

# *A Festival of Christmas*

## *Readings and Carols*

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### PROCESSIONAL CAROL – ONCE IN ROYAL DAVID'S CITY (LH 632)

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| 1. Once in royal David's city<br>stood a lowly cattle shed,<br>where a mother laid her baby<br>in a manger for his bed;<br>Mary was that mother mild,<br>Jesus Christ her little child.                      | 3. And our eyes at last shall see him,<br>through his own redeeming love,<br>for that child so dear and gentle<br>is our Lord in heaven above;<br>and he leads his children on<br>to the place where he is gone.       |
| 2 He came down to earth from heaven<br>who is God and Lord of all,<br>and his shelter was a stable,<br>and his cradle was a stall;<br>with the poor, and meek, and lowly<br>lived on earth our Saviour holy. | 4. Not in that poor lowly stable,<br>with the oxen standing by,<br>We shall see him; but in heaven,<br>set at God's right hand on high;<br>Where like stars his children<br>crowned<br>all in white shall wait around. |

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### GREETING AND PRAYER

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Friends in Christ: Let us hear again the message of the angels, and in heart and mind go to Bethlehem and see the loving-kindness of our God, and the baby lying in a manger.

Let us hear in holy Scripture the story of the loving purposes of God from the first days of our disobedience to the glorious redemption gained for us by the holy child, Jesus Christ our Lord; and let us thank him with our carols of praise.

But first let us pray to God for the needs of the whole world.

Heavenly Father, bring peace and goodwill among all people, so that we may learn to love one another, as your children.

Look in mercy on the poor and helpless; the homeless, the hungry, and the oppressed; the sick and those who mourn; the lonely and the unloved; the aged and the little children; and all those who do not know or love the Lord Jesus, or who by sin have grieved his heart.

We come before you with all those who rejoice with us in a greater light, that heavenly multitude which none of us can number, with whom, in the Lord Jesus, we are one for evermore.  
In his name we now pray:

**Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your name, your kingdom come, your will be done, on earth as in heaven. Give us today our daily bread. Forgive us our sins as we forgive those who sin against us. Lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil. For the kingdom, the power, and the glory are yours now and forever. Amen.**

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FIRST READING

*Genesis 3:8-15 God announces in the Garden of Eden that the offspring of the woman will crush the serpent's head.*

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CAROL – COME, THOU SAVIOUR OF OUR RACE (LH 19)

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| 1. Come, Thou Saviour of our race,<br>Choicest Gift of heav'nly grace!<br>O Thou blessed Virgin's Son,<br>Born, Thy course for us to run. | 5. Thou, the Father's only Son,<br>Hast o'er sin the victory won.<br>Boundless shall thy kingdom be;<br>When shall we its glories see?     |
| 2. Not of mortal blood and birth,<br>He descendeth to the earth:<br>By the Holy Ghost conceived,<br>Truly man, to be believed.            | 6. Brightly doth Thy manger shine!<br>Glorious is its light divine:<br>Let not sin o'ercloud this light,<br>Ever be our faith thus bright. |
| 3. Wondrous birth! O wondrous Child<br>Of the virgin, undefiled!<br>Though by all the world disowned,<br>Still to be in heaven enthroned. | 7. Praise to God the Father sing,<br>praise to God the Son, our king,<br>praise to God the Spirit be<br>ever and eternally.                |
| 4. From the Father forth He came,<br>And returneth to the same;<br>Captive leading death and hell,<br>High the song of triumph swell.     |  |

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SECOND READING

*Isaiah 9:2,6,7 The prophet Isaiah foretells Christ's birth and kingdom.*

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CAROL - O COME, ALL YE FAITHFUL (LH 34)

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| 1. O come, all ye faithful,<br>Joyful and triumphant,<br>O come ye, O come ye<br>to Bethlehem;<br>Come and behold him,<br>Born the King of angels:<br><br><i>O come, let us adore Him,<br/>O come, let us adore Him,<br/>O come, let us adore Him,<br/>Christ the Lord!</i> | 2. God of God,<br>Light of light,<br>Lo, he abhors not the<br>virgin's womb;<br>Very God,<br>Begotten, nor created:<br><br><i>O come, let us adore Him,<br/>O come, let us adore Him,<br/>O come, let us adore Him,<br/>Christ the Lord!</i> |
| 3. Sing, choirs of angels,<br>Sing in exultation,<br>Sing, all ye citizens of heaven above;<br>Glory to God<br>In the highest:<br><br><i>O come, let us adore Him,<br/>O come, let us adore Him,<br/>O come, let us adore Him,<br/>Christ the Lord!</i>                     |  |

*John 1:1-4, 14 St John describes the mystery of the incarnation.*

## CAROL – JOY TO THE WORLD (LH 627)

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| <p>1. Joy to the world! The Lord has come;<br/>let earth receive her king;<br/>let every heart prepare him room,<br/>and heaven and nature sing.</p> <p>2. Joy to the world! The Saviour reigns;<br/>let all their songs employ;<br/>while fields and floods, rocks,<br/>hills and plains<br/>repeat the sounding joy.</p> | <p>3. No more let sins and sorrows grow,<br/>nor thorns infest the ground;<br/>He comes to make his blessings flow<br/>far as the curse is found.</p> <p>4. He rules the world with truth<br/>and grace,<br/>and makes the nations prove<br/>the glories of his righteousness,<br/>and wonders of his love.</p> |
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## OFFERING

## COLLECT

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

Let us pray.  
**Almighty God, you enlighten us with the new light of your incarnate Word. May we show in our deeds the light that by faith shines in our hearts; through your Son, Jesus Christ our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and for ever. Amen.**

## BLESSING

Christ the Son of God give you joy and peace by his presence with you;  
and the blessing of almighty God, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, be with you  
always.  
**Amen.**

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| <p>1. The people that in darkness sat<br/>a glorious light have seen;<br/>the Light has shone on them<br/>who long<br/>in shades of death have been.</p> <p>2. To hail thee, Sun of Righteousness,<br/>the gathering nations come,<br/>their joy when the reapers bear<br/>their harvest treasures home.</p> <p>3. For thou their burden dost remove,<br/>and break the tyrant's rod,<br/>as in the day when Midian fell<br/>before the sword of God.</p> <p>4. To us a child of hope is born,<br/>to us a son is given;<br/>and on his shoulder ever rests<br/>all power in earth and heaven.</p> | <p>5. His name shall be the Prince of<br/>Peace<br/>the everlasting Lord,<br/>the Wonderful, the Counsellor,<br/>the God by all adored.</p> <p>6. His righteous government and<br/>power<br/>shall over all extend;<br/>on judgment and on justice based,<br/>his reign shall have no end.</p> <p>7. Lord Jesus, reign in us, we pray,<br/>and make us thine alone,<br/>who with the Father ever art<br/>and Holy Spirit One.</p> |
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## THIRD READING

*Micah 5:2-5a The prophet announces the birth-place of the Saviour.*

## CAROL - O LITTLE TOWN OF BETHLEHEM (LH 633)

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| <p>1. O little town of Bethlehem,<br/>how still we see you lie!<br/>Above your deep and dreamless sleep<br/>the silent stars go by;<br/>yet in your dark streets shining<br/>the everlasting Light;<br/>the hopes and fears of all the years<br/>are met in you tonight.</p> | <p>2. For Christ is born of Mary:<br/>and, gathered all above,<br/>while mortals sleep, the angels<br/>keep<br/>their watch of wondering love.<br/>O morning stars, together<br/>proclaim the holy birth,<br/>and praises sing to God the king,<br/>and peace to all on earth.</p> |
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3. How silently, how silently,  
the wondrous gift is given!  
So God imparts to human hearts  
the blessings of his heaven.  
No ear may hear his coming;  
but in this world of sin,  
where meek souls will receive him, still  
the dear Christ enters in.

4. O holy child of Bethlehem  
descend to us we pray;  
cast out our sin, and enter in:  
be born in us today.  
We hear the Christmas angels  
The great glad tidings tell;  
O come to us, abide with us,  
our Lord Immanuel!

FOURTH READING

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Matthew 1:18-25    *St Matthew tells of the birth of Jesus.*

- HYMN – O COME, O COME IMMANUEL (WITH EXTRA VERSES)(LH 2)
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1. O come, O wisdom, Word of God  
teach us to know and fear the Lord;  
you guide the world through night and day:  
direct us in the living way.  
Rejoice! Rejoice! Immanuel  
shall come to you, O Israel.

2. O come, O come, great Lord of might,  
in ancient times, on Sinai's height,  
you gave your chosen tribes the law,  
in cloud and majesty and awe.  
Rejoice! Rejoice! Immanuel  
shall come to you, O Israel.

3. O come, O branch of Jesse, free  
your own from Satan's tyranny;  
from depth of hell your people save,  
and give them victory from the grave.  
Rejoice! Rejoice! Immanuel  
shall come to you, O Israel.

4. O come, O key of David, come  
and open wide our heavenly home.  
Make safe the path that leads on high,  
and close the path to misery.  
Rejoice! Rejoice! Immanuel  
shall come to you, O Israel.

- HYMN – HARK! THE HERALD ANGELS SING (LH 33)
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1. Hark! The herald angels sing  
glory to the new-born King;  
peace on earth, and mercy mild,  
God and sinners reconciled.  
Joyful, all you nations, rise,  
join the triumph of the skies;  
with the angelic host proclaim:  
Christ is born in Bethlehem.

2. Christ, by highest heaven adored,  
Christ, the everlasting Lord,  
late in time behold him come,  
offspring of a virgin's womb.  
Veiled in flesh the Godhead see;  
Hail, the incarnate Deity,  
pleased as man with us to dwell,  
Jesus, our Immanuel:
- Hark! the herald angels sing  
glory to the new-born King.*

3. Hail, the heaven-born Prince of peace!  
Hail, the sun of righteousness!  
Light and life to all he brings,  
risen with healing in his wings.  
Mild he lays his glory by,  
born that we no more may die,  
born to raise the sons of earth,  
born to give them second birth:

*Hark! the herald angels sing  
glory to the new-born King.*

EIGHTH READING

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Matthew 2:1-11    *The wise men are led by the star to Jesus.*

- HYMN – AS WITH GLADNESS MEN OF OLD (LH 40)
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1. As with gladness, men of old  
Did the guiding star behold  
As with joy they hailed its light  
Leading onward, beaming bright  
So, most glorious Lord, may we  
Evermore be led to Thee.

2. As with joyful steps they sped  
To that lowly manger bed  
There to bend the knee before  
Him Whom Heaven and earth adore;  
So may we with willing feet  
Ever seek Thy mercy seat.

3. As they offered gifts most rare  
At that manger rude and bare;  
So may we with holy joy,  
Pure and free from sin's alloy,  
All our costliest treasures bring,  
Christ, to Thee, our heavenly King.

4. He brings those blessings long ago  
Prepared by God for all below;  
That in His kingdom bright and fair  
You may with us his glory share

5. These are the tokens ye shall mark,  
The swaddling clothes and manger dark;  
There shall ye find the young child laid,  
By whom the heavens and earth were made.

6. Now let us all, with gladsome cheer,  
Follow the shepherds, and draw near  
To see this wondrous gift of God,  
Who hath His own dear Son bestowed.

7. Give heed, my heart, lift up thine eyes!  
Who is it in yon manger lies?  
Who is this child, so young and fair?  
The blessèd Christ-child lieth there!
5. O come, O sunrise, come and cheer  
our spirits by your advent here;  
disperse the gloomy clouds of night,  
and death's dark shadows put to flight.  
Rejoice! Rejoice! Immanuel  
shall come to you, O Israel.

6. O come, O king of nations, bind  
in one the hearts of humankind.  
Bid every sad division cease  
and be yourself our Prince of Peace.  
Rejoice! Rejoice! Immanuel  
shall come to you, O Israel.

7. O come, O come, Immanuel,  
and ransom captive Israel,  
that mourns in lonely exile here,  
until the Son of God appear.  
Rejoice! Rejoice! Immanuel  
shall come to you, O Israel.

SIXTH READING

*Luke 2:8-12 The shepherds are told of the birth of Jesus.*

CAROL – SILENT NIGHT (LH 629)

1. Silent night, holy night!  
All is calm, all is bright  
round yon virgin mother and child.  
Holy infant, so tender and mild,  
sleep in heavenly peace.

2. Silent night, holy night!  
Shepherds quake at the sight,  
glory streams from heaven afar,  
heavenly hosts sing: Hallelujah!  
Christ the Saviour is born.

3. Silent night, holy night!  
Son of God, love's pure light  
radiant beams from thy holy face,  
with the dawn of redeeming grace,  
Jesus, Lord, at thy birth.

SEVENTH READING

*Luke 2:13-20 The angels proclaim peace, and the shepherds go to Bethlehem*

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FIFTH READING

*Luke 2:1-7 St Luke tells of the birth of the Christ child.*

HYMN – FROM HEAVEN ABOVE TO EARTH I COME (LH 23)

1. From heaven above to earth I come,  
To bear good news to every home;  
Glad tidings of great joy I bring,  
Whereof I now will say and sing.

2. To you, this night, is born a Child  
Of Mary, chosen virgin mild;  
This little child of lowly birth,  
Shall be the joy of all your earth.

3. This is the Christ our God and Lord,  
who in all need shall aid afford;  
He will himself your Saviour be,  
From all your sins to set you free.