

FREE FROM THE GUARDIAN

AS WE GATHER

A new year begins! Yet, often so little changes. For most, a new year means little difference regarding life, vocation, house, and home. Outside of annually changing one number on our calendar, much of life remains the same, including the daily battles we face against Satan, sin, and our own flesh. With that, we rejoice today not just in the year's changing, but a daily changing we recognize every day as we live in this world through the blameless One born for us. Christ was under and has fulfilled God's Law perfectly for us, even as an infant child brought to the temple for circumcision under Mosaic Law. It would mark both the promise of redemption and the burden of the Law—and with Jesus marking the sacrifice that would set us free. Try as we might with new year's resolutions to become better people, we still find ourselves falling short of God's moral law that remains today. Rejoice in the newness that has come! More than a new year, we are given a new life, for Christ has fulfilled all and set us free! As we are marked in Baptism and bear Christ's name, we become inheritors of His promise. It is a newness to celebrate each day of every year!

OPENING HYMN "O COME, ALL YE FAITHFUL"

# 379 sts. 1, ref, 2-4



1 O come, all ye faith - ful, Joy - ful and tri - um - phant! O  
2 High - est, most ho - ly, Light of Light e - ter - nal,  
3 Sing, choirs of an - gels, Sing in ex - ul - ta - tion,  
4 Yea, Lord, we greet Thee, Born this hap - py morn - ing;



come ye, O come— ye to Beth - le - hem;  
Born of a vir - gin, a mor - tal He comes;  
Sing, all ye cit - i - zens of heav - en a - bove!  
Je - sus, to Thee— be— glo - ry giv'n!



Come and be - hold Him Born the king of an - gels:  
Son of the Fa - ther Now in flesh ap - pear - ing!  
Glo - ry to God— In— the— high - est:  
Word of the Fa - ther Now in flesh ap - pear - ing!

*Refrain*



O come, let us a - dore Him, O come, let us a - dore Him,



O come, let us a - dore Him, Christ the Lord!

Text: tr. Frederick Oakeley, 1802-80, alt.  
Text and tune: John F. Wade, c. 1711-1786  
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## INVOCATION

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

## OPENING SENTENCES

*Galatians 3:24–26; 4:4–5*

- P** Christ, our Savior is born!  
**C** O come, let us adore Him!

- P** When the fullness of time had come, God sent forth His Son, born of woman, born under the law, to redeem those who were under the law, so that we might receive adoption as sons.  
**C** O come, let us adore Him!

- P** The law was our guardian until Christ came, in order that we might be justified by faith. But now that faith has come, we are no longer under a guardian, for in Christ Jesus you are all sons of God, through faith.  
**C** O come, let us adore Him!

## CONFESSION AND ABSOLUTION

*John 8:34; Galatians 3:23; 5:1*

- P** As we begin a new year in God’s grace, we acknowledge and repent of our sinfulness and failure to keep His Law. “Everyone who commits sin is a slave to sin.”

- C** Lord, we confess to You our sins, those of which we know, and those of which we are unaware. We have not always viewed Your Law as a gift, but instead at times as a burden to obey. Though we desire to be free, we find ourselves enslaved and unable to help ourselves. Forgive us.

- P** “Now before faith came, we were held captive under the law, imprisoned until the coming faith would be revealed.”

- C** For the sake of Your Son, Jesus Christ, have mercy on us. Forgive us, renew us, and lead us, so that we may delight in Your Law and walk in Your ways to the glory of Your holy name.

- P** “For freedom Christ has set us free; stand firm therefore, and do not submit again to a yoke of slavery.”

Almighty God in His mercy has given His Son to die for you, and for His sake forgives you all your sins. As a called and ordained servant of Christ, and by His authority, I therefore forgive you all your sins in the name of the Father and of the ✠ Son and of the Holy Spirit.

- C** Amen.

## INTROIT

**P** May all who seek you rejoice and be glad in you;  
may those who love your salvation say continually, "Great is the LORD!"  
Sacrifice and offering you have not desired, but you have given me an open ear.  
Burnt offering and sin offering you have not required.  
Then I said, "Behold, I have come;  
in the scroll of the book it is written of me:  
I desire to do your will, O my God;  
your law is within my heart."

**C** **Glory be to the Father and to the Son  
and to the Holy Spirit;  
as it was in the beginning,  
is now, and will be forever. Amen.**

**P** May all who seek you rejoice and be glad in you;  
may those who love your salvation say continually, "Great is the LORD!"

## KYRIE

**P** In peace let us pray to the Lord.

**C** **Lord, have mercy.**

**P** For the peace coming to us from beyond creation and for our salvation let us  
pray to the Lord.

**C** **Lord, have mercy.**

**P** For the peace of all people around the planet, for the well-being of the Church of  
God in time and space, and for the unity of all let us pray to the Lord.

**C** **Lord, have mercy.**

**P** For this holy house and for all who offer here their worship and praise to our  
majestic God let us pray to the Lord.

**C** **Lord, have mercy.**

**P** Help, save, comfort, and defend us, gracious Lord.

**C** **Amen.**

## SALUTATION

**P** The Lord be with you.

**C** **And also with you.**

## PRAYER OF THE DAY

**P** Let us pray.

Lord God, You made Your beloved Son, our Savior, subject to the Law and  
caused Him to shed His blood on our behalf. Grant us the true circumcision of  
the Spirit that our hearts may be made pure from all sins; through Jesus Christ,  
our Lord, who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and  
forever.

**C** **Amen.**

## OLD TESTAMENT READING

*Numbers 6:22–27*

<sup>22</sup>The LORD spoke to Moses, saying, <sup>23</sup>“Speak to Aaron and his sons, saying, Thus you shall bless the people of Israel: you shall say to them,

<sup>24</sup>The LORD bless you and keep you;

<sup>25</sup>the LORD make his face to shine upon you and be gracious to you;

<sup>26</sup>the LORD lift up his countenance upon you and give you peace.

<sup>27</sup>“So shall they put my name upon the people of Israel, and I will bless them.”

**L** This is the Word of the Lord.

**C** Thanks be to God.

## GRADUAL

*Hebrews 8:10; 10:17*

**P** This is the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel

**C** after those days, declares the Lord:

**P** I will put My laws into their minds,

**C** and write them on their hearts.

**P** I will be their God, and they shall be My people.

**C** I will remember their sins and their lawless deeds no more.

## EPISTLE

*Galatians 3:23–29*

<sup>23</sup>Now before faith came, we were held captive under the law, imprisoned until the coming faith would be revealed. <sup>24</sup>So then, the law was our guardian until Christ came, in order that we might be justified by faith. <sup>25</sup>But now that faith has come, we are no longer under a guardian, <sup>26</sup>for in Christ Jesus you are all sons of God, through faith. <sup>27</sup>For as many of you as were baptized into Christ have put on Christ. <sup>28</sup>There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free, there is neither male nor female, for you are all one in Christ Jesus. <sup>29</sup>And if you are Christ's, then you are Abraham's offspring, heirs according to promise.

**L** This is the Word of the Lord.

**C** Thanks be to God.

## VERSE

*Matthew 1:21*

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

## HOLY GOSPEL

*Luke 2:21*

**P** The Holy Gospel according to St. Luke, the second chapter.

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

<sup>21</sup>And at the end of eight days, when he was circumcised, he was called Jesus, the name given by the angel before he was conceived in the womb.

**P** This is the Gospel of the Lord.

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



1 The an - cient Law de - parts, And all its fears re - move,  
 2 The Light of Light di - vine, True bright - ness un - de - filed,  
 3 His in - fant bod - y now Be - gins the cross to feel;  
 4 To - day the name is Thine At which we bend the knee.  
 △ 5 All praise, e - ter - nal Son, For Thy re - deem - ing love,



For Je - sus makes with faith - ful hearts A cov - e - nant of love.  
 He bears for us the pain of sin, A ho - ly, spot-less child.  
 Those pre-cious drops of blood that flow For death the vic-tim seal.  
 They call Thee Je - sus, child di-vine; Our Je - sus deign to be.  
 With Fa - ther, Spir - it, ev - er one In glo-rious might a - bove.

Text: Sebastian Besnault, d. 1724; tr. The Lutheran Hymnal, 1941

Tune: Johann Sebastian Bach, 1685–1750, adapt.

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## SERMON

## CREED

*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**

*John 3:16, adapted; 16:33; Galatians 4:4–5, adapted*

**P** Let us pray for the whole Church of God in Christ Jesus and for all people according to their needs.

Ever-present God, You are Lord of our past, our present, and our future. We know that all we need for this body and life and all we would ever need for the peace of our souls in the forgiveness of sins comes from You. For Your care in the past year and for Your gracious promises in this new year assured in Christ alone,

**C** we praise You, Lord.

**P** Ever-living God, we know that no matter the year or new beginnings, we are not strangers to Christ's words, "In the world you will have tribulation. But take heart; I have overcome the world." Be with the leaders of the nations, states, and local communities that wisdom be given for the justice and well-being of others. In times of tribulation, grant us Your peace. In times of trials, grant us a confident faith. In times of troubles, remind us of Your living presence and draw us to Your Word and Means of Grace. For the gifts of grace You supply for our every need each year and each day,

**C** we praise You, Lord.

**P** Ever-compassionate God, for those who have needs known to us, *including Hedy, Jean, Ray, Rose, Sue, Wally, Dana, Kaylee, Kris, Jen, John, Jonathan, Leah, Rod, Sadie and Tim*, and for those whose needs of body and soul are known only to You, we lift them up in prayer and commend them to Your ever-present care. Through trials and tribulations, suffering and struggles, set them free from their burdens and heal them according to Your will. Lord, in Your mercy,

**C** hear our prayer.

**P** Ever-gracious God, You so loved this world that You gave Your only-begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him shall not perish, but have eternal life. In this continuing Christmas season and each day of this new year, continue to draw us to our Savior Jesus Christ, born for us, that we follow Him who would ultimately die for us, rising to victory and ascending to glory. As we do, equip and sustain us through Your Holy Spirit that we witness the truth of Your Word centered on our Savior to all whom You place in our lives. Lord, in Your mercy,

**C** hear our prayer.

**P** All-knowing God, though You are not bound by the limits of time, we are as we remain in this world and recognize another year's passing and another new beginning. Yet in Your divine wisdom, when the time was right, You sent Your

Son into this world to be born of a woman, born under the Law, to redeem those under the Law that we be Your children, now and forever. Help us seek to live according to Your Law that we may remain faithful to Your truth according to Your Word. Lord, in Your mercy,

**C** hear our prayer.

*Additional petitions may follow.*

**P** In this new year, abide among us with Your Holy Spirit that we may always trust in the saving name of our Lord Jesus Christ, who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.

**C** Amen.

## 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

LSB 161





## PRAYER OF THANKSGIVING

**P** Blessed are You, Lord of heaven and earth, for You have had mercy on those whom You created and sent Your only-begotten Son into our flesh to bear our sin and be our Savior. With repentant joy we receive the salvation accomplished for us by the all-availing sacrifice of His body and His blood on the cross.

Gathered in the name and the remembrance of Jesus, we beg You, O Lord, to forgive, renew, and strengthen us with Your Word and Spirit. Grant us faithfully to eat His body and drink His blood as He bids us do in His own testament. Gather us together, we pray, from the ends of the earth to celebrate with all the faithful the marriage feast of the Lamb in His kingdom, which has no end. Graciously receive our prayers; deliver and preserve us. To You alone, O Father, be all glory, honor, and worship, with the Son and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.

**C** Amen.

## THE WORDS OF OUR LORD

**P** Our Lord Jesus Christ, on the night when He was betrayed, took bread, and when He had given thanks, He broke it and gave it to the disciples and said: "Take, eat; this is My  $\text{✝}$  body, which is given for you. This do in remembrance of Me."

In the same way also He took the cup after supper, and when He had given thanks, He gave it to them, saying: "Drink of it, all of you; this cup is the new testament in My  $\text{✝}$  blood, which is shed for you for the forgiveness of sins. This do, as often as you drink it, in remembrance of Me."

## PROCLAMATION OF CHRIST

**P** As often as we eat this bread and drink this cup, we proclaim the Lord's death until He comes.

**C** Amen. Come, Lord Jesus.

**P** O Lord Jesus Christ, only Son of the Father, in giving us Your body and blood to eat and to drink, You lead us to remember and confess Your holy cross and passion, Your blessed death, Your rest in the tomb, Your resurrection from the dead, Your ascension into heaven, and Your coming for the final judgment. So remember us in Your kingdom and teach us to pray:

## LORD'S PRAYER

**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.**

**PAX DOMINI**

- P** The peace of the Lord be with you always.
- C** Amen.

**AGNUS DEI**

LSB 163

**C** Lamb of God, You take a-way the sin of the world; have  
 mer-cy on us. Lamb of God, You take a-way the sin of the  
 world; have mer-cy on us. Lamb of God, You take a-way the  
 sin of the world; grant us peace.

**DISTRIBUTION HYMNS**

**“WE PRAISE YOU, JESUS, AT YOUR BIRTH”**

#382

1 We praise You, Je - sus, at Your birth; Clothed in flesh You  
 2 Now in the man - ger we may see God's Son from e -  
 3 The vir - gin Mar - y's lul - la - by Calms the in - fant  
 4 The Light E - ter - nal, break - ing through, Made the world to  
 came to earth. The vir - gin bears a sin - less boy  
 ter - ni - ty, The gift from God's e - ter - nal throne  
 Lord Most High. Up - on her lap con - tent is He  
 gleam a - new; His beams have pierced the core of night,



And all the an - gels sing for joy. Al - le - lu - ia!  
 Here clothed in our poor flesh and bone. Al - le - lu - ia!  
 Who keeps the earth and sky and sea. Al - le - lu - ia!  
 He makes us chil - dren of the light. Al - le - lu - ia!

5 The very Son of God sublime  
 Entered into earthly time  
 To lead us from this world of cares  
 To heaven's courts as blessed heirs.  
 Alleluia!

6 In poverty He came to earth  
 Showing mercy by His birth;  
 He makes us rich in heav'nly ways  
 As we, like angels, sing His praise.  
 Alleluia!

7 All this for us our God has done  
 Granting love through His own Son.  
 Therefore, all Christendom, rejoice  
 And sing His praise with endless voice.  
 Alleluia!

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## THANK THE LORD

LSB 164



☐ Thank the Lord and sing His praise; tell ev-'ry-one what He has done.



Let all who seek the Lord re - joice and proud-ly bear His name.



He re-calls His prom-is - es and leads His peo-ple forth in joy



with shouts of thanks-giv-ing. Al - le - lu - ia, al - le - lu - ia.

## POST-COMMUNION THANKSGIVING

**P** 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 ✠ give you peace.

**C** Amen.

## CLOSING HYMN

### ”O GOD, OUR HELP IN AGES PAST”

#733 *sts. 1–6*



1 O God, our help in a - ges past, Our hope for years to come,  
2 Un - der the shad - ow of Thy throne Thy saints have dwelt se - cure;  
3 Be - fore the hills in or - der stood Or earth re - ceived her frame,  
4 A thou - sand a - ges in Thy sight Are like an eve - ning gone,



Our shel - ter from the storm - y blast, And our e - ter - nal home:  
Suf - fi - cient is Thine arm a - lone, And our de - fense is sure.  
From ev - er - last - ing Thou art God, To end - less years the same.  
Short as the watch that ends the night Be - fore the ris - ing sun.

5 Time, like an ever-rolling stream,  
Soon bears us all away;  
We fly forgotten as a dream  
Dies at the op'ning day.

6 O God, our help in ages past,  
Our hope for years to come,  
Be Thou our guard while troubles last  
And our eternal home!

Text: Isaac Watts, 1674–1748, alt.

Tune: William Croft, 1678–1727

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