

CHRISTMAS WORSHIP



Our season of waiting and watching is over. From North and South, from East and West, the Advent voice has called us towards Bethlehem. Again, we light the candles for Hope, and Peace, and Joy and Faithfulness. And as we gather now in worship, we light the candle for Glory.

We light all our candles and declare the good news again afresh!

Shout, as you journey home,
songs be in every mouth,
lo, from the North they come,
from East and West and South:
**In Jesus all shall find their rest,
in him the universe be blest.**

An opening hymn may be sung.

RECEIVING FORGIVENESS

Our heavenly guest has come:
Christ is born, alleluia!

Hear the words of the angel to Joseph: 'You shall call his name Jesus, for he will save his people from their sins.' Therefore let us seek the forgiveness of God through Jesus the Saviour of the world.

Silence.

You were born for our salvation:
Lord have mercy
Lord have mercy.

You came as saviour to bring
wholeness and peace:
Christ have mercy
Christ have mercy.

You come to bring light into the
darkness of our lives:
Lord have mercy
Lord have mercy.

May the God
of all healing and forgiveness
draw you to himself,
and cleanse you from all your sins
that you may behold
the glory of his Son,
the Word made flesh,
Jesus Christ our Lord.
Amen

THE SPECIAL PRAYERS

Christmas Eve

Eternal God,
in the stillness of this night
you sent your almighty Word
to pierce the world's darkness
with the light of salvation:
give to the earth the peace
that we long for and fill our hearts
with the joy of heaven;
through our Saviour,
Jesus Christ.

Christmas Morning

Lord Jesus Christ,
your birth at Bethlehem draws us
to kneel in wonder
at heaven touching earth:
accept our heartfelt praise
as we worship you,
our Saviour and our eternal God.

Sunday after Christmas

God in Trinity,
eternal unity of perfect love:
gather the nations to be one family,
and draw us into your holy life
through the birth of Emmanuel,
our Lord Jesus Christ.

A SONG FROM THE PROPHETS

There shall come forth a shoot from
the stock of Jesse, and a branch shall
grow out of his roots.

And the Spirit of the Lord shall rest
upon him, the spirit of wisdom and
understanding, the spirit of counsel
and might the spirit of knowledge
and the fear of the Lord.

He shall not judge by what his eyes
see, or decide by what his ears hear,
but with righteousness he shall judge
the poor, and decide with equity for
the meek of the earth.

The wolf shall dwell with the lamb,
and the leopard shall lie down with
the kid. The calf, the lion and the
fatling together, with a little child to
lead them. They shall not hurt or
destroy in all my holy mountain, for
the earth shall be full of the
knowledge of the Lord as the waters
cover the sea.

**Glory to the Father
and to the Son
and to the Holy Spirit;
as it was in the beginning
is now and shall be for ever.
Amen.**



THE CHRISTMAS STORY

Luke 2:1-7 (Christmas Eve)

*Hear the Gospel of our Lord Jesus
Christ according to Luke:*

Glory to you O Lord

In those days a decree went out from Emperor Augustus that all the world should be registered. This was the first registration and was taken while Quirinius was governor of Syria.

All went to their own towns to be registered. Joseph also went from the town of Nazareth in Galilee to Judea, to the city of David called Bethlehem, because he was descended from the house and family of David.

He went to be registered with Mary, to whom he was engaged and who was expecting a child.

While they were there, the time came for her to deliver her child. And she gave birth to her firstborn son and wrapped him in bands of cloth, and laid him in a manger, because there was no place for them in the inn.

This is the Gospel of the Lord:
Praise to you O Christ.

Luke 2:8-14 (Christmas Day)

*Hear the Gospel of our Lord Jesus
Christ according to Luke:*
Glory to you O Lord

In that region there were shepherds living in the fields, keeping watch over their flock by night. Then an angel of the Lord stood before them, and the glory of the Lord shone around them, and they were terrified. But the angel said to them, ‘Do not be afraid; for see—I am bringing you good news of great joy for all the people: to you is born this day in the city of David a Saviour, who is the Messiah, the Lord. This will be a sign for you: you will find a child wrapped in bands of cloth and lying in a manger.’

And suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host, praising God and saying, ‘Glory to God in the highest heaven, and on earth peace among those whom he favours!’

This is the Gospel of the Lord:
Praise to you O Christ.



Luke 2:15-21
(Sunday after Christmas)

*Hear the Gospel of our Lord Jesus
Christ according to Luke:
Glory to you O Lord*

When the angels had left them and gone into heaven, the shepherds said to one another, 'Let us go now to Bethlehem and see this thing that has taken place, which the Lord has made known to us.' So they went with haste and found Mary and Joseph, and the child lying in the manger. When they saw this, they made known what had been told them about this child; and all who heard it were amazed at what the shepherds told them. But Mary treasured all these words and pondered them in her heart. The shepherds returned, glorifying and praising God for all they had heard and seen, as it had been told them.

After eight days had passed, it was time to circumcise the child; and he was called Jesus, the name given by the angel before he was conceived in the womb.

This is the Gospel of the Lord:
Praise to you O Christ.

*We reflect on today's
readings together*



TRUSTING THE MYSTERY

**We believe in God the Father
from whom every family in
heaven and on earth is named.**

**We believe in God the Son
who lives in our hearts through
faith, and fills us with his love.**

**We believe in God the Holy Spirit
who strengthens us with power
from on high.**

**We believe in one God:
Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.
Amen.**

PRAYING FOR OTHERS

*Hills of the North, rejoice, river and
mountain-spring, hark to the advent
voice; valley and lowland, sing.
Christ comes in righteousness and
love, he brings salvation from above.*

God of righteousness and love, we pray for your Church throughout the world. As once the angels carried good news and the shepherds hurried to Bethlehem, make us bearers of the news that Christ has come among us. Let every hill and valley, every city and village, every church and home hear again the Advent voice and rejoice.

Silence

Living God:
**let your kingdom
be born in us.**

Isles of the southern seas, sing to the listening earth, carry on every breeze hope of a world's new birth: in Christ shall all be made anew, his word is sure, his promise true.

God of new beginnings, we pray for your world: for nations at war, people driven from their homes, communities divided by hatred, and all who hunger for justice and peace. Let the song of the angels be heard above the noise of violence, and give to this listening earth the hope of a world made new.

Silence

Living God:
**let your kingdom
be born in us.**

Lands of the East, arise, he is your brightest morn, greet him with joyous eyes, praise shall his path adorn: Your seers have longed to know their Lord; to you he comes, the final word.

God of light, we pray for those with whom we will share these Christmas days: our families and friends, our neighbours and communities, those we welcome and those we miss. Open our eyes to recognise Christ in one another, and let kindness, generosity, laughter and praise brighten our homes.

Silence

Living God:
**let your kingdom
be born in us.**

Shores of the utmost West, lands of the setting sun, welcome the heavenly guest in whom the dawn has come: He brings a never-ending light who triumphed o'er our darkest night.

God who comes into the darkness, we pray for those for whom Christmas is difficult: those who are ill, anxious, lonely or afraid; those facing an empty chair or an uncertain future; those for whom the night feels long. Come close to them with the tenderness of the child of Bethlehem, and kindle your never-ending light in their darkness.

Silence

Living God:
**let your kingdom
be born in us.**

Shout, as you journey home, songs be in every mouth, lo, from the North they come, from East and West and South: In Jesus all shall find their rest, in him the universe be blest.

God who gathers us home, we remember those who have died, especially those whose absence will be felt this Christmas. Gather them into your everlasting rest.



Gather us, with people of every nation and generation, around the child of Bethlehem, until the whole creation finds its home in Christ and the song begun by angels is sung by all the earth.

Silence

Living God:
**let your kingdom
be born in us.**

God of all the earth, from North and South, from East and West, you call your children home. We thank you for Jesus Christ: our heavenly guest, our brightest morning, our hope of new birth, our light in the darkness, and our everlasting home.

Merciful Father,
**accept these prayers
for the sake of your Son,
our Saviour Jesus Christ. Amen.**

THE PEACE

Unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given, and his name shall be called the Prince of Peace. The peace of the Lord be always with you.
And also with you.

A hymn may be sung.

PRAYERS AT THE TABLE

The Lord be with you
And also with you.

Lift up your hearts.
We lift them to the Lord.

Let us give thanks
to the Lord our God.
**It is right to give
thanks and praise.**

It is always right to give you thanks, God our Creator, loving and faithful, holy and strong. You made us and the whole universe, and filled your world with life. You sent your Son to live among us, Jesus our Saviour, Mary's child. He suffered on the cross; he died to save us from our sins; he rose in glory from the dead. You send your Spirit to bring new life to the world, and clothe us with power from on high. And so we join the angels to celebrate and sing:

**Holy, holy, holy, holy,
Lord of power,
Lord of might.**

**Heav'n and earth
are full of your glory.
Sing hosanna evermore.**

**Blest and holy, blest and holy,
he who comes
from God on high.**

**Raise your voices,
sing his glory,
praise his name
for evermore.**



Father, on the night before he died,
Jesus shared a meal with his friends.
He took the bread, and thanked you.
He broke it, and gave it to them,
saying:

*Take and eat;
this is my body, given for you.
Do this to remember me.*

After the meal, Jesus took the cup of
wine. He thanked you, and gave it to
them, saying:

*Drink this, all of you.
This is my blood,
the new promise
of God's unfailing love.
Do this to remember me.*

Father, as we bring this bread and
wine, and remember his death and
resurrection, send your Holy Spirit,
that we who share these gifts may be
fed by Christ's body and his blood.

Pour your Spirit on us that we may
love one another, work for the
healing of the earth, and share the
good news of Jesus, as we wait for his
coming in glory.

For honour and praise belong to you,
Father, with Jesus your Son, and the
Holy Spirit: one God, for ever and
ever.

Amen!

THE LORDS PRAYER

**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 for ever. Amen.**

THE BREAKING OF BREAD

We break the bread of life,
and that life is the light of the world.
**God here among us,
light in the midst of us,
bring us to light and life.**

SHARING COMMUNION

This is Christ's table.
He welcomes all. Come and be fed.
**Voices old and new,
lives young and old.
This is who we are.
This is who we are becoming.
Amen! Together we come!**

*You are warmly welcomed
to receive communion
or a blessing.*



THANKSGIVINGS

God our Father, whose Word has come among us in the Holy Child of Bethlehem: refresh and sustain us as we go forward on our journey, in the name of Jesus Christ whose birth we proclaim.

Amen.

A closing hymn may be sung.

May the joy of the angels, the eagerness of the shepherds, the perseverance of the wise men, the obedience of Joseph and Mary, and the peace of the Christ-child be yours this Christmas; and the blessing of God almighty, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit, be upon you and remain with you always.

Amen

Hear the Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ according to John:
Glory to you O Lord

In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was in the beginning with God. All things came into being through him, and without him not one thing came into being. What has come into being in him was life, and the life was the light of all people. The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness did not overcome it.

There was a man sent from God, whose name was John. He came as a witness to testify to the light, so that all might believe through him. He himself was not the light, but he came to testify to the light. The true light, which enlightens everyone, was coming into the world.

He was in the world, and the world came into being through him; yet the world did not know him. He came to what was his own, and his own people did not accept him. But to all who received him, who believed in his name, he gave power to become children of God, who were born, not of blood or of the will of the flesh or of the will of man, but of God.

And the Word became flesh and lived among us, and we have seen his glory, the glory as of a father's only son, full of grace and truth.

This is the Gospel of the Lord:
Praise to you O Christ.

You have heard his story,
the story of God's own Son.
Yes! We thank you Lord!

May he fill you with joy to bring
this good news to others today.
Yes! We thank you Lord!

Go in peace, proclaiming
"Jesus is with us!"
We thank you Lord!
Yes and Amen!

