

Christmas Pageant 2018
An “Orderly Account” From the Gospel of Luke

Scene 1: Introduction

Featuring Pastor, Luke, and Theophilus

Pastor (P): Hello and welcome to Trinity’s annual Pop-Up Christmas Pageant. This is one of my favorite traditions here at Trinity, and St. Peter, I’m so glad you are able to join us this year. A few quick instructions before we begin. First off, if you’re in the room, you’re in the Angel Chorus. There are some halos scattered around, feel free to wear them whenever you want. And please sing out loud on the singing parts. If you have a speaking part, there aren’t really cues, so just come up when you think you’re supposed to. Most importantly, have fun. The Christmas story, as we’ll see, was itself a little chaotic, so this is a good representation of that. And now, without further ado, I present to you, An “Orderly Account” from the Gospel of Luke.

Luke enters

Luke (L): Since many have undertaken to set down an orderly account of the events that have been fulfilled among us... I too decided, after investigating everything, to set down an orderly account for you, most excellent Theophilus, so that you may know the truth concerning the things about which you have been instruct... (*trails off as Theophilus enters the scene*). Who are you?

Theophilus (T): Who do you think I am? I am “most excellent Theophilus.” Great title, by the way, thanks for that. I’m here to see this “orderly account” you are writing, for I am eager to know the truth concerning the things, as you so formally put it.

L: Oh, I, uh, I didn’t expect you to actually show up. You were a bit more hypothetical in my mind.

T: Nope, I’m here and I’m ready to party! Looks like we’ve got everything we need. I see some shepherds, some angels, some random first century people, Mary, Joseph, and, wait, is that a lobster? That’s weird, but hey, whatever. Let’s get to the setting down of this account.

L: Well, um, ok, I guess we could do that.

T: I bet this Angel Chorus will sing us in to the first scene. Let’s have them sing, and when they finish, you’ll take it away. Ready chorus, and, go!

ELW 242, v. 1: Awake! Awake, and Greet the New Morn

Scene 2: Zech and Elizabeth

Featuring Theophilus, Luke, Zechariah, Elizabeth, and Gabriel

T: Where are we?

L: We're in Jerusalem; I thought you wanted me to tell you an account of the events?

T: I did, but the story starts in Bethlehem. The Chorus seems to have accidentally deposited us twenty miles west of where we're supposed to be.

L: No, this is right. You asked for an orderly account so before we get to Bethlehem there are some people you need to meet. (*Enter Elizabeth and Zechariah*) And here they are now. Theophilus, I'd like you to meet Zechariah and Elizabeth.

T: Who are these people? They look old.

L: Theo, don't be rude! Zechariah is a priest and Elizabeth a descendant of Aaron. They are righteous people, living blamelessly according to the Lord. Show some respect.

Elizabeth (E): Oh, don't be too hard on the boy. He's right, we are old. Zechariah says that all the time, don't you Zech.

Zechariah nods

E: Zech, you listening, old man?

Zechariah nods again

E: Come on Zech, don't be shy, say something to the nice people.

Zechariah nods and gestures frantically that he cannot speak

E: I know you can't speak old man; I'm just messing with you. (*To Theo and Luke*) I only have nine months of his silence; I'm enjoying it while I can.

T: Why can't he speak?

(Enter Gabriel)

Gabriel (G): Because of me.

T: (*startled*) Ahhhh, who are you!

G: I am Gabriel and that's exactly what he said (*gestures to Zechariah*). I stand in the presence of the Lord and I don't know why you humans find me so terrifying.

T: Maybe if you didn't sneak up on us like that. Why can't he speak?

G: He can't speak because I was sent to speak to him and to bring him good news. And he did not believe me. So I figured if he didn't believe my words then he shouldn't have any words. So now he's mute.

L: Tricks like that may be why we humans are afraid of you.

G: He had it coming. It was really good news. I told him that Elizabeth was going to have a son named John who would be great! And he was all, 'how can this be, I'm old, she's old.' So I was all, "I'm Gabriel, no more talking until the kid's born."

T: That seems kind of mean.

E: Whatever, guy gets to talk all the time. Having to be quiet for a while is good for him. Teach him listening. Don't you agree Zech?

Zechariah nods

E: Zech, Zech, you listening Zech? Just kidding, I love to do that. Come on, old man. Let's get off the scene and let them get on with the story.

Zechariah and Elizabeth leave

T: *(To Luke)* OK, now what. *(To Gabriel)* And why are you still here?

G: Because I'm in the next part as well. Sing us in, Angel Chorus!

ELW 265, v. 1-2: The Angel Gabriel from Heaven Came

Mary enters during the singing

Scene 3: The Annunciation

Featuring Luke, Theophilus, Gabriel, and Mary

L: Welcome to Nazareth, Theophilus. This is Mary. She's soon to be Joseph's wife and, as you heard, Gabriel here just shared some very exciting news with her. She's going to have a baby.

T: Mary, wow, what an honor. I've heard about your son, he will grow up to be quite the man. How did it feel to hear that you were carrying the Son of God? Were you terrified?

G: I appeared to her, of course she was! That's my job. I show up, people are terrified, and I say, "do not be afraid." We've been through this.

M: I hate to interrupt but, I wasn't terrified. Perplexed, yes. But terrified, no. Gabriel said to me, "Greetings, favored one." If I'm favored, what did I have to be afraid of?

T: But the stories all describe you as meek, and gentle, and lowly. Weren't you afraid at this big, mighty angel and this huge task you were given?

M: Luke, set him straight will you? This is your orderly account.

L: Theophilus, it was a big task Gabriel asked of Mary, but Gabriel knew not only that she could do it, but that she would want to do it. Gabriel has a bad habit of sneaking up on people, but he's not going to make someone do something that they don't want to do. Especially something like be the mother to the Son of God.

T: But that song we just heard! You're supposed to be meek and mild.

M: Meek and mild is not the same as weak, my friend. You can be meek and mild and still be tough as nails. Have you heard my song? The one that I sang? It's fierce! Take it away, Angel Chorus.

Mary and Gabriel leave during song.

ELW 723, v. 1-2: Canticle of the Turning

Scene 4: In Which Luke Sets the Scene

Featuring Theophilus, Luke, Emperor Augustus, Quirinius, Joseph, and King David

T: Wow, that song is fierce! Mary sang that?!

L: She did. Mary is one tough highly favored lady.

T: She is! OK, so we've got a pregnant Elizabeth, and a pregnant Mary, now what? Are there ever going to be any actual babies in this story?

L: Of course, of course. Be patient. We're getting to that part now. Chapter two: "In those days a decree went out from Emperor Augustus that all the world should be registered:

(Enter Emperor)

Emperor (E): Alright everyone. Time to get registered.

(Emperor leaves)

L: This was the first registration and was taken while Quirinius was governor of Syria.

(Enter Quirinius)

Quirinius: Hey team.

(Quirinius leaves)

L: All went to their own towns to be registered. Joseph also went.

(Enter Joseph)

Joseph (J): Hi

(Joseph leaves)

L: from the city of David called Bethlehem

(enter David)

David: What's up guys! I'm David, and this is my city!

(David leaves)

L: Because he was descended from the house and family of David.

T: Whoa, whoa, whoa, slow down a minute. What's with all the name dropping?

L: I'm establishing a setting. This is an orderly account, it is important you understand the greater socio-political time period which this story takes place. Emperor Augustus, the first emperor of the so-called Pax Romana is in power. The governor of Syria was Quirinius. And well ok, we don't really know anything about Quirinius, but he's governor. And then Bethlehem being the city of David because it is important to place Joseph, and therefore Jesus, in the Davidic line of the ancient Kings of Israel. Fulfillment of the events, and all that.

ELW 264, v. 1, 4: Prepare the Royal Highway

Scene 5: In Bethlehem

Featuring Theophilus, Luke, Mary, Joseph, and Donkey

T: You talk too much. And you use big words.

L: And you ask too many questions. Can I get on with it?

Enter Mary, Joseph, and donkey

T: Hey, look, Joe's back! And look who's with him! Hey, hey, Mary, how've you been? Oh, you are quite pregnant.

M: I am VERY pregnant. And I'm none too excited having to travel all the way from Nazareth to Bethlehem to be registered. We don't even live in Bethlehem. It seems like there could have been a more efficient way to do this.

J: I'm also not excited about this trip. I can think of more fun things to do than travel with my very pregnant, and very fierce, fiancée on a donkey for ninety miles. And now we get here and there's not even a place to stay! So we're stuck sleeping in the stable WITH the donkey.

Donkey (D): Quit complaining. I already carried you all the ninety-some miles. Can you at least pipe down and let me get some sleep?

T: Wait, the donkey talks?!

L: Of course the donkey talks. Read Numbers chapter twenty-two, there's precedent.

M: I hate to interrupt this little Bible study here but I think it may be time for the Son of God to be born. Could you take this story somewhere else for a bit?

L: Oh, sure, of course. Angel Chorus, I think there may be some shepherds in this region. Let's go see what they're up to.

Mary, Joseph, Donkey, Luke, and Theophilus all leave

ELW 300, v. 1: The First Noel

Scene 6: Shepherds Keep Watch
Featuring the Shepherds and Gabriel

Shepherd 1 (S1): Here we are. In our field. Doing what we do.

Shepherd 2 (S2): Keeping watch over our flock, at night, where nothing ever happens.

Shepherd 3 (S3): Except the occasional attack by a lion or a bear!

S1: There aren't any lions or bears in this story.

S3: But there could be!

S2: But there aren't.

S3: But our part's boring, I'm just trying to spice it up a little bit.

(enter Gabriel)

G: Your part's not boring.

Sheperds (*in unison*): Ah, an angel of the Lord. We're terrified!

G: Now that's more like it. Do not be afraid; for see—I am bringing you good news of great joy for all people: to you is born this day in the city of David a Savior, who is the Messiah, the Lord.

ELW 270, v. 1, 2: Hark! The Herald Angels Sing

Scene 7: Establishing Vocabulary
Featuring the Shepherds and Gabriel

S1: What's a herald?

G: It's an official messenger. That's me, that's what an angel is in scripture, a messenger.

S2: How about incarnate deity, what did that mean?

G: A deity is a god. In this case, THE God. And incarnate means "in the flesh." From the Latin "carne" meaning flesh. That's what Jesus is, right, God in the flesh.

S3: You could have just said that. How about Emmanuel, what's an Emmanuel?

G: Emmanuel is from the Hebrew meaning "God with us." What's with all the questions! I'm Gabriel, I stand in the presence of God and I was sent to bring you this good news, not give you a vocabulary lesson! Clearly I picked the wrong song...

S3: Oh good! Does that mean you have to sing another one? Sing this one, it's my favorite!

ELW 266, v. 1, 2: All Earth is Hopeful

Scene 8: This Will Be a Sign
Featuring the Shepherds and Gabriel

S2: That's a way better song. It defines its words.

S1: Enough talking you two. This heralding angel has come to bring us an important message! How will we know which child is the Messiah?

G: An excellent question! Finally an excellent question. This will be a sign for you: you will find a child wrapped in bands of cloth and lying in a manger. We've got a song for that too. This is the musical portion of the pageant.

ELW 277 or 278, v. 1, 2: Away in a Manger

(Gabriel leaves during the singing)

Scene 9: To Bethlehem!
Featuring the Shepherds

S3: Hey, where'd the herald angel go?

S1: Who cares, did you hear that song. We've got to get to Bethlehem to see "this thing that has taken place, which the Lord has made known to us!"

S2: Can we maybe sing one more song? For traveling? Please?

S1: Fine. But just one verse. We're in a hurry.

ELW 279, v. 1: O Little Town of Bethlehem

Mary, Joseph, Donkey, manger and Baby Jesus enter during singing

Scene 10: At the Manger
Featuring the Shepherds, Mary, Joseph, and Donkey

S3: Look, its Mary and Joseph, and the child lying in the manger!

M: Shepherds, as glad as I am that you have come. And I am very glad, you are exactly the sort of people whom this child was born for. But could you keep it down just a bit? I'm afraid you'll wake the donkey.

S2: You're not afraid we'll wake the baby?

M: No, the baby's pretty quiet. The donkey however, is a handful.

J: Numbers chapter twenty-two, I'm telling you. Get a donkey started in scripture, and they'll never stop talking.

S2: That's fine. We have to be off anyway. We need to make known all that was told us about this child!

S1: That was weird syntax on that sentence.

S2: Yeah, the Greek to English translation left something to be desired there.

S3: Who cares! Song time!

ELW 290, v. 1, 3: Go Tell It on the Mountain

Shepherds leave during song. Luke and Theophilus enter.

Scene 11: The End (As Far As Luke's Concerned)

Featuring Luke and Theophilus

L: The shepherds returned, glorifying and praising God for all they had heard and seen, as it had been told them. And there you have it. An orderly account, or at least, mostly orderly, of the events that have been fulfilled among us.

T: Wait, you can't stop there! What about the kings?

L: The kings aren't in my account.

T: But the kings are my favorite part! And the choir's been working so hard on their song. Look at all the hats.

L: I don't care, no kings here. This is an orderly account, not some sort of Christmas pageant Gospel mash-up. Hey, wait, no!

WOV: We Three Kings

Matthew enters during song.

Scene 12: Matthew Takes Over

Featuring Theophilus, Matthew, Luke, and the Kings

T: Matthew! I'm so glad you're here. Luke, I appreciated the orderly account, but I've gotta have me some kings!

Matthew (M): Anything for you, kid. In the time of King Herod, after Jesus was born in Bethlehem of Judea, wise men from the East came to Jerusalem.

Enter choir

Zumba, Zumba

Scene 13: The Grand Finale

Featuring Luke, Matthew, Theophilus, the Lobster King, the Unicorn, John, Gabriel, the Donkey, and the whole cast

L: What was that! There's more than three of them, there's like a whole herd. That one's not even a king, that one's a lobster. And, wait, is that a unicorn? And what's with the gifts? They're supposed to bring gold, frankincense, and myrrh. Have you even read your own story? What are Mary and Joseph going to do with a meat pie!

Matt: Eat it, I'd assume. Loosen up, Lukey. Have you read my Gospel? It's an "orderly account" too; I just don't feel the need to brag about it. The men bringing gifts weren't kings, they were magi. Wise men from the East, Zoroastrian priests most likely. They show you the breadth of the salvation this child is bringing, that it reached even faraway followers of Zoroastrianism. And there weren't specifically three of them; I just said they brought three gifts, gold, frankincense and myrrh. Which they did, hold up your gifts, team. Who's to say they didn't also bring a meat pie?

T: If you think about it, a meat pie is a way more practical gift for a new family than gold, frankincense and myrrh. I bet Mary and Joseph aren't going to want to do a lot of cooking with a brand-new baby. Maybe the Wise Men had Take Them a Meal!

L: Humph! I don't know about this.

Lobster King (LK): It's ok, Luke, there's space for you and Matthew in the Christmas Story.

L: Oh, now the Lobster King talks too! What's next, a unicorn?!

Unicorn (U): Yes, a unicorn. Because Luke, God is bigger than any one story. Jesus was born to save the whole world, not just one part of it. This story is too expansive for just one orderly account.

LK: You yourself said this account was handed down to us by those who from the beginning were eyewitnesses and servants of the word. EyewitnessES and servantS, plural.

U: That's why we do this church thing together. So that we can learn from each other. As Matthew recorded Jesus saying, "Wherever two or three are gathered in my name, I am there among them." There's more than two or three of us here, which means Jesus is here too.

(Enter John)

John: And, like I said in MY Gospel, the Gospel of John, "Now Jesus did many other signs... which are not written in this book." If any one of us wrote everything Jesus did, it would be too long to read. The purpose of a Gospel isn't to share every single detail. The purpose of a Gospel is "so that you"—plural you, by the way—"so that you may come to believe that Jesus is the Messiah, the Son of God, and that through believing you may have life in his name."

T: Wow, Luke, Matthew, and John! All we need is Mark!

U: We don't have time for Mark. Mark doesn't pick up until Jesus' baptism, and we don't have all day.

LK: Yeah. Plus we just finished a whole year of Mark; he's taking a well-deserved vacation.

L: And, I too have an account of Jesus' baptism.

M: We all do.

J: Jesus' baptism was kind of a big deal.

L: Fine, but we'll read mine on January thirteenth. And it will be fun! Mark your calendars.

T: Ha! You said "Mark."

(enter Gabriel)

G: Enough with this back and forth, it's time for the Grand Finale!

All (in unison): Ahh! Who are you!

G: Still! (kind of boredly) Do not be afraid. I am bringing you good news of great joy.

T: We're just messing with you, Gabe. Send us out.

G: Alright, big finish. It's time for Joy to the World! Anyone who wants to come forward to create that classic Christmas Nativity Scene moment is invited. If you don't want to come forward, turn in your seat and look up toward the organ so Pastor Kjersten can get a picture. Because the story may have happened two-thousand years ago, but as we've talked about, it still matters today. And this is the Twenty-first Century, which means Hashtag "pics or it didn't happen." Hashtag "no filter." Hashtag "blessed." Hashtag "classic Christmas scene." Hashtag "is that a lobster." Hashtag "unicorn."

D: Hashtag, "they say the Donkey talks too much!" Let's get singing!

ELW 267, v. 1, 2: Joy to the World