

First Christian Church

(Disciples of Christ)

Morehead, Kentucky

*In support of
Morehead's Sesquicentennial Celebration
and the Hometown Holiday Celebration
Presents*



First Christmas Voices

An original drama with
traditional Christmas carols

Script and direction by Mark Etherton
Musical direction by Craig Stephan

December 2, 2006

First Christmas Voices

- Prelude** Choir
"Love Came Down at Christmas"
"Christmas Praise"
- Vignette I -- Morehead at the Union Church**
"Every Valley" Choir
- Vignette II - Bethlehem**
"Angels from the Realms of Glory" Choir
"Be Not Afraid" Dr. Ricky Little
- Vignette III – Morehead at the Union Church**
- Vignette IV – Bethlehem**
"O Little Town of Bethlehem" Choir, Children
"Love Came Down at Christmas" Choir
"Baby, What You Goin' to Be" Children
- Vignette V -Near Bethlehem**
"O Come All Ye Faithful"
Choir, Morehead Union Church

**First Christian Church
(Disciples of Christ)
Morehead, Kentucky**

A BRIEF HISTORY

The history of the Morehead Christian Church dates back many years. The first services of the church, in common with other church organizations of the community were held in the court house. From 1884 to 1887 all church services in the town were intermittent and irregular due to the violence that was common in the community. Dr. Guerant, a Presbyterian minister, finally succeeded in persuading the people of the community to erect a union church building, in which, at stated times, the various groups might hold their services.

The union church building stood on or near the site of the present Christian Church structure. In 1887, Mrs. Phoebe Button and her son, Frank C. Button were sent to Morehead by the Christian Missionary Society as teachers to establish what was called the Morehead Normal School. It was also during this time that Dr. Button devoted himself to firmly establishing the Christian Church in Morehead serving many years as its minister.

Finally, the Christian Church congregation by purchase, came into the possession of the union church building, which, with repairs and alterations, served as its house of worship and teaching until the erection of the present structure in 1925.

First Christmas Voices

Cast

Morehead at the Union Church

Frank Button	Chris McCoy
Phoebe Button	Darlene Perkins
Hattie Bishop	Susan Whidden
Anna Page	Megan Peterson
Rev. Abrams	Mark Etherton
Rev. Foley	Jack Whidden
Rev. Minnich	Ron Walke
Rev. Marcum	David Perkins
1 st Woman	Ginny Etherton
2 nd Woman	Tish Damron

Bethlehem

Shepherd	Leon Smothers
Older Child	Ryan Anderson
1 st Child	Emma Banks
2 nd Child	Harper Anderson
3 rd Child	Haley Banks
4 th Child	Jasarae McKinny
5 th Child	Raven Evans
1 st King	Joe Barrett
2 nd King	Bill Davis

3rd King Wayne Caldwell

Beggar Dianna Walke

Mary Toby Hale

Joseph Jared Cordray

Choir - Natalie Caudill

Kathryn Rogers

Jack Bissell

Bessie Pernell

Dianna Walke

Wayne Caldwell

Hedy Caldwell

Anne Buckner

Leon Smothers

Jessamyn Delgado

Etta McCarty

Jim McCarty

Bill Davis

Ricky Little

Handbell Ringers -

Sarah Chaney

Elizabeth Reffitt

Hedy Caldwell

Wayne Caldwell

Mickey Reffitt

Musical Director - Craig Stephan

I Heard the Bells on Christmas Day

I heard the bells on Christmas day,
Their old familiar carols play,
And wild and sweet the words repeat
Of peace on earth good will to men.

I thought how as the day had come,
The belfries of all Christendom
Had rolled along the unbroken song
Of peace on earth good will to men.

Till, ringing, singing on its way,
The world revolved from night to day,
A voice, a chime, a chant sublime
Of peace on earth good will to men.

Then from each black accursed beast,
The cannons thundered in the East,
And with the sound the carols drowned
Of peace on earth good will to men.

And in despair I bowed my head,
"There is no peace on earth," I said,
"For hate is strong, and mocks the song
Of peace on earth, good will to men."

Yet pealed the bells more loud and deep,
God is not dead, nor does He sleep
The wrong shall fail, the right prevail
With peace on earth good will to men.

Vignette VI - Morehead at the Union Church

"As with Gladness Men of Old" Choir

"We Three Kings" Choir

Vignette VII - Morehead at the Union Church

Vignette VIII - Bethlehem

"The Jesus Gift"

Natalie Caudill & Leon Smothers

Postlude

"Love Came Down at Christmas" Choir

**The audience is encouraged to sing along
with the performers and choir
in the singing of the last carol,
*"I Heard the Bells on Christmas Day"***

Acknowledgements -

Jackie Bailey -
Costume Design and Construction

Dianna Walke, Hedy Caldwell, Lisa Banks -
Costume Construction

Jennifer Anderson -
Photography

Morehead Theater Guild

Jack Whidden -
Set Construction

Scharline & Susan Whidden -
Properties

Robin Mirus

Yvonne Baldwin, Eva Johnston, Linda Bryant
and the CWF -
Church Decoration & Refreshments

The Elves of Pi Kappa Phi

Mark Spear

First Voices of Christmas

(1)

Setting 1 – the Union Church, Morehead, KY --1887

The Characters: Frank Button

Phoebe Button

Hattie Bishop

Anna Page

Rev. Abrams

Rev. Foley

Rev. Minnich

Rev. Marcum

1st Woman

2nd Woman

u

Setting 2 – Bethlehem – the birth of Christ

Shepherd

Other shepherds if needed

Older child

Child 1

Child 2

Other children

Beggar

Other poor people if needed

1st King

2nd King

3rd King

Mary

Joseph

Baby Jesus

Front steps on church --- Bell ringers

Prelude – Bells on the steps ushering the people/congregation in.

24-year-old Frank Button, his mother Phoebe Button, Hattie Bishop, Frank's future 21-year old wife, 4 other men of the church Abrams, Foley, and Minnich, Marcum and Anna Page who plans on entering the Morehead Normal School as a student enter the Union Christian Church.

(Walking down the aisle Frank and Hattie follow Mrs. Button and Anna. The four men follow. It is very cold.)

Love Came Down at Christmas/Christmas Praise sung by a duet/quartet (2)

*Love came down at Christmas,
Love all lovely, love divine;
Love was born at Christmas,
Star and angels gave the sign.*

*As we prepare to celebrate the birth of our Lord,
Let us always remember why He came.
For His birth in Bethlehem was a gift from God to man,
"Thank you Father, for Your perfect gift of Love."*

F M M
P
A
F

*Allelu alleluia, Allelu alleluia, Allelu alleluia, praise the Lord
Allelu alleluia, Allelu alleluia, Allelu alleluia, praise the Lord
Praise the Lord! Allelu alleluia, praise the Lord. Praise the Lord!*

Vignette I

Mrs. Button: Frank, even though we have the warmth of the Christ in our hearts tonight, you'll have to see about the stove. It is cold enough to freeze our breath. Hattie, you and Anna sit over here next to me.

Frank: Morehead winter's are brutal. I hope the Methodists didn't let the fire get too low. Praise God. Good ol' Union Church and good ol' Methodists. The fire still has life in it!

Rev. Abrams: Yep, if you have to share a place of worship, it's good that they keep it warm for us.(Foley, Minnich, and Marcum agree).

Mrs. Button: Frank, remember why the Kentucky Christian Missionary Society has sent us.

Frank: I think we all know why we were sent, Mother. Let us pray. Dear Lord, we thank thee for this opportunity to bring your good news to Morehead. Here on this Christmas Day, let us have the strength to bring the message of love and peace to a place that has been the center of violence. Oh, God, Morehead needs your gentle guiding hand to stop the lawlessness that has enveloped it. Its people cry out for your aid and we as your servants have come hear to do your work. We desperately ask for your presence in our every move. In Jesus name we pray.
Amen.

Abrams: Tell us about your plans, Frank.

Frank: I believe God has lead Mother and me here to begin a school. Mother and I will teach and our students will be the sheep that carry the message of peace to these hills. Anna Page will be our first student.

Frank
Minnich
H P A
↑
F

Anna: The first of many I hope.

(3)

Mrs Button: Beyond that it is our hope that a church rise from this place and can be a center for Christians to come and worship, Christ's disciples will gather here and help the strong in spirit overcome the rough and lawless. It will be a beacon even a guiding star *standing* that will remind the people about the peace that is found in following the Messiah.

Shepherd: (overlaps the words of Mrs. Button) The star will be a beacon that will remind the people about the peace that is found in following the Messiah.

{**Every Valley** is sung by the choir}

*Every valley shall be exalted and every mountain made low
And the crooked straight and the rough places plane
For the mouth of the Lord hath spoken it.*

Vignette II

*Jesus - born
at
Bethlehem*
Shepherd : What a curious brightness that hangs there in the night. It shines on a dark and violent world. Bethlehem, you are small and insignificant ~~and lay below me~~. What is your contribution for this dark and foreboding world. More hunger? More pain? More death? But this light. An angel has appeared that tells of a Messiah being born this night to bring peace to a broken world. An angel hanging in the brightness of the star. What am I to believe? I am just a lowly herder of sheep. Yet, a Messiah, the angel says, that will be an answer to a violent and lawless land. Star, you seem to know something that I do not. And it does lift my heart. Shine on - light the dark corners of our land and our hearts. Would that it was an omen to usher in a new way of life of abundance, of peace, of joy, of light on this very night.

- moves center
looks at star.

{**Angels from the Realms of Glory/Be Not Afraid** is sung by Quartet/Solo}

*Angels from the realms of glory, wing your flight o'er all the earth.
Ye who sang creations story, now proclaim Messiah's birth.
Come and worship, come and worship. Worship Christ the newborn King.*

*Be not afraid, Shepherds
Be not afraid.
I bring you the most joyful news you've ever heard.
And it for everyone, but 'specially for shepherds.
Yes it's for everyone, hearing this sound right now.
Everyone everywhere, but specially for shepherds.
Yes it's for everyone, the whole world around.*

*For Jesus the Messiah, the King
Has been born tonight in Bethlehem.*

You will find the baby, wrapped up in a blanket
Lying in a manger filled with straw.

(4)

And there's no other like him.
They will call him Jesus.

... will stand in awe.

Shepherds in the fields abiding, watching o'er your flocks by night.
God with us is now residing, yonder shines the infant light.
Come and worship, come and worship. Worship Christ the newborn King.

Vignette III

news to Frank

Rev. Foley: You know, Frank, in a way, we're like the shepherds that were awaiting the coming of the Messiah. We know that something great is in store for Morehead because of the message that we can bring to the people, but we cannot be afraid like the shepherds were when they received the news of the miracle that was to happen. We have to be bold.

Hattie: Yes, you and your Mother came here to help peace take hold. Even though Morehead is small, troubles are everywhere. People are fighting in our streets. Hate is strong in our families. Men, women, and children are afraid to worship and learn. Jesus and education is the answer, and your presence here will help bring His message to the people. It is the answer to our prayers. Though the task be great, we cannot afford to be afraid to do the work of the Lord. *Children enter. (From Behind)*

Frank: We have much work to do in this small town. Something great is about to happen

Segue way to Bethlehem -- Vignette IV

An older child: (Line laps over Frank Button) Bethlehem is a small town. Something great is about to happen.

Another child: In our little bitty town? What have you heard?

Older child: A king is coming.

All children: A king? Coming to Bethlehem?

Older child: Yes. You see that bright star? That's supposed to be a sign that He's coming.

FMM
F

name seated
name stand

Enters up the aisle

Another child: When?

(5)

Older child: Maybe tonight.

Phew

{O Little Town of Bethlehem/Love Came Down at Christmas is sung}

O little town of Bethlehem, how still we see the lie.

Above thy deep and dreamless sleep, the silent stars go by.

Yet in thy dark streets shineth the everlasting Light.

The hopes and fear of all the years are met in thee tonight.

Love came down at Christmas,

Love all lovely, love divine;

Love was born at Christmas,

Star and angels gave the sign. *King, exit from behind*

Younger children: Can we see him? Where will he be? Will he bring gifts for us?

Older child: It's kind of a mystery. I don't exactly understand. But the king is supposed to be a baby.

Child: Baby? You mean a king younger than me?

Older child: That star is supposed to lead us to a stable where the baby will be born.

Child: A king born in a stable in Bethlehem? No gifts for us then.

Older child: The light is his gift. He is supposed to be a light to the world.

{Baby, What You Goin' To Be is sung by the children}

Baby, lyin' in a manger, slumberin' so sweetly, what You goin' to be?

Baby, all the world is watchin', all the world awaits to see. What will You be?

Baby, sleepin' in a stable, underneath the heaven, what You goin' to say?

Baby, did You bring the Good News? Did You come to light our way?

Baby, gazin' at the cattle, lookin' at the shepherds, what You goin' to do?

Baby, will You be the Master? Will You bring the kingdom too?

Baby, hope of all the people, what You come to do here? What You come to say?

Baby, can You be the Savior, come to save the world one day?

Baby, lyin' in a manger, will You save the world one day?

*Hi! Stars
up, - goes to
audience
to say.*

*Children exit down
left aisle*

Vignette V

*Right side. This enter
↓ say line in the front.* (6)

1st King: The star has lead us to Bethlehem. We're very close to finding the Messiah.

2nd King: Ask the beggar if he knows where the king is?

3rd King: Listen, friend, we're travelers from the East. We've been following that star in hopes that it will lead us to the Messiah. It has brought us to Bethlehem. Do you have news that can help us find Him?

Leave not for a Messiah or you.
Beggar: Messiah? Your eyes do not betray you. I am poor and hungry. ~~I care not for a Messiah or you.~~ Bethlehem is a cruel place. But you can make my life easier. A coin? What can you give me?

2nd King: Here is money for your bread, but more importantly, here is wealth for ^{your} soul. If you believe, the Messiah will satisfy your every want. This place and all places will find peace and harmony if the people only believe.

{Segue way to Morehead}

Mrs. Button: (Her voice overlaps the 2nd King's last line) This place and all places will find peace and harmony if the people only believe.

{O Come All Ye Faithful is sung ----- Could this be sung by everybody in the company}?

*Let us adore Him! Let us adore Him!
Yea Lord we greet Thee, born this happy morning.
Jesus to Thee be all glory given.
Word of the Father, now in flesh appearing.
O come let us adore Him. O come let us adore Him. O come let us adore Him, Christ the Lord.*

*O come all the faithful, joyful and triumphant.
O come ye, o come ye to Bethlehem.
Come and behold Him, born the king of angels
O come let us adore Him. O come let us adore Him. O come let us adore Him, Christ the Lord.*

*Sing choirs of angels, sing in exultation. Bright hosts of heaven, heaven above.
Glory! Glory! Glory in the highest! Let us adore Him!
O come let us adore Him, Christ the Lord.*

*Let us adore Him! Let us adore Him!
For He alone is worthy. For He alone is worthy. For He alone is worthy, Christ the Lord.*

*O come let us adore Him, Christ the Lord.
Christ the Lord*

He go back.

B 3rd K - 2 1

3 B 2 1

Hand

Di moves.

He goes back to church.

Vignette VI

(7)

Frank Button: Hattie, you said that we could not be afraid. Despite being beset by the fighting in our streets, let's ring out God's word. Let's call the faithful to this church. We may share it with four other congregations but our faith is strong and we will endure.

Rev. Minnich: Like the men of old, like the wise men whose faith guided them to follow a star, let our faith be the guiding light to build a strong church.

Rev. Marcum: Yes, this church will grow based upon the foundation laid 1900 years ago and tonight. We are committed to have an impact on Morehead. Let's worship him together at the First Christian Church.

(As with Gladness Men of Old/ We Three Kings)

As with gladness men of old, did the guiding star behold.

As with joy they hailed its light, leading onward beaming bright.

So true Morning Star, may we evermore your splendor see. We three kings of Orient are. Bearing gifts we traverse afar.

Field and fountain, moor and mountain, following yonder star.

As with joyful steps they sped to that lowly manger bed.

There to bend the knee before, One whom heaven and earth adore

*Glorious now behold him arise. Christ and God and sacrifice
Prayer and praising, voices raising worshipping God on high.*

O star of wonder, star of night, star with royal beauty bright.

Westward leading, still proceeding, guide us to thy perfect light.

So true Morning Star may we evermore thy splendor see.

O star of wonder, star of night, star with royal beauty bright.

Westward leading, still proceeding, guide us to thy perfect light.

Vignette VII

{Two women, relatively poor, enter through the center aisle from the back of the church.}

1st woman: We've got to meet Mr. Button. They're talking in the streets about him and his mother.

Frank: I'm Frank Button, and this is my mother. This is my friend Hattie Bishop, our first student, Anna Page and the Reverends, Foley, Minnich, Abrams and Marcum. What can we do for you, ladies?

Ken P

Go back

running
Tish

T F G

2nd woman: Do for us? No, we came here to see what we could do to help your efforts to build your school and church in Morehead?

1st woman: We don't have any money. But we are willing to serve, to work, to be faithful followers.

Mrs Button: You've said that right words and you've come to the right place. All you to do is give that what you have.

{The Jesus Gift is sung by a duet}

Shall I gather emeralds? Shall I bring him gold?

Shall I shower diamonds white-hard, bright-cold?

Shall I spangle jewels like stars above?

Give him laughter, bring peace-filled laughter, offer him warm laughter and love.

Simplest of gifts, gentlest of hearts, kindness He'll use as He leads.

So give Him these gifts, hand Him your hearts.

Honor His birth and you'll need no...

Emeralds nor rubies. Silver nor gold. Neither bring Him diamonds white-hard, bright-cold.

Spangle not rich jewels like stars above.

You'll have laughter, sweet peace-filled laughter. Simple warm laughter and love.

Give him your hearts.

Vignette VIII

{The children, shepherd, beggar, and three kings have been guided to the birth of Jesus at the manger}

1st King: Children, behold the Messiah.

A child: He is a baby, just like we were told – so peaceful, so full of light.

1st King: Yours is the voice of the first Christmas – a baby born this night, a messiah to bring light and peace to the oppressed and downtrodden.

{Segue way back to Morehead}

Frank Button: Let us in 1887, our first Christmas as a Church in Morehead remember in those first voices of Christmas as we rededicate ourselves to the promise of His birth—to bring His light and peace to the oppressed and downtrodden.

*Along with Joseph etc
up the
aisle -*

*children
come from
back -*

{key on First Voices of Christmas}

*Love came down at Christmas,
Love all lovely, love divine;
Love was born at Christmas,
Star and angels gave the sign.*

{Congregational Singing "I Heard the Bells on Christmas Day"}

*I heard the bells on Christmas day, their old familiar carols play,
And wild and sweet the words repeat of peace on earth good will to men.*

*I thought how as the day had come, the belfries of all Christendom
Had rolled along the unbroken song of peace on earth good will to men.*

*Till, ringing, singing on its way, the world revolved from night to day,
A voice, a chime a chant sublime of peace on earth, good will to men!*

*Then from each black accursed beast, the cannons thundered in the East,
And with the sound the carols drowned Of peace on earth, good will to men!*

*And in despair I bowed my head, "There is no peace on earth," I said,
"For hate is strong, and mocks the song of peace on earth, good will to men."*

*Yet pealed the bells more loud and deep, God is not dead, nor does He sleep
The wrong shall fail, the right prevail with peace on earth good will to men.*

Postlude --Organ or Brass

Bells -- on the steps as the congregation(audience) departs.

King The star

Morehead News

Morehead Theatre Guild

Jackie Bailey

Yvonne Baldwin

PIP his

Hedy -

Di } costuming
Etta Jane }

Jack Whidden } Bethlehem
Union Church

Scharlene - ~~stone from~~ stone from
Robert Meyer

members of
CWF
hot cider

Lisa Banks - header

Photograph - Jennifer Anderson
Sound - Robin Marcus

names / music authors / numbers

Raven Evans

Prop list

rig. 1
Frankenw.
Bail of Straw -
bed

Children
Haley
Emma
Haiper
Ryan
Gasman
Raven

Congregation

Craig, Stefan@gmail.com
little@moreheadst.edu

Prelude Early American Strings would be nice - maybe out on the steps
Or flute; harp maybe; bells would be nice - inside where it's warm
Piano as a last resort

Break 3 Family I

Love Came Down at Christmas/Christmas Praise [Opening Scene] Quartet/Duet

Bethlehem Every Valley *exhorted - building* Prophecy of Christ Choir

Vignette I *People coming together to build this church - People like Mary - like*

Morehead Angels From the Realms of Glory/Be Not Afraid Quartet/Solo *Face*

Vignette II *tell the shepherds Be Not Afraid. Go to Morehead - Be Not Afraid of building the*

Morehead O Little Town of Bethlehem/Love Came Down at Christmas [Scene II] Quartet *Church*

Bethlehem Baby, What You Goin' To Be *Morehead is a small town - close to nothing* Children

Vignette III *when something is great of building this about*

Bethlehem O Come All Ye Faithful Choir

Vignette IV *When you go, go calling the faithful*

Morehead As With Gladness Men of Old/We Three Kings Quartet/?

Vignette V *Let us worship together*

The Jesus Gift - *What are the keys -* Duet/?

Vignette VI *Bring your heart -*

Morehead Love Came Down at Christmas [Closing Scene] Quartet

I Heard the Bells on Christmas Day Congregation Tag for choir

Postlude Organ or brass

Bells on the steps

Dec 23