

The Real Christmas part 1



Well, this being the last weekend before Christmas it is time to start talking about what's been going on in Christ's house, eh? At least the particular earthly house of His that I visit on a regular basis- I can't speak for any of the thousands and thousands of other ones around the world. Aside from advent, which began at the beginning of the month, the real show began last weekend. At the, er, *other branch* of this house that I attend. That is to say, the worship service including the choir was on tour with two stops. I did not take part in the choir last weekend as I am also involved in children's ministry and I needed to be at my usual place. That was okay because although the other church is larger, the stage is smaller so not all the members of the choir would fit.

Since I wasn't there I'll just skip ahead to this weekend. We sang three choir pieces, all of which had to be memorized, and five worship songs, which the entire congregation sings. One of the songs was from a previous year so I more or less had it memorized already, meaning only two songs for me to work on for the last month. One of the interesting things to note about this choir is the altos seriously outnumber the sopranos and the tenors outnumber the basses. The women of course outnumber the men. Now I couldn't do anything about the altos vs. the sopranos, but as a lyric baritone (tenor II) I dutifully stepped down to the bass part. This wasn't at all unfamiliar territory since I had sung baritone in choir for years before my tenor range opened up. The choir songs were The Night that Christ was Born, a strange up-tempo rendition of Hark the Herald Angels Sing, and Light of the World. Now I said that we did one of these songs before so I knew it (the first one I listed), but really we did two of them before. The other one though had a very different choir part so the choir part (most choir songs we do are solos/duets with choir

background) was new. I lasted for the Saturday night service and the first Sunday service. After that my voice started going- the upper range. I just don't have the endurance I should. I should exercise my vocal muscles more. Well, I should exercise *all* my muscles more, but that's going a bit off topic here... ☐

Following two of the choir performances I rushed to serve in the 4th/5th grade room, where I made it for the lesson and small group time (the important part). While past years have often meant a video during this weekend and cookies, we had a real lesson this year instead of the video (still had cookies at the end- yum). It was on patience. Zechariah and Elizabeth had to wait several decades for a child before God finally gave them one. The Bible says they were "righteous before God, walking blamelessly in all the commandments and statutes of the Lord" and so their childlessness wasn't due to sin in one of their lives. Eventually, God gave them the son they had waited for all of their lives into their sixties. Naturally since it was customary to name the son after the father he would have had his father's name, only Zechariah the Baptist isn't a name we know. Rather, God had them name their son John of course. In fact, these were the first words out of Zechariah's mouth after God allowed him to speak again (his disbelief over having a child at his age earned him the inability to speak until John was born- good thing he wasn't in a choir, at least that we know of! ☐). So in small groups then we talked about how patient they, as 10- and 11-year-olds, tended to be. They got to rate themselves and talk about what kinds of things makes them impatient. Waiting for big gifts like video game systems topped the list, but there were other things like healing. Two of my kids are actually going through cancer in their families- an uncle and a mom. Big ouch on the mom. If anyone wants to add these two to their prayer lists their names are Daniel (mom) and Matt (uncle- currently not responding well to treatment I understand). This while my pastor and associate pastor are

both being treated for prostate cancer... □

Christmas part 2 coming later following Christmas Eve service.