

"And Hear the Angels Sing"

A Christmas Hymn-Sing of Stories, Scripture, Music

- This Hymn-Sing can be used in any non-profit setting or family Christmas gathering.
- Two of the scripture readings are from the *Book of Mormon*.
- The hymns are from the 1985 LDS Hymn Book
- Most of the hymns are intended to be sung by the audience or family group to maximize their participation. If the program needs to be shorter or longer, fewer or most relevant verses of hymns can be sung and stories could be edited for length or others found in the Church's online magazines
- The story references are mostly from the "Mormon Journal" sections (Jan 1975- Dec 1999) of the *Ensign* magazine or the "Latter-day Saint Voices" sections (Jan 2000-Dec 2020) of the *Ensign* or (now) *Liahona* magazines of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints (aka LDS or Mormon) at https://www.churchofjesuschrist.org/study/magazines/ensign-19712020?lang=eng
- It is recommended that a printed or visual outline of the program be handed out or posted so the audience can anticipate the music
- In the readings, please remember to reference the title & author of the story / poem / scripture / music
- Art work can be used to enhance the presentation

"And Hear the Angels Sing"

(compiled by SMSmith 1996, updated & epublished 2025)

MUSIC: "Angels We Have Heard on High" • 1985 LDS Hymn Book–203, vv. 1,2,3

Reader 1: Edmund H. Sears, a Unitarian minister of the mid-1800's wrote a five-verse poem that he titled: "Peace on Earth" where he expressed his longing for the day when peace and goodwill would envelop the world. It soon became the popular carol: "It Came Upon a Midnight Clear" where we sing his plea for peoples everywhere to hear the angels sing, even as shepherds did upon a star-lit hillside—over 2000 years ago. Our LDS hymn #207 contains only verses 1, 2, and 5 of his poem. We will begin with verses 1 & 2.

MUSIC: "It Came Upon a Midnight Clear" • 1985 LDS Hymn Book–207, vv. 1,2

Reader 2: Verses 3 & 4 of Edmund Sears' "Peace on Earth"
[See p. 4 herein for vv. 3 & 4; may softly underscore with the music.]

Reader 3: Wars and troubles still rage, and yet in every corner of our world, there are those who clearly hear the angels sing—men, women, and children whose deeds of peace and goodwill reflect the Savior's love and mission—faithful servants who understand that what they do for others, they do also for their Savior born so long ago in Bethlehem—latter-day angels whose songs are sung in the Christ-like deeds of everyday.

Reader 1: "Loving the Savior: Our Christmas Key" by Esther Jane Ward, (*Ensign*, Dec 1980, p. 49)

MUSIC: "Oh, Come All Ye Faithful" • 1985 LDS Hymn Book–202, vv. 1,2

Reader 2: Isaiah 9:6: For unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given: and the government shall be upon his shoulder: and his name shall be called Wonderful, Counsellor, The mighty God, The everlasting Father, The Prince of Peace.

Luke 2:6-7: And so it was, that, while they were there, the days were accomplished that she should be delivered. And she brought forth her firstborn son, and wrapped him in swaddling clothes, and laid him in a manger; because there was no room for them in the inns.

MUSIC: "Once Within a Lowly Stable" • Children's Songbook–41, vv. 1,2

Reader 3: Luke 2:8-14: And there were in the same country shepherds abiding in the field, keeping watch over their flock by night. And, lo, the angel of the Lord came upon them, and the glory of the Lord shone round about them: and they were sore afraid. And the angel said unto them, Fear not: for, behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy, which shall be to all people. For unto you is born this day in the city of David a Saviour, which is Christ the Lord. And this *shall be* a sign unto you; Ye shall find the babe wrapped in swaddling clothes, 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, and on earth peace, good will toward men.

MUSIC: "Far, Far Away on Judea's Plains" • 1985 LDS Hymn Book–212, vv. 1, 2,3,4

Reader 1: 1 Nephi 11:18-21: And [the angel] said unto me: Behold, the virgin whom thou seest is the mother of the Son of God, after the manner of the flesh. And it came to pass that I beheld that she was carried away in the Spirit; and after she had been carried away in the Spirit for the space of a time the angel spake unto me, saying: Look! And I looked and beheld the virgin again, bearing a child in her arms. And the angel said unto me: Behold the Lamb of God, yea, even the Son of the Eternal Father!

MUSIC: "O Little Town of Bethlehem" • 1985 LDS Hymn Book–208, vv. 2,3

Reader 2: "Keeping Baby Warm" by Lynda H. Laughlin
[Story can be found at myfavoritechristmasstories.blogspot.com/2009/06/keeping-baby-warm.html or with a compound online search of story title & author.]

MUSIC: "Silent Night, Holy Night" • 1985 LDS Hymn Book–204, vv. 1,2,3

Reader 3: An Angel in Deed by Amanda Rowe, *Ensign*, Dec 1998, p. 58-9

MUSIC: "Hark! the Herald Angels Sing" • 1985 LDS Hymn Book–209, vv. 1,2

Reader 1: "Two Mounties & the Christmas Spirit" by W. LaMar Palmer, Ensign, Dec 1982, p. 6

MUSIC: "I Heard the Bells on Christmas Day" • 1985 LDS Hymn Book–214, vv. 1,2,3,4,5

Reader 2: "The Gifts of Christmas" by John A. Widtsoe, *Ensign*, Dec 1972 (p. 4 herein)

MUSIC: "Joy to the World" • 1985 LDS Hymn Book–201, vv. 1,4

Reader 3: Poem: "Merry Christmas" by Howard Thurmas (from a Quaker calendar) – New Era, Dec 1980, p. 51 (See https://www.churchofjesuschrist.org/study/magazines/for-the-strength-of-youth/new-era-19712020?lang=eng)

MUSIC: "With Wondering Awe" • 1985 LDS Hymn Book–210, vv. 3,4

Reader 1: The 5th and last verse of Edmund Sears poem, "Peace on Earth" that became our hymn "It Came Upon a Midnight Clear" anticipated our day:
(Sing solo of Hymn #207, v. 3)

Other possible or substitute stories:

Reader: "Alycia's Angel" by Brenda Tanner Peterson • Ensign, Dec 1993, p. 45

Reader: "The Angel on the Ammo Can" by John L. Meisenbach • Ensign, Dec 1991, p. 63

Reader: Poem - "If Ye would Hear" by Dora Greenwood, (The Oxford Book of Carols)

Peace on Earth

by
Edmund H. Sears

(The other three verses---1, 2, & 5---are found in LDS Hymnal "It Came Upon a Midnight Clear" # 207)

Yet with the woes of sin and strife
The world has suffered long;
Beneath the angel-strain have rolled
Two thousand years of wrong;
And man, at war with man, hears not
The love song which they bring;
O hush the noise, ye men of strife,
And hear the angels sing!

And ye, beneath life's crushing load,
Whose forms are bending low,
Who toil along the climbing way
With painful steps and slow,
Look now, for glad and golden hours
Come swiftly on the wing:
O rest beside the weary road,
And hear the angels sing!

(ref: *Our Latter-day Hymns: The Stories and the Messages*, by Karen Lynn Davidson, p. 219)

The Gifts of Christmas by John A. Widtsoe

... Our first gift at Christmas should be to the Lord; next to the friend or stranger by our gate; then, surcharged with the effulgence from such giving, we would enhance the value of our gifts to our very own. ... How can we give to the Lord? What shall we give to him? Every kind word to our own, every help given them, is as a gift to God, whose chief concern is the welfare of his children. Every gentle deed to our neighbor, every kindness to the poor and suffering, is a gift to the Lord, before whom all mankind are equal. Every conformity to the Lord's plan of salvation—and this is of first importance—is a direct gift to God, for thereby we fit ourselves more nearly for our divinely planned destiny (Ensign, Dec 1972).