

Home worship service during time of isolation and social distancing.

The Second Sunday after Christmas

January 2, 2022

Note: In preparation for this service, light all the candles on the Advent wreath.

Holy Scripture tells us little about the young boy Jesus as he grew to be a man. Luke reports that when He was twelve that He stayed in the temple because He felt the need to be in His Father's house and about His Father's business. Since we have been adopted into the Father's family, how wonderful it would be if we felt the same need as Jesus.

Come, Your Hearts and Voices Raising Lutheran Service Book 375, Lutheran Worship 48, The Lutheran Hymnal 90



1 Come, your hearts and voices raising, Christ the
2 Christ, from heav'n to us descend-ing And in
3 Ja - cob's star in all its splen - dor Beams with
4 From the bond - age that op - pressed us, From sin's



Lord with glad - ness prais - ing; Loud - ly sing His love a -
love our race be - friend-ing; In our need His help ex -
com - fort sweet and ten - der, Forc - ing Sa - tan to sur -
fet - ters that pos - sessed us, From the grief that sore dis -



maz - ing, Wor - thy folk of Chris - ten - dom.
tend - ing, Saved us from the wi - ly foe.
ren - der, Break - ing all the pow'rs of hell.
tressed us, We, the cap - tives, now are free.

5 Oh, the joy beyond expressing
When by faith we grasp this blessing,
And to You we come confessing
That Your love has set us free.

6 Gracious Child, we pray, O hear us,
From Your lowly manger cheer us,
Gently lead us and be near us
Till we join Your choir above.

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L In the name of the Father and the Son and of the Holy Spirit.

C Amen.

L Our help is in the name of the Lord,

C who made heaven and earth. (*Psalm 124:8*)

L Who can discern his errors? Forgive my hidden faults.

C Keep your servant also from willful sins; may they not rule over me. (*Psalm 19:12, 13*)

- L** If You, O Lord, kept a record of sins, O Lord who could stand?
C But with You there is forgiveness; therefore You are feared. (*Psalm 130:3–4*)

L Let us, confess before God that we have sinned in thought, word, and deed, and as His people let us take refuge in His infinite mercy seeking His grace for the sake of Christ, saying:

C God, be merciful to me, a sinner, forgive us our sins, and lead us to everlasting life. Amen. (*Luke 18:13*)

L Almighty God, merciful Father, in Your holy Church, You daily and richly forgive us our sins and grant us new life through Your Spirit. Be in our midst, enliven our faith, and graciously receive our prayer and praise; through Your Son, Jesus Christ, our Lord.

C Amen.

Introit Psalm 147:1, 5, 11–12; antiphon John 1:14

L The Word became flesh and dwelt among us, and we have seen his glory,
glory as of the only Son from the Father, full of grace and truth.

C Praise the Lord! For it is good to sing praises to our God;
for it is pleasant, and a song of praise is fitting.

L Great is our Lord, and abundant in power;
his understanding is beyond measure.

C But the Lord takes pleasure in those who fear him,
in those who hope in his steadfast love.

L Praise the Lord, O Jerusalem!
Praise your God, O Zion!

C Glory be to the Father and to the Son and to the Holy Spirit;
as it was in the beginning, is now, and will be forever. Amen.

L The Word became flesh and dwelt among us, and we have seen his glory,
glory as of the only Son from the Father, full of grace and truth.

Kyrie

L O Lord, **C** Have Mercy on us.

L O Christ, **C** Have Mercy on us.

L O Lord, **C** Have Mercy on us.

Gloria in Excelsis ~ Glory to God in the Highest

L Glory to God in the highest, and peace to his people on earth.

C Lord God, heavenly King, almighty God and Father: We worship You, we give You thanks, and we praise You for Your glory.

L Lord Jesus Christ, only Son of the Father, You are Lord and God, You are the Lamb of God:

C Lord Jesus Christ, You take away the sin of the world; have mercy on us.

L Lord Jesus Christ, You are seated at the right hand of the Father; and we ask you to graciously receive our prayer.

C For You alone are the Holy One,
You alone are the Lord,
You alone are the Most High, Jesus Christ,
with the Holy Spirit, in the glory of God the Father. Amen.

Collect of the Day

- L** Let us pray: Almighty God, You have poured into our hearts the true Light of Your incarnate Word. Grant that this Light may shine forth in our lives; through the same Jesus Christ, Your Son, our Lord, who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.
- C** Amen.

1 Kings 3:4–15

⁴The king went to Gibeon to sacrifice there, for that was the great high place. Solomon used to offer a thousand burnt offerings on that altar. ⁵At Gibeon the LORD appeared to Solomon in a dream by night, and God said, “Ask what I shall give you.” ⁶And Solomon said, “You have shown great and steadfast love to your servant David my father, because he walked before you in faithfulness, in righteousness, and in uprightness of heart toward you. And you have kept for him this great and steadfast love and have given him a son to sit on his throne this day. ⁷And now, O LORD my God, you have made your servant king in place of David my father, although I am but a little child. I do not know how to go out or come in. ⁸And your servant is in the midst of your people whom you have chosen, a great people, too many to be numbered or counted for multitude. ⁹Give your servant therefore an understanding mind to govern your people, that I may discern between good and evil, for who is able to govern this your great people?”

¹⁰It pleased the Lord that Solomon had asked this. ¹¹And God said to him, “Because you have asked this, and have not asked for yourself long life or riches or the life of your enemies, but have asked for yourself understanding to discern what is right, ¹²behold, I now do according to your word. Behold, I give you a wise and discerning mind, so that none like you has been before you and none like you shall arise after you. ¹³I give you also what you have not asked, both riches and honor, so that no other king shall compare with you, all your days. ¹⁴And if you will walk in my ways, keeping my statutes and my commandments, as your father David walked, then I will lengthen your days.”

¹⁵And Solomon awoke, and behold, it was a dream. Then he came to Jerusalem and stood before the ark of the covenant of the LORD, and offered up burnt offerings and peace offerings, and made a feast for all his servants.

- L** This is the Word of the Lord.
- C** Thanks be to God.

Gradual Isaiah 9:6; Psalm 98:1b

- L** To us a child is born, to us a son is given;
- C** and the government shall be upon his shoulder.
- L** And his name shall be called Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God,
- C** Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace.
- L** Sing to the Lord a new song,
- C** for he has done marvelous things!

Psalm 119:97–104

- L** ⁹⁷Oh how I love your law! It is my meditation all the day.
- C** ⁹⁸**Your commandment makes me wiser than my enemies, for it is ever with me.**
- L** ⁹⁹I have more understanding than all my teachers, for your testimonies are my meditation.
- C** ¹⁰⁰**I understand more than the aged, for I keep your precepts.**
- L** ¹⁰¹I hold back my feet from every evil way, in order to keep your word.
- C** ¹⁰²**I do not turn aside from your rules, for you have taught me.**
- L** ¹⁰³How sweet are your words to my taste, sweeter than honey to my mouth!
- C** ¹⁰⁴**Through your precepts I get understanding; therefore I hate every false way.**

Ephesians 1:3–14

³Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us in Christ with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places, ⁴even as he chose us in him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and blameless before him. In love ⁵he predestined us for adoption through Jesus Christ, according to the purpose of his will, ⁶to the praise of his glorious grace, with which he has blessed us in the Beloved. ⁷In him we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of our trespasses, according to the riches of his grace, ⁸which he lavished upon us, in all wisdom and insight ⁹making known to us the mystery of his will, according to his purpose, which he set forth in Christ ¹⁰as a plan for the fullness of time, to unite all things in him, things in heaven and things on earth.

¹¹In him we have obtained an inheritance, having been predestined according to the purpose of him who works all things according to the counsel of his will, ¹²so that we who were the first to hope in Christ might be to the praise of his glory. ¹³In him you also, when you heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation, and believed in him, were sealed with the promised Holy Spirit, ¹⁴who is the guarantee of our inheritance until we acquire possession of it, to the praise of his glory.

L This is the Word of the Lord.

C Thanks be to God.

Verse of the Day: Luke 2:40

L Alleluia, Alleluia, The child grew and became strong, filled with wisdom. Alleluia.

C Alleluia, Alleluia, And the favor of God was upon him. Alleluia.

Luke 2:40–52

L The Holy Gospel according to St. Luke, the 2nd chapter.

C Glory to You, O Lord.

⁴⁰The child [Jesus] grew and became strong, filled with wisdom. And the favor of God was upon him.

⁴¹Now his parents went to Jerusalem every year at the Feast of the Passover. ⁴²And when he was twelve years old, they went up according to custom. ⁴³And when the feast was ended, as they were returning, the boy Jesus stayed behind in Jerusalem. His parents did not know it, ⁴⁴but supposing him to be in the group they went a day's journey, but then they began to search for him among their relatives and acquaintances, ⁴⁵and when they did not find him, they returned to Jerusalem, searching for him. ⁴⁶After three days they found him in the temple, sitting among the teachers, listening to them and asking them questions. ⁴⁷And all who heard him were amazed at his understanding and his answers. ⁴⁸And when his parents saw him, they were astonished. And his mother said to him, "Son, why have you treated us so? Behold, your father and I have been searching for you in great distress." ⁴⁹And he said to them, "Why were you looking for me? Did you not know that I must be in my Father's house?" ⁵⁰And they did not understand the saying that he spoke to them. ⁵¹And he went down with them and came to Nazareth and was submissive to them. And his mother treasured up all these things in her heart.

⁵²And Jesus increased in wisdom and in stature and in favor with God and man.

L This is the Gospel of the Lord.

C Praise to You, O Christ.

C I believe in God, the Father Almighty,
maker of heaven and earth.

And in Jesus Christ, His only Son, our Lord,
who was conceived by the Holy Spirit,
born of the virgin Mary,
suffered under Pontius Pilate,
was crucified, died and was buried.
He descended into hell.
The third day He rose again from the dead.
He ascended into heaven
and sits at the right hand of God the Father

Almighty.
From thence He will come to judge the living
and the dead.

I believe in the Holy Spirit,
the holy Christian Church,
the communion of saints,
the forgiveness of sins,
the resurrection of the body,
and the life everlasting. Amen.

Within the Father's House Lutheran Service Book 410, Lutheran Worship 80, The Lutheran Hymnal 133



1 With - in the Fa - ther's house The Son has found His home,
2 The doc - tors of the Law Gaze on the won - drous child
3 Yet not to them is giv'n The might - y truth to know,
4 The se - cret of the Lord Es - capes each hu - man eye,



And to His tem - ple sud - den - ly The Lord of life has come.
And mar - vel at His gra - cious words Of wis - dom un - de - filed.
To lift the earth - ly veil that hides In - car - nate God be - low.
And faith - ful pon - d'ring hearts a - wait The full e - piph - a - ny.

5 Lord, visit Thou our souls
And teach us by Thy grace
Each dim revealing of Thyself
With loving awe to trace

6 Till we behold Thy face
And know as we are known
Thee, Father, Son, and Holy Ghost,
Coequal Three in One.

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Devotional thoughts:

Happy New Year! The New Year is a time of anticipation for the days ahead and reflection on the year past. For a variety of reasons, this New Year brings with it an even greater cause for contemplating times past and times ahead. As a nation, 2021 began like most new years with expectations for a brighter future. As things stand today, many in our country would count it as a disappointing year.

A year ago, we thought that the pandemic would be over by now. We thought that our economy would be flourishing. We hoped that political bitterness would decrease. Alas, it wasn't to be.

Nevertheless, for many of us, 2021 was a year filled with blessings. Couples wed. Babies were born. Families were reunited. New friendships were made. God has given us many reasons to rejoice.

We all experience the New Year differently. This New Year may be one that you will always remember or it may be one that you would like to quickly forget.

As we contemplate this New Year and reflect on the past, let us turn to our Gospel lesson and remember how God directs our lives from childhood through retirement until He calls us home to be with Him. To do this, let's place in order the sequence of events surrounding Jesus' birth that brings us to where we find Him today.

It all began with an angel visiting Zechariah, the father of John the Baptist, and announcing that his wife, Elizabeth would conceive a child in her old age (Luke 1:5-25). We then jumped ahead six months and the same angel, Gabriel, visited the Virgin Mary and announced to her that she has "found favor with God." And she "will conceive in (her) womb and bear a son" and "call his name Jesus" (Luke 1:26-38). Gabriel also revealed to Mary that Elizabeth was in the sixth month of her pregnancy. Next, Mary hurries to spend time with her.

When Mary returns to Nazareth, it soon becomes apparent that she is expecting a baby. Her intended husband, Joseph, is in distress by this turn of events and determines to end their relationship. To prevent this from happening, God intervened by sending His angel to Joseph in a dream. He tells Joseph, "Do not fear to take Mary as your wife, for that which is conceived in her is from the Holy Spirit. She will bear a son, and you shall call his name Jesus, for he will save his people from their sins" (Matthew 1:18-25). Joseph obeyed the words of the angel.

All was well with this young couple except that a new regulation from the national government required Mary and Joseph to leave their home in Nazareth and take a multi-day journey of about 100 miles to Bethlehem. "While they were there, the days were accomplished that she should be delivered. And she brought forth her firstborn son, and wrapped him in swaddling clothes, and laid him in a manger; because there was no room for them in the inn" (Luke 2:6-7 KJV).

"There were in the same country shepherds abiding in the field, keeping watch over their flock by night. And, lo, the angel of the Lord came upon them, and the glory of the Lord shone round about them: and they were sore afraid. And the angel said unto them, Fear not: for, behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy, which shall be to all people. For unto you is born this day in the city of David a Saviour, which is Christ the Lord."

Before the shepherds could rush to find the baby Jesus, "There was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host praising God, and saying, Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good will toward men" (Luke 2:8-14 KJV).

When things calmed down, the baby was circumcised and given the name Jesus on the eighth day (Luke 2:21). On our calendar, that would have happened yesterday since today is the Ninth Day of Christmas.

Then on the fortieth day, Mary, Joseph, and Jesus traveled from Bethlehem to the temple in Jerusalem for the purification of Mary and to sacrifice two turtle doves for Jesus (Luke 2:22-38). There they met Simeon and Anna. This was the Gospel lesson for last week but on our calendar, it corresponds to February 2.

Mary, Joseph, and Jesus then returned to Bethlehem and settled into a house. While they were there, they received a surprise visit from Magi or Wise Men from the east who bring gifts of gold, frankincense, and myrrh (Matthew 2:1-7).

For a brief moment, things couldn't be better. But all is not well. An angel appeared again to Joseph in a dream to warn him of Herod's plot to kill the newborn king, Jesus. The Holy Family fled to Egypt while Herod's men carry out his reprehensible orders to kill the baby boys of Bethlehem (Matthew 2:13-18).

Soon, word came to Egypt that Herod was dead. Unfortunately, his equally cruel son, Archelaus, is ruling in Judea. Jerusalem is far too dangerous for Mary, Joseph, and Jesus. They returned to Nazareth (Matthew 2:19-23) where we learn from the first words of our text, "The child grew and became strong, filled with wisdom. And the favor of God was upon him" (Luke 2:40).

God was in control of this sequence of events in the young life of our savior and His family. Not everything that happened to Him was a blessing in our way of thinking but it was all according to God's plan, even when things weren't going well.

As you review last year, and the years before, I am certain that you will also see God's hand directing your life. He may not have used angels, but nevertheless, God was working things out in your life to accomplish His purpose. Not only do we see this in the life of Jesus, but it is repeated over and over again in the lives of God's people. We see it in the lives of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob to name a few. In Genesis 50, Joseph tells his brothers, "You meant evil against me, but God meant it for good, to bring it about that many people should be kept alive, as they are today" (Genesis 50:20). The Apostle Paul echoes this idea when he writes, "We know

that for those who love God all things work together for good, for those who are called according to his purpose” (Romans 8:28). A moments’ contemplation will confirm this truth for every one of us.

Jesus’ life in Nazareth was that of a normal boy growing and maturing. However, as a sinless youth, He must have been particularly diligent in His study of Holy Scripture.

His parents were faithful people. They annually went to Jerusalem for the Feast of the Passover. They were great models for Jesus in their weekly attendance at synagogue so that the Bible reports it was His custom (Luke 4:16).

All Christian parents can learn from Mary and Joseph. Our children learn more from us by observing what we do than by listening to our lectures. Those wanting their children to grow in the wisdom and knowledge of God must demonstrate their faithfulness to them. As we cross into a New Year and I contemplate the one now past, I cannot help but think of my mother who was called to her eternal home in February. If my mother and father had not faithfully brought me to church every Sunday, I am certain that I wouldn’t be here today.

On this one particular trip to Jerusalem, Mary and Joseph have given Jesus some freedom. He is twelve years old. To their dismay, Jesus used His freedom to spend His time in the temple. For three days, Jesus sat with the greatest Bible scholars of His day, listening to them and asking them questions. His knowledge of the Bible amazed them. At this point, I must insert, that Jesus knew the Bible because He was a good student. It was not because He used His divine knowledge. During His state of humiliation, He chose not to use His divine attributes to help him through life. Proof of this is found when He refuses to turn stones into bread to ease His hunger.

However, Jesus is aware of His ultimate purpose in life. When Mary asks Him, “Son, why have you treated us so? Behold, your father and I have been searching for you in great distress,” He answers, “Did you not know that I must be in my Father’s house?”

Studying this verse, especially during a time of contemplating the past, reminded me of my paternal grandmother. When more than fifty years ago, she learned that I had chosen to dedicate my life to the study of Scripture and becoming a pastor, she asked me why I had to learn Greek. I told her that it was so I could translate the Bible. To this, she responded, “Why? The Bible is already in English.”

Of course, she was right. In those days, we had two translations. One was the King James Version and the other was the Revised Standard Version, better known as the KJV and RSV. My memory work was all KJV but my religion studies were all RSV. Now here is the rub.

The RSV translates this verse, “Did you not know that I must be in my Father’s house?” but the KJV has, “I must be about my Father’s business?” So what do you think it says in Greek? House or Business? It was a quest of my youth to find out. The answer is neither! Greek omits the word! You are left to supply it for yourself.

Perhaps the best translation is Luther’s, “And he said to them, What is it that you have sought me? Do you not know that I must be in what is my father’s?” (“Und er sprach zu ihnen: Was ist's, daß ihr mich gesucht habt? Wisset ihr nicht, daß ich sein muß in dem, das meines Vaters ist?”)

So what do you think? I may be prejudiced, but I prefer “business.” Jesus is twelve years old. He is approaching adulthood. He must know that the people around Him expect Him to become a carpenter. In fact, later in life, when He is teaching in Nazareth, the people criticize Him by asking, “Is not this the carpenter’s son?” (Matthew 13:55).

But Jesus is not destined to be a carpenter. He is destined to be in His Father’s business. What is His Father’s business? His Father’s business is saving sinners! Psalm 34:18 tells us, “The Lord is near to the brokenhearted and saves the crushed in spirit.”

On Palm Sunday, the cry of hosanna will ring in Jesus’ ears. Hosanna is Hebrew for “Save, now!” This is exactly what Jesus will do through His suffering, death, and resurrection. On the cross, Jesus will be fully and completely engaged in His Father’s business fulfilling the promise of His name, as the angel said. “You shall call his name Jesus, for he will save his people from their sins” (Matthew 1:21).

If Jesus is in His Father’s house and going about His Father’s business, then this is an example for all of God’s children. You may recall from the Christmas Gospel that through faith in Jesus we have become children of God! (John 1:12) We are baptized into His family (John 3:1-8). St. Paul tells us, “The Spirit himself bears witness with our spirit that we are children of God” (Romans 8:16). Jesus taught us to call His Father, Our Father (Matthew 6:9).

If God is our Father, then we are called to be about our Father's business. When Jesus was twelve years old, He declared His Father's business to be His business. In all that we say and do, our business is serving the Lord and advancing His business of saving sinners.

None of us knows what 2022 will bring but we can be certain that God's Kingdom will come and His will done in and through the lives of His children. May God grant that to each one of us.

"Rejoice in the Lord always; again I will say, rejoice. Let your reasonableness be known to everyone. The Lord is at hand; do not be anxious about anything, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God. And the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus" (Philippians 4:4-7).

God's richest blessings to you in Christ.

L Heavenly Father, Your Son diligently studied the Holy Scriptures and grew in wisdom and stature. He was submissive to His earthly parents and always about Your business and in Your house. Keep our families in Your Word, and always treasuring Your divine wisdom and favor.

C Amen.

L O Lord, Mary and Joseph were diligent in their devotion to You and Your house. They shared their devotion with their son, Jesus. Grant that all parents would follow this godly example displayed by Mary and Joseph.

C Amen.

L O Lord, bless the lonely, that they would be comforted with the sure and certain knowledge that You will never forsake them, and that within the household of faith they might find family, friends and loving companionship.

C Amen.

L O Lord, we pray for the sick and the suffering, that You would grant healing according to Your will. Bless all who practice the healing ministry and grant success in their efforts to combat this pandemic with vaccines and treatments.

C Amen.

L Almighty God, in this time of national distress and distrust, give our leaders wisdom for the challenges ahead. Send Your holy angels to watch over all of our loved ones, especially those who live in distant places. Protect all who attend to our needs during this time of the pandemic.

C Amen.

C I thank You, my heavenly Father, through Jesus Christ, Your dear Son, that You have kept me this night from all harm and danger; and I pray that You would keep me this day also from sin and every evil, that all my doings and life may please You. For into Your hands I commend myself, my body and soul, and all things. Let Your holy angel be with me, that the evil foe may have no power over me. Amen.

C Our Father who art in heaven, hallowed be Thy name, Thy kingdom come, Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven; give us this day our daily bread; and forgive us our trespasses as we forgive those who trespass against us; and lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil. For Thine is the kingdom and the power and the glory forever and ever. Amen.

L Let us bless the Lord.

C Thanks be to God.

L The Lord bless us, defend us from all evil, and bring us to everlasting life.

C Amen.

Let Us All with Gladsome Voice Lutheran Service Book 390, Lutheran Worship 42, The Lutheran Hymnal 97



1 Let us all with glad-some voice Praise the God of heav - en,
2 To this vale of tears He comes, Here to serve in sad - ness,
3 We are rich, for He was poor; Is not this a won - der?
4 Christ, our Lord and Sav - ior dear, Be Thou ev - er near us.



Who, to bid our hearts re - joice, His own Son hath giv - en.
That with Him in heav'n's fair homes We may reign in glad - ness.
There-fore praise God ev - er - more Here on earth and yon - der.
Grant us now a glad new year. A - men, Je - sus, hear us.

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Service Notes:

One person may serve as Leader or this may be shared with a number of individuals.

Read one or more of the lessons. Hymns may be sung or read. Use as much or little of this service as you would like.

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Enhancing Your Worship

Meditating on God's Word and Works

I will meditate on your wondrous works. Psalm 119:27
My eyes are awake through the night watches,
That I may meditate on Your word. Psalm 119:148 NKJV

The Second Sunday after Christmas

January 3, 2022 – January 8, 2022

Introduction

Most modern forms of mediation turn a person inward. Biblical meditation turns a person outward toward what God has said and done especially what He has said and done through Jesus for our salvation.

Each Sunday has its own special theme directing us to meditate on God's word and actions. This theme is found in the Propers of the Day (the parts of the service that change week to week). From Advent through the Easter season these themes focus our attention on the life of Jesus from His birth to His death and resurrection. There is always much more in the propers than can be covered in any Sunday service. God willing, I will use the propers for Sunday to provide you with a devotion each day to help you meditate on what God has done for you.

Monday - The Tenth Day of Christmas

Light all the candles on the Advent wreath.

- L** In the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit.
- C** Amen.

Introit Psalm 147:1, 5, 11–12; antiphon John 1:14

- L** The Word became flesh and dwelt among us, and we have seen his glory,
glory as of the only Son from the Father, full of grace and truth.
- C** Praise the Lord! For it is good to sing praises to our God;
for it is pleasant, and a song of praise is fitting.
- L** Great is our Lord, and abundant in power;
his understanding is beyond measure.
- C** But the Lord takes pleasure in those who fear him,
in those who hope in his steadfast love.
- L** Praise the Lord, O Jerusalem!
Praise your God, O Zion!
- C** Glory be to the Father and to the Son and to the Holy Spirit;
as it was in the beginning, is now, and will be forever. Amen.
- L** The Word became flesh and dwelt among us, and we have seen his glory,
glory as of the only Son from the Father, full of grace and truth.

Kyrie

L O Lord, **C** Have Mercy on us.
L O Christ, **C** Have Mercy on us.
L O Lord, **C** Have Mercy on us.

There are a handful of introits throughout the Church Year with verses from outside the Psalms. The antiphon for this week is one of those occasions. It is the well-known words of John 1:14, “The Word became flesh and dwelt among us, and we have seen his glory, glory as of the only Son from the Father, full of grace and truth.”

We learn from these words that God is not a remote uncaring being. He is not merely the intelligent design behind the universe. Rather He is the God who chose to become one of us. He lived with us. In the person of Jesus, the disciples were able to see God for who He is, a caring and compassionate God!

Jesus, the only Son from the Father is full of grace and truth! Those who opposed grace and truth were opposed Jesus!

In Jesus, grace and truth were triumphant through the cross. The grave could not hold Him. He came to give us life, life eternal.

Christmas movies have come to an end. In the days and weeks ahead, we will have to look for warm fuzzy feelings somewhere else. But do not despair! Most of these films missed the mark. Christmas is not about upholding family traditions, Christmas tree lighting ceremonies, fancy baking, snow, and jingle bells. Christmas lasts forever because the Word became flesh and dwelt among us. Immanuel is God with us even to the end of the age. He will never leave us or forsake us.

He rules the world with truth and grace,
and makes the nations prove
the glories of his righteousness,
and wonders of his love,
and wonders of his love,
and wonders, wonders of his love.

Joy to the World, stanza 4, Public Domain

L Let us pray. O Lord Jesus, thank you for entering the world as a baby born in Bethlehem. Grant that our lives may always be filled with the grace, truth, and joy of Christmas. Let us always know the wonders of Your love.

C Amen

Tuesday – The Eleventh day of Christmas

Light all the candles on the Advent wreath.

L In the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit.

C Amen.

Verse of the Day: Luke 2:40

L Alleluia, Alleluia, The child grew and became strong, filled with wisdom; Alleluia.

C Alleluia, Alleluia, And the favor of God was upon him. Alleluia.

Kyrie

L O Lord, **C** Have Mercy on us.
L O Christ, **C** Have Mercy on us.
L O Lord, **C** Have Mercy on us.

L Let us pray: Almighty God, You have poured into our hearts the true Light of Your incarnate Word. Grant that this Light may shine forth in our lives; through the same Jesus Christ, Your Son, our Lord, who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.

C Amen

My only memory from attending my first Vacation Bible School is this song:

This Little Gospel Light of Mine, I'm gonna let it shine.

Hide it under a bushel. No! I'm gonna let it shine.

Don't let Satan Pffft it out. I'm gonna let it shine.

All around the neighborhood, I'm gonna let it shine.

This is such a simple little song but it is one with profound implications for life. It echoes Jesus words from His Sermon on the Mount recorded in Matthew 5:14-16

¹⁴ "You are the light of the world. A city set on a hill cannot be hidden. ¹⁵ Nor do people light a lamp and put it under a basket, but on a stand, and it gives light to all in the house. ¹⁶ In the same way, let your light shine before others, so that they may see your good works and give glory to your Father who is in heaven.

We are to be nothing less than what Jesus is Himself. He is the true light of the world as He tells us in John 8:12, "I am the light of the world. Whoever follows me will not walk in darkness, but will have the light of life."

You and I have the light of life! Many around us go through life bumping into things in the dark. We have the opportunity to bring light and life to them. When they see your light, they will want to know more about the True Light.

Let us pray: Almighty God, You have poured into our hearts the true Light of Your incarnate Word. Grant that this Light may shine forth in our lives; through the same Jesus Christ, Your Son, our Lord, who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. Amen.

Wednesday – The Twelfth Day of Christmas

Light all the candles on the Advent wreath and as many other candles as practical.

L In the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit.

C Amen.

Verse of the Day: Luke 2:40

L Alleluia, Alleluia, The child grew and became strong, filled with wisdom; Alleluia.

C Alleluia, Alleluia, And the favor of God was upon him. Alleluia.

Kyrie

L O Lord, **C Have Mercy on us.**

L O Christ, **C Have Mercy on us.**

L O Lord, **C Have Mercy on us.**

Psalm 119:97–104

- L** ⁹⁷Oh how I love your law! It is my meditation all the day.
C ⁹⁸**Your commandment makes me wiser than my enemies, for it is ever with me.**
L ⁹⁹I have more understanding than all my teachers, for your testimonies are my meditation.
C ¹⁰⁰**I understand more than the aged, for I keep your precepts.**
L ¹⁰¹I hold back my feet from every evil way, in order to keep your word.
C ¹⁰²**I do not turn aside from your rules, for you have taught me.**
L ¹⁰³How sweet are your words to my taste, sweeter than honey to my mouth!
C ¹⁰⁴**Through your precepts I get understanding; therefore I hate every false way.**

On the twelfth day of Christmas my true love sent to me twelve drummers drumming, eleven pipers piping, ten lords a-leaping, nine ladies dancing, eight maids a-milking, seven swans a-swimming, six geese a-laying, five gold rings, four calling birds, three French hens, two turtle doves, and a partridge in a pear tree.

And so we come to the end of another Christmas season in the Church Year. I know the rest of the world moved on from Christmas days ago (but what they left behind wasn't Christmas.) They left behind Christmas trees, ornaments, lights, and wrapping paper. Many people left behind a false Christmas, a Christ-less Christmas.

We never leave behind the real Christmas because Christ never leaves us. He will be with us as we walk with the Wise Men to Bethlehem. He will be with us as we witness His baptism and water changed to wine. He will be with us on the Mount of Transfiguration and on the road that goes up from Jericho to Jerusalem. He will be with us as we sing Hosanna and watch with Him for a bitter hour in Gethsemane. We will be with Him as He offers Himself up for our sins and the sins of the world. He will be with us in the garden near an empty tomb. He will be with us when angels carry us to Abraham's bosom. We will be with Him and a repentant thief one day in paradise and for all eternity.

Let our sojourn here on earth be filled with the wisdom that Christ will never leave us or forsake us. Let us never leave Him behind.

Prayer: O Lord God, thank You for the ultimate Christmas. Thank You for the gift of Your only-begotten Son who has promised to be with us always even to the end of the world. Grant that we would never leave or forsake Him. Rather move us to walk more closely with Him each day. Amen.

Thursday

The Epiphany of our Lord

January 6, 2022

Light all the candles on the Advent wreath and as many other candles as practical.

Epiphany is a time for us to celebrate that Jesus is made known to us as Savior and Lord. He was revealed to the Wise Men as "King of the Jews." In His baptism, He was revealed to be God's "Beloved Son." In His miracle at Cana, His disciples witnessed for the first time His command over nature. We know Him as King of the Universe, Lord of the Church, and King of Heaven. We know Him not only as the babe born in Bethlehem but as the only-begotten Son of God. We know Him as the One who was given for our salvation so that believing in Him, we may have eternal life.



1 As with glad-ness men of old Did the guid-ing star be-hold;
 2 As with joy-ful steps they sped, Sav-ior, to Thy low-ly bed,
 3 As they of-fered gifts most rare At Thy cra-dle, rude and bare,
 4 Ho-ly Je-sus, ev-'ry day Keep us in the nar-row way;
 5 In the heav'n-ly coun-try bright Need they no cre-at-ed light;



As with joy they hailed its light, Lead-ing on-ward, beam-ing bright;
 There to bend the knee be-fore Thee, whom heav'n and earth a-dore;
 So may we with ho-ly joy, Pure and free from sin's al-loy,
 And when earth-ly things are past, Bring our ran-somed souls at last
 Thou its light, its joy, its crown, Thou its sun which goes not down;



So, most gra-cious Lord, may we Ev-er-more be led by Thee.
 So may we with will-ing feet Ev-er seek Thy mer-cy seat.
 All our cost-liest trea-sures bring, Christ, to Thee, our heav'n-ly King.
 Where they need no star to guide, Where no clouds Thy glo-ry hide.
 There for-ev-er may we sing Al-le-lu-ias to our King.

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L In the name of the Father and the Son and of the Holy Spirit.

C Amen.

L Our help is in the name of the Lord,

C who made heaven and earth. (*Psalm 124:8*)

L Who can discern his errors? Forgive my hidden faults.

C Keep your servant also from willful sins; may they not rule over me. (*Psalm 19:12, 13*)

L If You, O Lord, kept a record of sins, O Lord who could stand?

C But with You there is forgiveness; therefore You are feared. (*Psalm 130:3-4*)

L Let us, confess before God that we have sinned in thought, word, and deed, and as His people let us take refuge in His infinite mercy seeking His grace for the sake of Christ, saying:

C God, be merciful to me, a sinner, forgive us our sins, and lead us to everlasting life. Amen. (*Luke 18:13*)

L Almighty God, merciful Father, in Your holy Church, You daily and richly forgive us our sins and grant us new life through Your Spirit. Be in our midst, enliven our faith, and graciously receive our prayer and praise; through Your Son, Jesus Christ, our Lord.

C Amen.

Introit Psalm 45:6-7; antiphon Psalm 45:17

- L** I will cause your name to be remembered in all generations;
therefore nations will praise you forever and ever.
- C** **Your throne, O God, is forever and ever. The scepter of your kingdom is a scepter of uprightness; you have loved righteousness and hated wickedness.**
- L** Therefore God, your God, has anointed you with the oil of gladness beyond your companions;
your robes are all fragrant with myrrh and aloes and cassia.
- C** **Glory be to the Father and to the Son and to the Holy Spirit;
as it was in the beginning, is now, and will be forever. Amen.**
- L** I will cause your name to be remembered in all generations;
therefore nations will praise you forever and ever.

Kyrie

- | | |
|--------------------|-----------------------------------|
| L O Lord, | C Have Mercy on us. |
| L O Christ, | C Have Mercy on us. |
| L O Lord, | C Have Mercy on us. |

Gloria in Excelsis ~ Glory to God in the Highest

- L** Glory to God in the highest, and peace to his people on earth.
- C** **Lord God, heavenly King, almighty God and Father: We worship You, we give You thanks, and we praise You for Your glory.**
- L** Lord Jesus Christ, only Son of the Father, You are Lord and God, You are the Lamb of God:
- C** **Lord Jesus Christ, You take away the sin of the world; have mercy on us.**
- L** Lord Jesus Christ, You are seated at the right hand of the Father; and we ask you to graciously receive our prayer.
- C** **For You alone are the Holy One,
You alone are the Lord,
You alone are the Most High, Jesus Christ,
with the Holy Spirit, in the glory of God the Father. Amen.**

Collect of the Day

- L** Let us pray: O God, by the leading of a star You made known Your only-begotten Son to the Gentiles.
Lead us, who know You by faith, to enjoy in heaven the fullness of Your divine presence; through the same Jesus Christ, our Lord, who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.
- C** **Amen.**

Isaiah 60:1–6

- ¹Arise, shine, for your light has come,
and the glory of the LORD has risen upon you.
- ²For behold, darkness shall cover the earth,
and thick darkness the peoples;
but the LORD will arise upon you,
and his glory will be seen upon you.
- ³And nations shall come to your light,
and kings to the brightness of your rising.
- ⁴Lift up your eyes all around, and see;
they all gather together, they come to you;

your sons shall come from afar,
 and your daughters shall be carried on the hip.
⁵Then you shall see and be radiant;
 your heart shall thrill and exult,
 because the abundance of the sea shall be turned to you,
 the wealth of the nations shall come to you.
⁶A multitude of camels shall cover you,
 the young camels of Midian and Ephah;
 all those from Sheba shall come.
 They shall bring gold and frankincense,
 and shall bring good news, the praises of the LORD.

- L** This is the Word of the Lord.
- C** Thanks be to God.

Gradual 117:1–2a; 96:8

- L** Praise the LORD, all nations!
- C** Extol him, all peoples!
- L** For great is his steadfast love toward us,
- C** and the faithfulness of the LORD endures forever.
- L** Ascribe to the LORD the glory due his name;
- C** bring an offering, and come into his courts!

Psalm 72:1–15

- L** ¹Give the king your justice, O God, and your righteousness to the royal son!
 - C** ²May he judge your people with righteousness, and your poor with justice!
 - L** ³Let the mountains bear prosperity for the people, and the hills, in righteousness!
 - C** ⁴May he defend the cause of the poor of the people, give deliverance to the children of the needy, and crush the oppressor!
 - L** ⁵May they fear you while the sun endures, and as long as the moon, throughout all generations!
 - C** ⁶May he be like rain that falls on the mown grass, like showers that water the earth!
 - L** ⁷In his days may the righteous flourish, and peace abound, till the moon be no more!
 - C** ⁸May he have dominion from sea to sea, and from the River to the ends of the earth!
 - L** ⁹May desert tribes bow down before him and his enemies lick the dust!
 - C** ¹⁰May the kings of Tarshish and of the coastlands render him tribute; may the kings of Sheba and Seba bring gifts!
 - L** ¹¹May all kings fall down before him, all nations serve him!
 - C** ¹²For he delivers the needy when he calls, the poor and him who has no helper.
 - L** ¹³He has pity on the weak and the needy, and saves the lives of the needy.
 - C** ¹⁴From oppression and violence he redeems their life, and precious is their blood in his sight.
 - L** ¹⁵Long may he live; may gold of Sheba be given to him!
- May prayer be made for him continually, and blessings invoked for him all the day!

Ephesians 3:1–12

¹For this reason I, Paul, a prisoner for Christ Jesus on behalf of you Gentiles—²assuming that you have heard of the stewardship of God’s grace that was given to me for you, ³how the mystery was made known to me by revelation, as I have written briefly. ⁴When you read this, you can perceive my insight into the mystery of Christ, ⁵which was not made known to the sons of men in other generations as it has now been revealed to his

holy apostles and prophets by the Spirit. ⁶This mystery is that the Gentiles are fellow heirs, members of the same body, and partakers of the promise in Christ Jesus through the gospel.

⁷Of this gospel I was made a minister according to the gift of God's grace, which was given me by the working of his power. ⁸To me, though I am the very least of all the saints, this grace was given, to preach to the Gentiles the unsearchable riches of Christ, ⁹and to bring to light for everyone what is the plan of the mystery hidden for ages in God who created all things, ¹⁰so that through the church the manifold wisdom of God might now be made known to the rulers and authorities in the heavenly places. ¹¹This was according to the eternal purpose that he has realized in Christ Jesus our Lord, ¹²in whom we have boldness and access with confidence through our faith in him.

L This is the Word of the Lord.

C Thanks be to God.

Verse of the Day: Luke 2:30, 32

L Alleluia, Alleluia, Where is he who has been born king of the Jews? Alleluia.

C Alleluia, Alleluia, We saw his star when it rose and have come to worship him. Alleluia.

Matthew 2:1–12

L The Holy Gospel according to St. Matthew, the 2nd chapter.

C Glory to You, O Lord.

¹Now after Jesus was born in Bethlehem of Judea in the days of Herod the king, behold, wise men from the east came to Jerusalem, ²saying, "Where is he who has been born king of the Jews? For we saw his star when it rose and have come to worship him." ³When Herod the king heard this, he was troubled, and all Jerusalem with him; ⁴and assembling all the chief priests and scribes of the people, he inquired of them where the Christ was to be born. ⁵They told him, "In Bethlehem of Judea, for so it is written by the prophet:

⁶"And you, O Bethlehem, in the land of Judah,
are by no means least among the rulers of Judah;
for from you shall come a ruler
who will shepherd my people Israel."

⁷Then Herod summoned the wise men secretly and ascertained from them what time the star had appeared. ⁸And he sent them to Bethlehem, saying, "Go and search diligently for the child, and when you have found him, bring me word, that I too may come and worship him." ⁹After listening to the king, they went on their way. And behold, the star that they had seen when it rose went before them until it came to rest over the place where the child was. ¹⁰When they saw the star, they rejoiced exceedingly with great joy. ¹¹And going into the house they saw the child with Mary his mother, and they fell down and worshiped him. Then, opening their treasures, they offered him gifts, gold and frankincense and myrrh. ¹²And being warned in a dream not to return to Herod, they departed to their own country by another way.

L This is the Gospel of the Lord.

C Praise to You, O Christ.

C I believe in God, the Father Almighty,
maker of heaven and earth.

And in Jesus Christ, His only Son, our Lord,
who was conceived by the Holy Spirit,
born of the virgin Mary,
suffered under Pontius Pilate,
was crucified, died and was buried.
He descended into hell.
The third day He rose again from the dead.
He ascended into heaven
and sits at the right hand of God the Father

Almighty.
From thence He will come to judge the living
and the dead.

I believe in the Holy Spirit,
the holy Christian Church,
the communion of saints,
the forgiveness of sins,
the resurrection of the body,
and the life everlasting. Amen.

O God of God, O Light of Light Lutheran Service Book 810, Lutheran Worship 83, The Lutheran Hymnal 132



1 O God of God, O Light of Light, O Prince of Peace and
2 For deep in proph-ets' sa-cred page, And grand in po-ets'
3 That life of truth, those deeds of love, That death so steeped in
4 Then raise to Christ a might-y song, And shout His name, His



King of kings: To You in heav-en's glo-ry bright The song of
wing-ed word, Slow-ly in type, from age to age The na-tions
hate and scorn— These all are past, and now a-bove He reigns, our
mer-cies tell! Sing, heav'n-ly host, your praise pro-long, And all on



praise for - ev - er rings. To Him who sits up - on the throne,
saw their com - ing Lord; Till through the deep Ju - de - an night
King once crowned with thorn. Lift up your heads, O might - y gates!
earth, your an - them swell! All hail, O Lamb for sin - ners slain!



The Lamb once slain but raised a - gain, Be all the glo - ry
Rang out the song, "Good - will to men!" Sung once by first - born
So sang that host be - yond our ken. Lift up your heads, your
For - ev - er let the song as - cend! Wor - thy the Lamb, en -



He has won, All thanks and praise! A - men, a - men.
sons of light, It ech - oes now, "Good - will!" A - men.
King a - waits. We lift them up. A - men, a - men.
throned to reign, All glo - ry, pow'r! A - men, a - men.

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Devotional thoughts:

There is great irony in the visit of the Wise Men. Those who ought to be worshiping the newborn King of the Jews are clueless. And in the end, instead of worshiping, they crucify Jesus of Nazareth, King of the Jews.

However, the foreign gentile scholars who we would expect to ignore the savior's birth are eager to worship Him and give Him gifts of gold, frankincense, and myrrh.

A careful reading of the Gospel of Matthew makes his reporting of this account quite understandable. Matthew's inclusion of Jesus' genealogy, his meticulous documentation of the fulfillment of prophecies, and the overall flavor of his text make it clear that he was writing for a Jewish audience. But over and over again, he records how gentiles are welcomed into the family of God. In Matthew 8, we learn of the faith of a Roman centurion. In chapter 15, we hear the Canaanite woman beseech Jesus with these words, "Yes, Lord, yet even the dogs eat the crumbs that fall from their masters' table." The centurion at the cross at Jesus' death, declared, "Truly this was the Son of God!" Finally, Matthew closes His Gospel with these words from Jesus, "Make disciples of all nations (gentiles!) (Matthew 28:19).

Whether we may be lowly shepherds or magnificently clad magi, we all are welcome at Jesus cradle. We may bring to Him gold, frankincense, or myrrh. Or we may simply sigh and say, "Nothing in my hand I bring, Simply to thy cross I cling." Jesus welcomes all who come to Him in faith.

"Rejoice in the Lord always; again I will say, rejoice. Let your reasonableness be known to everyone. The Lord is at hand; do not be anxious about anything, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God. And the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus" (Philippians 4:4-7).

God's richest blessings to you in Christ.

O Morning Star, How Fair and Bright Lutheran Service Book 395, Lutheran Worship 343, The Lutheran Hymnal 73

- | | |
|--|---|
| 1 O Morning Star, how fair and bright, Thou beamest forth in truth and light! O Sov'reign meek and lowly, Thou Root of Jesse, David's Son, My Lord and Master, Thou hast won My heart to serve Thee solely! Thou art holy, Fair and glorious, all-victorious, Rich in blessing, Rule and might o'er all possessing. | 2 Thou heav'nly Brightness, Light divine, O deep within my heart now shine, And make Thee there an altar. Fill me with joy and strength to be Thy member, ever joined to Thee In love that cannot falter; Toward Thee longing Doth possess me; turn and bless me; Here in sadness Eye and heart long for Thy gladness. |
|--|---|

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Prayer of the Church on Epiphany

P Most merciful God, we rejoice in the manifestation of Christ to the Gentiles. When you led the Magi by a star to worship the baby Jesus, you revealed your desire for everyone to be saved and come to the knowledge of the truth. Grant that by the preaching of Your Gospel we may join the Wise Men in receiving the wisdom that leads to salvation. By the working of Your Holy Spirit keep us attentive to all the teachings of Your Word. Enlighten our minds, control our wills, and purify our desires. Let Your Word be a light for our path that neither the pleasures nor the honors nor the pains of this life may turn away our thoughts from the fullness of life that is found only in You. Enable us in sincerity of heart to follow You, the only true God with the resolve and purpose of the Magi who sought the newborn king. By Your holy Word enlighten all who are in error, doubt, or temptation with the sure and certain knowledge of Your truth that all who live in sin may be led to repentance. Show mercy and grace to all those suffering any distress, to those who are sick or hospitalized, and to those facing death. Let them know the sure comfort of Your holy Word. We commit ourselves and all for whom we pray to Your fatherly care and benediction. Be gracious to us and defend us by Your power. Direct us by Your Spirit that we may daily grow in grace and in the knowledge of our Savior until we shall stand before You in the joy of everlasting glory; through the same Jesus Christ, our Lord, who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.

C Amen.

Collect to Enter the New Year

L Lord God our Father, You kept Abraham and Sarah in safety throughout the days of their pilgrimage, You led the children of Israel through the midst of the sea, and by a star You led the Wise Men to the infant Jesus. Protect and guide us now in this time as we enter this New Year. Make our ways safe and our homecomings joyful, and bring us at last to our heavenly home, where You dwell in glory with Your Son and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.

C Amen.

L O Lord, grant us grace to rejoice in Christ's incarnation; and thankfulness that, in the fullness of time, God sent forth His Son, born of a woman, born under the Law, to redeem us and give us the adoption as Your sons and heirs; and grant us a glad new year,.

C Amen.

C Our Father who art in heaven, hallowed be Thy name, Thy kingdom come, Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven; give us this day our daily bread; and forgive us our trespasses as we forgive those who trespass against us; and lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil. For Thine is the kingdom and the power and the glory forever and ever. Amen.

L Let us bless the Lord.

C Thanks be to God.

L The Lord bless us, defend us from all evil, and bring us to everlasting life.

C Amen.



1 The peo - ple that in dark - ness sat A glo - rious
 2 To hail Thee, Sun of Righ - teous - ness, The gath - 'ring
 3 To us a Child of hope is born, To us a
 4 His name shall be the Prince of Peace, The Ev - er -



light have seen; The light has shined on them who long In
 na - tions come; They joy as when the reap - ers bear Their
 Son is giv'n, And on His shoul - der ev - er rests All
 last - ing Lord, The Won - der - ful, the Coun - sel - or, The



shades of death have been, In shades of death have been.
 har - vest trea - sures home, Their har - vest trea - sures home.
 pow'r in earth and heav'n, All pow'r in earth and heav'n.
 God by all a - dored, The God by all a - dored.

5 His righteous government and pow'r
 Shall over all extend;
 On judgment and on justice based,
 His reign shall have no end,
 His reign shall have no end.

6 Lord Jesus, reign in us, we pray,
 And make us Thine alone,
 Who with the Father ever art
 And Holy Spirit, one,
 And Holy Spirit, one.

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Friday

Light all the candles on the Advent wreath.

L In the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit.

C Amen.

Verse of the Day: Luke 2:30, 32

L Alleluia, Alleluia, My eyes have seen your salvation; Alleluia.

C Alleluia, Alleluia, A light for revelation to the Gentiles, and for glory to your people Israel.
 Alleluia.

Kyrie

L O Lord, **C** Have Mercy on us.

L O Christ, **C** Have Mercy on us.

L O Lord, **C** Have Mercy on us.

Isaiah 60:1–6

¹Arise, shine, for your light has come,
and the glory of the LORD has risen upon you.

²For behold, darkness shall cover the earth,
and thick darkness the peoples;
but the LORD will arise upon you,
and his glory will be seen upon you.

³And nations shall come to your light,
and kings to the brightness of your rising.

⁴Lift up your eyes all around, and see;
they all gather together, they come to you;
your sons shall come from afar,
and your daughters shall be carried on the hip.

⁵Then you shall see and be radiant;
your heart shall thrill and exult,
because the abundance of the sea shall be turned to you,
the wealth of the nations shall come to you.

⁶A multitude of camels shall cover you,
the young camels of Midian and Ephah;
all those from Sheba shall come.
They shall bring gold and frankincense,
and shall bring good news, the praises of the LORD.

Isaiah 60:1–6 is an appropriate reading for The Epiphany of our Lord on a number of levels. I am certain that verse 6 jumped out at you as you read it. Who could miss the camels bringing gold and frankincense? But there is much more.

The peoples and the nations mentioned in verses 2 and 3 are another way of saying gentiles. Although the gentiles live in darkness, they will come to God's light! This was absolutely fulfilled in the coming of the wise men on the first Epiphany. They were guided by the light of a star to come to the True Light, the Light that shines in the darkness, and the darkness has not overcome it (John 1:5).

Verse 3 speaks of kings coming to the brightness. At Epiphany, we sometimes sing "We Three Kings." Strictly speaking, the magi were not kings. However, there was at least one time when an individual identified as one of the magi briefly ruled as a king in Persia until he was defeated by Darius the Great.

The ultimate joy of Epiphany is the knowledge that God became man to save us from sin and death. Without Him, we could never fully know the love of God. Jesus, God of God and Light of Light, came down from heaven for us men and our salvation! It is no wonder that the ancient Church celebrated Epiphany with such vigor!

Prayer: O God, by the leading of a star You made known Your only-begotten Son to the Gentiles. Lead us, who know You by faith, to enjoy in heaven the fullness of Your divine presence; through the same Jesus Christ, our Lord, who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. Amen.

Saturday

Light all the candles on the Advent wreath. (It is the custom to retire the Advent wreath until next year on the Saturday following Epiphany. There is certainly nothing inappropriate continuing to use it throughout the Epiphany season to remind us that Jesus is the Light of the World.)

L In the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit.

C Amen.

Gradual Isaiah 9:6; Psalm 98:1b

L To us a child is born, to us a son is given;

C and the government shall be upon his shoulder.

L And his name shall be called Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God,

C Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace.

L Sing to the Lord a new song,

C for he has done marvelous things!

Ephesians 3:1–12

¹For this reason I, Paul, a prisoner for Christ Jesus on behalf of you Gentiles—²assuming that you have heard of the stewardship of God’s grace that was given to me for you, ³how the mystery was made known to me by revelation, as I have written briefly. ⁴When you read this, you can perceive my insight into the mystery of Christ, ⁵which was not made known to the sons of men in other generations as it has now been revealed to his holy apostles and prophets by the Spirit. ⁶This mystery is that the Gentiles are fellow heirs, members of the same body, and partakers of the promise in Christ Jesus through the gospel.

⁷Of this gospel I was made a minister according to the gift of God’s grace, which was given me by the working of his power. ⁸To me, though I am the very least of all the saints, this grace was given, to preach to the Gentiles the unsearchable riches of Christ, ⁹and to bring to light for everyone what is the plan of the mystery hidden for ages in God who created all things, ¹⁰so that through the church the manifold wisdom of God might now be made known to the rulers and authorities in the heavenly places. ¹¹This was according to the eternal purpose that he has realized in Christ Jesus our Lord, ¹²in whom we have boldness and access with confidence through our faith in him.

Verse of the Day: Luke 2:30, 32

L Alleluia, Alleluia, My eyes have seen your salvation; Alleluia.

C Alleluia, Alleluia, A light for revelation to the Gentiles, and for glory to your people Israel. Alleluia.

Kyrie

L O Lord, **C** Have Mercy on us.

L O Christ, **C** Have Mercy on us.

L O Lord, **C** Have Mercy on us.

I don’t know if it has been done before, but it is entirely appropriate to call St. Paul, the Epiphany Apostle! Epiphany is known as the “Gentile Christmas” because the wise men were the first gentiles to worship the baby Jesus. The Epistle lesson for Epiphany reminds us that Paul is the apostle to the gentiles—hence he is the Epiphany Apostle.

Epiphany is all about God’s mysteries being made manifest. The first mystery revealed is that Jesus is God in man made manifest! The second is expressed by Paul in Ephesians. “This mystery is that the Gentiles are fellow heirs, members of the same body, and partakers of the promise in Christ Jesus through the gospel”

(Ephesians 1:6)!

This is an amazing gift of God's grace! You and I are fellow heirs with God's people of the Old Testament! We are no longer separated from the family of God. All people who believe in Jesus as their savior are one in Christ!

We continue to thank God today for the Epiphany Apostle, St. Paul, who was sent to preach to the Gentiles the unsearchable riches of Christ! The riches of Christ and the salvation that He won for us on the cross are greater than gold, frankincense, and myrrh! This is the great and wonderful mystery revealed to us that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners! In thanksgiving, let us joy the wise men in falling down to worship our newborn King!

Prayer: Most merciful God, we rejoice in the manifestation of Christ to the Gentiles. When you led the Magi by a star to worship the baby Jesus, you revealed your desire for everyone to be saved and come to the knowledge of the truth. Grant that by the preaching of Your Gospel we may join the Wise Men in receiving the wisdom that leads to salvation, through the same Jesus Christ, our Lord, who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. Amen.

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