

**“SING THE STORY”**

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**As we continue preparing to celebrate the Birth of Christ...**

- My hope is that we can see how so many of the things built inside our Traditions, Legend and Lore point us towards the one who reigns at the center of it all.
- For some this has been challenging, for others it has been enlightening.
- Either way we have taken the time to ask questions around why we do the things we do and what meaning they hold...

**So, with that said... come with me to a dark and starry night...**

- Allow yourself to sit there next to the fire, talking, laughing, just living your life...
- And then, a sound, a song, a proclamation that will forever change the world as you and everyone after knows it.

**Now, Pause. Fast Forward to present day... It's Christmas time...**

- ... And you're in a Church service talking about what that is supposed to mean.

**When we think of Christmas, there are many things that might spring to mind, like delicious food, opening presents and feeling very chilly!**

- One thing that many people look forward to, is singing or hearing Christmas carols.

**“A Christmas carol (also called a Noël, from the French word meaning "Christmas") is a carol (song or hymn) whose lyrics are on the theme of Christmas, and which is traditionally sung on Christmas itself or during the surrounding holiday season.”**

**Question: “Why do we sing carols and where did they come from?”**

- The idea of celebrating in December with special songs has been around for many hundreds of years - even before Jesus was born.
- But of course, they didn't call them Christmas carols back then, because Christmas didn't exist!
- In Roman times, when it was dark and cold, people used to cheer themselves up with a winter festival.
- It was a long, noisy party with lots of wild dancing and singing.

**Def: "The word 'carol' probably comes from the old French word 'carole,' which - from around the mid-1100s - meant a popular circle dance accompanied by singing."**

**After Jesus was born and His teachings began to spread to many parts of the world, His followers wanted to encourage everyone to become Christian...**

- ... But they didn't really approve of all of this noisy winter partying.
- They wanted everyone to celebrate the Christian message properly by singing about the birth of Jesus, so they put new Christian words to the old favorite songs.
- By the late Middle Ages, carols had become more associated with Christmas and the nativity, so went from this to this...

**This tradition grew and by the 19th Century, lots of new carols were written by the church and many of them are the carols we all know today.**

- Ordinary people sang carols in their homes, often to their favorite folk tunes, while in church more formal, professional choirs sang sophisticated Christmas music.
- Many people couldn't read or write, so they learned carols by heart.
- Christmas carols have been sung in towns and villages for hundreds of years, with many places even having their own local songs.

**Just as the songs used to bring people together many hundreds of years ago, singing carols at Christmas is still a popular activity to bring families and friends together over Christmas time.**

**In this way... "Carols are an ancient Tradition that are supposed to both Proclaim and Praise something!"**

- Allow me to show you... Let's go back to that dark and starry night.

*(Vs) Luke 2:8-20 ESV – "And in the same region there were shepherds out in the field, keeping watch over their flock by night..."*

- The first and most obvious message is the joyous pronouncement that the King of Israel has been born. "He's here!" ... "He's arrived!" ... "He has Happened!"
- But notice, the reference which follows shortly after the announcement to those shepherds....
- Luke stated that when the shepherds returned from seeing the newborn Jesus, they were...

*(Vs) Luke 2:17-20 ESV – "And when they saw it, they made known the saying that had been told them concerning this child. And all who heard it wondered at what the shepherds told them. But Mary treasured up all these things, pondering them in her heart. And the shepherds returned, glorifying and praising God for all they had heard and seen, as it had been told them."*

**“The Shepherds had now joined the angels and were proclaiming to those who listened, through their Singing and Praising of God, the King has come!” - Perhaps even Mary’s “treasuring” was a form of praise?**

**The Psalms often instruct believers to sing praises to God.**

- For example, (Vs) Psalm 47:6-7 - *“Sing praises to God, sing praises! Sing praises to our King, sing praises! For God is the King of all the earth; sing praises with understanding.”*
- Also, James instructed believers... (Vs) James 5:13 - *“Is anyone among you suffering? Let him pray. Is anyone cheerful? Let him sing praise.”*
- The Angels voices aren’t just proclaiming Jesus has arrived, they are praising He who has come to be, and always has been.

**The Angels... “... sang the story out, for they could not stop to tell it in heavy prose. They sang, “Glory to God on high, and on earth peace, good will towards men.” I think they sang it with gladness in their eyes; with their hearts burning with love, and with breasts as full of joy as if the good news to man had been good news to themselves.” - Charles Spurgeon**

**When we sing true Christmas Carols...**

- We are following the example of the angels, announcing the good news that Jesus Christ was born, not just for Israel, but for all mankind.

**“We as God’s people are still supposed to Sing the Story Out!”**

- Proclaiming and praising the One who came for us.

**This is our message, our song and our proclamation!**

- We are now the voices proclaiming!
- “He’s here!” ... “He’s arrived!” ... “He has Happened!”

**And it’s always been He that changes everything...**

- He who Restores those that feel alone and without relationship.
- He who Redeems those who feel worthless.
- He who Reaches those who feel abandoned.
- He who Remembers those who feel forgotten.

**This year, as in years in the past, we as a Church take time to learn about and then give to some of the places, outside our walls, where God is doing these very things.**

- His Heart Foundation is one of those places... They Sing the Story out!



To learn more visit  
**[www.HisHeartFoundation.org](http://www.HisHeartFoundation.org)**

The mission of His Heart Foundation is "Serving local churches to minister in the areas of mental wellness, through prevention, intervention, and restoration. Transforming one life at a time." To learn more about this awesome organization visit **[www.hisheartfoundation.org](http://www.hisheartfoundation.org)**.

**Other resources of His Heart are:**

**Mental Health Academy**  
[www.mentalhealth.academy](http://www.mentalhealth.academy)

**Mental Health Tips with Angela Howard (on YouTube):**  
<https://bit.ly/2ssOvZR>