

COMMUNITY CAROLS

This service is held in 5 centres, ranging from a local park to a wool shed.

Welcome

During the community carols please feel free to stand, or sit. It is really great to see so many children here, as a parent of two active boys I know how anxious we parents can get about the noise our children can make, I want to assure you that I have a loud voice and I can get over most noises. As a church family we are very used to children so relax and join in the celebration of Christmas the season when we remember the birth of the saviour Jesus Christ.

Lets pray as we begin this celebration of Jesus birth.

Living God come and join us as we turn our voices and thoughts to the meaning of Christmas. Bless us we pray . Amen.

Lets begin our celebration by singing a well known carol

O come all ye faithful.

Christmas is a very special time of year. To each of us it means different things. People down through the centuries cherished and re-told the events of nativity in many different ways. Miriam and I visited the local schools recently and asked the school children to write a story about the way the inn keeper would have seen that first Christmas.

Between the first couple of carols we will read you some of what they wrote. This is one excerpt

A long time ago lived Mary and Joseph. They lived in Israel. They were riding on a donkey named wella. They were on their way to Bethlehem. When they got there they decided to stay at an inn. They went inside and asked the owner if he had any rooms to let. But there were none.

The owner keen to make a dollar offered them the only thing he had a stable for \$20. So they stayed in the stable. Mary was going to have a baby. The next day their baby was born, they called him Jesus. They put Jesus in a manger with some hay in it .to sleep in for a while.

While Jesus was sleeping Joseph went to milk a cow for something to drink and he collected fruit and Berrys to eat. He wished they could live forever in the stable.

Lets sing a song about the town in which the story took place Once in royal Davids city.

Another excerpt went like this;

One day there was a visitor that arrived, she asked if she could stay the night here. I said that there was no room in the homestay. I said that I could get a blanket and set up a bed of hay in the barn and she could stay the night there. The woman said okay.

I didn't see that there was another person there he was with a donkey. I pictured that the women had come on the donkey. I went out to the barn and set up 2 beds and gave the donkey a slab of hay and put it in the yard. Mary the women said I didn't realise that it was in a stable but it would be okay. I'd forgotten how much of a pig sty it was

The 2 people went into the stable and lay on the bed of hay. I told them not to worry about the animals they where friendly. I then went and lay down for a few minutes, I was so tired I went to sleep. A few hours latter something strange woke me. I got up and checked the Inn rooms, then I remembered the barn. I noticed a bright light and immediately thought they were burning hay to keep warm, Don't they know there is a fire ban on. I grabbed a bucket of water and ran outside.

I went into the stable to see what was going on. Joseph said Mary had a baby. In the stable there were lots of people some dressed like kings, even some stinky shepherds. They said they would pay half price for the baby because he had only been there half the night. The babies name was Jesus he was born to be king. Jesus was never king they all thought he would be because he got nailed to a cross.

So if this writer is right the night was not as quiet as our next carol. Lets sing

Silent night.

Another student wrote what Christmas meant to them Christmas has 2 sides. Christmas eve, wrapping and placing the presents under the tree. The bringing together of family and friends. The suspense and the surprises next morning as the presents are opened. Watching peoples joy of receiving and giving. Eating of large meals of rich food that makes you feel as if you will burst. It's also sad because it can be a dangerous time of year. People drive like idiots and there's always a lot of accidents. There can also be empty places at the table because someone's died during the year and this makes people feel lonely.

Then there is side 2. We have to remember that Christmas isn't just all of the above it is also about Jesus the Son of God who was born some other month but some people way back in history decided to celebrate it on Dec 25. That is also the meaning of Christmas, the celebration of the arrival of Jesus. Christmas is all of the above put into one big fun filled exciting day about family, friends, presents, and the Son of God.

Most of the carols we sing are very foreign to us because they are written in countries that are far away. Our next carol is from NZ and it talks about the reality of an upside down Christmas in NZ. Lets sing

Carol our Christmas an upside down Christmas.

SECTION 2

We have come together to celebrate a very special Christmas. As the children's writings have shown us most of us are familiar with the Christmas story.

We want to change gear now and present the Christmas story in a new and different way. Our hope is that, at the end of our celebration, you will leave with a renewed sense of the meaning of Christmas.

As you know, when Jesus was born, it was not in a fine hospital (the government had closed down all the country ones) nor was he born in a nice, warm house, because his parents were in between places and there was no where to stay it was like Christchurch during a test weekend. Instead it all happened in a lowly manger, I suppose the equivalent would be the back of Shearing shed.

A writer of a prayer captured the scene in a prayer entitled The Woolshed Christ

The shearers are sleeping, the night-pens arc filled. Wrapped and lying on a bed of newly shorn wool lies the Saviour. Mary and Joseph relax with tea from the thermos flask. Soon dogs bark, the song thrush and tui sing,

and the station shepherds, rising for m early muster, come to adore the new-born child. God of hope, the cries of Jesus blend with the bleatings of the sheep into an anthem of praise to your glory and love. Amen

-by (Bill Bennett)

Of course this did not happen in a shearing shed in But instead in Bethlehem where a very bright and special star burned. While we are setting the scene, join us in singing

"O Little Town of Bethlehem. "

During the singing, two clowns bring in a manger and find a tall person in the congregation to hold the star They stand the person with the star behind the manger Then the clowns sit on the edge of the area to listen as the narrator continues the story.

NARRATOR:

What follows is an adaption of some material from an unknown source.

Now the emperor, that was the boss of the country, a bit like Mrs Shipley, had decreed that everyone must be enrolled in their home town and must see how much they owed in taxes (So typical of a government). So, even though Jesus was about to be born, Mary and Joseph had to travel to Bethlehem. When they arrived, there was no room at the inn, so Mary and Joseph had to spend the night in a smelly stable.

To remember Mary and Joseph's stay in that humble stable, join in singing

"Long time ago. " Marys boy child

During the singing, clowns find a young woman from the congregation and drape a length of blue material over her head. Next they hand a staff to an older man in the congregation. Clowns face Mary and Joseph on either side of manger Then clowns sit on the edge of area to hear more of the story.

NARRATOR:

That very same night, when Jesus was born, it was as if someone had turned on the flood lights at Eden Park as a whole multitude of angels filled the skies singing, "Glory be to God in the Highest and on earth Peace." But this was no rugby crowd, they sang in beautiful harmony.

To remember the angels that appeared that very first Christmas, will you join us in singing

"It Came Upon a Midnight Clear "

During the singing, clowns find four angels and place tinsel halos on their heads. Clowns group angels behind the manger Then clowns sit on the edge of the chancel.

NARRATOR:

On that same night there were shepherds in nearby fields keeping watch over their sheep. The angels appeared to the shepherds and told them that a Saviour for all the world had been born in a shearing shed close by. So the shepherds thinking the Nor wester was getting them down decided to go and check it out. For the shepherds that came to see Jesus, please join us in singing

"The First Noel. "

During the singing, clowns choose three shepherds, male and female, and place head coverings on their heads. Clowns stand shepherds to left of manger scene, and then sit on sidelines.

NARRATOR:

Now, three kings from far away lands who thought they knew a thing or two and were interested in Astronomy saw an unusual star in the sky and followed it all the way to Bethlehem.

Their counsellors and advisors told them it could be a sign of something majorly important happening. Being astute they came prepared with gifts of gold, frankincense and myrrh. For the three kings at that first Christmas, please join us in singing "We Three Kings. "

Break into parts Men / Women

During the singing the clowns crown three men from the congregation and hand them their gifts. Then they line up the men and lead them to stand on the right side of the manger scene opposite the shepherds.

Clowns resume seats on edge of scene.

NARRATOR:

So, on that night, in a building not too much unlike the shearing shed there came to be a large crowd gathered around a new born baby. Each knowing that there was something special; about this small baby. But none knowing to what extent. Certainly none that gathered realised this was a turning point in history.

They knew that this baby was special that he was Gods gift of love. But what it meant well

Hind sight is a wonderful thing we have a greater understanding of what was going on because we have read the boo. To help us remember remember Jesus. God's gift of love on that very first Christmas, let us all sing

"Away in the Manger. "

Even after the singing ends, the clowns search in vain for a baby. When they are unable to find one, they sit on the stage in total dejection. There is a moment while everyone in the congregation becomes aware that there can be no Christmas without the baby Jesus. What will happen next?

As the suspense deepens, one clown notices a large, wrapped Christmas gift off to one side. He nudges the other clown and points to the gift. Together they curiously unwrap the box and peek inside. Before taking the lid completely off the box, one clown indicates, with obvious joy, the nature of the gift. He does this by gesturing first to the box, then to the cross, and finally, in a sweeping gesture, to the entire congregation. Then he reverently takes the baby doll out of the box. He places it in the manger and kneels beside it.

As he does so, the musician plays the introduction to "Happy Birthday to You. "

NARRATOR:

Please stand and join in singing

"Happy Birthday" to Jesus.

During the singing, clowns enter from all possible directions banging helium balloons. They hand balloons to each person in the nativity scene and even tie one onto the manger itself (Or balloons may be unleashed from where they have been concealed in the front pews.) Some clowns may carry in a birthday cake .All activity ceases at the end of "Happy Birthday."Every clown faces the manger scene to hear the narrator and the benediction.

NARRATOR: And now, on Christmas morning, when you are opening all your brightly wrapped gifts, we hope you will remember that the very first Christmas gift was the baby, Jesus, whom God gave to us all. And your special gift to Jesus will be remembering that Christmas is His birthday.

Let's sing a carol wishing each other a SUPER DUPER CHRISTMAS WITH JESUS this year.

How about turning to those that are around you and wish them a Christ filled merry Christmas. (((Possible re-sing a super duper Christmas)

The Gospel of John described Christmas in this way The Word became flesh and dwelt among us full of grace and truth, we have seen his glory, glory as of the only son from the Father, John 1:14

Lets join together and sing our last carol Joy to the world in which a collection will be taken up. The collection will be divided with some going to the.....and some to providing material for Bible in Schools locally.

Joy to the world

We the Awatere Christian Joint venture wish you a very blessed Christmas and invite you to join in our celebrations at

Supper will be served in

Clowns then hand out balloons among the congregation and cake may be served.

Things needed 2 or more clowns, a Manger, a star, Tinsel Hallows x 4, Length of blue material, Head coverings for 3 shepherds, 3 gifts gold/ frankincense / Myrrh Wrapped, present, cross, balloons, Baby Doll.

Christmas carols

Welcome

During the community carols please feel free to stand, or sit. It is really great to see so many children here, as a parent of three active boys I know how anxious we parents can get about the noise our children can make, I want to assure you that I have a loud voice and I can get over most noises. As a church family we are very used to children so relax and join in the celebration of Christmas the season when we remember the birth of the saviour Jesus Christ.

Lets pray as we begin this celebration of Jesus birth. Living God come and join us as we turn our voices and thoughts to the meaning of Christmas. Bless us we pray . Amen.

Lets begin our celebration by singing two well known carols

- Come all ye faithful
- Hark the herald angels sing

Our Christmas are not like those portrayed in many of our carols which talk of winter. Here at the bottom of the world Christmas is during the summer. This summer we rejoice because we have experienced a spring that has brought life back to our parched land. We thank you God for hearing our prayers and responding.

Lets sing about our upside down Christmas

- Upside down Christmas

This next reading is about how the Christmas scene might have been if it was in NZ today

The Woolshed Christ by Bill Bennett pg 14

The shearers are sleeping, the night-pens are filled. Wrapped and lying on a bed of newly shorn wool lies the Saviour. Mary and Joseph relax with tea from the thermos flask. Soon dogs bark, the song thrush and tui sing, and the station shepherds, rising for an early muster, come to adore the new-born child. God of hope, the cries of Jesus blend with the bleatings of the sheep into an anthem of praise to your glory and love.

Another New Zealand Carol writer experienced the New Zealand Christmas in this way.

- NZ Christmas Carol

We can easily relate to the Christmas story because it involves people of the land - it involves fellow shepherds. A Carol that views the Christmas story through their eyes is

- While shepherd's watched their flocks by night.

The First Nowell is another well loved version of the shepherds experiences. So let us sing

- The first Nowell

STORY OF A CRADLE

A story that was handed to me by a parishioner who had down loaded it from the net. Unfortunately I have no details of author or web site.

They left their home, the new cradle still swinging from the rafters. Night after night the aroma of fresh-cut wood had filled the room as Joseph had patiently fashioned the tiny cradle, using the same chisel and saw he usually put down at dusk. Now Joseph wiped the tears from Mary's cheeks and shut the door behind them. "It'll be okay," he told her, as he cinched up their belongings on the donkey. "Joseph, can't we wait a few days? The baby could come any time." She didn't want to leave home. Not now. "We've waited for the baby as long as we dare." He was ready to get on the road. "We have to leave today or I'll be arrested for not appearing in Bethlehem for the census." "At least bring the cradle, Joseph," she pleaded. "I want the baby to have something nice." "No, it'll have to stay behind. The baby will be rocking in it soon enough."

Joseph tugged hard at the donkey's halter. No luck. "Come on, animal," he shouted, whacking it on the rear end to get it moving. Grudgingly the donkey responded. With one hand Joseph led the donkey, with the other he steadied Mary on the steep incline, slowly enough to accommodate her ungainly progress down the winding road which led from Nazareth's height. In the house above, the cradle hung still. As Mary and Joseph made the journey let's urge the Donkey on by singing - Little donkey little donkey Five days and ninety bone-weary miles later, Joseph searched the small stable where they were staying on the outskirts of crowded Bethlehem. Mary's time would be soon now. He was careful to keep his lamp from igniting the old straw. He finally settled on an ancient stone manger for the baby's bed, cut from the wall of the limestone cave which housed the animals. He reached in to scoop the last gritty bits of straw from the manger's dank bottom. "That'll have to do," he muttered. He filled the trough with an armful of fresh fodder, which he covered with a folded blanket to keep the animals away.

It was well past midnight by the time Mary finished washing and wrapping her new baby. Now she lifted him gently into his new bed. Joseph put his arm around her shoulders as they gazed at the sleeping infant. Mary touched the tiny fingers. "That cradle you spent so much time on would be real nice right now, Joseph." She looked up at the cave's low ceiling. "You could hang it somewhere. No baby I know has a cradle like that. It's fit for a king." Joseph grinned. "Not every boy has a carpenter for a dad," he said. But he wondered. Why couldn't little Jesus be home in that cradle? Why does this special child the angel told Mary and him about have to be born in this smelly stable? A hill-country carpenter's home is bad enough. Why here? Why Bethlehem? As we ponder on the question of why Bethlehem we are going to sing a carol that was written by Phillips Brooks for his Sunday School in 1868 after he returned from visiting Bethlehem. - O little town of Bethlehem

The answer wasn't long in coming. An older boy poked his head in the door, startling the couple from their quiet moment. "Is there a baby in here?" he mumbled apologetically. Then he saw the tiny child. Mary picked her baby up to shield the infant from his eyes. The face disappeared. Mary's eyes mirrored Joseph's concern. He strode to the cave's opening. He could hear a distant call, "Over here, Jake found him!" In the darkness, Joseph could make out a handful of forms coming toward him. He gripped his stout wooden staff & stood resolutely at the door. As they approached the stable he could see they were shepherds. Joseph's grip on the staff tightened. The oldest one spoke hesitantly. "Can we come in? We have ... ah ... come to see the Christ-child." Joseph glanced at Mary. He could feel a tingle move down his spine. This was more than an accident. The whole fantastic course of events was far more than an accident. He nodded and stepped back into the stable. "Yes, come in. You are welcome."

The shepherds shuffled into the cramped cave. The youngest pushed in alongside the donkey to get a better view. They knelt. "God be praised!" The old shepherd spoke with deepest reverence. "It's just like the angel told us," another whispered in awe. "'Behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy, which shall be to all people,' the angel said." "Imagine! An angel . . . talking to us!" the old man interjected with rising excitement. "None of the

uppity-ups in this town would lower themselves to talk to us shepherds," he added. "But an angel did . . . And the child is right here in a stable so we can come and see him." Rivulets of tears were inching down the shepherd's weathered face. Joseph stared at the old man. "How did you find us?" he finally asked. The boy who had first peeked in answered. "The angel said, 'Unto you is born ...'" "Yes, to us!" The beaming old man couldn't contain himself. The boy spoke deliberately, as if to remember the exact words: "Unto you is born this day in the city of David a Saviour ..." "That's here--Bethlehem--David's birthplace," the littlest boy interrupted. He thrust out his chest proudly. "King David was a shepherd, too, you know." The older boy continued. ". . . a Saviour, which is Christ the Lord." "The Christ, the Messiah . . . He's the one!" The old man pointed to the baby. "The angel was very specific," the young man went on. "'And this shall be a sign unto you. You shall find the babe wrapped in swaddling clothes, lying in a manger.'" He grinned. "How could we miss? We just ran into town and checked every stable until we found you . . . found him." The boy paused. "How many newborns in Bethlehem do you know with a cattle manger for a cradle?" Joseph chuckled. So that was it. The heavenly Father Himself had provided a bed for His child. A special cradle. A sign to these crude shepherds that God cared for them too. ((Pause)) The Manger has been the focus for many of our Carols and this next carol is one of the most widely known even though no one knows who the author is. - Away in the manger

Let us realise and grasp the truth that As we ask Jesus to do all these things. To look after us and stay by us forever, he does . Because Jesus is non other than the saviour of the world, he is the living God that we all need ==WOW He is the King of Glory he is the king of peace. Let us sing

- You are the king of Glory MP790

As we approach Christmas 1998 let us not get bogged down with the great long list of things to do. Instead let us remember that Christmas is a celebration for all Gods creation. It is the celebration of the birth of the King. Let us remember that Jesus is the reason for the season.

So let us sing - Super duper Christmas

The Gospel of John described Christmas in this way The Word became flesh and dwelt among us full of grace and truth, we have seen his glory, glory as of the only son from the Father, John 1:14

Lets join together and sing our last carol Joy to the world in which a collection will be taken up. The collection will be divided with some going to the and some to providing material for Bible in Schools locally.

Joy to the world

We the Awatere Christian Joint Venture wish you a very blessed Christmas and invite you to join in our celebrations at

Supper will be served in

Christmas Day 1998

WELCOME

Welcome this Christmas morning, we are glad that you have come to be part of this celebration of the birth of our Saviour Jesus Christ. We invite you to relax and enjoy the celebration. No birthday is complete without party hats and streamers and if you are young enough you will have been given a hat to wear and we invite you to wave your streamer during the singing.

PRAYER

SONG

Let us begin our celebration with Song O come all ye faithful

The carol we have just sung invited us to come because a child of a peasant woman was born in an obscure village, along time ago. When he grew up he worked in a carpenter's shop until he was thirty, and then for three years was an itinerant teacher.

He never wrote a book. He never held an office. He never owned a home. He never had a family. He never travelled more than two hundred miles from the place where he was born. He had no credentials but himself.

While still a young man, the tide of popular opinion turned against him. His friends ran away; one of them denied him. He was turned over to his enemies. He went through a mockery of a trial; he was nailed on a cross between two thieves; when he was dead, he was taken down and laid in a borrowed grave.

Nineteen centuries have come and gone and during that time many armies have marched, navies built, and there have been many kings, queens and politicians yet none of them have ever affected the life of the human race as powerfully as that one solitary life.

It is the birth of Jesus Christ our savour that we come to celebrate this morning. So

SONG Come and join the celebration

LIGHTING THE ADVENT CANDLE

Traditionally at a birthday celebration we sing happy birthday so let us sing it to Jesus - mind you we will not clap out his age because that would take quite some time.

SONG Happy Birthday

Even though Jesus was born 1000's Km from NZ we celebrate his birth because not only did he influence history but he also was God. This next carol talks of Christmas in NZ

SONG Carol our Christmas

READING Luke 2:8-20

This was the passage that inspired the well known carol

SONG While shepherds watched their flocks by night.

It must have blown those shepherds away on a quiet Bethlehem evening to have been visited by a major heavenly Choir of angels in full voice, led by the chief angel Gabriel. Recently Gabriel bumped into another well known Christmas character - This is how it happened.

CHRISTMAS PUPPETS

Puppets back on and hit each other

Gabe/SANTA Shock!

Gabe Great heavens ! Its Nicholas.

SANTA Gabriel! Me old mate Gabe.

Hug each other .

Gabe Haven't seen you in what would it be now?

SANTA Must be - oh - going on 900 years.

Gabe Already? My, time flies. I just haven't noticed it We've been quite busy up there, singing praises, falling flat on our faces, playing harps and so on. (pause) You've put on a bit of weight since I last saw you.

SANTA Humm. You aint changed. You angels are all the same. All this eternal life and everything. Too dazzling white to see any wrinkles. Anyway what brings you here to Ward / Seddon?

Gabe I was just going to ask you the same question, my friend.

SANTA Well - its obvious, isn't it mate? It's Christmas, I've got to go all over the place stuffing toys and goodies into kid's stockings.

Gabe Ah, yes I remember. That old pagan custom, seems to have got mixed up with Jesus' birthday. Seems to keep you busy alright.

SANTA Hey, you haven't coughed up why you are here yet!

Gabe Oh yes - sorry old chap. Well a little boy said his prayers as usual when he went to bed last night. And he asked that he might see the angels just as they appeared to the shepherds on the very first Christmas Eve. The Master was so impressed he sent me down especially.

SANTA Hmm, I was thinking about God last night , as I cruise the skyways in my sleigh. I had to say a quick prayer after I passed a speed camera. I was feeling bad as I seem to have lost contact with you lot. Do you remember when I first started this job, I was working for God in a way.

(Gabriel nods)

Folk even used to call me Saint. Now - well there doesn't seem to be much time. Too busy running after a world full of children who just want more presents. They seem to have missed the most special gift of all - Jesus.

Gabe Mmmm. Yeah I see what you mean. But hey don't loose heart. Look at all the kids who have turned up in Ward / Seddon to celebrate Jesus' birthday! They look a neat bunch .

SANTA Thanks Gabe me mate, I'm glad I bumped into you. You reminded me about the good old days. Wasn't so busy then.

Gabe How do you mean?

SANTA Aw - I dunno. People didn't expect so much at Christmas time back then. They seemed to be happy just making small gifts for each other.

Gabe As if - they preferred the giving rather than the receiving?

SANTA Yeah - that's it, Gabe. Now it seems to be get, get, get. Grab all you can. You should see the letters I get from kids, not to mention the faxes and phone calls on my 0800 number, it would blow you away.

Gabe I guess it would. We thought we might try a new marketing campaign. Did you know that heaven is ...The storehouse, the storehouse, where everyone gets a bargain! People only have to pray and believe in Jesus.

SANTA Sounds familiar. Should get you a few million ... souls that is.

Gabe Yes then they can enjoy the benefits of a friendship with God - like the little boy whose prayer brought me this way.

SANTA Hey I'd better dash, I've got another 3 continents to cover before dawn. Spot ya later. Nice to have seen you again,

Gabriel. Give my regards back home, eh?

Gabe so long , my friend. And bless you.

Both exit.

SONG What Child is this.

PRAYER

Let us pray for our community and for those who are less fortunate than ourselves.

We pray for those who are lonely this Christmas because they have few friends. Give them your peace, Lord,
(Pause)

And show us how to help them.

We pray for those who are sad because they are trying to cope without someone they love. Give them your peace, Lord, (pause)

And show us how to help them.

We pray for those who find several days shut in with their families a real struggle. Give them your peace, Lord, (pause)

And show us how to help them.

We pray for those who have felt obliged to spend too much and face a worrying future. Give them your peace, Lord, (pause)

And show us how to help them.

We pray for those who have not heard that you were born on earth as a human being, and don't realise why there is such good news to celebrate. Give them your peace, Lord, (pause)

And show us how to help them. Amen

Lets wish those around us a super duper Christmas

SONG Super Duper Christmas

Christmas clearly shows that God really has walked on this planet, that is too amazing to ignore! We know what the Shepherds did. We know what Mary did. We even know what the Angels did. The question is what will WE do?

SONG Lets sing our final carol- during which a collection for the work of the church will be taken up.

SONG Hark the herald angels sing

Prayer for the collection

God we would not have guessed that your greatest action in history is the birth of a baby in Bethlehem. And yet it is so for us For unto us a child is born

Unto us a Son is given

Hallelujah for the Christ - child!

And may the grace and the truth and the mystery and power of Christ flood our lives with his renewing love and grace amen

CANDY HOOKS

As you leave we would like to give the children a simple reminder of what Christmas is all about. Created by a candy maker. Known as a candy cane the candy maker created it out of hard white candy to remind people of the virgin birth of Jesus and how Jesus was sinless. He then added the red stripe as a symbol of the sacrifice that Jesus made for us on the cross.

We wish you and your family a very blessed Christmas as you consider afresh the love of God that was demonstrated in the birth of the baby Jesus our saviour.

Unwrapping Christmas

A Christmas sock or bag with small wrapped boxes in which there are cards on which are written the components of the service such as "sing a song" The children(or groups of children) are then invited to take turns pulling out a card and whatever the order the church does it.

1-3

2007 St Pauls

Intro

Welcome to Christmas unwrapped where we are going to pull back the silver screen curtain as we re discover the meaning of Christmas.

Carol O Come all ye faithful *

5

Lets Pray.

As we gather for worship today, Father, there is excitement in the air, a song on our lips and joy in our hearts. Help us to remember why we celebrate Christmas. May the Word which was made flesh be heard in our worship

May Christ be born again in this congregation and in the life of each person here. May the love of Christmas fill the church and the peace of Christmas fill our hearts; through Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

From Prayers before Worship

Round New Zealand people have woken this morning and with expectation they have looked to see what presents they might have received. They come wrapped in alsorts of shapes and sizes.

Have you ever read one of those mystery books where you make a choice at the bottom of the page and depending on what your choice is you turn to one page or another.

You know the one just as the child reached forward to pick up a parcel A) a bird flew past or B) He looked sideways and saw his brother coming.

If you chose A) turn to page

If B) then turn to .page

Well our service is going to be a bit like that this morning. We thought it would be fun today to have children come forward and unwrap a parcel and within the parcel we will find what we are going to do next in the service.

In Boxes

<i>Carols</i>	<i>Carol our Christmas an upside down Christmas</i>		
	31		
	<i>Marys boy child</i> *	12	
	<i>Oh Holy Night</i> 550 *		37
	<i>Come they told me par rumpa papa</i> *	23	
	<i>While Sheperds watched their flocks by night.</i> *		45
	<i>Hark the hearld angel sings</i> *	52	
	<i>Silent night</i> *		41
<i>Readings</i>	<i>John 1:1-14</i>		
	<i>Ps 98</i>		
	<i>Matt 1:18-25</i>		

Sermon Almost magical 62

*Puppets**Prayers**Confession*

As Christmas comes round year by year, Lord,
we are tempted to say, 'We have heard
all this so many times before;
we know the story off by heart'.

*Forgive us, Lord, and remind us of the difference
between knowing about it, knowing it,
and letting it speak to us again and again.*

Help us to see ourselves and our own attitudes
lived out by people in the Christmas story:
The inn-keeper: who couldn't find room
for you in his inn.

*Lord, help us to cease from cluttering our lives
with countless things — things that don't really
matter; things that crowd you and others out.*

Herod: hostile, jealous, and hating, because
he was afraid of who he was and of what
your coming might do to him.

*Lord, help us see the destructiveness of our
jealousies, and help us replace our fears
with hope and our hates with forgiveness.*

The shepherds: who were scorned by others
as unskilled laborers, but heard the music
of your coming even while they worked.

*Lord, deliver us from the pride that thinks
some tasks too menial, and from prejudices
that blind us to your glory.*

The wise men from the east: who journeyed far
to find you.

*Teach us again, eternal God, that those who really
seek will find, and never let us rest content
until we have been found by you.
Taken from "Be our freedom Lord" pg 272*

After the unwrapping of boxes

Carol	Joy to the world *	70
Communion as per the NZPB		77
Carols	Feliz Navidad *	83
	Supa Duppa Christmas to CD *	90