

Friday, December 25, 2020
From Heaven Above: Christmas Day
Holy Communion

PEACE

The peace of Christ be with you always.
And also with you.

GATHERING SONG *Good Christian Friends, Rejoice* (Red Hymnal # 288)

1 Good Christian friends, rejoice
with heart and soul and voice;
give ye heed to what we say:
Jesus Christ is born today;
ox and ass before him bow,
and he is in the manger now.
Christ is born today!
Christ is born today!

2 Good Christian friends, rejoice
with heart and soul and voice;
now ye hear of endless bliss:
Jesus Christ was born for this!
He has opened heaven's door,
and we are blest forevermore.
Christ was born for this!
Christ was born for this!

3 Good Christian friends, rejoice
with heart and soul and voice;
now ye need not fear the grave;
Jesus Christ was born to save!
Calls you one and calls you all
to gain the everlasting hall.
Christ was born to save!
Christ was born to save!

GREETING

The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God, and the communion of the Holy Spirit be
with you all.
And also with you.

CHRISTMAS PROCLAMATION

Many ages from the time when God created the heavens and the earth
and then formed man and woman in his own image;
long after the great flood, when God made the rainbow shine forth as a sign of the covenant;
twenty-one centuries from the time the promise was given to Abraham and Sarah;
thirteen centuries after Moses led the people of Israel out of Egypt and Miriam danced in
freedom;
eleven hundred years from the time of Ruth and the judges;
one thousand years from the anointing of David as king,
in fulfillment of the times and years and months and days discerned by the prophets;
in the one hundred and ninety-fourth Olympiad;
the seven hundred and fifty-second year from the foundation of the city of Rome;
the forty-second year of the reign of Octavian Augustus;
while the whole world enjoyed a span of peace,
Jesus Christ, eternal God and Son of the eternal Father,
desiring to sanctify the world by his most merciful coming,
being conceived by the Holy Spirit and nine months of growth in the womb of his mother—
now in our own times is the nativity of our Lord Jesus Christ, God made flesh.

PRAYER OF THE DAY

Let us pray. Almighty God, you gave us your only Son to take on our human nature and to illumine the world with your light. By your grace adopt us as your children and enlighten us with your Spirit, through Jesus Christ, our Redeemer and Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. **Amen.**

WHO ARE THESE ANGELS WHO COME TO EARTH: Luke 2:8-14

A reading from Luke.

⁸In that region there were shepherds living in the fields, keeping watch over their flock by night.
⁹Then an angel of the Lord stood before them, and the glory of the Lord shone around them, and they were terrified. ¹⁰But the angel said to them, "Do not be afraid; for see — I am bringing you good news of great joy for all the people: ¹¹to you is born this day in the city of David a Savior, who is the Messiah, the Lord. ¹²This will be a sign for you: you will find a child wrapped in bands of cloth and lying in a manger." ¹³And suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host, praising God and saying,
¹⁴"Glory to God in the highest heaven,
and on earth peace among those whom he favors!"

HYMN *From Heaven Above*

1 "From heav'n above to earth I come
to bear good news to ev'ry home!
Glad tidings of great joy I bring
to all the world, and gladly sing:"

2 "To you this night is born a child
of Mary, chosen virgin mild;
this newborn child of lowly birth
shall be the joy of all the earth."

3 "This is the Christ, God's Son most high,
who hears your sad and bitter cry,
who will himself your Savior be
and from all sin will set you free."

WHO ARE THESE SHEPHERDS WHO RUN TO SEE?: Luke 2:15-20

A reading from Luke.

¹⁵When 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." ¹⁶So they went with haste and found Mary and Joseph, and the child lying in the manger. ¹⁷When they saw this, they made known what had been told them about this child; ¹⁸and all who heard it were amazed at what the shepherds told them. ¹⁹But Mary treasured all these words and pondered them in her heart. ²⁰The shepherds returned, glorifying and praising God for all they had heard and seen, as it had been told them.

HYMN From Heaven Above

4 "The blessing that the Father planned
the Son holds in his infant hand,
that in his kingdom, bright and fair,
you may with us his glory share."

5 "These are the signs that you will see
to let you know that it is he:
in manger-bed, in swaddling clothes
the child who all the earth upholds."

6 Now let us all with joyful cheer
go with the shepherds and draw near
to see this wondrous gift of God,
the blessed child to us bestowed.

WHO IS THIS CHILD, SO SMALL, SO SLIGHT: Hebrews 1:1-4

A reading from Hebrews.

¹Long ago God spoke to our ancestors in many and various ways by the prophets, ²but in these last days he has spoken to us by a Son, whom he appointed heir of all things, through whom he also created the worlds. ³He is the reflection of God's glory and the exact imprint of God's very being, and he sustains all things by his powerful word. When he had made 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.

HYMN From Heaven Above

7 Look, look, dear friends, look over there!
 What lies within that manger bare?
 Who is that lovely little one?
 The baby Jesus, God's dear Son.

8 Welcome to earth, O noble Guest,
 through whom this sinful world is blest!
 You turned not from our needs away;
 how can our thanks such love repay?

9 O Lord, you have created all!
 How did you come to be so small,
 to sweetly sleep in manger-bed
 where lowing cattle lately fed?

WHO IS THIS KING, A MANGER HIS THRONE?: Isaiah 9:2-7

A reading from Isaiah.

² The people who walked in darkness have seen a great light; those who lived in a land of deep darkness — on them light has shined.

³ You have multiplied the nation, you have increased its joy; they rejoice before you as with joy at the harvest, as people exult when dividing plunder.

⁴ For the yoke of their burden, and the bar across their shoulders, the rod of their oppressor, you have broken as on the day of Midian.

⁵ For all the boots of the tramping warriors and all the garments rolled in blood shall be burned as fuel for the fire.

⁶ For a child has been born for us, a son given to us; authority rests upon his shoulders; and he is named Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace.

⁷ His authority shall grow continually, and there shall be endless peace for the throne of David and his kingdom. He will establish and uphold it with justice and with righteousness from this time onward and forevermore. The zeal of the LORD of hosts will do this.

HYMN From Heaven Above

10 Were earth a thousand times as fair
 and set with gold and jewels rare,
 still such a cradle would not do
 to rock a prince so great as you.

11 For velvets soft and silken stuff
 you have but hay and straw so rough
 on which as king so rich and great
 to be enthroned in humble state.

WHO IS THIS GOD, WHO SENDS A SON?: John 1:1-14

A reading from John.

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 came into being through him, and without him not one thing came into being. What has come into being ⁴in him was life, and the life was the light of all people. ⁵The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness did not overcome it. ⁶There was a man sent from God, whose name was John. ⁷He came as a witness to testify to the light, so that all might believe through him. ⁸He himself was not the light, but he came to testify to the light. ⁹The true light, which enlightens everyone, was coming into the world. ¹⁰He was in the world, and the world came into being through him; yet the world did not know him. ¹¹He came to what was his own, and his own people did not accept him. ¹²But to all who received him, who believed in his name, he gave power to become children of God, ¹³who were born, not of blood or of the will of the flesh or of the will of man, but of God. ¹⁴And 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.

HYMN *From Heaven Above*

12 Ah, dearest Jesus, holy child,
 prepare a bed, soft, undefiled,
 a quiet chamber in my heart,
 that you and I may never part.

13 My heart for very joy now leaps;
 my voice no longer silence keeps;
 I too must sing with joyful tongue
 the sweetest ancient cradle-song:

14 "Glory to God in highest heav'n,
 who unto us the Son has giv'n."
 With angels sing in pious mirth
 a glad new year to all the earth!

SERMON

HYMN OF THE DAY *Of the Father's Love Begotten* (Red Hymnal # 295)

1 Of the Father's love begotten
ere the worlds began to be,
he is Alpha and Omega,
he the source, the ending he,
of the things that are, that have been,
and that future years shall see,
evermore and evermore.

2 Oh, that birth forever blessed,
when the virgin, full of grace,
by the Holy Ghost conceiving,
bore the Savior of our race,
and the babe, the world's redeemer,
first revealed his sacred face,
evermore and evermore.

3 This is he whom seers in old time
chanted of with one accord,
whom the voices of the prophets
promised in their faithful word;
now he shines, the long-expected;
let creation praise its Lord
evermore and evermore.

4 Let the heights of heav'n adore him;
angel hosts, his praises sing;
pow'rs, dominions, bow before him
and extol our God and King;
let no tongue on earth be silent,
ev'ry voice in concert ring
evermore and evermore.

5 Christ, to thee, with God the Father,
and, O Holy Ghost, to thee,
hymn and chant and high thanksgiving
and unwearied praises be:
honor, glory, and dominion,
and eternal victory
evermore and evermore! Amen.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

PRAYERS OF INTERCESSION

Joining our voices with the song of the angels, let us pray for the church, the world, and all who are in need.

God of glory, you bring your word to birth among us. As you spoke through prophets and ancestors, empower your church to proclaim your name with boldness and tenderness, that your salvation is revealed to all the ends of the earth. Hear us, O God. **Your mercy is great.**

You founded the earth and the heavens are the work of your hands. Protect the beauty of mountains and valleys. Save glaciers, tundra, and arctic lands from the threat of changing climates. Sustain all things by your powerful word. Hear us, O God. **Your mercy is great.**

You send messengers to announce peace. Build trust among nations. Strengthen relationships that reach beyond borders. Grant safety to ambassadors, relief workers, military personnel, and health care providers who travel across the world. Reveal your redemption through their work. Hear us, O God. **Your mercy is great.**

You bring hope to all people. Bring wholeness to all who long for your comfort and companionship. Revive aching spirits and restore tired bodies. Bring healing and wholeness to all who long for mercy (*especially*). Hear us, O God. **Your mercy is great.**

You are the fullness of grace and truth. Bless ministries of generosity in this congregation and community. Open our doors in welcome, extend our tables to guests, and send us out with provisions for those who lack food, water, shelter, clothing, or companionship. Hear us, O God. **Your mercy is great.**

Your throne, O God, is forever and ever. Claim us as your children in this life and in the next. Encourage us by the witness of the saints across the ages who have testified to your light and life (*especially*). Hear us, O God. **Your mercy is great.**

God of mercy, come quickly to us with grace upon grace as we lift these and all our prayers to you, in the name of Jesus. **Amen.**

OFFERING PRAYER

God with us: You came as a baby to a manger. You slept on straw and greeted shepherds. You come again in bread and wine.

Remind us how good you are at blessing ordinary things. And then, through these gifts, help us to bless the lives of others in the strength of your holy name. **Amen.**

DIALOGUE (Red Hymnal p. 152)

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 our thanks and praise.**

PREFACE

It is indeed right, our duty and our joy,
that we should at all times and in all places
give thanks and praise to you, almighty and merciful God,
through our Savior Jesus Christ.

In the wonder and mystery of the Word made flesh
you have opened the eyes of faith
to a new and radiant vision of your glory,
that, beholding the God made visible,
we may be drawn to love the God whom we cannot see.

THANKSGIVING AT THE TABLE

Holy God, Creator of all and Source of life, at the birth of time your word brought light into the world. In the fullness of time, you sent your Word, born of Mary, to shine in our darkness and to make us your daughters and sons.

In the night in which he was betrayed, our Lord Jesus took bread, and gave thanks; broke it, and gave it to his disciples, saying: Take and eat; this is my body, given for you. Do this for the remembrance of me. *The body of Christ, given for you.*

Again, after supper, he took the cup, gave thanks, and gave it for all to drink, saying: This cup is the new covenant in my blood, shed for you and for all people for the forgiveness of sin. Do this for the remembrance of me. *The blood of Christ, shed for you.*

Remembering, therefore, his birth and life among us, his death and resurrection, we await his coming again when all things will be restored in him. By your Spirit bless us and this bread and cup, that, held and nourished by you, we may live as your children, shining with the light of your Son. Through him all glory and honor is yours, Almighty Father, with the Holy Spirit, in your holy Church, both now and forever. **Amen**

LORD'S PRAYER

Lord, remember us in your kingdom and teach us to pray.

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.

PRAYER AFTER COMMUNION

On this day, O God, you gave us Christ the Son to save us. As you sent the one foretold, send us now with good news for all people.

Let the gladness of this feast have no end as we share with others the joy that fills us; through Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord. **Amen.**

BLESSING

May Christ, who by his incarnation has filled us with grace and truth, give you peace this Christmas and always. Almighty God, Father, ☩ Son, and Holy Spirit, bless you now and forever. **Amen.**

SENDING SONG *Go Tell It on the Mountain* (Red Hymnal # 290)

Go tell it on the mountain,
over the hills and ev'rywhere;
go tell it on the mountain
that Jesus Christ is born!

1 While shepherds kept their watching
o'er silent flocks by night,
behold, throughout the heavens
there shone a holy light.
Go tell it on the mountain,
over the hills and ev'rywhere;
go tell it on the mountain
that Jesus Christ is born!

2 The shepherds feared and trembled
when, lo, above the earth
rang out the angel chorus
that hailed our Savior's birth.
Go tell it on the mountain,
over the hills and ev'rywhere;
go tell it on the mountain
that Jesus Christ is born!

3 Down in a lonely manger
the humble Christ was born;
and God sent us salvation
that blessed Christmas morn.
Go tell it on the mountain,
over the hills and ev'rywhere;
go tell it on the mountain
that Jesus Christ is born!

DISMISSAL

Glory to God in the highest! **Peace to God's people on earth!**

Go in peace. Share the gift of Jesus. **Thanks be to God.**