show off the best of their town because the emperor was coming.

When the emperor would leave the city of Rome to go and lead troops into battle and then return that would also be a celebration that was called an "adventus." The return of the emperor would be celebrated and there would be this massive amount of preparation and excitement. They would even make special coins in honor of the emperor's adventus. The coin you see below is of Philip the First returning as an emperor to an adventus which you can see engraved on the front and the back of the coin. This coin is from 245 AD, and you see the image of the emperor on one side and then the word adventus with an image of the emperor on a horse returning.

GRAPHIC Phillip 1 Adventus Coin 245 AD

As Christians began to think about what it meant to prepare for the coming of Christ in the 2nd and 3rd century to celebrate his birth and prepare for the fact that he would come again, they recognized that Jesus was there emperor, their king of kings and Lord of Lords. This season is our adventus and the first weekend which is where we are today was seen as the first day of the calendar year, not January 1. There was this big idea that we should get our hearts prepared and ready for the coming of Christ.

We have many special opportunities for you this Christmas season. We gather with other Christians at different churches every Wednesday night and this season for a 30-minute worship service and then a time of fellowship with soup to remind ourselves that we are on this journey with other Christians all around the world. This Wednesday we will be at Christ the King Lutheran Church at 6:00 PM and the following Wednesday we will host it here in our church. We will host a blue Christmas service here at the church on Sunday night December

13 for those for whom this is a difficult holiday season because of a loss that's recent or one that we carry with us.

We have our Jingle jam event that will give us a chance to sing Christmas carols On Sunday December 6 in the evening and that will be a great time to sing many of the Christmas carols that we are going to be focusing on during this series of sermons. I've had several children over the years tell me great Christmas jokes about some of these Christmas carols. I thought I would share a couple of them with you today unless of course you don't want to hear silly Christmas Carol jokes told by kids. Do you want to hear them?

Knock, knock!
Who's there?
Harold.
Harold who?

SLIDE Hark the Harold Angels Sing!

What is a dog's favorite Christmas carol?

SLIDE "Bark, the Harold Angels Sing!"

I get it that those are silly plays on words but they are a reminder that these songs that we sing during this season are loved by people of all ages and there is something about each of them that captures the Christmas story that we want to learn and focus on each week in this series. We begin with one of the most famous Christmas carols that was written by Charles Wesley who is the brother of John Wesley and who together helped launch the Methodist movement in the early 1700s.

- First publication: Charles Wesley published the poem as "Hymn for Christmas Day" in Hymns and Sacred Poems (1739), inspired by Luke 2:8–14 and London church bells, just one year after his conversion experience.
- Original opening: It began with

SLIDE **"Hark, how all the welkin rings/Glory to the King of Kings,"** using "welkin" as an old English term for **the sky or heavens.**

- Early reception: Wesley's ten-stanza hymn originally had a slower, more somber tune and saw limited early traction.
- Opening line change: Evangelist George Whitefield altered the opening line to "Hark! the herald angels sing / Glory to the new-born King" in his 1753 hymnal.
- Shift in perspective: Replacing "welkin" invited singers to join the angels' proclamation rather than only describing the heavens ringing.
- Wesley's reaction: Both Charles and John Wesley generally disliked unauthorized edits to their hymns, though Whitefield's wording eventually became standard.

GRAPHIC **Charles Wesley/Felix Mendelsohn** (one on each side)

- Mendelssohn's melody: In 1840, Felix Mendelssohn composed the tune (from Festgesang) for a festival celebrating the 400th anniversary of the printing press—and originally felt the music fit a secular or martial text rather than a sacred carol.
- Cummings's pairing: In the mid-19th century (around 1855), William H. Cummings adapted Mendelssohn's melody and paired it with Wesley and Whitefield's lyrics, creating the standard carol.

Let's listen to this beautiful version.

VIDEO **Hark the Herald Angels Sing – Reawaken Hymns** (Fade out at 1:01.)

SLIDE
Hark! the herald angels sing
Glory to the newborn King
Peace on earth, and mercy mild
God and sinners reconciled

This opening line of the Christmas Carol captures in many ways how people were struggling in the 1st century, and I think how we

struggle today. There is a desire for a newborn king and peace on earth because the world in which we are living contains so much conflict and sin which I remind you is something that separates us from God and from others. There is this idea of needing to be reconciled because we feel broken sometimes even in our own families. I saw someone on Black Friday and ask them how their Thanksgiving was and they simply shrugged and said, "It was ok. You know. Family."

Here's a few headlines I came across that reminded me of why it is versus from this Christmas Carol are so desperately needed.

- Isolated altercations and shootings: Police in Birmingham investigated a fatal shooting during a fight on Black Friday morning involving a sneaker shop, while officers in Louisville arrested a woman accused of shoplifting at Target and kicking an officer during an arrest.
- Shifting retail crime: According to Insurance Business, overall shoplifting incidents fell 12.4% in 2025 compared to 2024, but organized retail crime (ORC) incidents rose 40%. Loss prevention data also notes early evening (around 4 to 5 p.m.) as a peak window for threatening or violent behavior during the holiday rush.
- Cultural shift away from old-school brawls: Commentary in The Guardian and Fox News highlights how online shopping and extended sales have reduced traditional doorbuster stampedes, even as viral clips and holiday sports crowds draw comparisons to past retail chaos.
- A man in his 20s was shot and killed when a fight broke out on the sidelines at the end of a rivalry high school football game outside of Boston Wednesday night. The deadly skirmish erupted at Chelsea High School just before 8 p.m. as the visiting East Boston High School celebrated its Thanksgiving Eve victory over Chelsea. Two people appeared to be wrestling on the ground on the turf between the football field and sidelines before the shooting.

While some people think these sorts of challenges are new to the human condition, the scriptures tell a different story. Israel was founded as a nation state with its first king around 1020 to 1030 BCE. Up until that point they were a confederation of tribes and God was their king, but the people asked for a king with skin on and God said be careful what you asked for. The people wanted a king like everyone else, and God reluctantly gave them king Saul. He started off OK but then he turned away from God and continue to wage wars and oppress his own people. He was killed in battle, and David becomes the next king. He was seen as the ideal king and reigned for 40 years. David was known as a lover of God, and he wrote many of the psalms. He loved people and served faithfully by doing justice and loving kindness and walking humbly with God.

But money and power and wealth got the best of him, and he would oppress his people and eventually became a murderer and committed sexual assault. David's son king Solomon started off well as the next king but eventually his wisdom left him when he had hundreds of wives and concubines and desired gold and jewels from not only his own people but foreign lands. He oppresses the people of Israel and by the time his reign ends in 930 BCE the people in the northern part of Israel said they would not tolerate any son of king Solomon, and they separated into two kingdoms, North and South. The north which had the sea of Galilee and Nazareth was known as Israel and the South, containing Jerusalem and Bethlehem, was known as Judah. This map will show you what it looked like during the time of the divided Kingdom.

GRAPHIC Divided Kingdoms of Israel and Judah Map

The capital of Israel in the north was Samaria and the capital in the South was Jerusalem. You see the Mediterranean Sea on the left and the sea of Galilee in the very top of the nation of Israel which has the Jordan river emptying out of that down into the Dead Sea in the South. You can see all the other empires around this region which

surrounded them and made them feel very vulnerable.

Each Kingdom will have its own king and if you read 1 and 2 Samuel, 1 and 2 Kings, and 1 and 2 Chronicles you will find a chronicling of all the different kings in both the north and the South. There are 42 kings from the time of king Saul until 586 BCE when the southern Kingdom of Judah was destroyed. When you read about them you will find that some of them did good in the sight of the Lord but most of them did evil in the sight of the Lord. The ratio was 37 evil kings to five good kings and even those five had their issues. The people were constantly disenchanted and disillusioned by their kings because they had hoped for something better but instead got something worse once their kings were in power.

Prophets were the religious leaders who would rise and speak to the kings and do their best to hold them accountable. Most of the kings who did evil, practiced idolatry, followed other gods, and were very greedy and treated people poorly. The disparity between the wealthy and the poor became greater until the prophets would rise and speak God's words about doing justice and loving kindness and walking humbly with God. They would tell the kings that if they would keep doing evil things then they would find their lives would end up in ruin and they also would ruin the nations they ruled. The big empires will gobble you up and destroy you and sometimes the kings would repent but mostly they didn't.

GRAPHIC Captivity of Israel and Judah

Eventually, the Assyrian empire arrives in 722, and they are this redline which destroys the northern nation of Israel and takes people off to be slaves in what is modern day Iran and Iraq. They leave the southern Kingdom alone but make them pay a heavy tax because there was much more wealth in the South. By 586 BCE the Babylonians have conquered the Assyrians, and they arrive led by king nebuchadnezzar and they utterly destroy the southern Kingdom and take people off to

be slaves in Babylon which again is modern day Iran and Iraq. The Persian Empire eventually conquers the Babylonians, and they allow the Jewish people to return along these two different routes in the red and in the green at different times around 536 BCE and then again around 480. The books of Ezra and Nehemiah are written about this return.

GRAPHIC Return from Exile

These historical events are important to remember as we read the scriptures and especially as we think about the Jewish people longing for a Messiah that would return and would be a new kind of king. During the season of advent, we always read from the prophets who are speaking during these challenging times. They would let people know that one day God is going to raise up a new kind of king who is ideal and they began to describe this. These are known as the messianic prophecies in your Bible. They would talk about an anointed king that was sent from God. One of the places we find this is in Isaiah 9 which contains our memory verse for the week. These are verses that we find in many of the Christmas carols that we sing this season. God tells us through the prophet Isaiah what an ideal king looks like.

BIBLE

> 2 **The people who walk in darkness will see a great light.**
> **For those who live in a land of deep darkness, a light will shine.**

BIBLE

> 6 **For a child is born to us, a son is given to us. The government will rest on his shoulders. And he will be called: Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace.**

BIBLE

> 7 **His government and its peace will never end. He will rule with fairness and justice from the throne of his ancestor David for all eternity. The passionate commitment of the Lord of Heaven's**

Armies will make this happen!

This beautiful idea of what should be which is why we have the next part of the Christmas Carol that we sing proclaiming these words. The angelic host and the herald of angels are another way of describing heaven's armies which is why there is joy for all nations and there is triumph in the skies. Generation after generation are waiting for the one that would be called wonderful counselor, mighty God, everlasting father, Prince of peace. He will be the Lord of heaven's armies, leading to the herald angels and the angelic host.

SLIDE **Joyful, all ye nations, rise**
Join the triumph of the skies
With th' angelic host proclaim
Christ is born in Bethlehem
Hark, the herald angels sing
Glory to the newborn King

SLIDE **Hail, the heav'n-born Prince of peace**
Hail! the Son of Righteousness
Light and life to all he brings
Risen with healing in his wings

SLIDE **Mild he lays his glory by**
Born that we no more may die
Born to raise us from of earth
Born to give us second birth
Hark! the herald angels sing
Glory to the newborn King

These verses come right from the text in Luke 2.

BIBLE

8 That night there were shepherds staying in the fields nearby, guarding their flocks of sheep. 9 Suddenly, an angel of the Lord appeared among them, and the radiance of the Lord's glory

surrounded them. They were terrified, [10] but the angel reassured them. "Don't be afraid!" he said. "I bring you good news that will bring great joy to all people. [11] The Savior—yes, the Messiah, the Lord—has been born today in Bethlehem, the city of David! [12] And you will recognize him by this sign: You will find a baby wrapped snugly in strips of cloth, lying in a manger."

BIBLE

[13] Suddenly, the angel was joined by a vast host of others—the armies of heaven—praising God and saying,

[14] "Glory to God in highest heaven,
and peace on earth to those with whom God is pleased."

There is a different kind of king which is going to come that will be different from king Herod who was a horrible king and did cruel things to his people. This Messiah, which means the anointed king, will be one that comes to serve and is found as an infant in a Manger which is a first century feeding through in a 1st century parking garage. This will be a different kind of king than Caesar. This newborn king would bring a sense of hope to a nation that felt oppressed by not just their own kings but also by the political leadership that eventually would kill more than 1,000,000 Jews by the end of that century when they came to conquer Jerusalem.

30 years after the birth of Jesus, his public ministry would begin with his first sermon in Luke 4 where he quotes the same prophet Isaiah.

BIBLE

[18] **"The Spirit of the Lord is upon me,**
for he has anointed me to bring Good News to the poor.
He has sent me to proclaim that captives will be released,
that the blind will see,
that the oppressed will be set free,

19 **and that the time of the Lord's favor has come."**

Jesus comes to be a very different kind of king. His first throne would be a Manger and his crowned at the end of his life would be a crown of thorns. In between he would spend most of his time with people who were broken or alienated from the religious institutions of his day. They were called sinners or even notorious sinners, and they were seen as not worthy. They were seen as small and insignificant and yet Jesus ate dinner with them and healed them and brought a sense of hope during a dark life. Jesus was concerned for the poor and those who felt like they didn't have a place anymore. Jesus was constantly showing mercy and grace when others show judgment and condemnation.

Jesus called people to follow him before he called them to believe in him. He wanted them to know that they belonged with him, and it was only until after three years that he finally invited the disciples to believe. Instead, he called his followers to be part of a new Kingdom that resided in the heart and had already come because of Jesus and his birth. This Kingdom doesn't have earthly boundaries. Jesus called them to conquer not with weapons but with the power of love. He had the audacity to tell people to love their enemies and to pray for those who persecuted them. This message was not what people expected and it made many people angry because they wanted an earthly king that looked like Caesar.

But Jesus came to bring something different and to be a source of hope. I always remind you that Jesus didn't come to be a footnote to any political platform, Republicans or Democrats. Jesus did not come to take sides, but he came to take over as we invite him to live in our hearts. The source of our hope is captured in this stanza in the midst of this Christmas Carol and it's why we are drawn to it every year I believe.

SLIDE Hail, the heav'n-born Prince of peace
Hail! the Son of Righteousness

Light and life to all he brings
Risen with healing in his wings

The source of our hope is Jesus and it's not because he is going to instantaneously make everything OK. Jesus is not going to cure us from that disease that is invading our body miraculously. He will work through doctors and nurses and treatments and eventually bring healing to our hearts and become the prince of peace. What we believe is that Jesus has the capacity to redeem the darkness and to force something good to come from things that feel evil, whether it's people or a body that betrays us. Jesus has called us to live as his light and life in the world because then we are risen with healing in his wings because Jesus brings that this Christmas season.

Jesus is a different kind of king who lays down his life for his subjects and is willing to sacrifice and go to a cross. We easily find ourselves pulled into the Christmas story but it's just as important to remember that the gift that comes at Christmas is one of redemption that is fulfilled on a cross where each one of us who has sinned and fallen short of the glory of God is redeemed and reconciled because of this child.

If we are a follower of Jesus, we are meant to be an ambassador of hope because we have been redeemed and reconciled and we can sing this Christmas Carol with a loud voice. We are called to be the ambassadors of the light and life to all he brings. We are called to be risen with healing in his wings. That doesn't mean that we tell people who are in a dark place that it's all going to be fine so they just have to have enough faith. We don't just pray to make it all better but instead we show up and volunteer to be in the darkness. We offer not to leave people alone but we invite them to be part of a journey together.

GRAPHIC Mary at Thanksgiving Dinner

GRAPHIC John at Thanksgiving Dinner

GRAPHIC Thanksgiving Dinner

I saw this on Thursday when the community Thanksgiving meal was able to return to the La Plata County fairgrounds and server over 1400 people. I talked to several people afterwards who talked about not being alone on Thanksgiving and what a difference it made in their life and in their heart. Some of you in this church made sure there were rolls provided but that was just some bread that led people to sit around a table and to be the presence of Jesus for each other without even knowing it. I know that myself and the pastors in town were excited to jump in and be a part of this meal again because it was started by a pastor decades ago who wanted a place where people would know they were not alone on the holidays. Many of you volunteered and I'm so proud of you and the way you gave of yourself on that day for others.

GRAPHIC Marty Prouty

I think of Marty Prouty, a member of our church and our neighbor right next door who had a massive stroke last weekend. Our neighbor Tom went with Mary to the hospital and made sure she wasn't alone during the ordeal as Marty was eventually taken to Colorado Springs for surgery. This weekend we have a prayer quilt and it's our chance to lay hands on that blanket and pray over it and let Marty know that we will be with him and be thinking about him. It will be a blessing to Mary as she knows this, she is not alone and we get to be the presence of Jesus Christ even if it's from several 100 miles away.

GRAPHIC Roger Haney

Next week on Saturday we will be doing a memorial service for Roger Haney who was one of our pastors and worked with Marcia Heidenreich to set up our caring ministry system that many of you benefit from and are blessed by, including the prayer quilt ministry. He went to the hospital countless numbers of times bringing communion and praying over people, including some of you. He trained many of you to go to the hospital and to sit with people and be comfortable in

moments and times of grief. He in many ways laid the foundation for our caring ministries that we have today and I found myself thinking about him since we had All Saints weekend to begin the month and today, we talk about how it is Jesus meets us in our most difficult moments because he's a different kind of king.

GRAPHIC Native Hope Food Drive

GRAPHIC Operation Christmas Child

Many of you brought food items two weeks ago that we delivered to the Dine Community, the Navajo Nation, so they could have a Thanksgiving meal. Hundreds of you brought shoeboxes that will be delivered in the next few weeks. While none of these might change the world, they bring hope in very unexpected and beautiful ways. Here in the US, there is something like 300 million people who claim to be followers of Jesus. What happens if we all remember the king that we are serving who came to be the Prince of Peace, offering light and life and healing? What does it look like if we are going out every day to be ambassadors of hope? What if we took seriously what it means to push back the darkness?

GRAPHIC Flood Relief

That's why this year our entire Christmas offering which we give away each year will go to flood relief in our community. We have several volunteers in our church who will oversee that fund and take applications and go out and make sure every penny that we give is used to care for people in need. It's why we sing this verse.

SLIDE Christ, by highest heaven adored;
Christ, the everlasting Lord;
late in time behold him come,
offspring of a virgin's womb.

SLIDE Veiled in flesh the Godhead see;
hail th' incarnate Deity,

pleased as us in flesh to dwell,
Jesus, our Emmanuel.
Hark! the herald angels sing,
"Glory to the new born King!"

We live in an age not so different from the nation of Israel that was longing for a new kind of king. We long for a newborn king that will be different and be Emmanuel, God with us. We believe in a God that came in the flesh in this child Jesus, and we know inside it's something that we need. We know we need a different kind of king and a Kingdom that lives within our hearts, so we might live as ambassadors of the hope that king brings to the world.

As we close, would you say the scripture memory verse from the prophet Isaiah with me one more time? I hope you might let these words sit on your heart as you remember the Christmas carols this season which come from words like these.

BIBLE

6 **For a child is born to us, a son is given to us. The government will rest on his shoulders. And he will be called: Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace.**

Let's pray.

SLIDE Prayer

God of hope, On this Thanksgiving weekend as we begin the season of advent, we are thankful for your grace and love and mercy. Thank you for coming to show us the way, the truth, and the life. Help us to remember that the hopes and dreams of Israel found in those prophetic words we read today came to be in Christ and his birth in Bethlehem some 2000 years ago. We pray that you might give us strength to follow Jesus as our king, to serve him as our Lord, and to see him as our Prince of peace. May we be his light and life and healing to others in our world.

I pray that you might help each one of us listening to this message to be aware of those walking in dark places and who need to feel your light. May we show up for them and be your light and hope. We ask these things in the name of Jesus, our Lord and savior. Amen.

November 28-29 Order

1. Countdown
2. Ryan welcomes people, inviting them to stand in body or spirit.
3. Song – "O Come, O Come Emmanuel"
4. Song – "Noel"
5. Jeff welcomes and shares:
    A. QR Code
    B. Connect Card
    C. Invites people to greet each other
6. Intro to Advent
7. Advent Candle Reading
    a. Don and Kari Wright Sat at 5
    b. Thornbladh family Sun at 9
    c. Lyla Mansala and bridge crew Sun at 10:30
    d. Tim and Debbie Smith Sun at 11:55
8. Announcement Video
9. Sermon Video Intro
10. Sermon
11. Prayer
12. Med Moments
13. Offering (Caring Ministries Pamphlet on Holiday Grief)
14. Song – "Hark the Herald Angels Sing"
15. Prayer and Lord's Prayer
16. Care Ministers
17. The Bridge
18. Prayer Quilt for Marty Prouty
19. Closing Prayer