

Liturgy
The First Sunday of Christmastide
Year C

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 of
Christmastide, Year C:*

1 Samuel 2:18-20, 26

Psalm 148

Colossians 3:12-17

Luke 2:41-52

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

*Today is the first Sunday after Christ-
mas, the first Sunday in the wonderful,
12-day period of Christmastide. Just a
few days ago, we celebrated the In-
carnation 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 prep-
aration. 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 car-
ols—His still-to-come Second Advent,
and what Bernard of Clairvaux has
called Christ's third advent, His com-
ing 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

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).

We use this carol in two places: here, to close a time of prayers of invocation, and to close the service in joyful acclamation of praise.

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 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

God Rest Ye Merry, Gentlemen

O tidings of comfort and joy, comfort and joy;
O tidings of comfort and joy.

God rest ye merry, gentlemen, let nothing you dismay;
Remember Christ our Savior was born on Christmas day,
To save us all from Satan's pow'r when we were gone astray.

O tidings of comfort and joy, ...

Public domain. Traditional English carol.

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

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 shepherd 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 Christian, 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.

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

THE WORD

1 Samuel 2:18-20, 26

Psalms 148

Colossians 3:12-17

Luke 2:41-52

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!

True God of true God,
Light from Light Eternal;
Lo! He abhors not the Virgin's womb;
Son of the Father,
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...

Text: Latin hymns, attributed to John Francis Wade, c. 1743.
Transl. verses 1-3 from Latin: Frederick Oakley, 1841.
Hymn tune: ADESTE FIDELES. (attribution uncertain)

The theology of this beloved carol is rich and profound, especially when used at the Lord's Table. Look carefully at all the verses. What nuggets of rich theological truth and blessing to you find in them?

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!

Traditional French carol tune. Words: James Montgomery, 1816,

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.

Thanks be to God. Alleluia! Alleluia! Alleluia!

– based on Colossians 3:14-17

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 3:1-14
John 1:1-18

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