

## Welcome the Seasons Christmas Day

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At some point, you, or someone close to you, made an important decision about coming to Prince of Peace this morning.

For some, the decision was probably unconscious: It's just what you do on Christmas morning! You go to church on Christmas morning!

For others, maybe there was some discussion. Maybe some negotiating! "Aww, gee, do we have to? I'm still in my jammies; I want to play with my new Legos collection!"

But at some point, someone said, "Let's Go!" and you did. And here we are on this Christmas Day, celebrating the birth of Jesus, celebrating the fulfillment of God's promise to send a Savior! Celebrating Jesus, God's "Let's Go!" to the world!

WE SAY, "Let's Go!" TO A LOT OF THINGS.

In the past several weeks, many of us have said "Let's Go!"

"Let's Go!" to shopping, family gatherings, doctors' appointments, parent/teacher conferences, trips to the post office, vacations, vaccinations, friends' homes, moving into a new home, worship.

And that was just last weekend! Saying "Let's Go!" means a lot of things. Excitement, anticipation, wonder. But it also means the possibility of leaving what is safe, secure, and familiar and heading into what's dangerous, risky, and unknown. It may mean going where we're called instead of remaining where we're warm and comfy.

In the ancient story of the birth of Jesus, there's a lot of "Let's Go!" going on...

Zechariah, the priest, the father of John The Baptist goes to the sanctuary to worship and offer incense; the angel, Gabriel goes to meet Zechariah, to announce the impending birth of John, the Baptist. Zechariah's wife, Elizabeth, becomes pregnant, and Gabriel, who seems to be on pregnancy Patrol goes to Mary

announces that she has found favor with God, will conceive in her womb and bear a son, and will give him the name Jesus. Mary, then, goes to visit her cousin Elizabeth. This is no small feat. Mary goes probably to the city of Hebron, about 100 miles away. When Mary and Elizabeth get together, the babies go to some lengths to make Braxton Hicks look like child's play, a kind of pre-natal "Let's Go!" Later, in response to the census, Mary and Joseph say, "Let's Go!" to Bethlehem. When they arrive, as the legend implies, there was no room in the Inn, so the Innkeeper says, "Let's Go!" to the stable.

After Jesus is born and the whole creation is celebrating, the angels say, "Let's Go!" and make the first birth announcement to the most unlikely people on the planet: not to kings and rulers, not to the wealthy or positioned, not to the well-known or well regarded; but just the opposite... the angels say, "Let's Go!" to the shepherds...

[Luke 2:8-14]

"The shepherds were living in the fields, keeping watch over their flock by night. 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, "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." And suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host, praising God and saying, "Glory to God in the highest heaven, and on earth peace among those whom he favors!"

The angels say, "Let's Go!" to the shepherds, simple, lowly shepherds. And then it was their turn to say it.

[Luke 2:15-20]

"Let's go to Bethlehem and see this thing that has taken place, which the Lord has made known to us." Let's hurry and find this Word that is born in Bethlehem and see for ourselves what the Lord has revealed to us." So they ran into the village and found their way to Mary and Joseph. And there was the baby, lying in a feeding trough. Upon seeing this miraculous sign, the shepherds recounted what had just happened. Everyone who heard the shepherds' story was astonished by what they were told.

On this Christmas morning, the only response to the

good news of the birth of Jesus is “Let’s Go!” Which raises some good questions. Where are you going? Where are you going today? This week? Next week? Into the new year? You’re going somewhere, where are you going? And while every going means risk, the promise of Christmas morning is that we have what we need in Jesus. Throughout the entire season of Advent into Christmas and beyond, is that in Jesus we have hope, peace, we have love, and we have joy.

The powerful messages spoken by the ancient prophets, writers, kings and followers of Jesus; centuries ago, still ring true for us!

We have the promise of Hope from Jeremiah:

[Jeremiah 29:11]

“For I know the plans I have for you,” says the Lord. “They are plans for good and not for disaster, to give you a future and a hope. In those days when you pray, I will listen. If you look for me wholeheartedly, you will find me. I will be found by you,” says the Lord. “I will end your captivity and restore your fortunes. I will gather you out of the nations where I sent you and will bring you home again to your own land.”

We have the promise of Peace from the Apostle Paul:

[Romans 8:38-39]

“For I am sure that neither death nor life, nor angels nor rulers, nor things present nor things to come, nor powers, nor height nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord.”

We have the promise of Love from the prophet Isaiah:

[Isaiah 9:2b, 6-7]

“The people who walked in darkness have seen a great light; those who lived in a land of deep darkness— on them light has shined. 6 For a child has been born for us, a son given to us; authority rests upon his shoulders; and he is named Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace. 7 His authority shall grow continually, and there shall be endless peace for the throne of David and his kingdom. He will establish and uphold it with justice and with righteousness from this time onward and forevermore. The zeal of the Lord of hosts will do this.”

We have the promise of joy from the Gospel writer, Luke

[Luke 2:9-11]

The angel of the Lord appeared among them, and the radiance of the Lord’s glory surrounded them. They

were terrified, but the angel reassured them. “Don’t be afraid!” he said. “I bring you good news that will bring great joy to all people. The Savior—yes, the Messiah, the Lord—has been born today in Bethlehem, the city of David!

And so at some point this morning, we said, “Let’s Go!”

And here we are. Celebrating the birth of Jesus, the birth that changes everything. The birth that promises hope, and peace, and love, and joy for all people everywhere, for you, for me, for us.

But we won’t linger here long.

We’ll go back to our homes and almost as quickly as we said, “Let’s Go!” to coming this morning, we’ll say “Let’s Go!” to all of the life that we’ll step into in the days ahead!