

*Liturgy*  
The First Sunday after Christmas  
Year B

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, who are near 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 B:*

*Isaiah 61:10-62:3  
Psalm 148  
Galatians 4:4-7  
Luke 2:22-40*

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

*Today is the first Sunday after Christmas, and this year, 2023, the only Sunday in the wonderful, 12-day period of Christmastide. (Most years, there are two Sundays in this shortest of the seasons of Light, but due to the way Christmas and Epiphany fall this year, there is only one.) 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.*

*Today's lectionary is filled with rejoicing and praise, especially in the Isaiah and Psalm passages, along with expressions of deep thanksgiving and wondrous faith. Paul reminds us, in the epistle to the Galatians, that "when the fullness of time had come, God sent forth His Son . . ."—so that we might receive adoption as His children. And in Luke's narrative of the presentation of the infant Jesus at the Temple in Jerusalem, we see the excited praise and blessing of the "righteous and devout" Simeon and the prophetess Anna, both of whom had waited in anticipation their whole long lives for the coming of the promised Messiah.*

*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*

INVOCATION

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

*Angels From the Realms of Glory*

Angels from the realms of glory,  
Wing your flight o'er all the earth;  
Ye who sang creation's story  
Now proclaim Messiah's birth.

Gloria, in excelsis Deo! Gloria, in excelsis Deo!

Though an Infant now we view Him,  
He shall fill His Father's throne,  
Gather all the nations to Him;  
Every knee shall then bow down.

Gloria, in excelsis Deo! Gloria, in excelsis Deo!

Public domain. Words, James Montgomery; Hymn tune, GLORIA (BARNES).

PROFESSION OF FAITH

**We believe that the Son of God,  
the second person of the Trinity,  
being truly and eternally God,  
of one substance and equal with the Father,  
did, when the fullness of time had come,  
take upon Himself human nature,  
with all its essential properties and common frailties,  
yet without sin.**

He was conceived by the power of the Holy Spirit  
in the womb of the virgin Mary, and of her substance.

*In this way, two whole natures,  
the divine and the human, perfect and distinct,  
were inseparably joined together in one person  
without being changed, mixed, or confused.*

**This person is truly God and truly man,  
yet one Christ,  
the only mediator between God and man.**

In His human nature, united to the divine nature,  
the Lord Jesus was set apart  
and anointed with the Holy Spirit beyond measure,  
having in Him all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge.

*In Him the Father was pleased to have all fullness dwell,  
so that being holy, blameless, and undefiled,  
full of grace and truth,  
He might be completely equipped  
to fulfill the office of a mediator and guarantor.*

**He did not take this office to Himself  
but was called to it by His Father,  
who put all power and judgment into His hand  
and commanded Him to execute it.**

– from Westminster Confession (MESV), Chap. VIII, Sec. 2-3

*prayers, as we worship—sing, tell,  
pray, and enact God's story—in this  
second season of the Christian year.*

*We use this carol in two places: here,  
to close a time of prayers of invoca-  
tion and thanksgiving, and at the close  
the service to send us forth with a joy-  
ous acclamation of praise.*

## 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.

Setting: Ellen Koehler. ©2004. All Rights Reserved.  
Words: Charles Wesley, 1745.  
Hymn tune: HYFRYDOL; Rowland H. Prichard, 1830.

## ASSURANCE OF PARDON

This is the good news,  
good tidings of great joy, which is for all people:  
In the city of David a Savior was born to us;  
He is Christ, the Lord!  
**Lord, You have allowed our eyes to see Your salvation,  
the salvation which You have prepared  
in the presence of all peoples:  
a light of revelation to the Gentiles,  
and the glory of Your people Israel.**

– based on Luke 2:10-11, 30-32

**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-clip](https://clerestorynotes.com/live/content/music_library/come-thou-long-expected-jesus-live-clip)

## 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 61:10 - 62:3

Psalm 148

Galatians 4:4-7

Luke 2:22-40

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**

*O Come All Ye Faithful*

O come, all ye faithful, joyful and triumphant;

O come ye, O come ye to Bethlehem!

Come and behold Him, born the King of angels!

O come, let us adore Him!

O come, let us adore Him!

O come, let us adore Him, Christ the Lord!

God of God, Light of Light Eternal;

Lo! He abhors not the Virgin's womb;

Very God, begotten, not created.

O come let us adore Him...

Yea, Lord, we greet Thee, born this happy morning;

Jesus, to Thee be all glory giv'n;

Word of the Father, now in flesh appearing.

O come let us adore Him...

Sing choirs of angels, sing in exultation;

O sing, all ye citizens of heav'n above!

Glory to God, all glory in the highest!

O come let us adore Him...

SENDING FORTH  
The Life of the Body

*Angels from the Realms of Glory*

All creation, join in praising God, the Father, Spirit, Son,  
Evermore your voices raising to th'eternal Three in One.

*Refrain*

Gloria, in excelsis Deo!  
Gloria, in excelsis Deo!

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Benediction

Beloved, servants of the Lord,  
we depart from this place in peace,  
according to God's word.  
For we have seen His salvation.

**Amen!**

Now go forth, in peace and joy,  
into the world to live out your baptisms,  
loving and serving the Lord, Jesus Christ,  
who lives and reigns with the Father and the Spirit,  
one God, now and forevermore.

**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:* Genesis 1:1-5  
Psalm 29  
Acts 19:1-7  
Mark 1:4-11

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