

Today's Theme for Worship: Jesus is the Christ, the LORD's Anointed, the Shepherd from Bethlehem, the merciful High Priest.

Opening Hymn: 66 O Little Town Bethlehem

1 O little town of Bethlehem, How still we see thee lie!
Above thy deep And dreamless sleep The silent stars go by.
Yet in thy dark streets shineth The everlasting light.
The hopes and fears Of all the years Are met in thee tonight.

2 For Christ is born of Mary, And, gathered all above,
While mortals sleep, The angels keep Their watch of wond'ring love.
O morning stars, together Proclaim the holy birth,
And praises sing To God the King And peace to all the earth.

3 How silently, how silently The wondrous gift is giv'n!
So God imparts To human hearts The blessings of his heav'n.
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;
Oh, come to us, Abide with us, Our Lord Immanuel!

Text: Phillips Brooks, 1835-93, abr., alt.

P: In the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit.

C: **Amen.**

Confession of Sins

P: Beloved in the Lord, let us draw near with a true heart and confess our sins to God our Father, asking him in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ to grant us forgiveness.

C: **Holy and merciful Father, I confess that I am by nature sinful and that I have disobeyed you in my thoughts, words, and actions. I have done what is evil and failed to do what is good. For this I deserve your punishment both now and in eternity. But I am truly sorry for my sins, and trusting in my Savior Jesus Christ, I pray: Lord have mercy on me, a sinner.**

Lord Have Mercy

Kyrie

C: (*sung*) Lord, have mercy on us, Christ, have mercy on us, Lord, have mercy on us.

P: God our heavenly Father, has been merciful to us and has given his only Son to be the atoning sacrifice for our sins. Therefore as a called servant of Christ and by his authority, I forgive you all your sins in the name of the Father, and of the Son ✝ and of the Holy Spirit.

C: **Amen.**

Prayer and Praise

P: In the peace of forgiveness, let us praise the Lord.

Glory Be to God

Glory be to God on high, and on earth peace, good will toward men,
We praise you, we bless you, we worship you,
we glorify you, we give thanks to you, for you great glory,

O Lord God, heavenly king, God the Father almighty,
O Lord, the only begotten Son, Jesus Christ;
O Lord God, Lamb of God, Son of the Father,

You take away the sin of the world; have mercy on us.
You take away the sin of the world; receive our prayer,
You sit at the right hand of God the Father; have mercy on us.

For you only are holy; you only are the Lord.
You only, O Christ, with the Holy Spirit,
are most high in the glory of God the Father, Amen

Prayer of the Day

P: The Lord be with you.

C: **And also with you.**

P: Let us Pray.

P: Gracious Lord, our refuge and strength, pour out your Holy Spirit on your faithful people. Keep them steadfast in your Word, protect and comfort them in all temptations, defend them against all their enemies, and bestow on the Church your saving peace; through your Son, Jesus Christ our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. C:(*sung*) **Amen.**

FIRST LESSON: Micah 5:2-5a

From Bethlehem God would send a ruler for his people, a Shepherd to gather his flock.

²But you, Bethlehem Ephrathah,
though you are small among the clans of Judah,
from you, will go out the one who will be the ruler for me in Israel.

His goings forth are from the beginning, from the days of eternity.

³Therefore the LORD will give them up,

until the time when the woman who is in labor bears a child.

Then the remaining survivors from his brothers will return to the people of Israel.

⁴He will stand and shepherd with the strength of the LORD,

in the majesty of the name of the LORD his God.

They will dwell securely, for at that time he will be great to the ends of the earth.

⁵This one will be their peace.

Psalm of the Day: Psalm 148

Refrain

We have seen his glory; he shines forth with truth and grace.

Praise the Lord from the heavens,
praise him in the heights above.

Praise him, all his angels,
praise him, all his heavenly hosts.

Praise him, sun and moon,
praise him, all you shining stars.

Refrain

We have seen his glory; he shines forth with truth and grace.

Praise the Lord from the earth,
lightning and hail, stormy winds that do his bidding,
you mountains and all hills, fruit trees and all cedars,
wild animals and all cattle, small creatures and flying birds,

kings of the earth and all rulers on earth,
young men and maidens, old men and children.

Refrain

We have seen his glory; he shines forth with truth and grace.

Let them praise the name of the Lord,
for his splendor is above the earth and the heavens.

**Glory be to the Father and to the Son
and to the Holy Spirit,**

as it was in the beginning,

is now, and will be forever. Amen.

Refrain

We have seen his glory; he shines forth with truth and grace.

P: The Gospel for today is recorded in the gospel according to St. John, chapter 7.

C: **✠ Glory be to you, O Lord!**

GOSPEL: John 7:40-43

When the people hear Jesus speak, they wonder, "Is he the Christ?"

⁴⁰ After hearing his words, some of the people said, "This is truly the Prophet." ⁴¹ Others said, "This is the Christ." But some said, "Surely the Christ does not come from Galilee, does he?"

⁴² Doesn't the Scripture say that the Christ comes from David's descendants and from the little town of Bethlehem where David lived?" ⁴³ So the people were divided because of him.

P: This is the gospel of our Lord.

C: **✠ Praise be to you, O Christ!**

Nicene Creed

We believe in one God, the Father, the Almighty, maker of heaven and earth, of all that is, seen and unseen.

We believe in one Lord, Jesus Christ, the only Son of God, eternally begotten of the Father, God from God, Light from Light, true God from true God, begotten, not made, of one being with the Father.

Through him all things were made. For us and for our salvation, he came down from heaven, was incarnate of the Holy Spirit and the virgin Mary, and became fully human. For our sake he was crucified under Pontius Pilate. He suffered death and was buried. On the third day he rose again in accordance with the Scriptures.

He ascended into heaven and is seated at the right hand of the Father. He will come again in glory to judge the living and the dead, and his kingdom will have no end.

We believe in the Holy Spirit, the Lord, the giver of life, who proceeds from the Father and the Son, who in unity with the Father and the Son is worshiped and glorified, who has spoken through the prophets. We believe in one holy Christian and apostolic Church. We acknowledge one baptism for the forgiveness of sins. We look for the resurrection of the dead and the life of the world to come. Amen.

Hymn of the Day: 34 Now Sing We, Now Rejoice

1 Now sing we, now rejoice, Now raise to heav'n our voice;
He from whom joy streameth Poor in a manger lies;
Not so brightly beameth The sun in yonder skies.
Thou my Savior art! Thou my Savior art!

2 Come from on high to me; I cannot rise to thee.
Cheer my wearied spirit, O pure and holy Child;
Through thy grace and merit, Blest Jesus, Lord most mild,
Draw me unto thee! Draw me unto thee!

3 Now through his Son doth shine The Father's grace divine.
Death o'er us had reigned Through sin and vanity;
He for us obtained Eternal joy on high.
May we praise him there! May we praise him there!

4 Oh, where shall joy be found? Where but on heav'nly ground?
Where the angels singing With all his saints unite,
Sweetest praises bringing In heav'nly joy and light.
Oh, that we were there! Oh, that we were there!

Text: Latin hymn, 14th century; tr. Arthur T. Russell, 1806-74, alt.

Sermon Hebrews 2:10-18

¹⁰ Certainly it was fitting for God (the one for whom and through whom everything exists), in leading many sons to glory, to bring the author of their salvation to his goal through sufferings.

¹¹ For he who sanctifies and those who are being sanctified all have one Father. For that reason, he is not ashamed to call them brothers. ¹² He says:

I will declare your name to my brothers.
Within the congregation I will sing your praise.

¹³ And again:

I will trust in him.

And again:

Here I am and the children God has given me.

¹⁴ Therefore, since the children share flesh and blood, he also shared the same flesh and blood, so that through death he could destroy the one who had the power of death (that is, the Devil)

¹⁵ and free those who were held in slavery all their lives by the fear of death. ¹⁶ For surely he was not concerned with helping angels but with helping Abraham's offspring. ¹⁷ For this reason, he had to become like his brothers in every way, in order that he would be a merciful and faithful high priest in the things pertaining to God, so that he could pay for the sins of the people. ¹⁸ Indeed, because he suffered when he was tempted, he is able to help those who are being tempted.

Cre-ate in me a clean heart, O God,
and re-new a right spir-it with-in me.

Cast me not a-way from your pres-ence,
and take not your Ho-ly Spir-it from me.

Re-store un-to me the joy of your sal-va-tion,
and up-hold me with your free Spir-it. A-men.

Offering Prayer

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Prayer of the Church

Lord's Prayer

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

The Sacrament

P: The Lord be with you.

C: **✠ And also with you.**

P: **Lift up your hearts.**

C: **✠ We lift them up to the Lord.**

P: **Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.**

C: **✠ It is good and right so to do.**

P: It is truly good and right that we should at all times and in all places give you thanks, O Lord, holy Father, almighty and everlasting God, through Jesus Christ our Lord, for in the wonder and mystery of his birth you have opened our eyes to the glory of your grace and renewed in

our hearts the fervor of your love. Therefore, with all the saints on earth and hosts of heaven, we praise your holy name and join their glorious song:

♪ **Holy, Holy, Holy**

Ho-ly, ho-ly, ho-ly Lord God of heav-en-ly hosts:
heav'n and earth are full of your glo-ry.
Ho-san-na, ho-san-na, ho-san-na in the high-est.
Bless-ed is he, bless-ed is he,
bless-ed is he who comes in the name of the Lord.
Ho-san-na, ho-san-na, ho-san-na in the high-est.

Words of Institution

P: Our Lord Jesus Christ, on the night he was betrayed, took bread; and when he had given thanks, he broke it and gave it to his disciples, saying “Take and eat; this is my body, which is given for you. Do this in remembrance of me.”

Then he took the cup, gave thanks, and gave it to them, saying, “Drink from it all of you; this is my blood of the new covenant, which is poured out for you for the forgiveness of sins. Do this, whenever you drink it, in remembrance of me.”

P: The peace of the Lord be with you always.

C: ♪ **A-men.**

♪ **O Christ, Lamb Of God**

O Christ, Lamb of God,
you take a-way the sin of the world;
have mer-cy on us.

O Christ, Lamb of God,
you take a-way the sin of the world;
have mer-cy on us.

O Christ, Lamb of God,
you take a-way the sin of the world;
grant us your peace. A-men.

Song of Simeon

Lord, now you let your servant de-part in peace
ac-cord-ing to your word.

For my eyes have seen your salvation,
which you have pre-pared be-fore the face of all people,

a light to light-en the Gen-tiles
and the glo-ry of your peo-ple Is-ra-el.

P: O Give thanks to the Lord, for he is good.

C: **And his mercy endures forever.**

Prayer and Blessing

P: We give thanks, almighty God, that you have refreshed us with this holy supper. We pray that through it you will strengthen our faith in you and increase our love for one another. We ask this in the name of Jesus Christ, our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.

OR

P: O God the Father, source of all goodness, in your loving-kindness you sent your Son to share our humanity. We thank you that through him you have given us pardon and peace in this Sacrament. We also pray that you will not forsake us but will rule our hearts and minds by your Holy Spirit so that we willingly serve you day after day, through Jesus Christ our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.

C: **A-men.**

P: The Lord bless you and keep you.

The Lord make his face shine on you and be gracious to you.

The Lord look on you with favor and + give you peace.

C: **A-men. A-men. A-men.**

Closing Hymn 470 Praise to You Adoration

1 Praise to you and adoration,
Blessed Jesus, Son of God,
Who, to serve your own creation,
Came to share our flesh and blood.
Guide me that I never may
From your fold or pastures stray,
But with zeal and joy exceeding
Follow where your steps are leading.

2 Hold me ever in your keeping;
Comfort me in pain and strife.
In my laughter and my weeping
Be with me throughout my life.
Give me greater love for you,
And my faith and hope renew
In your birth, your life, and passion,
In your death and resurrection.

Text: Thomas H. Kingo, 1634-1703; tr. composite.