

PART I - ADVENT

1 Chorus: In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. The same was in the beginning with God. All things were made through him; and without him was not anything made that hath been made. In him was life; and the life was the light of men. And the light shineth in the darkness; and the darkness apprehended it not. And let all the angels of God worship him. I will be to him a Father, and he shall be to me a Son.

The Announcement of the Birth of John the Baptist

2 Evangelist: There was in the days of Herod, king of Judæa, a certain priest named Zacharias, of the course of Abijah: and he had a wife of the daughters of Aaron, and her name was Elisabeth. And they were both righteous before God, walking in all the commandments and ordinances of the Lord blameless. And they had no child, because that Elisabeth was barren, and they both were now well stricken in years. Now it came to pass, while he executed the priest's office before God in the order of his course, according to the custom of the priest's office, his lot was to enter into the temple of the Lord and burn incense. And the whole multitude of the people were praying without at the hour of incense. And there appeared unto him an angel of the Lord standing on the right side of the altar of incense. And Zacharias was troubled when he saw him, and fear fell upon him. But the angel said unto him:

3 Angel: Fear not, Zacharias: because thy supplication is heard, and thy wife Elisabeth shall bear thee a son, and thou shalt call his name John. And thou shalt have joy and gladness; and many shall rejoice at his birth. For he shall be great in the sight of the Lord, and he shall drink no wine nor strong drink; and he shall be filled with the Holy Spirit, even from his mother's womb. And many of the children of Israel shall he turn unto the Lord their God. And he shall go before his face in the spirit and power of Elijah, to turn the hearts of the fathers to the children, and the disobedient to walk in the wisdom of the just; to make ready for the Lord a people prepared for him.

4 Evangelist: And Zacharias said unto the angel:

5 Zacharias: Whereby shall I know this? for I am an old man, and my wife well stricken in years.

6 Evangelist: And the angel answering said unto him:

7 Angel: I am Gabriel, that stand in the presence of God; and I was sent to speak unto thee, and to bring thee these good tidings. And behold, thou shalt be silent and not able to speak, until the day that these things shall come to pass, because thou believedst not my words, which shall be fulfilled in their season.

8 Evangelist: And the people were waiting for Zacharias, and they marvelled while he tarried in the temple. And when he came out, he could not speak unto them: and they perceived that he had seen a vision in the temple: and he continued making signs unto them, and remained dumb. And it came to pass, when the days of his ministration were fulfilled, he departed unto his house.

And after these days Elisabeth his wife conceived; and she hid herself five months, saying:

9 Elisabeth: Thus hath the Lord done unto me in the days wherein he looked upon me, to take away my reproach among men.

**10 Chorale: 1. O Heiland, reiß die Himmel auf! Herab, herab vom Himmel lauf! Reiß ab vom Himmel Tor und Tür, reiß ab, wo Schloss und Riegel für!
2. Hier leiden wir die größte Not, vor Augen steht der ewig Tod. Ach komm, führ uns mit starker Hand vom Elend zu dem Vaterland!
(English Hymn "O Christ Come Back To Save Your Folk" by Calvin Seerveld)**

The announcement of the birth of Jesus

11 Evangelist: Now the birth of Jesus Christ was on this wise: Now in the sixth month the angel Gabriel was sent from God unto a city of Galilee, named Nazareth,

to a virgin betrothed to a man whose name was Joseph, of the house of David; and the virgin's name was Mary. And he came in unto her, and said:

12 Angel: Hail, thou that art highly favored, the Lord is with thee.

13 Evangelist: But she was greatly troubled at the saying, and cast in her mind what manner of salutation this might be. And the angel said unto her:

14 Angel: Fear not, Mary: for thou hast found favor with God. And behold, thou shalt conceive in thy womb, and bring forth a son, and shalt call his name JESUS. He shall be great, and shall be called the Son of the Most High: and the Lord God shall give unto him the throne of his father David: and he shall reign over the house of Jacob for ever; and of his kingdom there shall be no end..

15 Evangelist: And Mary said unto the angel:

16 Mary: How shall this be, seeing I know not a man?

17 Evangelist: And the angel answered and said unto her:

18 Angel: The Holy Spirit shall come upon thee, and the power of the Most High shall overshadow thee: wherefore also the holy thing which is begotten shall be called the Son of God. And behold, Elisabeth thy kinswoman, she also hath conceived a son in her old age; and this is the sixth month with her that was called barren. For no word from God shall be void of power.

19 Evangelist: And Mary said:

20 Mary: Behold, the handmaid of the Lord; be it unto me according to thy word.

**21 Chorale: 1. Kündet allen in der Not: Fasset Mut und habt Vertrauen!
Bald wird kommen unser Gott; herrlich werdet ihr ihn schauen. Allen
Menschen wird zuteil Gottes Heil.**

2. Gott naht sich mit neuer Huld, dass wir uns zu ihm bekehren; er wird lösen unsere Schuld, ewig soll der Friede währen. Allen Menschen wird zuteil Gottes Heil. (Unfortunately, there is no English version.)

The Visitation

22 Evangelist: And the angel departed from her. And Joseph her husband, being a righteous man, and not willing to make her a public example, was minded to put her away privily. But when he thought on these things, behold, an angel of the Lord appeared unto him in a dream, saying:

23 Angel: Joseph, thou son of David, fear not to take unto thee Mary thy wife: for that which is conceived in her is of the Holy Spirit. And she shall bring forth a son; and thou shalt call his name JESUS; for it is he that shall save his people from their sins. Now all this is come to pass, that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by the Lord through the prophet, saying, Behold, the virgin shall be with child, and shall bring forth a son, and they shall call his name Immanuel; which is, being interpreted, God with us.

24 Evangelist: And Joseph arose from his sleep, and did as the angel of the Lord commanded him, and took unto him his wife; 25 and knew her not till she had brought forth a son. And Mary arose in these days and went into the hill country with haste, into a city of Judah; and entered into the house of Zacharias and saluted Elisabeth. And it came to pass, when Elisabeth heard the salutation of Mary, the babe leaped in her womb; and Elisabeth was filled with the Holy Spirit; and she lifted up her voice with a loud cry, and said:

25 Elisabeth: Blessed art thou among women, and blessed is the fruit of thy womb. And whence is this to me, that the mother of my Lord should come unto me? For behold, when the voice of thy salutation came into mine ears, the babe leaped in my womb for joy. And blessed is she that believed; for there shall be a fulfilment of the things which have been spoken to her from the Lord.

26 Evangelist: And Mary said:

27 Mary (Magnificat): My soul doth magnify the Lord, and my spirit hath rejoiced in God my Saviour. For he hath looked upon the low estate of his handmaid: For behold, from henceforth all generations shall call me blessed. For he that is mighty hath done to me great things; and holy is his name. And his mercy is unto generations and generations on them that fear him. He hath showed strength with his arm; he hath scattered the proud in the imagination of their heart. He hath put down princes from their thrones, and hath exalted them of low degree. The hungry he hath filled with good things; and the rich he hath sent empty away. He hath given help to Israel his servant, that he might remember mercy as he spake unto our fathers toward Abraham and his seed for ever.

28 Chorale: 1. "Tauet Himmel, den Gerechten, Wolken regnet ihn herab," rief das Volk in bangen Nächten, dem Gott die Verheißung gab, einst den Retter selbst zu sehen und zum Himmel einzugehen; denn verschlossen war das Tor, bis der Heiland trat hervor.

2. Und als Mensch zu Menschenkindern kommt des ewgen Vaters Sohn; Licht und Heil bringt er den Sündern, Frieden von des Himmels Thron. Erde jauchze auf in Wonne bei dem Strahl der neuen Sonne: Bald erfüllet ist die Zeit. Macht ihm euer Herz bereit!

(Unfortunately, there is no English version.)

The Birth of John the Baptist

29 Evangelist: And Mary abode with her about three months, and returned unto her house. Now Elisabeth's time was fulfilled that she should be delivered; and she brought forth a son. And her neighbors and her kinsfolk heard that the Lord had magnified his mercy towards her; and they rejoiced with her. And it came to pass on the eighth day, that they came to circumcise the child; and they would have called him Zacharias, after the name of his father. And his mother answered and said:

30 Elisabeth: Not so; but he shall be called John.

31 Evangelist: And they said unto her:

32 Chorus: There is none of thy kindred that is called by this name.

33 Evangelist: And they made signs to his father, what he would have him called. And he asked for a writing tablet, and wrote, saying, His name is John. And they marvelled all. And his mouth was opened immediately, and his tongue loosed, and he spake, filled with the Holy Spirit, blessing God prophesying:

34 Zacharias (Benedictus): Blessed be the Lord, the God of Israel; for he hath visited and wrought redemption for his people, and hath raised up a horn of salvation for us in the house of his servant David as he spake by the mouth of his holy prophets that have been from of old, salvation from our enemies, and from the hand of all that hate us; to show mercy towards our fathers, and to remember his holy covenant; the oath which he sware unto Abraham our father, to grant unto us that we being delivered out of the hand of our enemies should serve him without fear, in holiness and righteousness before him all our days. Yea and thou, child, shalt be called the prophet of the Most High: For thou shalt go before the face of the Lord to make ready his ways; to give knowledge of salvation unto his people in the remission of their sins, because of the tender mercy of our God, whereby the dayspring from on high shall visit us, to shine upon them that sit in darkness and the shadow of death; to guide our feet into the way of peace.

35 Evangelist: And fear came on all that dwelt round about them: and all these sayings were noised abroad throughout all the hill country of Judæa. And all that heard them laid them up in their heart, saying:

36 Chorus: What then shall this child be?

37 Evangelist: For the hand of the Lord was with him. And the child grew, and waxed strong in spirit, and was in the deserts till the day of his showing unto Israel.

38 Chorus: There came a man, sent from God, whose name was John. The same came for witness, that he might bear witness of the light, that all might believe through him. He was not the light, but came that he might bear witness of the light. His voice crying in the wilderness: „*Make ye ready the way of the Lord, make his paths straight! There cometh after me he that is mightier than I, the latchet of whose shoes I am not worthy to stoop down and unloose. I baptized you in water; but he shall baptize you in the Holy Spirit.*“ For the law was given through Moses; grace and truth came through Jesus Christ. For of his fulness we all received, and grace for grace.

PART II - CHRISTMAS

39 Chorale: 1. Es ist ein Ros entsprungen aus einer Wurzel zart; wie uns die Alten sungen, von Jesse kam die Art, und hat ein Blümlein bracht mitten im kalten Winter wohl zu der halben Nacht. 2. Das Röslein, das ich meine, davon Jesaja sagt, ist Maria die Reine, die uns das Blümlein bracht. Aus Gottes ewgem Rat hat sie ein Kind geboren und blieb doch reine Magd.

(1. Lo, how a Rose e'er blooming from tender stem hath sprung! Of Jesse's lineage coming, as men of old have sung. It came, a floweret bright, amid the cold of winter, when half spent was the night. 2. Isaiah 'twas foretold it, the Rose I have in mind; Mary we behold it, the Virgin Mother kind. To show God's love aright, she bore to us a Savior, when half spent was the night.)

The Birth of Jesus

40 Evangelist: Now it came to pass in those days, there went out a decree from Cæsar Augustus, that all the world should be enrolled. This was the first enrolment made when Quirinius was governor of Syria. And all went to enrol themselves, every one to his own city. And Joseph also went up from Galilee, out of the city of Nazareth, into Judæa, to the city of David, which is called Bethlehem, because he was of the house and family of David; to enrol himself with Mary, who was betrothed to him, being great with child. And it came to pass, while they were there, the days were fulfilled that she should be delivered. And she brought forth her firstborn son; and she wrapped him in swaddling clothes, and laid him in a manger, because there was no room for them in the inn.

41 Chorus: There was the true light, even the light which lighteth every man, coming into the world. *He was in the world, and the world was made through him, and the world knew him not. He came unto his own, and they that were his own received him not. But as many as received him, to them gave he the right to become children of God, even to them that believe on his name: who was born not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God. And the Word became flesh, and dwelt among us and we beheld his glory, glory as of the only begotten from the Father, full of grace and truth.*

42 Evangelist: And there were shepherds in the same country abiding in the field, and keeping watch by night over their flock. And an angel of the Lord stood by them, and the glory of the Lord shone round about them: and they were sore afraid. And the angel said unto them:

43 Angel: Be not afraid; for behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy which shall be to all the people: for there is born to you this day in the city of David a Saviour, who is Christ the Lord. And this is the sign unto you: Ye shall find a babe wrapped in swaddling clothes, and lying in a manger.

44 Evangelist: And suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host praising God, and saying:

45 Chorus: **Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace among men in whom he is well pleased.**

46 Evangelist: And it came to pass, when the angels went away from them into heaven, the shepherds said one to another:

47 Shepherds: **Let us now go even unto Bethlehem, and see this thing that is come to pass, which the Lord hath made known unto us.**

48 Evangelist: And they came with haste, and found both Mary and Joseph, and the babe lying in the manger. And when they saw it, they made known concerning the saying which was spoken to them about this child.

And all that heard it wondered at the things which were spoken unto them by the shepherds. But Mary kept all these sayings, pondering them in her heart. And the shepherds returned, glorifying and praising God for all the things that they had heard and seen, even as it was spoken unto them.

49 Chorale: 1. Zu Bethlehem geboren ist uns ein Kindelein. Das hab ich auserkoren, sein eigen will ich sein. Eja, eja, sein eigen will ich sein.

2. In seine Lieb versenken will ich mich ganz hinab; mein Herz will ich ihm schenken und alles, was ich hab. Eja, eja, und alles, was ich hab.

(Unfortunately, there is no English version.)

The Presentation in the Temple

50 Evangelist: And when eight days were fulfilled for circumcising him, his name was called JESUS, which was so called by the angel before he was conceived in the womb. And when the days of their purification according to the law of Moses were fulfilled, they brought him up to Jerusalem, to present him to the Lord as it is written in the law of the Lord, Every male that openeth the womb shall be called holy to the Lord, and to offer a sacrifice according to that which is said in the law of the Lord, A pair of turtledoves, or two young pigeons. And behold, there was a man in Jerusalem, whose name was Simeon; and this man was righteous and devout, looking for the consolation of Israel: and the Holy Spirit was upon him. And it had been revealed unto him by the Holy Spirit, that he should not see death, before he had seen the Lord's Christ. And he came in the Spirit into the temple: and when the parents brought in the child Jesus, that they might do concerning him after the custom of the law, then he received him into his arms, and blessed God, and said:

51 Simeon: Now lettest thou thy servant depart, Lord, according to thy word, in peace; for mine eyes have seen thy salvation, which thou hast prepared before the face of all peoples; a light for revelation to the Gentiles, and the glory of thy people Israel.

52 Evangelist: And his father and his mother were marvelling at the things which were spoken concerning him; and Simeon blessed them, and said unto Mary his mother:

53 Simeon: Behold, this child is set for the falling and the rising of many in Israel; and for a sign which is spoken against; yea and a sword shall pierce through thine own soul; that thoughts out of many hearts may be revealed.

54 Evangelist: And there was one Anna, a prophetess, the daughter of Phanuel, of the tribe of Asher (she was of a great age, having lived with a husband seven years from her virginity, and she had been a widow even unto fourscore and four years), who departed not from the temple, worshipping with fastings and supplications night and day. And coming up at that very hour she gave thanks unto God, and spake of him to all them that were looking for the redemption of Jerusalem.

55 Chorale: 1. Nun freut auch ihr Christen, singet Jubellieder und kommet, o kommet nach Bethlehem. Christus der Heiland stieg zu uns hernieder. Kommt, lasset uns anbeten den König, den Herrn.

2. Der Abglanz des Vaters, Herr der Herren alle, ist heute erschienen in unserm Fleisch: Gott ist geboren als ein Kind im Stalle. Kommt, lasset uns anbeten den König, den Herrn.

(1 O come, all ye faithful, joyful and triumphant, O come ye, O come ye to Bethlehem; come and behold him, born the King of angels; O come, let us adore him, Christ, the Lord! 2 Yea, Lord, we greet thee, born this happy morning, Jesus, to thee be all glory given; Word of the Father, now in flesh appearing; O come, let us adore him, Christ, the Lord!)

The Visit of the Magi

56 Evangelist: Now when Jesus was born in Bethlehem of Judæa in the days of Herod the king, behold, Wise-men from the east came to Jerusalem, saying:

57 The Three Magi: Where is he that is born King of the Jews? For we saw his star in the east, and are come to worship him.

58 Evangelist: And when Herod the king heard it, he was troubled, and all Jerusalem with him. And gathering together all the chief priests and scribes of the people, he inquired of them where the Christ should be born. And they said unto him:

59 High priests and scribes: In Bethlehem of Judæa: for thus it is written through the prophet, and thou Bethlehem, land of Judah, art in no wise least among the princes of Judah: For out of thee shall come forth a governor, who shall be shepherd of my people Israel.

60 Evangelist: Then Herod privily called the Wise-men, and learned of them exactly what time the star appeared. And he sent them to Bethlehem, and said:

61 Herod: Go and search out exactly concerning the young child; and when ye have found him, bring me word, that I also may come and worship him.

62 Chorale: 1. Ein Stern mit hellem Brande drei König rief geschwind aus fernem Morgenlande zum neugebornen Kind; sie brachten reichen Sold und opferten mit Freuden ihm Weihrauch, Myrrhen, Gold.

2. Anbetend sinken nieder vor ihm die Großen all - ihm dienen freudig wieder die Völker allzumal. O König, höchstes Gut! Nimm hin auch unsere Liebe, Leib, Seele, Werk und Blut.

(The melody is well known: It is the same as No. 39. Unfortunately, there is no English version of these verses.)

The Flight to Egypt

63 Evangelist: And they, having heard the king, went their way; and lo, the star, which they saw in the east, went before them, till it came and stood over where the young child was. And when they saw the star, they rejoiced with exceeding great joy. And they came into the house and saw the young child with Mary his mother; and they fell down and worshipped him; and opening their treasures they offered unto him gifts, gold and frankincense and myrrh. And being warned of God in a dream that they should not return to Herod, they departed into their own country another way. Now when they were departed, behold, an angel of the Lord appeareth to Joseph in a dream, saying:

64 Angel: Arise and take the young child and his mother, and flee into Egypt, and be thou there until I tell thee: for Herod will seek the young child to destroy him.

65 *Evangelist: And he arose and took the young child and his mother by night, and departed into Egypt; and was there until the death of Herod: that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by the Lord through the prophet, saying, Out of Egypt did I call my son. Then Herod, when he saw that he was mocked of the Wise-men, was exceeding wroth, and sent forth, and slew all the male children that were in Bethlehem, and in all the borders thereof, from two years old and under, according to the time which he had exactly learned of the Wise-men. Then was fulfilled that which was spoken through Jeremiah the prophet, saying:*

66 The women of Rama: A voice was heard in Ramah, weeping and great mourning, Rachel weeping for her children; and she would not be comforted, because they are not.

67 *Evangelist: But when Herod was dead, behold, an angel of the Lord appeareth in a dream to Joseph in Egypt, saying:*

68 *Angel: Arise and take the young child and his mother, and go into the land of Israel: for they are dead that sought the young child's life.*

69 *Evangelist: And he arose and took the young child and his mother, and came into the land of Israel. But when he heard that Archelaus was reigning over Judæa in the room of his father Herod, he was afraid to go thither; and being warned of God in a dream, he withdrew into the parts of Galilee, and came and dwelt in a city called Nazareth; that it might be fulfilled which was spoken through the prophets, that he should be called a Nazarene.*

70 Chorus: And Jesus advanced in wisdom and stature, and in favor with God and men. No man hath seen God at any time; the only begotten Son, who is in the bosom of the Father, he hath declared him. Christus baptizeth in the Holy Spirit, and his life is the light of men. And the light shineth in the darkness; and the darkness apprehended it not. And let all the angels of God worship him. I will be to him a Father, and he shall be to me a Son.