HEAVEN

CAME DOWN



AND THE WORD BECAME FLESH
AND DWELT AMONG US.

JOHN 1:14

A CHRISTMAS MESSAGE

THE CHRISTMAS STORY *Retold*

BY CRAIG A. COOPER

CROSSWINDS

Amid the hustle of holiday lights and last-minute shopping, it's easy to forget that Christmas started as a simple, raw story of hope amid chaos. Imagine this: a young couple, Mary and Joseph, facing life's surprises in a world similar to our own, full of uncertainty, government regulations, and unexpected events. But their story unfolds with divine purpose, reminding us that love and redemption can come from the most ordinary, even messy, beginnings.

NAZARETH

An Unexpected Announcement

Let's go back to ancient Nazareth. Mary, a young girl engaged to Joseph, a carpenter, receives a visit from the angel Gabriel. "Do not be afraid, Mary, for you have found favor with God," he says in Luke 1:30. "And behold, you will conceive in your womb and bear a son, and you shall call his name Jesus." Imagine Mary's surprise. She is pregnant by the Holy Spirit? A virgin birth? In a culture where unwed pregnancy could lead to social exile at best, this was no fairy tale.

> *"Behold, I am the servant of the Lord; let it be to me according to your word."*
>
> LUKE 1:38

Still, she responds with humble faith. Joseph, overwhelmed by the news, dreams of an angel reassuring him: "Joseph, son of David, do not fear to take Mary as your wife, for that which is conceived in her is from the Holy Spirit" (Matthew 1:20). He chooses love over doubt, stepping up as a quiet hero.

BETHLEHEM

No Room at the Inn

Fast-forward to the census ordered by Caesar Augustus (Luke 2:1). The couple makes their way to Bethlehem, Joseph's ancestral town. Imagine a tough road trip with no Airbnb in sight. Mary, heavily pregnant, travels along dusty paths. When they arrive, every inn is fully booked. They end up in a stable, surrounded by hay and animals. There, in the flickering light of a fire, Jesus is born. "And she gave birth to her firstborn son and wrapped him in swaddling cloths and laid him in a manger, because there was no place for them in the inn" (Luke 2:7). No sterile hospital, no Instagram announcements; just a vulnerable baby in a feeding trough, the King of kings entering our world incognito.

THE FIELDS

Good News for the Overlooked

Word spreads first to shepherds on the night shift, the blue-collar workers of the era. An angel blasts through the darkness:

> *"Fear not, for behold, I bring you good news of great joy that will be for all the people. For unto you is born this day in the city of David a Savior, who is Christ the Lord."*
>
> LUKE 2:10–11

A heavenly choir erupts in praise: "Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace among those with whom he is pleased!" (Luke 2:14). These outsiders rush to the scene, becoming the first witnesses, proving God's love reaches the overlooked.

FROM THE EAST

Gifts Fit for a King

Then come the Magi, wise men from the East (perhaps sometime later), guided by a star (Matthew 2:1–2). They bring three gifts:



Gold

FIT FOR A KING



Frankincense

USED IN PRIESTLY WORSHIP



Myrrh

FORESHADOWING SACRIFICE

Herod's jealousy sparks danger, but the family flees to Egypt, refugees in their own story.

THE MEANING

A Rescue Mission Begins

This nativity isn't just history; it's an account of divine love and redemption. God, in endless love, sends His Son to heal our brokenness. As John 3:16 reminds us:

> *"For God so loved the world, that he gave his only Son, that whoever believes in him should not perish but have eternal life."*
>
> JOHN 3:16

Jesus' birth marks the beginning of a rescue mission. Jesus delivers us from sin's hold, offering forgiveness and fresh starts. In a relatable way, it's like a cosmic intervention for everyday people: the stressed parent, the lonely soul, the person seeking purpose or success. Mary's surrender, Joseph's faithfulness, and the shepherds' awe; they all show our potential to accept divine interruptions.

THIS CHRISTMAS

Love isn't flashy; it's sacrificial, appearing in stables rather than palaces.

Today, amid global unrest and personal struggles, the Christmas story reveals timeless truth: Love isn't flashy; it's sacrificial, appearing in stables rather than palaces. Redemption isn't earned; it's a gift, transforming ordinary lives into vessels of hope. So, as we unwrap presents, let's unwrap this story and let its light redeem our own lives, one act of love at a time.

Advent Season Events

JOIN US AT CROSSWINDS

NOV 29	Advent Week 1 — *Hope* SUNDAY · 9:00 & 11:00 AM SERVICES
DEC 4	Blue Christmas Service FRIDAY · 6:00 PM
DEC 6	Advent Week 2 — *Love* SUNDAY · 9:00 & 11:00 AM SERVICES
DEC 6	Kids Ministry PJ Party SUNDAY · DURING SUNDAY SERVICES
DEC 13	Advent Week 3 — *Joy* SUNDAY · 9:00 & 11:00 AM SERVICES
DEC 16	Student Ministry Christmas Event WEDNESDAY · 6:00 – 8:30 PM
DEC 17	Christmas Eve Service THURSDAY · 7:00 PM
DEC 20	Advent Week 4 — *Peace* SUNDAY · 9:00 & 11:00 AM SERVICES
DEC 24	Christmas Eve Services THURSDAY · 1:00, 3:00, 5:00 & 7:00 PM
DEC 25	Celebrate Recovery on Christmas Day FRIDAY · 6:00 PM
DEC 27	Virtual Sunday Morning Service JOIN US ONLINE THIS SUNDAY!
JAN 1 2027	Celebrate Recovery on New Year's Day FRIDAY · 6:00 PM

Merry Christmas ✦

FROM OUR FAMILY TO YOURS



CROSSWINDS