

**Introduction to the day**

Within the gospel reading's profound words lies the simple message that God is revealed in a human person. Though we may try to understand how the Word existed with God from the beginning of time, the wonder we celebrate at Christmas is that the Word continues to dwell among us. Christ comes among us in the gathered assembly, the scriptures, the waters of new birth, and the bread and the wine. Through these ordinary gifts we receive the fullness of God's grace and truth.

**WELCOME AND ANNOUNCEMENTS**

**INVOCATION**

We gather in the name of God, the Creator of Light; + Jesus, the Light of the World; and the Holy Spirit, the Light who illumines our path. **Amen.**

**CONFESSION AND FORGIVENESS**

In this season of light, let us go before God and confess how our words and actions contribute to the darkness instead of adding to the light. *Silence.*

God of Love and Light,

**We confess that we are not always the light-bearers you desire us to be.**

**We shine a spotlight on the transgressions of others  
while trying to keep our own sins hidden in the dark.**

**We burn bridges by being impatient, opinionated and judgmental.**

**We inflame others by lashing out in anger.**

**We go through our days enveloped in the gloom of fear and doubt.**

**We let our witness become a smoldering ember until it dies out completely.**

**Forgive us Jesus, the Everlasting Light.**

**Come to us, abide with us, our Lord, Emmanuel.**

**Teach us to walk as children of light, surrounded by your love, forgiveness and healing.**

**We ask this in the name of Christ. Amen.**

God is light, and in God there is no darkness as all. If we walk in the light as God is in the light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus cleanses us from all sin.  
**Amen.**



1 Hark! the her - ald an - gels sing, Je-sus, the Light of the world;  
 2 Joy - ful, all you na - tions, rise; Je-sus, the Light of the world;  
 3 Christ, by high - est heav'n a - dored, Je-sus, the Light of the world;  
 4 Hail the heav'n-born Prince of peace! Je-sus, the Light of the world;



“Glo - ry to the new-born king,” Je-sus, the Light of the world.  
 join the tri - umph of the skies; Je-sus, the Light of the world.  
 Christ, the ev - er - last - ing Lord! Je-sus, the Light of the world.  
 Hail the Sun of righ-teous-ness! Je-sus, the Light of the world.

*Refrain*

We'll walk in the light, beau-ti-ful light, come where the dew-drops of mer-cy are bright.



Shine all a-round us by day and by night, Je-sus, the Light of the world.

Text: Charles Wesley, 1707–1788, stanzas; George D. Elderkin, 1845–1928, refrain  
 Music: WE'LL WALK IN THE LIGHT, Traditional; arr. George D. Elderkin

**GREETING**

Christ has called us to this place,  
 gathered one and all by his Holy Spirit

**We are followers of Christ  
 who seek to hear the Word,  
 live the Word, and share the Word.**

The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God,  
 and the communion of the Holy Spirit be with you all.

**And also with you.**

## KYRIE

(words by David Eck, tune "Come Thou Long Expected Jesus")



Lord, have mer - cy\_\_ on your peo - ple. Christ have mer - cy\_\_ on\_\_ us.  
Ky - ri - e e - le - i - son\_\_ Chri - ste e - le - i - son.



Shine your light in\_\_ to our dark - ness. Fill\_\_ us\_\_ with your ho - ly love.  
Heal all\_\_ con - flicts be - tween na - tions. Teach us\_\_ how to\_\_ live as one.



Be our strength in times of\_\_ trou - ble. Set us free from chains that\_\_ bind.  
Show us how to love our\_\_ neigh - bor. Run to those who\_\_ cry for\_\_ help.



Breathe new\_ life in - to our\_ spir - its. Pu - ri - fy our\_ hearts and minds.  
Word made flesh who lives a - mong us; Christ our\_ Lord, Em - man - u - el.

## SALUTATION

The Lord be with you **And also with you.**

## PRAYER OF THE DAY

Let us pray.

Almighty God, you have filled all the earth with the light of your incarnate Word. By your grace empower us to reflect your light in all that we do, through Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.

**Amen.**

## CHILDREN'S MESSAGE

## FIRST READING: Jeremiah 31:7-14

A reading from Jeremiah.

*God promises to bring Israel back to its land from the most remote parts of exile. In Zion Israel will rejoice over God's gift of food and livestock. Young women will express their joy in dancing; God will give gladness instead of sorrow.*

<sup>7</sup> Thus says the LORD:

Sing aloud with gladness for Jacob,  
and raise shouts for the chief of the nations;  
proclaim, give praise, and say,  
"Save, O LORD, your people,  
the remnant of Israel."

<sup>8</sup> See, I am going to bring them from the land of the north  
and gather them from the farthest parts of the earth,  
among them the blind and the lame,  
those with child and those in labor together;  
a great company, they shall return here.

<sup>9</sup> With weeping they shall come,  
and with consolations I will lead them back;  
I will let them walk by brooks of water,  
in a straight path where they shall not stumble,  
for I have become a father to Israel,  
and Ephraim is my firstborn.

<sup>10</sup> Hear the word of the LORD, O nations,  
and declare it in the coastlands far away;  
say, "He who scattered Israel will gather him  
and will keep him as a shepherd does a flock."

<sup>11</sup> For the LORD has ransomed Jacob  
and has redeemed him from hands too strong for him.

<sup>12</sup> They shall come and sing aloud on the height of Zion,  
and they shall be radiant over the goodness of the LORD,  
over the grain, the wine, and the oil,  
and over the young of the flock and the herd;  
their life shall become like a watered garden,  
and they shall never languish again.

<sup>13</sup> Then shall the young women rejoice in the dance,  
and the young men and the old shall be merry.

I will turn their mourning into joy;  
I will comfort them and give them gladness for sorrow.

<sup>14</sup> I will give the priests their fill of fatness,  
and my people shall be satisfied with my bounty,  
says the LORD.

Word of God, word of life. **Thanks be to God.**

## **SECOND READING: Ephesians 1:3-14**

A reading from Ephesians.

*In Jesus, all of God's plans and purposes have been made known as heaven and earth are united in Christ. Through Jesus, we have been chosen as God's children and have been promised eternal salvation.*

<sup>3</sup> Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us in Christ with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places, <sup>4</sup> just as he chose us in Christ before the foundation of the world to be holy and blameless before him in love. <sup>5</sup> He destined us for adoption as his children through Jesus Christ, according to the good pleasure of his will, <sup>6</sup> to the praise of his glorious grace that he freely bestowed on us in the Beloved. <sup>7</sup> In him we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of our trespasses, according to the riches of his grace <sup>8</sup> that he lavished on us. With all wisdom and insight <sup>9</sup> he has made known to us the mystery of his will, according to his good pleasure that he set forth in Christ, <sup>10</sup> as a plan for the fullness of time, to gather up all things in him, things in heaven and things on earth. <sup>11</sup> In Christ we have also obtained an inheritance, having been destined according to the purpose of him who accomplishes all things according to his counsel and will, <sup>12</sup> so that we, who were the first to set our hope on Christ, might live for the praise of his glory. <sup>13</sup> In him you also, when you had heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation, and had believed in him, were marked with the seal of the promised Holy Spirit; <sup>14</sup> this is the pledge of our inheritance toward redemption as God's own people, to the praise of his glory.

Word of God, word of life. **Thanks be to God.**

The holy gospel according to St. John the 1st chapter.

**Speak, Lord, your servants are listening!**

## **GOSPEL: John 1:[1-9] 10-18**

*John begins his gospel with this prologue: a hymn to the Word through whom all things were created. This Word became flesh and brought grace and truth to the world.*

[<sup>1</sup> In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. <sup>2</sup> He was in the beginning with God. <sup>3</sup> All things came into being through him, and without him not one thing came into being. What has come into being <sup>4</sup> in him was life, and the life was the light of all people. <sup>5</sup> The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness did not overtake it.

<sup>6</sup> There was a man sent from God whose name was John. <sup>7</sup> He came as a witness to testify to the light, so that all might believe through him. <sup>8</sup> He himself was not the light, but he came to testify to the light. <sup>9</sup> The true light, which enlightens everyone, was coming into the world.]

<sup>10</sup> He was in the world, and the world came into being through him, yet the world did not know him. <sup>11</sup> He came to what was his own, and his own people did not accept him. <sup>12</sup> But to all who received him, who believed in his name, he gave power to become children of God, <sup>13</sup> who were born, not of blood or of the will of the flesh or of the will of man, but of God.

<sup>14</sup> And the Word became flesh and lived among us, and we have seen his glory, the glory as of a father's only son, full of grace and truth. <sup>15</sup> (John testified to him and cried out, "This was he of whom I said, 'He who comes after me ranks ahead of me because he was before me.'") <sup>16</sup> From his fullness we have all received, grace upon grace. <sup>17</sup> The law indeed was given through Moses; grace and truth came through Jesus Christ. <sup>18</sup> No one has ever seen God. It is the only Son, himself God, who is close to the Father's heart, who has made him known.

The gospel of the Lord. **Praise to you, O Christ.**

HYMN OF THE DAY

Love Has Come

(ELW 292)



1 Love has come— a light in the dark - ness! Love shines forth in the  
2 Love is born! Come, share in the won - der. Love is God now a -  
3 Love has come and nev - er will leave us! Love is life ev - er -



Beth - le - hem skies. See, all heav - en has come to pro - claim it;  
sleep in the hay. See the glow in the eyes of his moth - er;  
last - ing and free. Love is Je - sus with - in and a - mong us.



hear how their song of joy a - ris - es: Love! Love! Born un - to  
what is the name her heart is say - ing? Love! Love! Love is the  
Love is the peace our hearts are seek - ing. Love! Love! Love is the



you, a Sav - ior! Love! Love! Glo - ry to God on high.  
name she whis - pers; Love! Love! Je - sus, Im - man - u - el.  
gift of Christ - mas. Love! Love! Praise to you, God on high!

Text: Ken Bible, b. 1950

Music: UN FLAMBEAU, F. Seguin, *Recueil de noëls composés en langue provençale*, 1856

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## **NICENE CREED**

**We believe in one God,  
the Father, the Almighty,  
maker of heaven and earth,  
of all that is, seen and unseen.**

**We believe in one Lord, Jesus Christ,  
the only Son of God,  
eternally begotten of the Father,  
God from God, Light from Light,  
true God from true God,  
begotten, not made,  
of one Being with the Father;  
through him all things were made.**

**For us and for our salvation  
he came down from heaven,  
was incarnate of the Holy Spirit and the virgin Mary  
and became truly human.  
For our sake he was crucified under Pontius Pilate;  
he suffered death and was buried.  
On the third day he rose again  
in accordance with the scriptures;  
he ascended into heaven  
and is seated at the right hand of the Father.  
He will come again in glory to judge the living and the dead,  
and his kingdom will have no end.**

**We believe in the Holy Spirit, the Lord, the giver of life,  
who proceeds from the Father and the Son,\*  
who with the Father and the Son is worshiped and glorified,  
who has spoken through the prophets.**

**We believe in one holy catholic and apostolic church.**

**We acknowledge one baptism for the forgiveness of sins.**

**We look for the resurrection of the dead,  
and the life of the world to come. Amen.**

## PRAYERS OF INTERCESSION

Empowered by the news of Christ's birth, let us pray boldly for the church, creation, and all who are in need.

O God, you reveal yourself wherever two or three are gathered in your name. Be with us now, not only in the infant Jesus and resurrected Christ, but in the beloved people of this assembly. Hear us, O God.

**Your mercy is great.**

You reveal yourself in the waters of the womb; in brooks, ponds, and oceans; and in the waters of baptism. Grant us wisdom to tenderly care for the earth as a garden watered by your grace. Hear us, O God.

**Your mercy is great.**

You reveal yourself in blessed diversity. Help us to look for you in people near and far, in bodies of all kinds, and in kindred young and old. Let us seek you in many places, praising you in many tongues. Hear us, O God.

**Your mercy is great.**

You reveal yourself in new life. Support those beginning a new job, a new relationship, or a new living situation, especially those displaced because of tragedy or loss. Be with all others who need your life-giving touch this day (*especially*).

Mel Satnan, Stephany Sanborn, Summer, Lyn Smith, Dana Hansen, Angie Robbins, John Robbins, Doug Knutson, Lucy Bergan, Lacey Mescher, Ann Huffman, Dawn Jensen, Tim Wegner, Kathy Heilaman, Norma Jones, Roberta Califf, Alan Meilike

Hear us, O God.

**Your mercy is great.**

You reveal yourself in holy communion. Sustain all who provide food and fellowship in this congregation and in the wider community. Make our tables signs of your welcoming presence among us. Hear us, O God.

**Your mercy is great.**

You promise to turn mourning into joy and to comfort those who weep. We remember those who have died and look to being united with them in your glory. Hear us, O God.

**Your mercy is great.**

With the joy of Christ's birth in our hearts, we commend our prayers to you, O God, trusting in your boundless mercy and eternal love; through Jesus Christ our Savior.

**Amen.**

## PEACE

The peace of Christ be with you always. **And also with you.**

Please greet one another with a sign of Christ's peace.

## OFFERING





1 What child is this, who, laid to rest, on Mar-y's lap is sleep-ing?  
 2 Why lies he in such mean es-tate where ox and ass are feed-ing?  
 3 So bring him in - cense, gold, and myrrh; come, peas-ant, king, to own him.



Whom an - gels greet with an-thems sweet while shep-herds watch are keep-ing?  
 Good Chris-tian, fear; for sin-ners here the si - lent Word is plead-ing.  
 The King of kings sal - va - tion brings; let lov - ing hearts en-throne him.



This, this is Christ the king, whom shep-herds guard and an - gels sing;  
 Nails, spear shall pierce him through, the cross be borne for me, for you;  
 Raise, raise the song on high, the vir - gin sings her lul - la - by;



haste, haste to bring him laud, the babe, the son of Mar - y!  
 hail, hail the Word made flesh, the babe, the son of Mar - y!  
 joy, joy, for Christ is born, the babe, the son of Mar - y!

Text: William C. Dix, 1837-1898

Music: GREENSLEEVES, English ballad, 16th cent.

## OFFERING PRAYER

God of Light, our world can be a very dark place. Therefore, we offer the gifts of ourselves, our time and our resources, trusting that you will use them to set the world aglow with your loving presence. May our offerings continue to shine brightly before others so they may see our good works and give glory to you. We ask this in the name of Christ. **Amen.**

## HOLY COMMUNION

The Lord be with you. **And also with you.**

Lift up your hearts. **We lift them to the Lord.**

Let us give thanks to the Lord our God. **It is right to give him thanks and praise.**

At the beginning of creation God said, "Let there be light"; and there was light. God saw that the light was good; and God separated the light from the darkness. In ancient times God also led the Israelites through the desert with a pillar of cloud by day and a pillar of fire by night. The priests of old also kept a perpetual fire burning in the Temple to remind us that God is a light who cannot be extinguished.

Finally Jesus, the Word, who was with God since the beginning of creation, became flesh and lived among us. We have seen his glory shining in our world, full grace and truth. Christ's light shines in the darkness, and the darkness did not overcome it. This same light has commanded us not to hide our light under a bushel basket, but to put it on a lamp stand so that everyone can see it. With our lights burning brightly, we now join the saints and angels in a hymn of praise to God, the Everlasting Light. **Amen.**

## HOLY, HOLY, HOLY

(words by David Eck, tune "Love Has Come")



On the night in which he was born, our Lord Jesus took a body, in all its human brokenness, and his mother placed him in a feeding trough – a foreshadowing of another night, when Jesus would offer his own body, broken as food. That night, when God came to earth, the new covenant began to take shape, a covenant begun with the pains of labor and brought to completion with the agony of the cross. On the night in which he was born, our very God became very human, so that he might live and die for us.

On the night in which he was betrayed, our Lord Jesus took bread, gave thanks; and broke it, and gave it to his disciples saying: Take and eat; this is my body, given for you. Do this for the remembrance of me. Again after supper, he took the cup, gave thanks, and gave it for all to drink, saying, take and drink, this is the new covenant in my blood, shed for you and for all people for the forgiveness of sin. Do this for the remembrance of me.

For as often as we eat this bread and drink this cup, we proclaim that the Lord comes, that the Lord has come, that the Lord will come again. **Amen. Come, Lord Jesus.**

God who comes to us, pour out your Holy Spirit upon this bread and wine, and upon all your people gathered here: grant us faith so that we may live in hope; lead us into Peace with self, neighbor, creation, and Creator; bring us the Joy of living in the freedom of salvation; send us out with the Love that is born in Bethlehem and in our hearts; so that we may proclaim Christ in word and deed. **Amen. Come, Holy Spirit.**

All glory and honor is yours, O God, who comes to fulfill all expectation in the most unexpected of ways, through Jesus Christ the Word made flesh, with the Holy Spirit who breathes life into a dying world; now and forever. **Amen.**

## **THE LORD'S PRAYER**

**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.**

**INVITATION** Come, let us adore him: Christ our Lord. **God is with us, Emmanuel.**

*All Christians are welcome to this table of God's grace. Both wine (red) and grape juice (white) are available at each station. Gluten-free wafers are available upon request. If for any reason you do not wish to take communion, you may come forward to receive a blessing. If you are unable to come forward, let an usher know, and communion or a blessing can be brought to you in the pews.*

LAMB OF GOD

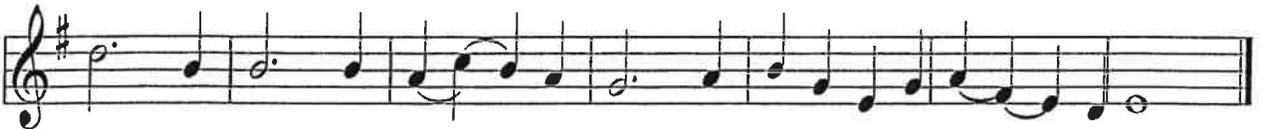
(words by David Eck, tune "O Come, O Come, Emanuel")



O Lamb of God you take a-way our sin; have mer-cy on us, give\_ us your



peace. Pre - pare us to re - ceive\_ your grace and teach us how to fol - low your ways. Re -



joice! Re - joice! E - man - u - el has come to you, O Is - ra - el.

DISTRIBUTION HYMN

*The Bells of Christmas*

(ELW 298)



*Det ki - mer nu til ju - le - fest, det ki - mer*  
 1 The bells of Christ - mas chime once more; the heav'n - ly  
 2 This world, though wide and far out - spread, could scarce - ly  
 3 Now let us go with qui - et mind, the swad - dled  
 4 Oh, join with me, in glad - ness sing, to keep our



*for den høj - e gæst, som steg til la - ve*  
 guest is at the door. He comes to earth - ly  
 find for you a bed. Your cra - dle was a  
 babe with shep - herds find, to gaze on him who  
 Christ - mas with our king, un - til our song, from



*hyt - ter ned med nyt - års - ga - ver: fryd og fred.*  
 dwell - ings still with new year gifts of peace, good will.  
 man - ger stall, no pearl nor silk nor king - ly hall.  
 glad - dens them, the love - liest flow'r of Jes - se's stem.  
 lov - ing souls, like rush - ing might - y wa - ter rolls!

Text: Nikolai F. S. Grundtvig, 1783-1872; tr. Charles Porterfield Krauth, 1823-1883, alt.

Music: DET KIMER NU TIL JULEFEST, Carl C. N. Balle, 1806-1855



1 The first No - el the an - gel did say was to  
 2 They look - ed up and saw . . a star shin - ing  
 3 And by the light of that . . same star three . .  
 4 This star drew near to the . . north - west, o'er . .  
 5 Then en - tered in those wise . . men three, full . .



cer - tain poor shep - herds in fields as they lay; in fields where  
 in . . the east . . be - yond . . them far; and to the  
 wise . . men came . . from coun - try far; to seek for a  
 Beth - le - hem . . it took . . its rest; and there it  
 rev - 'rent - ly . . . up - on . . . their knee, and of - fered



they lay, keep - ing their sheep, on a cold win - ter's  
 earth it gave . . . great light, and . . so it con -  
 king was their . . . in - tent, and to fol - low the  
 did both stop . . . and stay right . . o - ver the  
 there in his . . . pres - ence their . . gold, . . . and

*Refrain*



night that was so deep.  
 tin-ued both day and night.  
 star wher - ev - er it went. No - el, No - el, No -  
 place where Je - sus lay.  
 myrrh, and frank - in - cense.



el, No - el! Born is the King of Is - ra - el.

Text: English traditional

Music: THE FIRST NOWELL, English traditional

May the body and blood of our Lord, Jesus Christ, strengthen you, and keep you in his grace, now and forever. **Amen**

### PRAYER AFTER COMMUNION

God of abundance, we give you thanks that in this holy meal you have invited us to feast with you and with one another. May the joyful light of your love remain with us to fill us with hope, and may our words and our work in your name invite others into your peace. Send us from your table to proclaim your presence. **Amen.**

### BLESSING

Almighty God, Father, + Son, and Holy Spirit, bless you now and forever. **Amen.**

### SENDING SONG

### *He Came Down*

(ELW 253)



- 1 He came down that we may have love; he came down that we may have love;
- 2 He came down that we may have light; he came down that we may have light;
- 3 He came down that we may have peace; he came down that we may have peace;
- 4 He came down that we may have joy; he came down that we may have joy;



he came down that we may have love;  
he came down that we may have light; hal - le - lu - jah for - ev - er - more.  
he came down that we may have peace;  
he came down that we may have joy;

Text: Cameroon traditional

Music: HE CAME DOWN, Cameroon traditional

### DISMISSAL

Go in peace, serve the Lord.  
**Thanks be to God!**

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