



Welcome

Jesus, the Firstfruit of Jesse's Tree

As We Gather

The promise made to Adam and Eve after the fall, the promise signified by the rainbow after the great flood, the promise of a land for God's wandering people, the promise of a Messiah from the mouths of the prophets to God's wavering people: all of these come to fruition in the birth of Jesus, God's only begotten Son. The Word of promise has become flesh and made His dwelling among us, full of grace and truth. So today we rejoice with unbridled joy! God does not leave us alone to our wandering and wavering. He comes as a baby, as our Savior, as our Lord, as the firstfruit of God's restoration of all creation. Rejoice!

Opening Hymn

367 Angels from the Realms of Glory

1 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. Refrain

ref Come and worship, come and worship;
Worship Christ, the newborn King.

2 Shepherds in the field abiding,
Watching o'er your flocks by night,
God with us is now residing,
Yonder shines the Infant Light. Refrain

3 Sages, leave your contemplations,
Brighter visions beam afar;
Seek the great Desire of nations,
Ye have seen His natal star. Refrain

4 Saints before the altar bending,
Watching long in hope and fear,
Suddenly the Lord, descending,
In His temple shall appear. Refrain

D 5 All creation, join in praising
God the Father, Spirit, Son,
Evermore your voices raising
To the eternal Three in One. Refrain

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Invocation

(The sign of the cross may be made by all in remembrance of their Baptism.)

P In the name of the Father and of the T Son and of the Holy Spirit.
C **Amen.**

Opening Sentences

P Behold, the virgin shall conceive and bear a son,
C **and shall call His name Immanuel.**

P She will bear a son, and you shall call His name Jesus,
C **for He will save His people from their sins.**

P Who shall ascend the hill of the Lord?
C **He who has clean hands and a pure heart.**

P Christ Jesus was descended from David according to the flesh
C **and declared to be the Son of God in power according to the Spirit of holiness by His resurrection from the dead.**

Confession of Sins

P O almighty God, merciful Father,
C **I, a poor, miserable sinner, confess unto You all my sins and iniquities with which I have ever offended You and justly deserved Your temporal and eternal punishment. But I am heartily sorry for them and sincerely repent of them, and I pray You of Your boundless mercy and for the sake of the holy, innocent, bitter sufferings and death of Your beloved Son, Jesus Christ, to be gracious and merciful to me, a poor, sinful being.**

Absolution

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P Upon this your confession, I, by virtue of my office, as a called and ordained servant of the Word, announce the grace of God unto all of you, and in the stead and by the command of my Lord Jesus Christ I forgive you all your sins in the name of the Father and of the T Son and of the Holy Spirit.
C **Amen.**

Service of Light

P The Spirit and the Church cry out:
C **Come, Lord Jesus.**

P All those who await His appearance pray:
C **Come, Lord Jesus.**

P The whole creation pleads:
C **Come, Lord Jesus.**

P Awaiting the shoot from the stump of Jesse, we implore:
C **Come, Lord Jesus.**

Hymn 891 O Light Whose Splendor

1 O Light whose splendor thrills and gladdens
With radiance brighter than the sun,
Pure gleam of God's unending glory,
O Jesus, blest Anointed One;

2 As twilight hovers near at sunset,
And lamps are lit, and children nod,
In evening hymns we lift our voices
To Father, Spirit, Son: one God.

3 In all life's brilliant timeless moments,
Let faithful voices sing Your praise,
O Son of God, our Life-bestower,
Whose glory lightens endless days.

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(As the hymn is sung, the candles of the Advent wreath are lighted.)

Prayer of the Day

P Stir up Your power, O Lord, and come. Strengthen Your gift of faith in us, and keep us by Your power to be Your own; for You live and reign with the Father and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.

C **Amen.**

Old Testament Reading

Isaiah 52:7–10

A The Old Testament Reading is from Isaiah, the fifty-second chapter.

⁷How beautiful upon the mountains
are the feet of him who brings good news,
who publishes peace, who brings good news of happiness,
who publishes salvation,
who says to Zion, "Your God reigns."

⁸The voice of your watchmen—they lift up their voice;
together they sing for joy;
for eye to eye they see
the return of the LORD to Zion.

⁹Break forth together into singing,
you waste places of Jerusalem,
for the LORD has comforted his people;
he has redeemed Jerusalem.

¹⁰The LORD has bared his holy arm
before the eyes of all the nations,
and all the ends of the earth shall see
the salvation of our God.

A This is the Word of the Lord.

C **Thanks be to God.**

Epistle

Hebrews 1:1–6

A The Epistle is from Hebrews, the first chapter.

¹Long ago, at many times and in many ways, God spoke to our fathers by the prophets, ²but 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 world. ³He is the radiance of the glory of God and the exact imprint of his nature, and he upholds the universe by the word of his power. After making purification for sins, he sat down at the right hand of the Majesty on high, ⁴having become as much superior to angels as the name he has inherited is more excellent than theirs.

⁵For to which of the angels did God ever say,

“You are my Son,
today I have begotten you”?

Or again,

“I will be to him a father,
and he shall be to me a son”?

⁶And again, when he brings the firstborn into the world, he says,

“Let all God’s angels worship him.”

A This is the Word of the Lord.

C **Thanks be to God.**

Holy Gospel

John 1:1–14

P The Holy Gospel according to St. John, the first chapter.

C **Glory to You, O Lord.**

¹In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. ²He was in the beginning with God. ³All things were made through him, and without him was not any thing made that was made. ⁴In him was life, and the life was the light of men. ⁵The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness has not overcome it.

⁶There was a man sent from God, whose name was John. ⁷He came as a witness, to bear witness about the light, that all might believe through him. ⁸He was not the light, but came to bear witness about the light.

⁹The true light, which enlightens everyone, was coming into the world. ¹⁰He was in the world, and the world was made through him, yet the world did not know him. ¹¹He came to his own, and his own people did not receive him. ¹²But to all who did receive him, who believed in his name, he gave the right to become children of God, ¹³who were born, not of blood nor of the will of the flesh nor of the will of man, but of God.

¹⁴And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, and we have seen his glory, glory as of the only Son from the Father, full of grace and truth.

P This is the Gospel of the Lord.

C **Praise to You, O Christ.**

Hymn of the Day 359 Lo, How a Rose E'er Blooming

1 Lo, how a rose e'er blooming
From tender stem hath sprung!
Of Jesse's lineage coming
As prophets long have sung,
It came, a flow'ret bright,

Amid the cold of winter,
When half-spent was the night.

- 2 Isaiah 'twas foretold it,
 The rose I have in mind;
With Mary we behold it,
 The virgin mother kind.
To show God's love aright,
 She bore to us a Savior,
When half-spent was the night.
- 3 This flow'r, whose fragrance tender
 With sweetness fills the air,
Dispels with glorious splendor
 The darkness ev'rywhere.
True man, yet very God,
 From sin and death He saves us
And lightens ev'ry load.
- 4 O Savior, child of Mary,
 Who felt our human woe;
O Savior, King of glory,
 Who dost our weakness know:
Bring us at length we pray
 To the bright courts of heaven,
And to the endless day.

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Sermon

Nicene Creed

- C I believe in one God,
 the Father Almighty,
 maker of heaven and earth
 and of all things visible and invisible.**

**And in one Lord Jesus Christ,
 the only-begotten Son of God,
 begotten of His Father before all worlds,
 God of God, Light of Light,
 very God of very God,
 begotten, not made,
 being of one substance with the Father,
 by whom all things were made;
 who for us men and for our salvation came down from heaven
 and was incarnate by the Holy Spirit of the virgin Mary
 and was made man;
 and was crucified also for us under Pontius Pilate.
 He suffered and was buried.
 And the third day He rose again according to the Scriptures
 and ascended into heaven**

and sits at the right hand of the Father.

**And He will come again with glory to judge both the living and the dead,
whose kingdom will have no end.**

And I believe in the Holy Spirit,

the Lord and giver of life,

who proceeds from the Father and the Son,

who with the Father and the Son together is worshiped and glorified,

who spoke by the prophets.

And I believe in one holy Christian and apostolic Church,

I acknowledge one Baptism for the remission of sins,

and I look for the resurrection of the dead

and the life of the world to come. Amen.

Prayer of the Church

P Let us pray for the Church around the world, ourselves, and all people in their various circumstances.

Lord Jesus, guide and protect clergy and lay leaders of Your Church. Enable them to lift people's hearts and minds to look beyond global pandemics, natural disasters, and political upheavals to see the eternal Kingdom, which You have graciously opened to all people who trust in You for life and health and peace. Bless those who till the soil, manage farms, transport supplies, and distribute food and clothing where they are needed. Son of David,

C **hear our prayer.**

P Almighty Lord, give wisdom and courage to those who lead governments, command armed forces, and maintain order in society. Give them hearts to seek peace so that warfare with neighbor states and civil strife within them give way to prosperity, health, and cooperation. Increase our faith to depend on Your eternal promises of the better country that awaits us by grace. Son of Abraham,

C **hear our prayer.**

P Jesus, Light of the world, open the hearts of all who are burdened by their scandals and other past sins. Surround them with faithful people to tell them about Your coming in human history to give Yourself for them. Protect and guide all law enforcement personnel, first responders, health care workers, and counselors. Help them balance justice, mercy, and compassionate care so that many may have their lives repaired and hope restored. Son of scandal,

C **hear our prayer.**

P Gracious Lord, cared for by Your adopted human father, Joseph, remember people like him, those who have been forgotten, whether dispossessed, incarcerated, or isolated for any reason. Remember not their sins and iniquities but give them a sense of Your abiding presence. Nurture in us all a love for Your will so that we obediently do whatever You ask. Son of Joseph,

C **hear our prayer.**

P Servant Savior, born in a stable to a lowly Virgin, remind us again that You turn the world's ways upside down. Give strength to the weak, lift up the downtrodden, provide hope for the despairing, announce peace to the distraught, and proclaim eternal forgiveness to all burdened by their sin. Son of Mary,

C **hear our prayer.**

P Into Your hands, heavenly Father, we commend ourselves and all for whom we pray, trusting in Your mercy for the sake of Your Son, Jesus Christ, our Lord.

C **Amen.**

+ SERVICE OF THE SACRAMENT +

Preface

P The Lord be with you.

C **And also with you.**

P Lift up your hearts.

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

P Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.

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

Proper Preface

P It is truly good, right, and salutary that we should at all times and in all places give thanks to You, holy Lord, almighty Father, everlasting God, through Jesus Christ, our Lord; for in the mystery of the Word made flesh You have given us a new revelation of Your glory that, seeing You in the person of Your Son, we may know and love those things which are not seen. Therefore with angels and archangels and with all the company of heaven we laud and magnify Your glorious name, evermore praising You and saying:

Sanctus

C **O holy, holy, holy Lord, The God by heav'nly hosts adored,
Both heav'n and earth Your glory show. Hosanna sing we to the Lord.
Rejoice! Rejoice! Emmanuel Shall come to thee, O Israel!**

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Prayer of Thanksgiving

P Thanks be to You, heavenly Father, for at the appointed time You sent Your Son, born of the Virgin Mary, into the family of Abraham that we might become heirs of the heavenly promised land and of the Son of David, reigning eternally. In order to abolish death, break the bonds of sin, and defeat the age-old enemy, He was obedient to death, even death on the cross. For His sake, You have remembered Your ancient promises of forgiveness and grace to even the least among us.

Gather into one, we pray, all Your holy people, that we may meet together at the eternal banquet to praise Your name in joyful song. To You, with the Spirit and Your Son, be all glory in the Church, now and forever.

C **Amen.**

Lord's Prayer

LSB 162

P Lord, remember us in Your kingdom and teach us to pray:

C **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.**

The Words of Our Lord

Pax Domini

P The peace of the Lord be with you always.

C **Amen.**

Distribution – We receive the True Body and True of Our Lord

Post-Communion Collect

A Let us pray.

O God the Father, the fountain and source of all goodness, who in loving-kindness sent Your only-begotten Son into the flesh, we thank You that for His sake You have given us pardon and peace in this Sacrament, and we ask You not to forsake Your children but always to rule our hearts and minds by Your Holy Spirit that we may be enabled constantly to serve You; through Jesus Christ, Your Son, our Lord, who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.

C **Amen.**

Benediction

P The Lord bless you and keep you.

The Lord make His face shine on you and be gracious to you.

The Lord look upon you with favor and T give you peace.

C **Amen.**

Closing Hymn 383 A Great and Mighty Wonder

1 A great and mighty wonder,
A full and holy cure:
The virgin bears the infant
With virgin honor pure! Refrain

ref Proclaim the Savior's birth:

"To God on high be glory
And peace to all the earth!"

2 The Word becomes incarnate
And yet remains on high,
And cherubim sing anthems
To shepherds from the sky. Refrain

- 3 While thus they sing your Monarch,
Those bright angelic bands,
Rejoice, O vales and mountains,
And oceans, clap your hands. Refrain
- 4 Since all He comes to ransom,
By all be He adored,
The infant born in Bethl'em,
The Savior and the Lord. Refrain
- 5 All idols then shall perish
And Satan's lying cease,
And Christ shall raise His scepter,
Decreeing endless peace. Refrain

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Dismissal

P Go in peace as you serve the Lord.

C **Thanks be to God.**

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