**Christmas Program**

**“We Are Forever Families Because of Christ”**

Opening Hymn: “Hark the Herald Angels Sing”, Hymn #209

Sacrament Hymn: “God Loved Us So He Sent His Son”, (Hymn #187)

**PROGRAM:**

**SONG**: **Primary** - “Could I Hold the Baby”

**Speaker #1:**

Before we came to earth, we lived in Heaven with our Heavenly Parents. We were and are a great family. Jesus was the firstborn of all of us, our elder brother. We knew him well and we loved him dearly. I’m sure he taught us many things as he learned and progressed before us. Part of our Heavenly Father’s plan for us was that our brother would atone for us so that we could return and be a forever family. Jesus agreed.

**SONG**: Congregation – “Angels We Have Heard on High”, Hymn #203

**Speaker #2:**

Jesus, the Son of God, was going to come to the earth. He would experience mortality just like the rest of us. This meant that His Heavenly Father had prepared a special family to raise Jesus. His mother would be a beautiful, deeply faithful young woman.

Nephi records in 1 Nephi 11:14:

**“**And it came to pass that I saw the heavens open; and an angel came down and stood before me; and he said unto me: Nephi, what beholdest thou?

And I said unto him: A virgin, most beautiful and fair above all other virgins….

And he 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.”

Jesus, the Son of God, would have a mother on earth who would feed him, love him, and teach him about God.

**SONG**: “Mary’s Lullaby” Children’s Songbook, #44 – female solo

**Speaker #3:**

Heavenly Father wanted a family for his beloved Son to live in on the earth. That meant that he also needed a father. Strong and faithful, Joseph was chosen to be that father. Baby Jesus needed a father who would protect him, love his mother, and teach him. The scriptures tell us a bit about this wonderful man:

Matthew 1:19:

Then Joseph her husband, being a just *man,* and not willing to make her a publick example, was minded to put her away privily.

But while he thought on these things, behold, the angel of the Lord appeared unto him in a dream, saying, 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 Ghost.

And she shall bring forth a son, and thou shalt call his name JESUS: for he shall save his people from their sins.

Then Joseph being raised from sleep did as the angel of the Lord had bidden him, and took unto him his wife:

And knew her not till she had brought forth her firstborn son: and he called his name JESUS.”

Joseph was a just man—a man who did what the Lord told him to do. He would be the earthly father of the Son of God.

**SONG**: “When Joseph Went to Bethlehem” Children’s Songbook, #38 – male solo

**SONG**: Congregation “Away in a Manger”, Hymn #206

**Speaker #1:**

Jesus came to earth to a family—a family who waited for him and loved him. That night when he was born, a little family began—a family that would change the world.

What were the thoughts of Mary as she realized she was now a mother—the mother of the Son of God? As she wrapped him carefully and held him close, did she think of her new role of loving mother?

What were the thoughts of Joseph as he realized he was now a father—the earthly father of the Son of God? As he stood watch over his little family, did he think of his responsibilities as the father and protector and provider of these precious souls?

Jesus was safe and warm with his family. The Savior of the World who would bring the greatest love to the world had his first experience of mortality in the loving arms of his earthly parents. He felt love.

Luke 2:4

“And Joseph also went up from Galilee, out of the city of Nazareth, into Judæa, unto the city of David, which is called Bethlehem; (because he was of the house and lineage of David:)

To be taxed with Mary his espoused wife, being great with child.

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 inn.

And it came to pass, as the angels were gone away from them into heaven, the shepherds said one to another, Let us now go even unto Bethlehem, and see this thing which is come to pass, which the Lord hath made known unto us.

And they came with haste, and found Mary, and Joseph, and the babe lying in a manger.

And when they had seen *it,* they made known abroad the saying which was told them concerning this child.

And all they that heard *it* wondered at those things which were told them by the shepherds.

But Mary kept all these things, and pondered *them* in her heart.”

**SONG**: “Candlelight Carol” – **Choir**

**Speaker #2:**

Christ came to earth to atone for each of us. Because of his birth, life, and death, each of us can be cleansed from sin. Because of this, we can be with our families forever.

What a gift he has given us! Each of us is born here on earth to parents—a mother and a father. Our parents love us and protect us just as Mary and Joseph loved and protected Jesus. We are given the great privilege of having children of our own whom we can love and protect.

We have the privilege of having families.

Jesus has made it possible for each of us to be sealed together as families and to return to our Heavenly family to be reunited with all of our brothers and sisters. Such a gift.

**SONG**: “Oh Holy Night” – piano solo w/violin?

**Speaker #3:**

Each Christmas we gather with our families to celebrate the birth of Christ. We gather with mothers and fathers and children and grandparents and aunties and uncles and cousins. All together to reaffirm our love for each other and our faith in Jesus Christ. We each have our own traditions at this time of year.

We give gifts to each other. We sing together. We attend Church and worship together. Christmas is also about families.

Some of us have loud, fun traditions. Some of us have quiet, peaceful moments together. Each of us celebrate the birth of the Savior in our own way.

But we are all bound together as families.

As we sit quietly together, we strengthen our faith together.

We believe and know that Jesus Christ is our brother and that He came to earth to save us all because He loves us.

We believe and know that Heavenly Father is our father and that we long to return to be with him.

We believe and know that we were sent to families here on earth so that we could learn to be like them. So that we could learn to love.

Christmas is about families—that sweet new family that welcomed Jesus to earth, and our family where we feel love.

**SONG**: “Joy to the World” – Choir with organ and piano (DeFord accompaniment)

**BISHOP** – Closing remarks

**SONG**: “Silent Night”, Choir and congregation Hymn #204