

### **Introduction to the day**

As we celebrate the Twelve Days of Christmas, our gospel today confronts us with the death of innocent children at the hands of Herod. The birth of Christ does not remove the power of evil from our world, but its light gives us hope as we walk with all the “holy innocents” of past generations and today who have suffered unjustly. In our gathering around word and meal, God continues to redeem us, lift us up, and carry us as in days of old.

### **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 Let all to - geth - er praise our God be - fore the  
 2 From God's right hand the Son de - scends, is born an  
 3 O ten - der Child, you veil in flesh the splen - dor  
 4 Your moth - er feeds you ten - der - ly, sings you a



high - est throne; to - day God o - pens heav'n a - gain and  
 in - fant small, and lies in pov - er - ty, his bed a  
 of your might; a ser - vant's garb now wraps the one who  
 lul - la - by, while an - gels, hail - ing Da - vid's heir, your



sends the on - ly Son, and sends the on - ly Son.  
 man - ger in a stall, a man - ger in a stall.  
 clothed the sky with light, who clothed the sky with light.  
 glo - ry mag - ni - fy, your glo - ry mag - ni - fy.

5 A wonderful exchange you make:  
 you take our flesh and blood,  
 and in return give us to share  
 the shining realm of God,  
 the shining realm of God.

6 Unlock the door again today  
 that leads to paradise;  
 the angel bars the way no more.  
 To God let praises rise,  
 to God let praises rise!

Text: Nikolaus Herman, 1480–1561; tr. hymnal version  
 Music: LOBT GOTT, IHR CHRISTEN, Nikolaus Herman  
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## BAPTISM (5:30)

### 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.**

## HYMN OF PRAISE

(words by David Eck, tune "Angels We Have Heard on High")



Glo-ry be to God on high. Peace, good-will to all the earth. Let us sing a  
Love has come to dwell with us. Light now shines on ev - 'ry - one. Hope has lift - ed



joy - ful song to the Christ, the Liv - ing Word. Glo - - -  
up our hearts. Joy has made, in us, a home.



- - - ri - a in ex - cel - sis De - o; Glor -



- - - ri - a in ex - cel - sis De - o.

## SALUTATION

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

## PRAYER OF THE DAY

Let us pray.

O Lord God, you know that we cannot place our trust in our own powers. As you protected the infant Jesus, so defend us and all the needy from harm and adversity, 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: Isaiah 63:7-9**

*God does not delegate divine intervention to a messenger or angel. God's own presence brings salvation. The prophet and all who read these words join in celebrating God's gracious deeds. God trusts that God's people will not act falsely.*

<sup>7</sup> I will recount the gracious deeds of the LORD,  
the praiseworthy acts of the LORD,  
because of all that the LORD has done for us  
and the great favor to the house of Israel  
that he has shown them according to his mercy,  
according to the abundance of his steadfast love.

<sup>8</sup> For he said, "Surely they are my people,  
children who will not act deceitfully,"  
and he became their savior  
<sup>9</sup> in all their distress.

It was no messenger or angel  
but his presence that saved them;  
in his love and pity it was he who redeemed them;  
he lifted them up and carried them all the days of old.

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

### **PSALM: Psalm 148**

<sup>1</sup> Hallelujah! Praise the LORD from the heavens;  
praise God in the heights.

<sup>2</sup> **Praise the LORD, all you angels;  
sing praise, all you hosts of heaven.**

<sup>3</sup> Praise the LORD, sun and moon;  
sing praise, all you shining stars.

<sup>4</sup> **Praise the LORD, heaven of heavens,  
and you waters above the heavens.**

<sup>5</sup> Let them praise the name of the LORD,  
who commanded, and they were created,

<sup>6</sup> **who made them stand fast forever and ever,  
giving them a law that shall not pass away.**

<sup>7</sup> Praise the LORD from the earth,  
you sea monsters and all deeps;

<sup>8</sup> **fire and hail, snow and fog,  
tempestuous wind, doing God's will;**

<sup>9</sup> mountains and all hills,  
fruit trees and all cedars;

<sup>10</sup> **wild beasts and all cattle,  
creeping things and flying birds;**

<sup>11</sup> sovereigns of the earth and all peoples,  
princes and all rulers of the world;

<sup>12</sup> **young men and maidens,  
old and young together.**

<sup>13</sup> Let them praise the name of the LORD,  
whose name only is exalted, whose splendor is over earth and heaven.

<sup>14</sup> **The LORD has raised up strength for the people and praise for all faithful servants,  
the children of Israel, a people who are near the LORD. Hallelujah!**

## **SECOND READING: Hebrews 2:10-18**

*Through Jesus' suffering and death, the trail to eternal salvation has been blazed for us. We do not fear death, because he has conquered the power of death. Thus Christ, our merciful and faithful high priest, has the final say over the destiny of our lives.*

<sup>10</sup> It was fitting that God, for whom and through whom all things exist, in bringing many children to glory, should make the pioneer of their salvation perfect through sufferings. <sup>11</sup> For the one who sanctifies and those who are sanctified all have one Father. For this reason Jesus is not ashamed to call them brothers and sisters, <sup>12</sup> saying,

“I will proclaim your name to my brothers and sisters;  
in the midst of the congregation I will praise you.”

<sup>13</sup> And again,

“I will put my trust in him.”

And again,

“Here am I and the children whom God has given me.”

<sup>14</sup> Since, therefore, the children share flesh and blood, he himself likewise shared the same things, so that through death he might destroy the one who has the power of death, that is, the devil, <sup>15</sup> and free those who all their lives were held in slavery by the fear of death. <sup>16</sup> For it is clear that he did not come to help angels but the descendants of Abraham. <sup>17</sup> Therefore he had to become like his brothers and sisters in every respect, so that he might become a merciful and faithful high priest in the service of God, to make a sacrifice of atonement for the sins of the people. <sup>18</sup> Because he himself was tested by what he suffered, he is able to help those who are being tested.

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

The holy gospel according to St. Matthew the 2nd chapter.

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

## **GOSPEL: Matthew 2:13-23**

*In a dream, Joseph is warned to flee to Egypt to protect the infant Jesus from the jealousy of Herod.*

<sup>13</sup> Now after [the magi] had left, an angel of the Lord appeared to Joseph in a dream and said, “Get up, take the child and his mother, and flee to Egypt, and remain there until I tell you, for Herod is about to search for the child, to destroy him.” <sup>14</sup> Then Joseph got up, took the child and his mother by night, and went to Egypt <sup>15</sup> and remained there until the death of Herod. This was to fulfill what had been spoken by the Lord through the prophet, “Out of Egypt I have called my son.”

<sup>16</sup> When Herod saw that he had been tricked by the magi, he was infuriated, and he sent and killed all the children in and around Bethlehem who were two years old or under, according to the time that he had learned from the magi. <sup>17</sup> Then what had been spoken through the prophet Jeremiah was fulfilled:

<sup>18</sup> “A voice was heard in Ramah,  
wailing and loud lamentation,  
Rachel weeping for her children;  
she refused to be consoled, because they are no more.”

<sup>19</sup> When Herod died, an angel of the Lord suddenly appeared in a dream to Joseph in Egypt and said, <sup>20</sup> “Get up, take the child and his mother, and go to the land of Israel, for those who were seeking the child's life are dead.” <sup>21</sup> Then Joseph got up, took the child and his mother, and went to the land of Israel. <sup>22</sup> But when he heard that Archelaus was ruling Judea in place of his

father Herod, he was afraid to go there. And after being warned in a dream, he went away to the district of Galilee. <sup>23</sup> There he made his home in a town called Nazareth, so that what had been spoken through the prophets might be fulfilled, "He will be called a Nazarene."

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

**SERMON** Pr. Celeste

**HYMN OF THE DAY**

*Gentle Joseph Heard a Warning*

**(ACS 1060)**

- 1 Gentle Joseph heard a warning  
from an angel in the night;  
valiant Mary, maiden mother,  
roused from sleep, prepared for flight:  
thus the Christ-child's fam'ly lived out  
what the prophet had foretold,  
that he might be called from Egypt  
as God's people were of old.
  
- 2 Targets of a tyrant's army,  
seeking safety, fleeing strife,  
leaving house and land and kindred,  
spurred by dreams of peaceful life;  
through the desert of unknowing  
and the night of doubt they went,  
guided by God's promised presence,  
by that trust made confident.
  
- 3 Give us, God, such faith and courage  
when we move from place to place,  
and to those who come among us,  
make us channels of your grace.  
Let us see in ev'ry stranger  
refugees from Bethlehem,  
help us offer each one welcome  
and receive the Christ in them.

Text: Carl P. Daw Jr., b. 1944

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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.**

## **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.**

## 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.

God of grace, you show us mercy not according to our worthiness, but according to the abundance of your steadfast love. Grant us the courage to go into the world and do likewise. Hear us, O God.

**Your mercy is great.**

God of abundance, the sun and moon praise you and the shining stars sing of your love. Where we have desecrated your creation, make us into a healing balm for what we have broken. Hear us, O God.

**Your mercy is great.**

God of righteousness, when leaders fail to fulfill their calls to enact justice, you suffer alongside us. Propel those in power to see you reflected in the faces of all they serve. Hear us, O God.

**Your mercy is great.**

God of life, you claim us as your own and care for us as Christ's siblings. Pour out your compassion in every place your people suffer, and protect them in the palm of your hand. (*We pray especially for . . .*)

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

Baptism: Madalyn Marie Hansen

Hear us, O God.

**Your mercy is great.**

God of compassion, you nurture children as the apple of your eye. As you sheltered your son Jesus from Herod's grasp, shelter all children in danger. As you comforted Rachel, comfort all who have lost children to violence. Hear us, O God.

**Your mercy is great.**

God of love, you console those who weep for lost beloved ones (*especially*). Even as we mourn, we offer thanks for those who have gone before us, trusting in your comfort and protection. 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.**

## 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.**

## BLESSING

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



1 Good Chris - tian friends, re - joice with heart and soul and voice;  
 2 Good Chris - tian friends, re - joice with heart and soul and voice;  
 3 Good Chris - tian friends, re - joice with heart and soul and voice;



give ye heed to what we say: Je - sus Christ is born to - day;  
 now ye hear of end - less bliss: Je - sus Christ was born for this!  
 now ye need not fear the grave; Je - sus Christ was born to save!



ox and ass be - fore him bow, and he is in the man - ger now.  
 He has o - pened heav - en's door, and we are blest for - ev - er - more.  
 Calls you one and calls you all to gain the ev - er - last - ing hall.



Christ is born to - day! Christ is born to - day!  
 Christ was born for this! Christ was born for this!  
 Christ was born to save! Christ was born to save!

Text: Medieval Latin carol; tr. John Mason Neale, 1818–1866  
 Music: IN DULCI JUBILO, German carol, 14th cent.

## DISMISSAL

Go in peace, serve the Lord.

**Thanks be to God!**

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