

*Liturgy*  
The First Sunday after Christmas  
Year A

GATHERING

Praise the LORD!

Praise the LORD from the heavens;  
Praise Him in the heights!

**Praise Him, all His angels;**

**praise Him, all His host!**

**Praise Him, sun and moon;**

**praise Him, all you shining stars!**

Praise Him, you highest heavens,  
and you waters above the heavens!  
Let them praise the name of the LORD,  
for He commanded and they were created.

**He established them forever and ever;**

**He fixed their bounds, which cannot be passed.**

Praise the LORD from the earth,  
all creatures and all nature;  
Kings of the earth and all peoples,  
princes and all rulers of the earth!  
Young men and women alike,  
old and young together!

**Let them praise the name of the LORD,  
for His name alone is exalted;**

**His glory is above earth and heaven.**

**He has raised up a horn for His people,  
praise for all His faithful,  
for the people of Israel who are close to Him.  
Praise the LORD!**

— from Psalm 148

*Joy to the World*

Joy to the world! The Lord is come;  
Let earth receive her King.  
Let every heart prepare Him room,  
And heav'n and nature sing,  
And heav'n and nature sing,  
And heav'n, and heav'n, and nature sing.

Joy to the world! The Savior reigns;  
Let men their songs employ,  
While fields and floods, rocks, hills and plains  
Repeat the sounding joy,  
Repeat the sounding joy,  
Repeat, repeat the sounding joy.

He rules the worlds 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.

Text: Isaac Watts, 1719. Hymn tune: ANTIOCH, trad. arr. Lowell Mason, 1836.

*LECTIONARY for the first Sunday  
after Christmas, Year A:*

*Isaiah 63:7-9*

*Psalm 148*

*Hebrews 2:10-18*

*Matthew 2:13-23*

*Joy to the world! The Lord is come!  
Let every heart prepare Him room!*

*Today is the first Sunday after Christmas, the first Sunday in the wonderful, 12-day period of Christmastide. Just a few days ago, we celebrated the Incarnation of the Word of God, the birth of Jesus—the One for whom we have waited and prepared during the 4-week season of Advent. During that season, you will have noticed that our songs were songs of waiting and preparation. Now, during Christmastide, we enter fully into the worship and celebration of the first coming of Christ, and we continue to ponder—even as we embrace the exuberant praise of the familiar Christmas carols—His still-to-come Second Advent, and what Bernard of Clairvaux has called Christ's third advent, His coming into our own lives and living there as Emmanuel.*

*In this sample liturgy, you'll see well-loved Christmas carols and songs in various places, sometimes just a verse or two, interspersed with readings and prayers, as we worship—sing, tell, pray, and enact God's story—in this second season of the Christian year.*

## INVOCATION

Prayers of adoration, praise, and thanksgiving for God's presence

### *Good Christians All, Rejoice*

Good Christians all, rejoice  
With heart and soul and voice.  
Give ye heed to what we say:  
News! News! Jesus Christ is born today!  
Ox and ass before Him bow,  
And He is in the manger now.  
Christ is born today! Christ is born today!

Good Christians all, rejoice  
With heart and soul and voice.  
Now ye hear of endless bliss:  
Joy! Joy! Jesus Christ was born for this!  
He has opened heaven's door,  
And man is blessed evermore.  
Christ was born for this! Christ was born for this!

Setting: Ellen Koehler. Copyright ©2014 Ellen Koehler. All rights reserved.  
Hymn tune: IN DULCI JUBILO (14<sup>th</sup>-century German melody).  
Words: 14<sup>th</sup>-century carol, attrib. to Heinrich Seuse;  
transl. from Latin and German by John Mason Neale, 1853.

## PROFESSION OF FAITH

Long ago, at many times and in many ways,  
God spoke to our fathers by the prophets;  
**But in these last days He has spoken to us by His Son,  
whom He appointed the heir of all things,  
through whom also He created the worlds.**  
He is the radiance of the glory of God  
and the exact representation of His being,  
and He sustains all things by the word of His power.  
**After making purification for sins,  
He sat down at the right hand of the Majesty on high.**  
It was fitting that He, for whom and by whom all things exist,  
in bringing many children to glory,  
should make the pioneer of their salvation perfect through suffering.  
**For He who sanctifies and those who are sanctified all have one Father.  
That is why He is not ashamed to call them brothers and sisters.**  
Since therefore the children share in flesh and blood,  
He himself likewise partook of the same things,  
that through death He might destroy  
the one who has the power of death, that is, the devil,  
and free all those who all their lives were held  
in slavery by the fear of death.  
**He became like them in every respect,  
so that He might be a merciful and faithful high priest  
in the service of God,  
to make atonement for the sins of the people.  
Because He himself was tested by what He suffered,  
He is able to help those who are being tested.**

– from Hebrews 1:1-4, 2:10-18

*We use this carol in two places: here, to close a time of prayers of invocation; and below, to close the service in joyful acclamation of praise and thanksgiving for the gifts of Christ, the Lord.*

*Good Christians All, Rejoice is available in the Music Catalog (Season of Light) as a lead sheet. Be sure to read the commentary for background explanation of this joyful Christmas carol and for creative suggestions for its use in a worship service.*

*Here's a link:*

<https://clerestorynotes.com/live/sheetmusic/good-christians-all-rejoice>

*The Profession of Faith is a setting of the epistle reading for today, and adds some verses from the first chapter of Hebrews. It is written as a responsive reading, for a single reader and the congregation.*

## PRAYERS OF CONFESSION

When the fullness of time had come,  
God sent forth His Son,  
Jesus Christ our Lord,  
born of a woman,  
born under the Law,  
so that He might redeem us,  
who were under the law,  
that we might receive adoption as children.

*When the goodness and loving kindness of God our Savior appeared,  
He saved us –  
not because of any works of righteousness that we had done,  
but according to His mercy.*

– from Galatians 4:4-5, Titus 3:4-7

**O Lamb of God, the only begotten Son of the Father,  
Jesus Christ, who was made human to take away the sins of the world,  
have mercy upon us and turn us from our iniquities.**

[Silence]

You who were made manifest to destroy the works of the devil,  
**have mercy upon us and enable us to renounce and forsake them.**

[Silent confessions]

You who are our great advocate with the Father,  
**Receive our prayer. Amen.**

*Come, Thou Long-Expected Jesus*

Born Thy people to deliver,  
Born a Child and yet a King;  
Born to reign in us forever,  
Now Thy gracious kingdom bring.  
By Thine own eternal Spirit,  
Rule in all our hearts alone;  
By Thine all-sufficient merit,  
Raise us to Thy glorious throne.

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Words: Charles Wesley, 1745.  
Hymn tune: HYFRYDOL; Rowland H. Prichard, 1830.

## ASSURANCE OF PARDON

Hear the word of promise spoken through the prophet Isaiah:

*I will recount the gracious deeds and praiseworthy acts of the LORD,  
because of all that the LORD has done for us,  
according to His mercy and the abundance of His steadfast love.*

For He said, “Surely they are my people,”  
and He became their Savior in all their distress.

*It was no messenger or angel, but His presence that saved them.  
In His love and in His pity He redeemed them;  
He lifted them up and carried them.*

– from Isaiah 63:7-9

**Thanks be to God!**

*Music for this setting of Come, Thou Long-Expected Jesus is available in the sheet music catalog as a lead sheet and arranged for 3-part vocal harmony. (See the Sheet Music Catalog in the Music Room, “Season of Light.”)*

*Here’s a link:*

<https://clerestorynotes.com/live/sheetmusic/come-thou-long-expected-jesus>

*You may hear this beloved Christmas hymn in the Audio Media Studio section of the Music Room. (This live recording, from 2017, is from our annual Advent Lessons and Carols service.)*

*Here’s a link:*

[https://clerestorynotes.com/live/content/music\\_library/come-thou-long-expected-jesus-live-clp](https://clerestorynotes.com/live/content/music_library/come-thou-long-expected-jesus-live-clp)

## TIME OF OFFERING

Words and testimonies of thanksgiving and praise.

God of love, Prince of peace, King of kings:

You humbled Yourself and dwelt among us,  
the Word made flesh, that we might have life.

**With grateful hearts we bring these gifts,  
Your tithes and our offerings.  
In worship, may our loving hearts enthrone You.**

### *What Child is This?*

What Child is this who, laid to rest,  
On Mary's lap is sleeping?  
Whom angels greet with anthems sweet,  
While shepherds watch are keeping?  
This, this is Christ the King,  
Whom shepherds guard and angels sing;  
Haste, haste, to bring Him laud,  
The Babe, the Son of Mary.

Why lies He in such mean estate,  
Where ox and ass are feeding?  
Good Christians, fear, for sinners here  
The silent Word is pleading.  
Nails, spear shall pierce Him through,  
The cross be borne for me, for you.  
Hail, hail the Word made flesh,  
The Babe, the Son of Mary.

So bring Him incense, gold and myrrh,  
Come peasant, king to own Him;  
The King of kings salvation brings,  
Let loving hearts enthrone Him.  
Raise, raise a song on high,  
The virgin sings her lullaby.  
Joy, joy for Christ is born,  
The Babe, the Son of Mary.

This, this is Christ the King,  
Whom shepherds guard and angels sing;  
Haste, haste, to bring Him laud,  
The Babe, the Son of Mary.

Words: William C. Dix, 1865. Hymn tune: GREENSLEEVES, 16<sup>th</sup> century English melody.

## THE WORD

Isaiah 63:7-9

Psalm 148

Hebrews 2:10-18

Matthew 2:13-23

THE TABLE

Remembering the Body of Christ

*Passing of the Peace*

The Lord be with you!

**And also with you!**

Lift up your hearts.

**We lift them up to the Lord.**

Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.

**It is right to give Him thanks and praise.**

**Christ has died. Christ is risen. Christ will come again!**

*The Lord's Prayer* (spoken)

**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 debts**

**As we forgive our debtors.**

**And lead us not into temptation,**

**But deliver us from evil.**

**For Thine is the kingdom,**

**And the power, and the glory,**

**Forever. Amen**

*Fullness of Grace*

Fullness of grace in man's human frailty,

This is the wonder of Jesus.

Laying aside His power and glory,

Humbly He entered our world.

Chose the path of meanest worth;

Scandal of a virgin birth.

Born in a stable, cold and rejected;

Here lies the hope of the world.

Fullness of grace, the love of the Father

Shown in the face of Jesus.

Stooping to bear the weight of humanity,

Walking the Calvary road.

Christ the holy innocent

Took our sin and punishment.

Fullness of God, despised and rejected;

Crushed for the sins of the world.

Fullness of hope in Christ we had longed for,

Promise of God in Jesus.

Through His obedience we are forgiven,

Op'ning the floodgates of heav'n.

All our hopes and dreams we bring

Gladly as an offering.

Fullness of life and joy unspeakable:

God's gift in love to the world.

SENDING FORTH  
The Life of the Body

*Good Christians All, Rejoice (verse 3)*

Good Christians all, rejoice  
With heart and soul and voice.  
Now ye need not fear the grave:  
Peace! Peace! Jesus Christ was born to save!  
Calls you one and calls you all  
To gain His everlasting hall.  
Christ was born to save! Christ was born to save!

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**Benediction**

Beloved, hear and take these words of blessing into your hearts,  
as you celebrate, and ponder, the Incarnation of Christ, the Lord:  
Let the peace of Christ rule in your hearts;  
let the word of Christ dwell in you richly.  
And as you go forth into the world to love and serve the Lord,  
whatever you do, walking out your baptisms,  
do everything in the name of the Lord Jesus,  
giving thanks always to God the Father through Him.

– based on Colossians 3:14-17

**Thanks be to God. Alleluia! Alleluia! Alleluia!**

*A thought about worship...*—“The incarnation is the starting point for our spirituality. . . God united himself with humans in order for men and women to be united with God. The incarnation is not something unrelated to us; it has everything to do with our spirituality—for the incarnation not only brings God to human nature but brings human nature to God.” (Robert E. Webber, *Ancient-Future Time: Forming Spirituality through the Christian Year* [Grand Rapids: Baker Books, 2004], 62).

**Lectionary for next week:** Jeremiah 31:7-14  
Psalm 147:12-20  
Ephesians 1:3-14  
John 1:1-18

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