

CHRISTMASTIME IN THE TEMPLE

By Eugenie C. Stoll

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It didn't seem that there was time for Christmas that year. I was in the middle of moving, with one house to organize and unpack and another to clean and fix up. Weighed down by many responsibilities, I wasn't ready to feel any Christmas cheer.

A week earlier I had tried to keep my personal commitment to attend the temple monthly. After getting up at 5:00 a.m. on a frozen Saturday morning, I made my way to the Jordan River Utah Temple, only to discover that it was closed. I turned my car around and headed for the Salt Lake Temple, but icy roads and freeway detours brought me home again.

"Next week," I promised myself. But as Saturday approached, the last one before Christmas, I still had much to do: unpack, clean, decorate, bake, and wrap. Maybe temple service would just have to wait until January. I wrestled with the thought, but fortunately, my commitment won out.

As I took my seat in the chapel of the Salt Lake Temple that Saturday, I heard a familiar Christmas carol in the background. Christmas carols in the temple? At first the music seemed out

of place. But as I thought of the words of the carol, the Spirit spoke to my heart and opened my mind.

Sitting in the chapel filled with waiting people, I imagined what it must have been like to wait for the Savior's birth and how exciting it must have been for the shepherds in the fields and the hosts in the heavens to know of His birth. A thrill of joy surged through me. I realized how exciting it was for me—then, that day—to know of His birth. I too had cause for celebration! And that's what Christmas really is—the excitement, the joy, and the thrill of Christ coming to earth.

As I was leaving the celestial room following an endowment session, I halted. Towering above me was a magnificent painting of the risen Lord. As I stood there in awe of this beautiful artwork, I felt as if He had greeted me. The Spirit filled me with peace and joy—this was His house, and His Spirit was there.

I realized that the anticipation of waiting for Christ to come had been fulfilled for me that day. Through temple worship and service, He had come into my heart.



As I headed home in the congested traffic, I felt untouched by the frenzy of last-minute shoppers around me. Overcome with love for the Savior, I had been filled with the true spirit of Christmas—not found in busy shopping malls or under a perfectly decorated tree but within the walls of the temple. There I had discovered that we can celebrate the joy of Christ's coming to earth by allowing Him to come into our hearts. ■

The author lives in Utah, USA.



A FEELING OF PEACE

"As we attend the temple, there can come to us a dimension of spirituality and a feeling of peace which will transcend any other feeling which could come into the human heart."

President Thomas S. Monson, "Blessings of the Temple," *Ensign*, Oct. 2010, 35.