

As We Gather

Advent is the season of waiting! Soon and very soon our waiting and planning for Christmas celebrations will come to their close, and we will rejoice in Christ's coming to save us. Such waiting and planning for Christmas can also guide us as we prepare for Christ's final advent, His ultimate coming, when He returns on the Last Day. Until that glorious Day, when all portions of God's plan for our salvation will be accomplished, we are blessed with the peace "which surpasses all understanding" (Philippians 4:7). Such peace is an amazing gift that the Lord gave to the virgin Mary, the mother of our Lord, when she received God's Word from the angel Gabriel and then carried our salvation in her womb, delivering Jesus into the world. "Let it be to me according to your word," she said (Luke 1:38). May we say the same as we gather this day and, like Mary, receive the peace that God alone can give.

Opening Hymn "Let The Earth Now Praise the Lord"

LSB 352



1 Let the earth now praise the Lord, Who has truly
2 What the Fa - thers most de - sired, What the proph - ets'
3 A - bram's prom - ised great re - ward, Zi - on's help - er,
4 As Your com - ing was in peace, Qui - et, full of



kept His word And at last to us did send
heart in - spired, What they longed for man - y a year,
Ja - cob's Lord— Him of two - fold race be - hold—
gen - tle - ness, Let the same mind dwell in me



Christ, the sin - ner's help and friend.
Stands ful - filled in glo - ry here.
Tru - ly came, as long fore - told.
Which is Yours e - ter - nal - ly.

5 Bruise for me the serpent's head
That, set free from doubt and dread,
I may cling to You in faith,
Safely kept through life and death.

- 6 Then when You will come again
As the glorious king to reign,
I with joy will see Your face,
Freely ransomed by Your grace.

Text: Heinrich Held, 1620–59; tr. Catherine Winkworth, 1827–78, alt.

Tune: Geystliche gesangk Buchleyn, 1524, Wittenberg, ed. Johann Walter

Text and tune: Public domain

Invocation

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

Opening Sentences

Psalm 37:7a, 34a; Isaiah 30:18

- P** Be still before the Lord and wait patiently for Him.
C Wait for the LORD and keep His way.

- P** The LORD waits to be gracious to you.
C He exalts Himself to show mercy to you.

- P** For the LORD is a God of justice;
C blessed are all those who wait for Him.

Confession and Absolution

- P** So that we may experience the peace of sins forgiven, let us come before our Lord with humble hearts as we confess together:

- C** Gracious Father, we all have sinned and fallen short of Your glory. By what we have done and by what we have failed to do, we have broken Your commands and have not accomplished Your plans for our lives.

- P** Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace, You alone give us the redemption and the restoration, the absolution and the ability to follow Your Word. Through the work of Jesus, the Word made flesh, do for us what is impossible apart from You.

- C** Forgive us, renew us, and lead us so that we may follow Your plan for our lives and walk in Your ways to the glory of Your holy name. Amen.

- P** In the mercy of our gracious Father, Jesus came into this world, journeying from the crib to the cross, from the tomb and to His throne of glory in order to secure our forgiveness according to God's plan of salvation. Receive His assurance of pardon this day as we celebrate Jesus' coming to save us. As a called and ordained servant of Christ and by His authority, I forgive you all your sins in the name of the Father and of the ✠ Son and of the Holy Spirit.

- C** Amen.

Introit

Psalm 19:1, 4c, 5–6; antiphon: Isaiah 45:8a, b

P Shower, O heavens, from above, and let the clouds rain down righteousness;
C **let the earth open, that salvation and righteousness may bear fruit.**

P The heavens declare the glory of God, and the sky above proclaims His handiwork.
C **In them He has set a tent for the sun,**

P which comes out like a bridegroom leaving his chamber,
C **and, like a strong man, runs its course with joy.**

P Its rising is from the end of the heavens, and its circuit to the end of them,
C **and there is nothing hidden from its heat.**

**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 Shower, O heavens, from above, and let the clouds rain down righteousness;
C **let the earth open, that salvation and righteousness may bear fruit.**

Kyrie

LSB 186

C **Lord, have mercy upon us.
Christ, have mercy upon us.
Lord, have mercy upon us.**

Salutation

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

Prayer of the Day

P Let us pray.
Stir up Your power, O Lord, and come and help us by Your might,
C **that we may experience the peace of knowing all things are possible with You;**

P for You live and reign with the Father and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.
C **Amen.**

¹Now when the king lived in his house and the LORD had given him rest from all his surrounding enemies, ²the king said to Nathan the prophet, “See now, I dwell in a house of cedar, but the ark of God dwells in a tent.” ³And Nathan said to the king, “Go, do all that is in your heart, for the LORD is with you.”

⁴But that same night the word of the LORD came to Nathan, ⁵“Go and tell my servant David, ‘Thus says the LORD: Would you build me a house to dwell in? ⁶I have not lived in a house since the day I brought up the people of Israel from Egypt to this day, but I have been moving about in a tent for my dwelling. ⁷In all places where I have moved with all the people of Israel, did I speak a word with any of the judges of Israel, whom I commanded to shepherd my people Israel, saying, “Why have you not built me a house of cedar?”’” ⁸Now, therefore, thus you shall say to my servant David, ‘Thus says the LORD of hosts, I took you from the pasture, from following the sheep, that you should be prince over my people Israel. ⁹And I have been with you wherever you went and have cut off all your enemies from before you. And I will make for you a great name, like the name of the great ones of the earth. ¹⁰And I will appoint a place for my people Israel and will plant them, so that they may dwell in their own place and be disturbed no more. And violent men shall afflict them no more, as formerly, ¹¹from the time that I appointed judges over my people Israel. And I will give you rest from all your enemies. Moreover, the LORD declares to you that the LORD will make you a house. . . .

¹⁶And your house and your kingdom shall be made sure forever before me. Your throne shall be established forever.’”

L This is the Word of the Lord.

C Thanks be to God.

Epistle

Romans 16:25–27

²⁵Now to him who is able to strengthen you according to my gospel and the preaching of Jesus Christ, according to the revelation of the mystery that was kept secret for long ages ²⁶but has now been disclosed and through the prophetic writings has been made known to all nations, according to the command of the eternal God, to bring about the obedience of faith— ²⁷to the only wise God be glory forevermore through Jesus Christ! Amen.

L This is the Word of the Lord.

C Thanks be to God.

Verse

Matthew 1:23a

P Alleluia. Behold, the virgin shall conceive and bear a son,

C and they shall call His name Immanuel. Alleluia.

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

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

²⁶In the sixth month the angel Gabriel was sent from God to a city of Galilee named Nazareth, ²⁷to a virgin betrothed to a man whose name was Joseph, of the house of David. And the virgin's name was Mary. ²⁸And he came to her and said, "Greetings, O favored one, the Lord is with you!" ²⁹But she was greatly troubled at the saying, and tried to discern what sort of greeting this might be. ³⁰And the angel said to her, "Do not be afraid, Mary, for you have found favor with God. ³¹And behold, you will conceive in your womb and bear a son, and you shall call his name Jesus. ³²He will be great and will be called the Son of the Most High. And the Lord God will give to him the throne of his father David, ³³and he will reign over the house of Jacob forever, and of his kingdom there will be no end."

³⁴And Mary said to the angel, "How will this be, since I am a virgin?"

³⁵And the angel answered her, "The Holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the Most High will overshadow you; therefore the child to be born will be called holy—the Son of God. ³⁶And behold, your relative Elizabeth in her old age has also conceived a son, and this is the sixth month with her who was called barren. ³⁷For nothing will be impossible with God." ³⁸And Mary said, "Behold, I am the servant of the Lord; let it be to me according to your word." And the angel departed from her.

P This is the Gospel of the Lord.

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

Apostles' Creed

C **I believe in God, the Father Almighty,
maker of heaven and earth.**

**And in Jesus Christ, His only Son, our Lord,
who was conceived by the Holy Spirit,
born of the virgin Mary,
suffered under Pontius Pilate,
was crucified, died and was buried.
He descended into hell.
The third day He rose again from the dead.
He ascended into heaven
and sits at the right hand of God the Father Almighty.
From thence He will come to judge the living and the dead.**

I believe in the Holy Spirit,
the holy Christian Church,
the communion of saints,
the forgiveness of sins,
the resurrection of the body,
and the life † everlasting. Amen.

Hymn of the Day "O Come, O Come, Emmanuel"

LSB 357, sts. 1, ref, 2-4



1 O come, O come, Em - man - u - el, And ran - som
2 O come, Thou Wis - dom from on high, Who or - d'rest
3 O come, O come, Thou Lord of might, Who to Thy
4 O come, Thou Branch of Jes - se's tree, Free them from

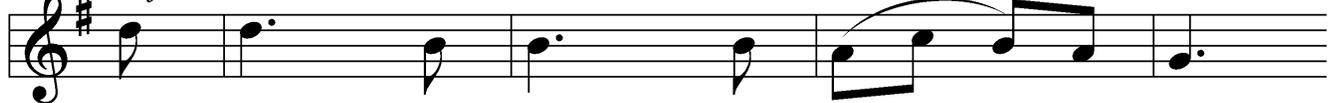


cap - tive Is - ra - el, That mourns in lone - ly
all things might - i - ly; To us the path of
tribes on Si - nai's height In an - cient times didst
Sa - tan's tyr - an - ny That trust Thy might - y



ex - ile here Un - til the Son of God ap - pear.
knowl - edge show, And teach us in her ways to go.
give the Law In cloud and maj - es - ty and awe.
pow'r to save, And give them vic - t'ry o'er the grave.

Refrain



Re - joice! Re - joice! Em - man - u - el



Shall come to thee, O Is - ra - el!

Text: Latin, c. 12th cent.; Psalterium Canticum Catholicum, 1710, Köln; tr. John Mason Neale, 1818-66, alt.

Tune: French, 15th cent.

Text and tune: Public domain

Sermon

Prayer of the Church

Romans 5:1–2; Philippians 4:7; John 14:27; Luke 2:14

P In the peace of Christ, our coming King, let us bring our prayers before our gracious God.

Therefore, since we have been justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ.

C **Through Him we have also obtained access by faith into this grace in which we stand.**

P For God’s amazing plan of salvation to reach into our hearts, that all those for whom Christ Jesus came into this world may know the hope, love, joy, and peace of sins forgiven; for perfect peace to reign in the hearts and minds of all who believe, that we may be the Lord’s instruments of peace in a world filled with troubles; in peace, let us pray to the Lord:

C **Lord, have mercy.**

P And the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding,

C **will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.**

P For the outpouring of the Spirit of peace upon the Church of Christ Jesus, that all who wait for His appearing would be strengthened in their faith and renewed in their boldness to confess His saving name before all the world; for all those who doubt God’s plan for their lives, that like the virgin Mary, the Holy Spirit would make His Word come alive in them, transforming them from the inside out; in peace, let us pray to the Lord:

C **Lord, have mercy.**

P Jesus said, “Peace I leave with you; My peace I give to you. Not as the world gives do I give to you.

C **Let not your hearts be troubled, neither let them be afraid.”**

P For the comfort and peace of Jesus to touch the lives of all who experience suffering, [*including . . .*]; for Christ’s peace to dwell among us as we celebrate His coming to save us, looking forward to the ultimate Day in which He will come again in all power and glory; in peace, let us pray to the Lord:

C **Lord, have mercy.**

P With hearts of gratitude and praise, we join with the hosts of heaven and say:

C **“Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace among those with whom He is pleased!”**

P Into Your hands, O gracious God, we entrust our prayers, through Jesus Christ, our King and Savior, who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.

C Amen.

Offering - We Thank the Lord with the Offering

Offertory

LSB 192

C Cre-ate in me a clean heart, O God, and re -
new a right spir - it with - in me. Cast me not a -
way from Thy pres - ence, and take not Thy Ho - ly Spir - it
from me. Re - store un - to me the joy of Thy sal - va -
tion, and up - hold me with Thy free spir - it. A - men.

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.**

Benediction

Romans 16:27; Numbers 6:24–26

P May our gracious God strengthen your hearts, for His plan of salvation has been revealed to us in the coming of His Son, our Savior and King.

C “To the only wise God be glory forevermore through Jesus Christ! Amen.”

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 Come, O Come, Emmanuel"

LSB 357, sts. 5-7



5 O come, Thou Key of Da - vid, come, And o - pen
 6 O come, Thou Day - spring from on high, And cheer us
 7 O come, De - sire of na - tions, bind In one the



wide our heav'n - ly home; Make safe the way that
 by Thy draw - ing nigh; Dis - perse the gloom - y
 hearts of all man - kind; Bid Thou our sad di -



leads on high, And close the path to mis - er - y.
 clouds of night, And death's dark shad - ows put to flight.
 vi - sions cease, And be Thy - self our King of Peace.



Refrain
 Re - joice! Re - joice! Em - man - u - el



Shall come to thee, O Is - ra - el!

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