

A vertical poster with a dark blue, starry night sky background. A bright star with a lens flare is positioned in the center, and its light reflects as a shimmering path on a dark surface of water at the bottom. The text is white and centered in the upper half.

# STATIONS OF THE NATIVITY

LOVE WAS BORN ON CHRISTMAS. COME AND SEE.

## **Station 1: In the Beginning**

### ***John 1:1 - 5***

*In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was in the beginning with God. All things came into being through him, and without him not one thing came into being. What has come into being in him was life, and the life was the light of all people. The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness did not overcome it.*

### **Reflection:**

God is telling a story in our lives.  
It's quite a story-  
full of the promises God makes  
and our struggles to trust;  
full of mystery and angels  
with surprising news;  
full of hard endings  
and unexpected new beginnings.

Come, hear the story  
pay attention to the angels' message  
in your heart  
in this place and time.

Then join all creation  
in worshipping the God  
who tells it  
full of grace and truth;  
who comes in Jesus,  
the Word made flesh,  
and makes our story holy.

- Christine Jerrett.

## **Station 2: Gabriel visits Zechariah**

### ***Isaiah 7:14***

*Therefore the Lord himself will give you a sign. Look, the young woman is with child and shall bear a son, and shall name him Immanuel.*

### **Reflection:**

God's plan for you and the world spans enormous amounts of time. If we listen closely, as the prophets of old did, we can sense God's presence and the assurance that He will fulfill His promises.

"Salvation from our enemies" in the Cantic of Zechariah can also mean full relief from those spiritual things that plague our souls: pride, temptations, envy, discontent, and greed, among others.

### **Prayer:**

Glory be to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit, as it was in the beginning, is now, and ever shall be, world without end. Amen.

### Station 3: The Annunciation

#### **Luke 1:26 - 38**

*In the sixth month the angel Gabriel was sent by God to a town in Galilee called Nazareth, to a virgin engaged to a man whose name was Joseph, of the house of David. The virgin's name was Mary. And he came to her and said, 'Greetings, favoured one! The Lord is with you.' But she was much perplexed by his words and pondered what sort of greeting this might be. The angel said to her, 'Do not be afraid, Mary, for you have found favour with God. And now, you will conceive in your womb and bear a son, and you will name him Jesus. He will be great, and will be called the Son of the Most High, and the Lord God will give to him the throne of his ancestor David. He will reign over the house of Jacob for ever, and of his kingdom there will be no end.' Mary said to the angel, 'How can this be, since I am a virgin?' The angel said to her, 'The Holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the Most High will overshadow you; therefore the child to be born will be holy; he will be called Son of God. And now, your relative Elizabeth in her old age has also conceived a son; and this is the sixth month for her who was said to be barren. For nothing will be impossible with God.' Then Mary said, 'Here am I, the servant of the Lord; let it be with me according to your word.' Then the angel departed from her.*

#### **Reflection:**

Each day holds a surprise. But only if we expect it can we see, hear, or feel it when it comes to us. Let's not be afraid to receive each day's surprise, whether it comes to us as sorrow or as joy. It will open a new place in our hearts, a place where we can welcome new friends and celebrate more fully our shared humanity.—Henri J. M. Nouwen

Excerpted from *Icons: The Essential Collection*

## Station 4: Mary Visits Elizabeth

### *Luke 1:39 - 45*

*In those days Mary set out and went with haste to a Judean town in the hill country, where she entered the house of Zechariah and greeted Elizabeth. When Elizabeth heard Mary's greeting, the child leapt in her womb. And Elizabeth was filled with the Holy Spirit and exclaimed with a loud cry, 'Blessed are you among women, and blessed is the fruit of your womb. And why has this happened to me, that the mother of my Lord comes to me? For as soon as I heard the sound of your greeting, the child in my womb leapt for joy. And blessed is she who believed that there would be a fulfilment of what was spoken to her by the Lord.'*

### **Reflection:**

"Mary and Elizabeth were both 'surprised by joy' as CS Lewis might describe it. I admire Elizabeth – her faith and fidelity, her patience, her infectious graciousness to serving God and his plan for her son to be Jesus' herald in the wilderness. And then for Mary – that she should be chosen to be the God bearer. We should seek to be like Mary – carrying Christ with us. But do we? Do others see us carrying Christ within us; in the way we relate to one another and to God? Do we see Christ in others? Our mission is to carry Christ with us – he expects nothing less and he is willing and indeed wants to be within us. Elizabeth and Mary are Christ's first missionaries and we have this charge to continue his mission with grace and truth and love." - Canon Ian Woodward

## Station 5: The Angel Visits Joseph

### **Matthew 1:18 - 25**

*Now the birth of Jesus the Messiah took place in this way. When his mother Mary had been engaged to Joseph, but before they lived together, she was found to be with child from the Holy Spirit. Her husband Joseph, being a righteous man and unwilling to expose her to public disgrace, planned to dismiss her quietly. But just when he had resolved to do this, an angel of the Lord appeared to him in a dream and said, 'Joseph, son of David, do not be afraid to take Mary as your wife, for the child conceived in her is from the Holy Spirit. She will bear a son, and you are to name him Jesus, for he will save his people from their sins.' All this took place to fulfil what had been spoken by the Lord through the prophet:*

*'Look, the virgin shall conceive and bear a son,  
and they shall name him Emmanuel',  
which means, 'God is with us.' When Joseph awoke from sleep, he did as the angel of the Lord commanded him; he took her as his wife, but had no marital relations with her until she had borne a son; and he named him Jesus.*

### **Poem: "The Hands of Joseph"**

I see the hands of Joseph.  
Back and forth along bare wood they move.  
There is worry in those working hands,  
sorting out confusing thoughts with every stroke.  
"How can this be, my beautiful Mary now with child?"  
Rough with deep splinters, these hands,  
small, painful splinters like tiny crosses  
embedded deeply in this choice to stay with her.  
He could have closed his hands to her,  
said, "No" and let her go to stoning.

But, dear Joseph opened both his heart and hands  
to this mother and her child.  
Preparing in these days before  
with working hands  
and wood pressed tight between them.  
It is these rough hands that will open  
and be the first to hold the Child.

I see the hands of John,  
worn from desert raging storms  
and plucking locusts from sand ripped rocks  
beneath the remnant of a Bethlehem star.  
A howling wind like some lost wolf  
cries out beneath the moon,  
or was that John?  
This loneliness,  
enough to make a grown man mad.  
He's waiting for this, God's whisper.  
"Go now. He is coming.  
You have prepared your hands enough.  
Go. He needs your servant hands,  
your cupping hands to lift the water,  
and place his feet upon the path to service and to death.  
Go now, John, and open your hands to him.  
It is time."

I see a fist held tight and fingers blanched to white.  
Prying is no easy task.  
These fingers find a way of pulling back to old positions,  
protecting all that was and is.  
Blanched to white. No openness. All fright.

But then the Spirit comes.  
A holy Christmas dance begins  
and blows between the twisted paths.

This fist opens  
slowly, gently,  
beautifully,  
the twisted fingers letting go.  
Their rock-solid place in line has eased.  
And one by one the fingers lift  
True color is returned  
And through the deepest of mysteries,  
The holiest of holies,  
O longing of longings

Beyond all human imagining, this fist,  
as if awakened from Lazarus' cold stone dream  
reaches out to hold the tiny newborn hand of God.

- written by Catherine Alder  
Posted on *Journey with Jesus*

## Station 6: The Visitation/Magnificat

**Luke 1:46 - 55**

*And Mary said,*

*'My soul magnifies the Lord,*

*and my spirit rejoices in God my Saviour,*

*for he has looked with favour on the lowliness of his servant.*

*Surely, from now on all generations will call me blessed;*

*for the Mighty One has done great things for me,*

*and holy is his name.*

*His mercy is for those who fear him*

*from generation to generation.*

*He has shown strength with his arm;*

*he has scattered the proud in the thoughts of their hearts.*

*He has brought down the powerful from their thrones,*

*and lifted up the lowly;*

*he has filled the hungry with good things,*

*and sent the rich away empty.*

*He has helped his servant Israel,*

*in remembrance of his mercy,*

*according to the promise he made to our ancestors,*

*to Abraham and to his descendants for ever.'*

"Lovers of the world unite  
Bound to Creator's vision, bright  
That even these, our darkest nights  
Become the light, become the light

Fashion all you can create  
That delights the One who incar-  
nates  
And links himself to the same fate  
As we sleepers who must rise to  
wake

Our Hope beyond all Hope did  
come  
To call us each and everyone  
To the surface of our consciousness  
God dwells within and always has

Put our feet back on the ground  
Contemplation's heart resound!  
We're still pursued by Heaven's  
Hound  
O Lover, seek us till we're found

Our Hope beyond all Hope did  
come  
To call us each and everyone  
To the surface of our consciousness  
God dwells within and always has

Tomorrow's children seek our  
hearts  
Will they know who they really  
are?



The center of a thousand stars  
And the breathers of the breath of  
God

Our Hope beyond all Hope did  
come  
To call us each and everyone

To the surface of our consciousness  
God dwells within and always has

This is what we sing at Christmas  
God dwells within and always has”

- Alana Levandoski

## Station 7: The Birth of John the Baptist

### **Luke 1:68 - 80**

*'Blessed be the Lord God of Israel, for he has looked favourably on his people and redeemed them.*

*He has raised up a mighty saviour for us in the house of his servant David, as he spoke through the mouth of his holy prophets from of old, that we would be saved from our enemies and from the hand of all who hate us.*

*Thus he has shown the mercy promised to our ancestors, and has remembered his holy covenant, the oath that he swore to our ancestor Abraham, to grant us that we, being rescued from the hands of our enemies, might serve him without fear, in holiness and righteousness before him all our days.*

*And you, child, will be called the prophet of the Most High; for you will go before the Lord to prepare his ways, to give knowledge of salvation to his people by the forgiveness of their sins.*

*By the tender mercy of our God, the dawn from on high will break upon us, to give light to those who sit in darkness and in the shadow of death, to guide our feet into the way of peace.'*

*The child grew and became strong in spirit, and he was in the wilderness until the day he appeared publicly to Israel.*

### **Poem:**

Beside himself	He remembers
With fidgety hands	Like stooping to tie
A father pouts	A shoe (or
Left alone	Sandal)
While scurrying pans	
Clatter in rooms	To quiet them
For good news	He murmuring writes
That aggravates	A name (like "John")
A mouth zipped	He already knows
Shut	Will be snatched
	From his hand
These coming steps	In expectation
Often sound	Of another name
Like voices calling	He can only
In his head	Sing
Or a desert	
A single word	

## Station 8: Travel to Bethlehem

### *Luke 2:1 - 5*

*In those days a decree went out from Emperor Augustus that all the world should be registered. This was the first registration and was taken while Quirinius was governor of Syria. All went to their own towns to be registered. Joseph also went from the town of Nazareth in Galilee to Judea, to the city of David called Bethlehem, because he was descended from the house and family of David. He went to be registered with Mary, to whom he was engaged and who was expecting a child.*

### **Reflection:**

Sometimes we are asked to do things that we may not have planned or intended to do. Travel was not easy for Joseph and Mary, and perhaps quite inconvenient. But they went anyway, in obedience, as the situation presented itself.

God has a way of turning what seems to be our inconvenience into something very special. Mary and Joseph went to Bethlehem to fulfill the requirements of the census. Bethlehem means "House of bread" or "Place of food." What a perfect description of God's gift of Jesus to the world! The bread of life that we need so much was provided for us in Our Lord and Savior, Jesus.

Our present moment situations often show us what we are to do next if we stay aware of the possibilities. This doesn't mean saying "yes" to everything, but it does mean sometimes doing what may seem inconvenient at the time. Who knows what God will turn it into?

## Station 9: Shepherd's Visited by an Angel

### **Luke 2:8 - 10**

*In that region there were shepherds living in the fields, keeping watch over their flock by night. Then an angel of the Lord stood before them, and the glory of the Lord shone around them, and they were terrified. But the angel said to them, 'Do not be afraid; for see—I am bringing you good news of great joy for all the people:*

### **Poem:**

Says a country legend told every year:  
Go to the barn on Christmas Eve and see  
What the creatures do as that long night tips over.  
Down on their knees they will go, the fire  
Of an old memory whistling through their minds!

I went. Wrapped to my eyes against the cold  
I creaked back the barn door and peered in.  
From town the church bells spilled their midnight music,  
And the beasts listened -  
Yet they lay in their stalls like stone.

Oh the heretics!  
Not to remember Bethlehem,  
Or the start as bright as a sun,  
Or the child born on a bed of straw!  
To know only of the dissolving Now!

Still they drowsed on -  
Citizens of the pure, the physical world,  
They loomed in the dark: powerful  
Of body, peaceful of mind,  
Innocent of history.

Brothers! I whispered. It is Christmas!  
And you are no heretics, but a miracle,  
Immaculate still as when you thundered forth  
On the morning of creation!  
As for Bethlehem, that blazing star

Still sailed the dark, but only looked for me.  
Caught in this life, listening again to its story,  
I curled against some sleepy beast, who nuzzled  
My hair as though I were a child, and warmed me  
The best it could all night

- Mary Oliver

### **Station 10: The Birth of Christ**

#### ***Luke 2:6-7***

*While they were there, the time came for her to deliver her child. And she gave birth to her firstborn son and wrapped him in bands of cloth, and laid him in a manger, because there was no place for them in the inn.*

#### **Prayer:**

Thou shalt know Him when he comes  
not by any din of drums,  
Nor his manners nor his airs,  
nor by anything he wears.  
Thou shalt know him when he comes,  
not by his crown or by his gown,  
But his coming known shall be  
by the holy harmony which his coming makes in thee.  
Thou shalt know him when he comes. Amen.

- Mark Sirett

*O God our Father, whose Word has come among us in the Holy Child of Bethlehem, may the light of faith illumine our hearts and shine in our words and deeds; through him who is Christ our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. Amen.*

*Wishing you and blessed and happy Christmas season.*

