



**“An Uncommon Birth:  
An Evening of ‘Unconventional’ Christmas Carols”  
with Rev. Bill Haley**

***The First Noel, Over the Rhine  
(The Darkest Night of the Year)***

***Another Advent, a poem by WRL Haley***

Father, Advent is here once again,  
Our response is to pause, and recall,  
That you sent Jesus, for us and for the world,  
Your glory unfurled vulnerably sweet,  
that we might see who You are, and be your body  
to this suffering earth.

So we light a fire and remember your birth, and with  
this flame remember the reality that You are here,  
with us,  
Emmanuel.

Now gone is all fear  
Now redeemed is all the pain  
Joy rides in on the wind once again

It is another Advent, You've come already once.  
Banished is the night  
Love burns in glory bright  
As it was, as it is will be,  
As it is, we come  
now come again this eve to us.



**Let All Mortal Flesh Keep Silence,  
John Michael Talbot (The Birth of Jesus)**

1. Let all mortal flesh keep silence,  
and with fear and trembling stand;  
ponder nothing earthly-minded,  
for with blessing in his hand,  
Christ our God to earth descendeth,  
our full homage to demand.
  
2. King of kings, yet born of Mary,  
as of old on earth he stood,  
Lord of lords, in human vesture,  
in the body and the blood;  
he will give to all the faithful  
his own self for heavenly food.
  
3. Rank on rank the host of heaven  
spreads its vanguard on the way,  
as the Light of light descendeth  
from the realms of endless day,  
that the powers of hell may vanish  
as the darkness clears away.  
Alleluia, Alleluia,  
Alleluia, Lord Most High!

***The Birth of Jesus, John Michael Talbot (The Birth of Jesus)***

This is how the birth of Jesus came to be  
When His mother, Mary, was engaged to Joseph in Galilee  
But before they came together she was found with child  
And Joseph, being a just man, decided to divorce her quietly  
Such was his intention, when an angel of God appeared saying,  
“Joseph Son of David, have no fear!  
It is by the Holy Spirit that she has conceived  
She will give birth to a son and give him the name Jesus”

Singing Alleluia! Singing Glory to God on high!  
Singing Alleluia! Singing Glory to God in the highest!

All of this happened to fulfill the Word  
That the Lord had spoken through the prophet Isaiah  
That the virgin shall be with child and give birth to a son  
And they shall call Him Emmanuel  
A name which means God is with us.

Singing Alleluia! Singing Glory to God on high!  
Singing Alleluia! Singing Glory to God in the highest!

## ***Cry of A Tiny Babe, Bruce Cockburn (Nothing But a Burning Light)***

Mary grows a child without the help of a man  
Joseph get upset because he doesn't understand  
Angel comes to Joseph in a powerful dream  
Says "God did this and you're part of his scheme"  
Joseph comes to Mary with his hat in his hand  
Says "forgive me I thought you'd been with some other man"  
She says "what if I had been -- but I wasn't anyway and guess what  
I felt the baby kick today"

*Like a stone on the surface of a still river  
Driving the ripples on forever  
Redemption rips through the surface of time  
In the cry of a tiny babe*

The child is born in the fullness of time  
Three wise astrologers take note of the signs  
Come to pay their respects to the fragile little king  
Get pretty close to wrecking everything  
'Cause the governing body of the whole land  
Is that of Herod, a paranoid man  
Who when he hears there's a baby born King of the Jews  
Sends death squads to kill all male children under two  
But that same bright angel warns the parents in a dream,  
And they head out for the border and get away clean  
There are others who know about this miracle birth  
The humblest of people catch a glimpse of their worth  
For it isn't to the palace that the Christ child comes  
But to shepherds and street people, hookers and bums  
And the message is clear if you have ears to hear  
That forgiveness is given for your guilt and your fear  
It's a Christmas gift you don't have to buy  
There's a future shining in a baby's eyes

***Let Us the Infant Greet*, traditional English Carol,  
Loreena McKennitt (To Drive the Cold Winter Away)**

Let us the Infant greet,  
In worship before Him fall,  
And let us pay Him homage meet,  
On this His Festival

Let us to the Infant sing,  
And bring Him of gifts rich store,  
Let us honour our Infant King,  
With praise for evermore.

Let us to the Infant kneel,  
And love Him with faithful love,  
And let our joyous anthems peal,  
For Him who reigns above.

Glad hymns in the Infant's laud,  
Sing we to Him while we may,  
In heaven where He is throned as God,  
Our service He will pay.

Be we to the Infant true,  
While we are dwelling on mould,  
And He will give us our wages due,  
A crown of purest gold.

***“O Holy Night,” Sara Groves (O Holy Night)***

O, holy night, the stars are brightly shining  
It is the night of our dear Savior's birth  
Long lay the world in sin and error pining  
Till He appeared and the soul felt its worth  
A thrill of hope, the weary world rejoices  
Yonder breaks a new and glorious morn  
Oh, fall on your knees and hear the angels' voices  
Singing, O, night divine

Truly He taught us to love one another  
His law is love and His gospel is peace  
Chains shall He break for the slave is our brother  
And in His name all oppression will cease

Sweet hymns of joy in grateful chorus raise we  
Let all within us praise His holy name  
O, Christ is the Lord, O, praise His name forever  
His power and glory proclaim

Shining Star, jingle bells  
Come to the earth to save our souls

O, Lord when You came to the earth  
O, my soul, my soul felt it's worth  
O, my soul, my soul felt a thrill of hope  
For yonder breaks a new and glorious morn

O, fall on your knees and hear the angels' voices  
Singing, O, night divine  
Singing, O, night, O, this holy night  
Singing, O, night divine

## ***Peace on Earth, U2 (All That You Can't Leave Behind)***

Heaven on Earth, we need it now  
I'm sick of all of this hanging around  
Sick of sorrow, sick of the pain  
I'm sick of hearing again and again  
That there's gonna be peace on Earth

Where I grew up  
There weren't many trees  
Where there was, we'd tear them down  
And use them on our enemies  
They say that what you mock  
Will surely overtake you  
And you become a monster  
So the monster will not break you

And it's already gone too far  
Who said that if you go in hard, you  
won't get hurt?  
Jesus, can you take the time  
To throw a drowning man a line?  
Peace on Earth

Tell the ones who hear no sound  
Whose sons are living in the ground  
Peace on Earth  
No who's or why's  
No one cries, like a mother cries  
For peace on Earth  
She never got to say goodbye

To see the colour in his eyes  
Now he's in the dirt  
Peace on Earth

They're reading names out over the  
radio  
All the folks, the rest of us won't get to  
know  
Sean and Julia, Garreth, Ann and  
Breda  
Their lives are bigger than any big idea

Jesus, can you take the time  
To throw a drowning man a line?  
Peace on Earth  
To tell the ones who hear no sound  
Whose sons are living in the ground  
Peace on Earth

Jesus, in the song you wrote  
The words are sticking in my throat  
Peace on Earth  
Hear it every Christmas time  
But hope and history won't rhyme  
So, what's it worth?  
This peace on Earth  
Peace on Earth  
Peace on Earth  
Peace on Earth

***“O Come, O Come, Emmanuel,”* Six Pence None the Richer**  
**(Dawn of Grace)**

O come, O come, Emmanuel  
And ransom captive Israel  
That mourns in lonely exile here  
Until the Son of God appear  
Rejoice, rejoice, Emmanuel  
Shall come to thee, O Israel

O come, Thou Day-Spring  
Come and cheer  
Our spirits by Thine advent here  
Disperse the gloomy clouds of night  
And death's dark shadows put to flight  
Rejoice, rejoice, Emmanuel  
Shall come to thee, o Israel

Oh, come, Desire of nations, bind  
In one the hearts of all mankind;  
Oh, bid our sad divisions cease,  
And be yourself our King of Peace.  
Rejoice! Rejoice! Emmanuel  
Shall come to you, O Israel!



***The Lamb Personified, a poem by WRL Haley***

Three men on a hill to be crucified;  
    one spat out anger and spit forth hate  
    while the one more humble lived to see heaven's gate.  
The Man in the middle, a kingship denied,  
    (at least by the screaming Jews at His feet)  
    was beaten til his blood seemed to fall down in sheets.  
The Christ, in anguish, to His Father cried  
    "Abba! Take now this cup from Your Son!  
    "But not My will, Father, let Yours be done."  
With a parting breath the world's Savior died  
    The temple veil once whole now rent in half,  
    the ransomed cast lots, and in ignorance laughed.

On a December day at Christmas tide  
    We remember a baby born  
    Let us remember He was a sheep to be shorn;  
    For to be born on this earth meant He had to be killed  
    To follow a plan the Almighty God willed;  
    This plan saves the world though the world knows Him not  
    At Christmas tide too often, Christ's purpose we've forgot.

***O Sacred Head, Now Wounded*, Bernard of Clairvaux  
(2<sup>nd</sup> Chapter of Acts, Hymns)**

O sacred Head, now wounded, with grief and shame weighed down,  
Now scornfully surrounded with thorns, Thine only crown;  
How pale Thou art with anguish, with sore abuse and scorn!  
How does that visage languish, which once was bright as morn!

What Thou, my Lord, hast suffered, was all for sinners' gain;  
Mine, mine was the transgression, but Thine the deadly pain.  
Lo, here I fall, my Savior! 'Tis I deserve Thy place;  
Look on me with Thy favor, vouchsafe to me Thy grace.

What language shall I borrow to thank Thee, dearest friend,  
For this Thy dying sorrow, Thy pity without end?  
O make me Thine forever, and should I fainting be,  
Lord, let me never, never outlive my love to Thee.

***Salvation Is Created*, Paul Tchesnokoff (Russian)**

Salvation is created in midst of the earth, O God!... Alleluia!

**From *Messiah*, G.F. Handel  
(Academy of Ancient Music: Hogwood)**

*Worthy Is The Lamb*—Revelation 5:12. Worthy is the Lamb that was slain to receive power, and riches, and wisdom, and strength, and honour, and glory, and blessing. 13. . . . Blessing, and honour, glory and power, be unto Him that sitteth upon the throne, and unto the Lamb for ever and ever.

Amen.

**“Of the Father’s Love Begotten”, ca 5th cent  
John Michael Talbot (The Birth of Jesus)**

1. Of the Father's love begotten  
Ere the worlds began to be,  
He is Alpha and Omega,  
He the Source, the Ending He,  
Of the things that are, that have been,  
And that future years shall see  
Evermore and evermore.

2. Oh, that birth forever blessed  
When the Virgin, full of grace,  
By the Holy Ghost conceiving,  
Bare the Savior of our race,  
And the Babe, the world's Redeemer,  
First revealed His sacred face  
Evermore and evermore.

5. Christ, to Thee, with God the Father,  
And Holy Spirit, to Thee  
Hymn and chant and high thanksgiving  
And unwearied praises be,  
Honor, glory, and dominion,  
And eternal victory  
Evermore and evermore. Alleluia, Alleluia!

**“Joy to the Word”, David Crowder Band (Oh For Joy)**

Joy to the World, the Lord is come!  
Let earth receive her King;  
Let every heart prepare Him room  
And Heaven and nature sing  
And Heaven and nature sing  
And Heaven, and Heaven, and nature sing

He rules the world with truth and grace  
And makes the nations prove  
The glories of His righteousness  
And wonders of His love  
And wonders of His love  
And wonders, wonders, of His love

Oh for joy lift up your voice  
For Christ has come the Christ has come  
Let the whole world see the Lord  
Christ has come the Christ has come  
Christ has come

**“Begin and Never Cease” by the Oh Hellos**  
**(An Oh Hellos Family Christmas Album)**

While shepherds watched their flocks by night  
All seated on the ground  
The angel of the Lord came down  
And glory shone around  
"Fear not, " said he, for mighty dread  
Had seized their troubled minds  
"Glad tidings of great joy I bring,  
To you and all mankind!"

O tidings of comfort and joy, comfort and joy  
O tidings of comfort and joy

"To you in David's town this day  
Is born of David's line  
The Savior, who is Christ the Lord,  
And this shall be the sign:  
The Heavenly Babe you there shall find  
To human view displayed  
And meanly wrapped in swathing bands  
And in a manger laid"

O tidings of comfort and joy, comfort and joy  
O tidings of comfort and joy

Noel! Noel!  
Noel! Noel!  
Born is the King of Israel!  
O come, let us adore Him!  
O come, let us adore Him, Christ the Lord!

"All glory be to God on high,  
And to the earth be peace!  
Good will henceforth from God to man:  
Begin and never cease!"

## **A concluding prayer: “The ‘O Antiphons’” from the 8th century**

O Wisdom of our God Most High,  
guiding creation with power and love:  
come to teach us the path of knowledge!

O Leader of the House of Israel,  
giver of the Law to Moses on Sinai:  
come to rescue us with your mighty power!

O Root of Jesse’s stem,  
sign of God’s love for all his people:  
come to save us without delay!

O Key of David,  
opening the gates of God’s eternal Kingdom:  
come and free the prisoners of darkness!

O Radiant Dawn,  
splendor of eternal light, sun of justice:  
come and shine on those who dwell in darkness and in the  
shadow of death.

O King of all nations and keystone of the Church:  
come and save man, whom you formed from the dust!

O Emmanuel, our King and Giver of Law:  
come to save us, Lord our God!

*When the song of the angels is stilled.  
When the star in the sky is gone.  
When the kings and princes are home.  
When the shepherds are back with their flock.  
The work of Christmas begins:*

*To find the lost  
To heal the broken  
To feed the hungry  
To release the prisoner  
To rebuild the nations  
To bring peace among all  
To make music in the heart*

*Howard Thurman*

