

Do Not Be Afraid
Christmas Monologues 2020
Written and prepared by Judi Harwig

This Christmas service is easily shared online, on Zoom or in person socially distanced or not. It is flexible and adaptable for every circumstance. There are a series of monologues or short exchanges that allow for spacing of participants, or individual recordings. There is a short exchange between Joseph and the Angel. It is possible that these two characters could be co-located if this makes the technology smoother.

There are suggested carols for the congregation and a soloist may be appropriate for *Mary Did You Know*. The primary theme is the message of the angel: *Do not be afraid!* What good news this is for the world at this time.

Participants are:

- Worship Leader
- Angel
- Mary
- Joseph
- Innkeeper
- Shepherds

Worship Leader: Welcome and prayer

Angel: You know, as angels, you might think that we have a fairly good idea of what is going on ... that we'd be insiders to God's plans, as it were.

But 2000 or so years ago – we were astounded by God's plan. Absolutely astounded!!

People weren't getting the idea that God loves EVERYBODY. Nor did they seem to understand that God wanted humans to love and care for all people.

So God decided to come to earth, in the form of a human, Jesus.

He didn't come in a splash of glory – he came as a baby who grew to be a man, showing everybody God's love and mercy.

And God decided that a young girl – Mary – would be the one to give birth to Jesus. ...

(sound incredulous for next sentence)

The whole thing rested on the answer of this teenage girl.

(pause)

The first thing we angels usually have to say when we visit people is, “Do not be afraid!”

Do not be afraid?? - I tell you – she may not have been – But **I** was!

What if it all went wrong?

What if Mary says, “No.” After all it was asking a lot of a young girl.

Mary:

I wanted to say no to God. I was not ready to become a mum. I’m too young. Joseph and I are betrothed but not married yet. It’s all too soon, and I wanted to say no. No to having a baby, no to motherhood, no to the gossip that would surely begin the moment the bump began to show. No to the people who would talk about me, turn away from me, and call me names behind my back or shout abuse to my face. No to all these things and more.

I wanted to say no because I am just a young girl with no money, no status, no nothing, and surely God would want someone more important than me to bear the child. Why doesn’t God pick someone who could give him a comfortable life of privilege, which is beyond what is possible for Joseph and me?

I wanted to say no because I’m not sure how Joseph will react to the news I am pregnant. We haven’t even kissed and he might disown me and turn his back on me and the baby. What can I say? “Hey Joseph, I’m pregnant and going to have a baby. Don’t worry though, this will be God’s son.” I mean, what man would believe me – even I wouldn’t believe me with that story!

I wanted to say no because I was afraid. I mean, giving birth to God’s son is not an everyday occurrence. That’s why I wanted to say no.

But how could I say no to the Holy God, the God Almighty? How could I say no to the God who has brought down kings and emperors and mighty armies? How could I say no to a God who brought my people out of slavery and into the land of promise?

How could I say no to a God who knows my heart and mind and circumstances? How could I say no to a God who has surely blessed me and honoured me in this way? How could I say no to God who loves me and cares for me and promises to watch over me.

How can anyone stand in the presence of God and say no, when asked personally to be the one to do this favour.

So I said yes. Yes to pain, yes to struggle, yes to God's good news for the world.

Suggested song: Mary Did You Know

Angel: I'm off to see Joseph. He is afraid to take Mary as his wife because she is already pregnant. He worries about the shame and the stigma – but he loves Mary and doesn't want to hurt her. He doesn't know what to do.

Joseph: I've had enough! This would try the patience of a saint and I am not a saint – just an ordinary man minding my own business. I'm a man of principle – trying to do my best. People appreciate good workmanship and I do good work – I am one of the most respected tradesmen of the area – a solid member of the community. And now this – what will people say?
Mary – the woman I am engaged to – is going to have a baby – AND IT'S NOT MINE. I will have to call the wedding off – I'll do it quietly though – no sense in kicking up more of a fuss than absolutely necessary. *(based on Good Enough p 208 / 209 Candles and Conifers: Resources for All Saints' and Advent (c) Ruth Burgess 2005 Wild Goose Publications)*

(Angel joins Joseph)

Angel: Joseph. Joseph. Do not be afraid to take Mary as your wife.

Joseph: But ..

Angel: The baby is God's baby and God wants you to name the baby Jesus.'

Joseph: God's Baby?

Angel: Gods Baby.

Joseph: God's trusting ME to raise God's baby???

Angel: Yes

Joseph: *(to Mary who is offstage – calling out)* Mary we're going to have a baby

Suggested carol: O Come All Ye Faithful

Angel: I hope they will be ok on the road. I worry about them. The hope of the whole world is dependent on them.

If in person, incidental music to briefly play as angel leaves and Mary comes

Mary: How stupid. Why do we have to have a census now? I don't want to go to Bethlehem. It's a long way to walk. And as for suggestions of riding on a donkey – at 8 ½ months pregnant – it's not going to happen. I'll just have to walk – swollen feet and all...

Suggested carol: O Little Town of Bethlehem

Joseph: At last. I thought we'd never get here. Mary is so tired and I think the baby could come any minute. There is no room anywhere in the town – there is only one more place to try.
(looking at innkeeper) Do you have any room? My wife is about to have a baby.

Innkeeper: I'm sorry mate. Everywhere is full. There is absolutely no room in the inn. But I tell you what – you can sleep in some straw in the stable. It will be warm and dry – and when the baby comes the little tyke can sleep in one of the mangers – the feed trough.

Suggested carol: Away in a Manger

Angel: Here I am again. I need to tell some more people to not be afraid. Shepherds. I don't know what God is thinking. Shepherds, rough, dirty and smelly. Not the ideal visitors for a newborn. Oh well – God is God and I am not so I had better do my 'do not be afraid' bit again. *(pause and take a deep breath)*

“Do not be afraid. I have some very good news for you—news that will make everyone happy. Today your Savior was born in David's town. He is the Messiah, the Lord. This is how you will know him: You will find a baby wrapped in pieces of cloth and lying in a manger. Praise to God in heaven, and on earth let there be peace to the people who please him.”

Suggested carol: Hark the Herald Angels sing

Shepherd: Who would have thought? Angels coming to see shepherds? I tell you I was scared to start off with but then such good news. My friends and I are just off to see the baby – and the parents of course. ... Who would have thought? Angels appearing to me??

Suggested carol: While shepherds watched their flocks by night

Angel: Later on some wise ones from the east came to see Jesus. I didn't have to tell them not to be afraid. They were curious about the special star that had appeared in the sky. They took their time – no sense rushing things – They gave the family great presents too. Gold frankincense and myrrh. Maybe some other presents – baby clothes, nappies and a casserole would have been more immediately useful but the gold, frankincense and myrrh helped the family escape from Herod. *(pause)*

I've spent the last little while afraid – scared witless if you want to know the truth – but God had a plan and it all worked out. There's more to come of course. Jesus is going to have lots of adventures, he's going to stir up trouble and give the authorities a headache because he **KNOWS** God – the God of love and peace, mercy, justice and compassion.

I've learned not to be afraid and I am going to say it one more time.

Do not be afraid.

Do not be afraid to let God into your heart.

Do not be afraid to be compassionate and kind.

Do not be afraid to stand up for the downtrodden.

Do not be afraid to love – because God is a God of love.

Suggested carol: Silent Night

Worship leader: Benediction