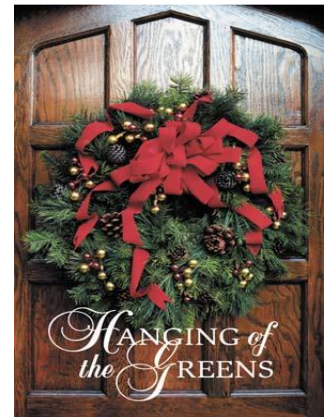


Hangings of the Greens Introduction 2019 Gods grand story

Alister McGrath has provided a key way for us to frame our Hanging of the Greens service. In his new book *Narrative Apologetics* he contrasts with “the more clinically rational approaches to apologetics (an explanation of the truths of Christianity) which lack imaginative depth and emotional intelligence” (*Narrative Apologetics*, Alister McGrath, Baker Books, 2019, p. 8 with a narrative approach that embraces “a series of stories that illuminate, inform and engage the different aspects of our experience” (p.13) and “set out the powerful Biblical vision of truth, beauty and goodness...[He says,] Stories enable us to make meaningful connections between the gospel and our own lived experience. We are able to show that the gospel is not merely true but has the capacity to transform lives truthfully and meaningfully” (p.16). And that’s the key. Stories engage both our heart and our imagination.

He continues, “The Christian Grand Story gives us a big picture of reality, enabling us to make sense of our subjective experiences and our observation of the world.” (P. 25) It is all about human transformation” (26).

For this reason we are framing our Hanging of the Greens experience today around God’s whole Grand Story. Through the ornaments and decorations, I hope we can experience anew the power behind our faith and the transformation Jesus Christ has made possible. His part of the story is our focus, though we will start briefly with creation and what sin did in the world before we turn to celebrate His birth as we remember *The Word became flesh and dwelt among us and we beheld his glory, the glory of the only Son of the Father*. Now historically, the Council of Chalcedon in 451 AD set out to “explain the doctrine of Christ’s two natures”⁸⁷. And that’s true and part of the mystery of our faith and of Christ’s coming into the world. But understanding His dual nature can seem theoretical and abstract, appealing primarily to the mind rather than the imagination.”⁸⁸).



However, when it is coupled with another truth that “*God so loved the world that He sent His one and only Son sent his only Son into the world so that we might live through him.*” We see God’s love demonstrated in the horrific implication of Christ laying down his life in crucifixion so that those whom he loves might live (Jn.15:13). As we enter into these theological truths, may we feel their power again to transform our lives.

That’s why today we will continue God’s grand story about Jesus that begins at Christmas and go on to his death and resurrection and end with the joy of the church as we combine our own story of faith with the global call to be witnesses to the core truths of the gospel.

God’s grand story centered in Christ. It is the context in which our celebration of Christmas makes sense. It is also the story of His coming that calls forth our response of surrender. We are not just decorating the church today; we are engaged in worship as we reenact the big picture – God’s love for the people in the world He created and His redemption offer for all who believe in Christ. As the story continues to unfold, we can live as His family, His Body of Christ, devoted to Him and each other and committed to bring this story to the whole world. The whole story for the whole world. Let’s celebrate it together. Let’s pray.

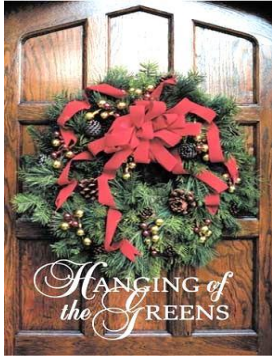
Dr. M.L. Codman-Wilson, Ph.D. 12/1/19 Hanging of the Greens

New Hope Hanging of the Greens 2019



NEW HOPE BIBLE FELLOWSHIP

Finding Our life Focus in God's heart for the World



Welcome

Hanging of the Greens

description: Hanging of the Greens began as a tradition in Europe. It is Christianity 101 in objects. These objects tell the whole gospel story. As we hang or put each Christmas decoration in place, we will learn the historical and Biblical meaning of this decoration and sing a Christmas carol that describes that meaning.

Narrator: Dr. Mary Lou

I. The Problem

Hanging the ornament of Noah's ark and the ornament of the globe

The Bells - Bring in the bells – large metal bell and two small beaded bells from India hung on tree

Hang the bells on a rope on front door

The Carol: *I Heard the Bells* (v. 1-2) – “there is no peace on earth I said”

II. The Prophecies

The Scriptures: *Jeremiah 23:5-6, Isaiah 9:6-7*

Narration: In ancient times the cedar was revered as the tree of royalty. It also signified immortality and was used for purification. We place these cedar branches as a sign of Christ, who reigns as King forever, and whose coming, in justice and righteousness, will purify our hearts.

Similarly, because the needles of pine and fir trees appear not to die each season, the ancients saw them as signs of things that last forever. Isaiah tells us that there will be no end to the reign of the Messiah. Therefore, we hang a wreath of evergreens shaped in a circle, which itself has no end, to signify the eternal reign of Jesus, the Christ.

The Cedars- Hang wreath over the fireplace

Hang cedar swag over the doorway leading to the dining room

The Carol: *Come Thou Long Expected Jesus*



III. The Coming of Light into the Darkness

The Scripture: *Isaiah 9:2*

Narration: Candles symbolize bringing light out of the darkness. Christ called Himself the light of the world. Whoever followed Him would have the light of life. (Jn. 8: 12).

The Candles- Light candles on the coffee table and the two large candles on the mantle

Hang oil painting of the candle on wall over the white sofa

The Carol: *We Are Singing For the Lord is Our Light*

IV. The Birth

The Scriptures: Luke 1:26-35, Luke 2:5-14

Narration:

Bring in the **angels** that hang on the Christmas tree and the red angel with the harp to put by the wooden manger



The Manger - Hang 2 manger theme ornaments on the tree, set up alabaster manger on the table by the tall lamp.

Put Mary, Joseph and Jesus into the wooden manger on the long table in my office

The Carol: *Hark the Herald Angels Sing*



V. The Miracles

The Story: The Mexican legend of the poinsettias

The Poinsettias - Put large poinsettia plant on top of sound system, lay poinsettia swag across the mantle over the fireplace

There would be many future miracles that Jesus would perform as an adult.

The Carol: *Mary, Did You Know?*

IV. The Death

The Scripture: *Isaiah 53:10-12*

Narration: This passage from Isaiah foretold the sufferings of Jesus, who saved us from our sins by his death on the cross and by his resurrection from the dead.

In ancient times, holly and ivy were considered signs of Christ's passion. Their prickly leaves suggested the crown of thorns, the red berries the blood of the Savior and the bitter bark the drink offered to Jesus on the cross. As we place the holly and ivy, let us rejoice in the coming of Jesus our Savior

The Holly - Place holly garland with lights on the back of the piano. Hang the gold holly wreath outside the front door

The Carol: *Amazing Love v.1*



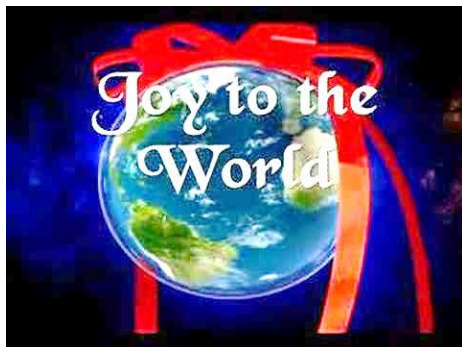
V. The Resurrection

Scripture: *Luke 24:1-8*

Narration:

Dove - Hang dove symbols of the Holy Spirit and the butterfly symbols of the resurrection on the tree

The Carol: *Alleluia, Give thanks to the Risen Lord*



VI. Our Response:

Giving in Gratitude

Words that speak of Christmas Joy – Hope – Believe

Hang joy banner on wall to right of mantle. Hang the believe plague on fireplace wall underneath the mantle. Hang the Indonesian banner with the star, the tree, the candle, the bell on the wall to the right of the front windows, hang the Joy Christmas ornament on the tree, put the picture of peace joy love on the piano, place the words HOPE on the mantle

The Carol: *Joy to the World, v. 1, 2, 4*

Living in supportive Christian community – prayers for one another

VII. Proclaiming the Good News of Salvation

Hang the horn on the fireplace wall under the Believe plaque, bring in the African drummer boy and a drum and hang them on the tree,

Light Christmas tree, plug in holly swag over piano

The Carol: *Go Tell it on the Mountain* v.3

VIII. The Benediction

New Hope Bible Fellowship

Pastor: Dr. Mary Lou Codman-Wilson (630) 480-2240 - cell phone text only 630-379-4518

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