

Jesus Christ is the light of the world,
the light no darkness can overcome.

Stay with us, Lord, for it is evening,
and the day is almost over.

Be our light and scatter the darkness,
and hear our evening prayer and praise.

Special Music

Drive Out the Darkness

First Reading

Isaiah 7:10-14

¹⁰The LORD spoke to Ahaz again. He said, ¹¹“Ask for a sign from the LORD your God. Ask for it either in the depths below or in the heights above.”

¹²But Ahaz responded, “I will not ask. I will not test the LORD.”

¹³So Isaiah said:

Listen now, you house of David. Is it not enough for you to test the patience of men? Will you test the patience of my God as well? ¹⁴Therefore the Lord himself will give a sign for all of you. Look! The virgin will conceive and give birth to a son and name him Immanuel.

Hymn: 330 Peace Came to Earth

- 1 Peace came to earth at last that chosen night
when angels clove the sky with song and light
and God embodied love and sheathed his might—
Who could but gasp: Immanuel!
Who could but sing: Immanuel!
- 2 And who could be the same for having held
the infant in their arms and later felt
the wounded hands and side, all doubts dispelled—
Who could but sigh: Immanuel!
Who could but shout: Immanuel!
- 3 You show the Father none has ever seen,
in flesh and blood you bore our griefs and pain,
in bread and wine you visit us again—
Who could but see: Immanuel!
Who could but thrill: Immanuel!

4 How else could I have known you, O my God!
How else could I have loved you, O my God!
How else could I embrace you, O my God!
Who could but pray: Immanuel!
Who could but praise: Immanuel!

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Second Reading

Psalm 95:1-7a

¹Come, let us sing joyfully to the LORD.
Let us give a loud shout to the Rock who saves us.
²Let us approach his presence with thanksgiving.
With music we will shout to him.
³For the LORD is the great God
and the great King above all gods.
⁴He holds the unexplored places of the earth in his hand,
and the peaks of the mountains belong to him.
⁵The sea belongs to him, for he made it,
and his hands formed the dry land.
⁶Come, let us bow down. Let us revere him.
Let us kneel before the LORD our Maker,
⁷for he is our God,
and we are the people of his pasture
and the flock in his hand.

Hymn: 325 My Soul in Stillness Waits

Ref For you, O Lord, my soul in stillness waits;
truly my hope is in you.

- 1 O Lord of Light, our only hope of glory,
your radiance shines in all who look to you;
come, light the hearts of all in dark and shadow. (Refrain)
- 2 O Spring of Joy, rain down upon our spirits;
our thirsty hearts are yearning for your Word;
come, make us whole, be comfort to our hearts. (Refrain)
- 3 O Root of Life, implant your seed within us,
and in your advent draw us all to you,
our hope reborn in dying and in rising. (Refrain)

- 4 O Key of Knowledge, guide us in our pilgrimage;
we ever seek, yet unfulfilled remain;
open to us the pathway of your peace. (Refrain)

Text: Marty Haugen, b. 1950
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Third Reading

Luke 2:6-7

⁶And so it was that while they were there, the time came for her to give birth. ⁷And she gave birth to her firstborn son, wrapped him in swaddling cloths, and laid him in a manger, because there was no room for them in the inn.

Hymn: 344 What Child Is This

- 1 What child is this who, laid to rest,
on Mary's lap is sleeping,
whom angels greet with anthems sweet
while shepherds watch are keeping?
This, this is Christ the King,
whom shepherds guard and angels sing;
haste, haste to bring him laud,
the babe, the son of Mary!
- 2 Why lies he in such mean estate
where oxen now are feeding?
Good Christian, fear; for sinners here
the silent Word is pleading.
Nails, spear shall pierce him through,
the cross be borne for me, for you;
hail, hail the Word made flesh,
the babe, the son of Mary!
- 3 So bring him incense, gold, and myrrh;
come, peasant, king, to own him.
The King of kings salvation brings;
let loving hearts enthrone him.
Raise, raise the song on high,
the virgin sings her lullaby;
joy, joy, for Christ is born,
the babe, the son of Mary!

Text: William C. Dix, 1837–1898, alt.
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Fourth Reading

Luke 2:8-14

⁸There were in the same country shepherds staying out in the fields, keeping watch over their flock at night. ⁹An angel of the Lord appeared to 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 behold, I bring you good news of great joy, which will be for all people: ¹¹Today in the town of David, a Savior was born for you. He is Christ the Lord. ¹²And this will be a sign for you: You will find a baby wrapped in swaddling cloths and lying in a manger.” ¹³Suddenly, there was with the angel a multitude from the heavenly army, praising God and saying, ¹⁴“Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good will toward mankind.”

Hymn: 350 Hark! The Herald Angels Sing

1 Hark! The herald angels sing,
“Glory to the newborn King;
peace on earth and mercy mild,
God and sinners reconciled!”
Joyful, all ye nations rise,
join the triumph of the skies;
with th’ angelic host proclaim,
“Christ is born in Bethlehem!” (Refrain)

Ref Hark! The herald angels sing,
“Glory to the newborn King!”

2 Christ, by highest heav’n adored,
Christ, the everlasting Lord,
late in time behold him come,
offspring of a virgin’s womb.
Veiled in flesh the Godhead see,
hail th’ incarnate Deity!
Pleased as man with man to dwell,
Jesus, our Immanuel! (Refrain)

3 Hail, the heav’nly Prince of Peace!
Hail, the Sun of Righteousness!
Light and life to all he brings,
ris’n with healing in his wings.
Mild he lays his glory by,
born that man no more may die,
born to raise the sons of earth,
born to give them second birth. (Refrain)

Fifth Reading

Luke 2:15-20

¹⁵When the angels went away from them into heaven, the shepherds said to one another, “Now let’s go to Bethlehem and see this thing that has happened, which the Lord has made known to us.” ¹⁶So they hurried off and found Mary and Joseph, and the baby, who was lying in the manger. ¹⁷When they had seen him, they told others the message they had been told about this child. ¹⁸And all who heard it were amazed by what the shepherds said to them. ¹⁹But Mary treasured up all these things, pondering them in her heart. ²⁰And the shepherds returned, glorifying and praising God for all the things that they had heard and seen, which were just as they had been told.

Hymn: 354 O Come, All Ye Faithful

1 O come, all ye faithful, joyful and triumphant!
O come ye, O come ye to Bethlehem!
Come and behold him, born the King of angels: (Refrain)

Ref O come, let us adore him,
O come, let us adore him,
O come, let us adore him,
Christ the Lord!

2 God from true God, and Light from Light eternal,
born of a virgin, to earth he comes!
Only-begotten Son of God the Father: (Refrain)

3 Sing, choirs of angels, sing in exultation,
sing, all ye citizens of heav’n above!
Glory to God, all glory in the highest: (Refrain)

4 Yea, Lord, we greet thee, born this happy morning;
Jesus, to thee be all glory giv’n!
Word of the Father, now in flesh appearing: (Refrain)

Text: tr. Frederick Oakeley, 1802–1880, alt.; John F. Wade, c. 1711–1786
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Lord, Have Mercy

For the peace of the whole world, for the well-being of the Church of God, and for the unity of all, let us pray to the Lord.

Lord, have mercy.

For favorable weather, for an abundance of the fruits of the earth, and for peaceful times, let us pray to the Lord.

Lord, have mercy.

For our deliverance from all affliction, wrath, danger, and need, let us pray to the Lord.

Lord, have mercy.

Prayer for Peace

Lord God, all holy desires, all good counsels, and all just works come from you. Give to us, your servants, that peace which the world cannot give, that our hearts may be set to obey your commandments. Defend us also from the fear of our enemies, that we may live in peace and quietness, through the merits of Jesus Christ our Savior, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.

Amen.

Lord's 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 forever. Amen.

Let us praise the Lord.

Thanks be to God.

Blessing

The grace of our Lord + Jesus Christ and the love of God and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with you all.

Amen.

Sixth Reading

Psalms 51:10-12

¹⁰Create in me a pure heart, O God.

Renew an unwavering spirit within me.

¹¹Do not cast me from your presence.

Do not take your Holy Spirit from me.

¹²Restore to me the joy of your salvation.

Sustain me with a willing spirit.

Hymn: 331 vv. 12-15 From Heaven Above to Earth I Come

12 And so it pleases you to see
this simple truth revealed to me:
that worldly honor, wealth, and might
are weak and worthless in your sight.

13 Ah, dearest Jesus, holy Child,
prepare a bed, soft, undefiled
within my heart, made clean and new,
a quiet chamber kept for you.

14 My heart for very joy must leap;
my lips no more can silence keep.
I too must sing with joyful tongue
that sweetest ancient cradle song:

15 Glory to God in highest heav'n,
who unto us his Son has giv'n,
while angels sing with pious mirth
a glad new year to all the earth!

Text: tr. Catherine Winkworth, 1827–1878, alt.; Martin Luther, 1483–1546
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Acknowledgments

Evening (Vespers) from Christian Worship

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