

Worship in the Home: December 24, 2020-Christmas Eve

Worship in the Home



Nativity of Our Lord: Christmas Eve December 24, 2020

In this time of world-wide crisis, congregations throughout this church are not able to gather for worship as the body of Christ. While you cannot be together in person, we can hear the word of God and hold each other in prayer. We offer this brief resource as an aid for prayer in the home. As with our prayers in the gathered assembly for worship, you are encouraged to prepare or adapt them locally for your context.

In winter's deepest night, we welcome the light of the Christ child. Isaiah declares that the light of the long-promised king will illumine the world and bring endless peace and justice. Paul reminds us that the grace of God through Jesus Christ brings salvation to all people. The angels declare that Jesus' birth is good and joyful news for everyone, including lowly shepherds. Filled with the light that shines in our lives, we go forth to share the light of Christ with the whole world.

Find a peaceful place to pray, perhaps a table. You may wish to light a candle near where you pray and incorporate other symbols of Christmas. One person may lead in this acclamation and then pray the Prayer of the Day.

Glory to God in the highest,

and peace to God's people on earth.

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

Amen.

Let us pray.

A brief silence is kept before the prayer.

Almighty God, you made this holy night shine with the brightness of the true Light. Grant that here on earth we may walk in the light of Jesus' presence and in the last day wake to the brightness of his glory; through your Son, Jesus Christ our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.

Amen.

First Reading: Isaiah 9:2-7

This poem promises deliverance from Assyrian oppression, a hope based on the birth of a royal child with a name full of promise. While Judah's king will practice justice and righteousness, the real basis for faith lies in God's passion for the people: The zeal of the LORD of hosts will do this!

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

³You 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.

⁴For 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.

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

⁶For 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.

⁷His authority shall grow continually,
and there shall be endless peace
for the throne and dominion of David,
to 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.

Word of God, word of life.

Thanks be to God.

Psalm 96

¹Sing to the LORD | a new song;
sing to the LORD, | all the earth.

²Sing to the LORD, bless the name | of the LORD;
proclaim God's salvation from | day to day.

³Declare God's glory among the nations
and God's wonders among all peoples.

⁴For great is the LORD and greatly | to be praised,
more to be feared | than all gods.

⁵As for all the gods of the nations, they | are but idols;
but you, O LORD, have | made the heavens.

⁶Majesty and magnificence are | in your presence;
power and splendor are in your | sanctuary.

⁷Ascribe to the LORD, you families | of the peoples,
ascribe to the LORD honor and power.

⁸Ascribe to the LORD the honor due the | holy name;
bring offerings and enter the courts | of the LORD.

⁹Worship the LORD in the beauty of holiness;

tremble before the Lord, ¹all the earth.

¹⁰Tell it out among the nations: "The ¹LORD is king!

The one who made the world so firm that it cannot be moved
will judge the peoples with equity."

¹¹Let the heavens rejoice, and let the ¹earth be glad;

let the sea thunder and all that is in it; let the field be joyful and all that ¹is therein.

¹²Then shall all the trees of the wood shout for joy at your coming, O LORD,
for you come to ¹judge the earth.

¹³You will judge the ¹world with righteousness
and the peoples ¹with your truth.

Second Reading: Titus 2:11-14

The appearance of God's grace in Jesus Christ brings salvation for all humanity. Consequently, in the present we live wisely and justly while also anticipating the hope of our Savior's final appearance.

¹¹The grace of God has appeared, bringing salvation to all, ¹²training us to renounce impiety and worldly passions, and in the present age to live lives that are self-controlled, upright, and godly, ¹³while we wait for the blessed hope and the manifestation of the glory of our great God and Savior, Jesus Christ. ¹⁴It is Jesus Christ who gave himself for us to redeem us from all iniquity and purify for himself a people of his own who are zealous for good deeds.

Word of God, word of life.

Thanks be to God.

Gospel: Luke 2:1-20

The holy gospel according to Luke.

Glory to you, O Lord.

God's greatest gift comes as a baby in a manger. Angels announce the "good news of great joy" and proclaim God's blessing of peace.

¹In those days a decree went out from Emperor Augustus that all the world should be registered. ²This was the first registration and was taken while Quirinius was governor of Syria. ³All went to their own towns to be registered. ⁴Joseph 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. ⁵He went to be registered with Mary, to whom he was engaged and who was expecting a child. ⁶While they were there, the time came for her to deliver her child. ⁷And 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.

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 God favors!"

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.

The gospel of the Lord.

Praise to you, O Christ.

Reflection

Having read these readings, think on this:

Jesus Christ is the Light that shines in our darkness, the grace of God that has appeared among us, the Prince of Peace in a warring world. This night we celebrate all these things, knowing our own need for them. Our liturgy uses an old Israelite text from Isaiah, probably originally spoken at the enthronement of a local king. But no king ever fulfilled what was spoken in that text. Rather, it is in Jesus Christ that there is a promise of the end of burdens placed on oppressed people and the end of garments rolled in blood. The Gospel tells of the reign of the Roman Emperor, evidencing how he violently pushed people around. But the child whose birth is told in this story has his bed among the poor in their need, sharing their weakness. In contrast with Augustus, a far more profound authority for "all the world" belongs to him. In the end this Jesus Christ reigns from the cross and brings peace in his resurrection. The story says there was no room for him in the inn. With Mary, we rightly welcome him and this story into our hearts.

If you have a hymnal, you may now sing or read "Hark! The Herald Angels Sing" (Evangelical Lutheran Worship 270), "I Am So Glad Each Christmas Eve" (Evangelical Lutheran Worship 271), "Lo, How a Rose E'er Blooming" (Evangelical Lutheran Worship 272). Selected hymns are provided below for those without a hymnal at home.

[Hark! The Herald Angels Sing](#)

[Lo, How a Rose E'er Blooming](#)

Then pray these intercessions:

As we celebrate Christmas, let us praise God for the birth of our Savior and pray for all in need, responding to each petition with the words "Your mercy is great."

A brief silence.

Mighty and merciful God, we praise you for bringing your Word to birth among us. Strengthen with your Spirit all the baptized, so that even where the faithful cannot assemble for worship, the whole church can together honor the birth of Jesus.

A brief silence.

Hear us, O God our Redeemer.

Your mercy is great.

We praise you for your created earth, the stars in the sky, the animals in stables, the flocks in the fields. Show us your majesty in the brightness of day and the darkness of night. Rouse our care for your magnificent creation.

A brief silence.

Hear us, O God our Creator.

Your mercy is great.

We praise you for each day that knows peace and welcomes justice. Inspire leaders of nations to seek concord where there is war and violence. Guard ambassadors, relief workers, and military personnel the world over. Visit both the Palestinians and the Israelis, and protect the many peoples who live under military rule. Make our own streets avenues of peace.

A brief silence.

Hear us, O God our Sovereign.

Your mercy is great.

We praise you for the benefits of light available in our homes and shining on our trees. Accompany those who enjoy no such light, and protect all who labor in the darkness on behalf of others.

A brief silence.

Hear us, O God our Light.

Your mercy is great.

We praise you for new parents with their newborns and for the joys of families of every shape and size. Visit the homes where there is sickness or sorrow. Abide with people who live isolated from others. Bless the children who this year receive no gifts.

A brief silence.

Hear us, O God our Treasure.

Your mercy is great.

We praise you for every sign of your loving presence, and we pray for all who suffer. Heal the sick. Feed the hungry. Shelter the homeless and the refugee. Visit those in prison. Comfort mourners. We pray especially for

A brief silence.

Hear us, O God our Savior.

Your mercy is great.

We praise you for the development of coronavirus vaccines. We pray for the millions who are afflicted with Covid-19. Uphold physicians, nurses, and all health care workers, and provide medical facilities for everyone.

A brief silence.

Hear us, O God our Healer.

Your mercy is great.

We praise you, the almighty God born on the earth; and so you transformed the cosmos. Come to each of us, and receive our silent prayers.

A longer period of silence.

Hear us, O God our Beloved.

Your mercy is great.

We praise you for all the saints who have proclaimed your glory in word and deed, especially those we remember in our hearts. With them, let us sing your praise, now and forever.

A brief silence.

Hear us, O God.

Your mercy is great.

To you, Mighty God, Prince of peace, wonderful Counselor, we offer our praises for your grace upon grace. Receive our prayers in the name of the one who was born to live and die and rise again for us, Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord.

Amen.

If you have a hymnal, you may now sing or read "Silent Night, Holy Night" (Evangelical Lutheran Worship 281), "Infant Holy, Infant Lowly" (Evangelical Lutheran Worship 276). Selected hymns are provided below for those without a hymnal at home.

[Silent Night, Holy Night!](#)

[Infant Holy, Infant Lowly](#)

Then conclude with these prayers:

Let us pray.

A brief silence is kept before the prayer.

Holy God,

everlasting Father, Prince of Peace, wonderful Counselor,
at the birth of time your Word brought light into the world,
and throughout the ages, you proclaim newness of life.

For your wondrous Word, we thank you, O God.

We thank you, O God.

In the fullness of time, your Word became flesh,
to shine in our world's darkness,

to speak peace to all peoples,

and to welcome us as members of your family.

For your loving Word, we adore you, O God.

We adore you, O God.

Grant us now the gift of your Spirit,
that held, nourished, and protected by your Word,
we may live as your children,
bearing your goodness throughout the world.

For your powerful Word, we praise you, O God.

We praise you, O God.

All glory to you, holy God,
now and forever. Amen.

Amen.

Offering

Please remember to mail in your offerings so that Grace can continue to serve you.

Offering Prayer

Gracious God, you came to us as one unknown, bringing joy and salvation to the earth. Nourish us at your banquet table, that with all who welcome your birth we may proclaim your peace, revealed in Jesus Christ, our Savior. **Amen.**

Gathered into one by the Holy Spirit, let us pray as Jesus taught us:

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. Save us from the time of trial, and deliver us from evil. For the kingdom, the power, and the glory are yours, now and forever. Amen.

Then speak the Blessing:

Almighty God,
who sent the Holy Spirit to Mary,
proclaimed joy through the angels,
sent the shepherds with good news,
and led the magi by a star,
bless us this day + through the Word made flesh.

Amen.

Here is a brief prayer to use at meals during the twelve days of Christmas:

With joy and gladness we feast upon your love, O God.
You have come among us in Jesus, your Son,
And your presence now graces this table.
May Christ dwell in us that we might bear his love to all the world,
For he is Lord forever and ever.

Amen.

Additional Carols for Christmas Eve

[Away in a Manger](#) (Evangelical Lutheran Worship 277)

[O Come, All Ye Faithful](#) (Evangelical Lutheran Worship 283)

[Angels We Have Heard on High](#) (Evangelical Lutheran Worship 289)

[While Shepherds Watched Their Flocks](#) (All Creation Sings 913)

Devotional Music Links: For your individual or group devotion, you may choose to listen to the following choral recordings made available through Augsburg Fortress: "[Lo, How A Rose E'er Blooming](#);" "[He Is Born: Il est né](#);" "[The Newborn King of Ages](#)."

Daily Prayer Resources are available, including simple forms of Morning, Evening, and Night Prayer; Responsive Prayer; and prayers for mealtimes and other occasions.

Due to copyright restrictions, we are only able to provide downloadable hymns that are in the public domain and selected hymns for limited use. Other suggestions provided above may be found in *Evangelical Lutheran Worship*. To purchase copies of *Evangelical Lutheran Worship* and *All Creation Sings* for the home, visit the [Augsburg Fortress website](#) or call 1-800-328-4648. Selected hymns from *All Creation Sings* will be provided for limited use.

Reflection text: Gordon Lathrop. Intercessory Prayer: Gail Ramshaw

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Thank you to those who clean the Church following worship.

In House Church Services have been cancelled until further notice.

Please keep in your prayers this week: Kevin Johnson, Barbara Metzger, Rob Johnson and Steve Lindberg (Streeter Family Friend's & Kin), Noah Klenken (Fred Fixsen's Nephew), Cal Curtis & Patty Thompson (Carole Holten's Son-in-Law & Sister), Bill Warner, David Warner, Emily (Ben & Casey's Daughter), Terry Newgard, Judy Winges, Steve Murdock, Bob Broberg.

The story of the Birth of Jesus: Luke 2 or Matthew 1 & 2