Dear friends,

I would like to welcome you all to our Christmas celebration, especially those of you who are visiting CTK. I hope you stay with us.

Mary gave birth to a son, her firstborn. She wrapped him in swaddling clothes and laid him in a manger because there was no room for them in the inn.

At Christmas, we tend to romanticize the manger. We turn it into something beautiful and heavenly. Look at our own manager, with golden fabric and beautiful flowers – a First Century birthing suite. Who wouldn't want to be born there?

But a real manger just isn't like that. The real manger is cold. Real Manger is dark. Real Manger is dirty. The truth is that Jesus is always born in the manger. That is the message of Christ, born in a real manger.

No matter how cold your heart is, Jesus is willing to be born there. No matter how dark your heart is, Jesus is willing to be born there. No matter dirty your heart is, or how sinful your life has been, Jesus is willing to come in, enter and clean your heart.

As you sit down today, you may feel you are not worthy enough, you may feel distant from God or that you feel divided and polarized with what is going on around us. Yes! Jesus wants to be born in your heart. Welcome Jesus today!

In the first reading prophet Isaiah summarized Christmas for us: “For to us a child is born, to us a son is given.” Centuries before the birth of Christ, Isaiah prophesized about the birth of the Savior.

“For unto us a child is born” These are beautiful words. It speaks about Jesus' humanity. That our God will be born just like us, in the form of a babe. That he will grow into a teenager and an adult just like us. There are many expressions about the mystery of the incarnation. 'The word was made flesh' or 'God pitched his tent in our midst.'

My favorite is “God has moved into our neighborhood.” He lives next door. He is just like one of us. Why?

Because He could love us and we could love Him just like one of us. That is our God. As St. Paul would say, “Though He was in the form of God, He did not count equality with God, something to be grasped, rather He emptied Himself taking the form of a slave, being born in human likeness.”

Isaiah further described who this God is going to be: “And he will be called Wonderful, Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace.”
“And His name will be called…” “Wonderful” Wonderful describes who He is, and that what He does, will be called “Wonderful.” I love that definition! Jesus is extremely good! Not just kind of good, or occasionally good, but extremely good all the time!

Jesus is wonderful. Other words that define wonderful are that He is Admirable, amazing, astonishing, astounding, awe-inspiring, brilliant, fabulous, fantastic, incredible, magnificent, marvelous, terrific, and so much more. My favorite would be He is awesome or as our kids would say, He is cool!

Dear friends, the God we celebrate at Christmas is an awesome God.

Some manuscripts combine the word “wonderful” with the word, “counselor.” All those synonyms we can place in front of the word Counselor to describe who Jesus is. “Counselor” expresses a distinct attribute, or quality. It is expressive of great wisdom, and of qualifications to guide and direct the human race.

We have in our midst today an awesome God who will guide us in to the way of peace.

Our God is a “Mighty God…” That our God is powerful. There is nothing that is impossible with Him. As we sit in prayer, we may feel, ‘I can’t do it, or it is impossible.’

No! Our God is powerful and there is nothing impossible for Him. He can do it!

And lastly, Isaiah calls God of Christmas as “Everlasting Father” Our God brings with him fatherly qualities- he is loving he is forgiving; he provides for us and he is there always to embrace us.”

I would like you to look at the creche today and know that our God is wonderful or awesome.

He is our counsellor- a guide who will direct us in our challenging world, He is a mighty God and Prince of peace.
At this time, I would like to ask you to close your eyes and contemplate with me.

Our lights will be dimmed now. We all have held a child in our hands. I invite you to hold the new born Babe of Bethlehem in your arms. Bring in your imagination. Hold the baby Jesus in your arms right now.

Spend some time holding baby Jesus. Look into His eyes and ears. What do you want to tell him? I invite you to speak to him from your heart – tell him what aches you? Tell him your deepest desire? You may open your eyes now.

Two thousand years ago, Mary held the child Jesus in her arms. She wondered what this child is going to be? How is He going to accomplish all that promised by God? What do all this mean?
I invite you to join Phyllis as music director as she sings that one of my favorite hymns “Mary did you know?”

It captures the message of Christmas.

Mary did you know that your baby boy would one day walk on water? Mary did you know that your baby boy would save our sons and daughters?

Did you know that your baby boy has come to make you new? This child that you've delivered, will soon deliver you.
Mary did you know that your baby boy will give sight to a blind man? Mary did you know that your baby boy will calm a storm with his hand?
Did you know that your baby boy has walked where angels trod? When you kiss your little baby, you kiss the face of God.

Mary did you know? Mary did you know? Mary did you know?
Mary did you know? Mary did you know? Mary did you know?

The blind will see, the deaf will hear, the dead will live again. The lame will leap, the dumb will speak, the praises of the lamb.

Mary did you know that your baby boy is Lord of all creation? Mary did you know that your baby boy would one day rule the nations?

Did you know that your baby boy is heaven's perfect lamb? That sleeping child you're holding is the great I am.

Mary did you know? Mary did you know? Mary did you know?
Mary did you know? Mary did you know? Mary did you know?