



AS WE GATHER

At Christmas, our lives and attention are often occupied not only with the smaller details of the season—the decorations, the gifts, the special menus, the schedule of events—but also with those details of greater importance: family, parents and grandparents, children and grandchildren, as well as those of more distant relationships. Greater than that, as Christians we center our celebration here in God’s presence to hear God’s Word, to attend to what is most important, which alone can give all the other details of life its most solid foundation. That Word puts everything else in its proper perspective, including our place and participation in the kingdom of God. The “big picture” includes God’s amazing creation from the beginning, as well as our part in mankind’s fall into sin and struggle with Satan and death. Then enters God’s great remedy: our salvation from sin and death through the redemption that is in God Himself, in the person of the Son of God, Jesus Christ, our Lord. His incarnation and birth from the virgin Mary was a great miracle—God taking on our human flesh and blood. Greater, however, was His own sacrifice in our flesh, by which He has cast down Satan and his lies and raised up a new creation to new, eternal life. On this day, amid any and all distractions and details, the familiar hymn has it right: “How firm a foundation, O saints of the Lord, is laid for your faith in His excellent Word!”

CALL TO WORSHIP Wexford Carol

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WELCOME & ANNOUNCEMENTS

OPENING HYMN LSB 386 Now Sing We, Now Rejoice

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| <p>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!</p> <p>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!</p> | <p>3 Now through His Son doth shine
The Father’s grace divine.
Death was reigning o’er us
Through sin and vanity
Till He opened for us
A bright eternity. May we praise Him
there! May we praise Him there!</p> <p>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!</p> |
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INVOCATION

Pastor: In the name of the Father and of the ☩ Son and of the Holy Spirit.

People: **Amen.**

OPENING SENTENCES *LSB 383:2*

Pastor: The Word becomes incarnate and yet remains on high,

People: **and cherubim sing anthems to shepherds from the sky.**

Pastor: Proclaim the Savior's birth:

People: **"To God on high be glory and peace to all the earth!"**

CONFESSION AND ABSOLUTION

Pastor: The infant Christ—the radiance of the glory of God—came to make purification for the sins of the world, to swallow up death forever, and to be the light of life for those who walked in darkness. In praise of God's mighty deliverance, we humble ourselves before Him in repentant prayer.

People: **Lord God, heavenly Father, we bow before You and confess that we indeed have walked in darkness; in the blindness of sin, we have neglected You, lost by our own fault. But we have seen the great light in the gift of Your only Son. Enlighten our hearts, our minds, and our lives by the forgiveness of our sins and the great promises of Your heavenly grace and mercy; for the sake of Jesus Christ, our Lord. Amen.**

Pastor: God has spoken His promises by the prophets, and now in these last days has spoken to us by His Son. By the command of my Lord Jesus Christ, upon this your confession, I, by virtue of my office, announce the grace of God to all of you and speak His own absolution: I forgive you all your sins in the name of the Father and of the ☩ Son and of the Holy Spirit.

People: **Amen.**

HYMN OF RESPONSE *LSB 379 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 Highest, most holy,
Light of Light eternal,
Born of a virgin, a mortal He comes;
Son of the Father
Now in flesh appearing! *Refrain*

3 Sing, choirs of angels,
Sing in exultation,
Sing, all ye citizens of heaven above!
Glory to God
In the highest: *Refrain*

4 Yea, Lord, we greet Thee,
Born this happy morning;
Jesus, to Thee be glory giv'n!
Word of the Father
Now in flesh appearing! *Refrain*

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SALUTATION

Pastor: The Lord be with you.

People: **And also with you.**

PRAYER OF THE DAY

Pastor: Let us pray. Almighty God, grant that the birth of Your only-begotten Son in the flesh may set us free from the bondage of sin; through Jesus Christ, Your Son, our Lord, who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.

People: **Amen.**

OLD TESTAMENT READING *Isaiah 52:7–10 (The Lord’s coming salvation)*

⁷ How beautiful upon the mountains are the feet of him who brings good news, who publishes peace, who brings good news of happiness, who publishes salvation, who says to Zion, “Your God reigns.” ⁸ The voice of your watchmen—they lift up their voice; together they sing for joy; for eye to eye they see the return of the Lord to Zion. ⁹ Break forth together into singing, you waste places of Jerusalem, for the Lord has comforted his people; he has redeemed Jerusalem. ¹⁰ The Lord has bared his holy arm before the eyes of all the nations, and all the ends of the earth shall see the salvation of our God.

Lector: This is the Word of the Lord.

People: **Thanks be to God!**

EPISTLE *Hebrews 1:1–12 (The supremacy of God’s Son)*

¹ Long ago, at many times and in many ways, God spoke to our fathers by the prophets, ² but in these last days he has spoken to us by his Son, whom he appointed the heir of all things, through whom also he created the world. ³ He is the radiance of the glory of God and the exact imprint of his nature, and he upholds the universe by the word of his power. After making purification for sins, he sat down at the right hand of the Majesty on high, ⁴ having become as much superior to angels as the name he has inherited is more excellent than theirs. ⁵ For to which of the angels did God ever say, “You are my Son, today I have begotten you”? Or again, “I will be to him a father, and he shall be to me a son”? ⁶ And again, when he brings the firstborn into the world, he says, “Let all God’s angels worship him.” ⁷ Of the angels he says, “He makes his angels winds, and his ministers a flame of fire.” ⁸ But of the Son he says, “Your throne, O God, is forever and ever, the scepter of uprightness is the scepter of your kingdom. ⁹ You have loved righteousness and hated wickedness; therefore God, your God, has anointed you with the oil of gladness beyond your companions.” ¹⁰ And, “You, Lord, laid the foundation of the earth in the beginning, and the heavens are the work of your hands; ¹¹ they will perish, but you remain; they will all wear out like a garment, ¹² like a robe you will roll them up, like a garment they will be changed. But you are the same, and your years will have no end.”

Lector: This is the Word of the Lord.

People: **Thanks be to God.**

HOLY GOSPEL *John 1:1–18* (*The Word became flesh.*)

Pastor: The Holy Gospel according to Saint John, the first chapter

People: Glory to You, O Lord.

¹ In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. ² He was in the beginning with God. ³ All things were made through him, and without him was not any thing made that was made. ⁴ In him was life,^[a] and the life was the light of men. ⁵ The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness has not overcome it. ⁶ There was a man sent from God, whose name was John. ⁷ He came as a witness, to bear witness about the light, that all might believe through him. ⁸ He was not the light, but came to bear witness about the light. ⁹ The true light, which gives light to everyone, was coming into the world. ¹⁰ He was in the world, and the world was made through him, yet the world did not know him. ¹¹ He came to his own,^[b] and his own people^[c] did not receive him. ¹² But to all who did receive him, who believed in his name, he gave the right to become children of God, ¹³ who were born, not of blood nor of the will of the flesh nor of the will of man, but of God. ¹⁴ And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, and we have seen his glory, glory as of the only Son^[d] from the Father, full of grace and truth. ¹⁵ (John bore witness about him, and cried out, “This was he of whom I said, ‘He who comes after me ranks before me, because he was before me.’”) ¹⁶ For from his fullness we have all received, grace upon grace.^[e] ¹⁷ For the law was given through Moses; grace and truth came through Jesus Christ. ¹⁸ No one has ever seen God; the only God,^[f] who is at the Father's side,^[g] he has made him known.

Pastor: This is the Gospel of the Lord.

People: Praise to You, O Christ.

CREED *Nicene Creed*

☩ I believe in one God, the Father Almighty, maker of heaven and earth and of all things visible and invisible. And in one Lord Jesus Christ, the only-begotten Son of God, begotten of His Father before all worlds, God of God, Light of Light, very God of very God, begotten, not made, being of one substance with the Father, by whom all things were made; who for us men and for our salvation came down from heaven and was incarnate by the Holy Spirit of the virgin Mary and was made man; and was crucified also for us under Pontius Pilate. He suffered and was buried. And the third day He rose again according to the Scriptures and ascended into heaven and sits at the right hand of the Father. He will come again with glory to judge both the living and the dead, whose kingdom will have no end. And I believe in the Holy Spirit, the Lord and giver of life, who proceeds from the Father and the Son, who with the Father and the Son together is worshiped and glorified, who spoke by the prophets. And I believe in one holy Christian and apostolic Church, I acknowledge one Baptism for the remission of sins, and I look for the resurrection of the dead and the life ☩ of the world to come. Amen.

HYMN OF THE DAY LSB 376 Once in Royal David's City

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| <p>1 Once in royal David's city
 Stood a lowly cattle shed,
Where a mother laid her baby
 In a manger for His bed:
Mary was that mother mild,
Jesus Christ her little child.</p> <p>2 He came down to earth from heaven,
 Who is God and Lord of all,
And His shelter was a stable,
 And His cradle was a stall;
With the poor and mean and lowly
Lived on earth our Savior holy.</p> <p>3 For He is our childhood's pattern,
 Day by day like us He grew;
He was little, weak, and helpless,
 Tears and smiles like us He knew;
And He feels for all our sadness,
And He shares in all our gladness.</p> | <p>4 And our eyes at last shall see Him,
 Through His own redeeming love;
For that child so dear and gentle
 Is our Lord in heav'n above;
And He leads His children on
To the place where He is gone.</p> <p>5 Not in that poor, lowly stable
 With the oxen standing by
Shall we see Him, but in heaven,
 Set at God's right hand on high.
Then like stars His children, crowned,
All in white, His praise will sound!</p> <p><i>Text: Public domain</i></p> |
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SERMON Sing With Joy *Isaiah 52:7-10*

PRAYER OF THE CHURCH

OFFERING

PREFACE *2 Timothy 4:22*

Pastor: The Lord be with you.

People: **And also with you.**

Pastor: Lift up your hearts.

People: **We lift them to the Lord.**

Pastor: Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.

People: **It is right to give Him thanks and praise.**

PROPER PREFACE

Pastor: It is truly good, right, and salutary that we should at all times and in all places give thanks to You, holy Lord, almighty Father, everlasting God, through Jesus Christ, our Lord; for in the mystery of the Word made flesh You have given us a new revelation of Your glory that, seeing You in the person of Your Son, we may know and love those things which are not seen. Therefore with angels and archangels and with all the company of heaven we laud and magnify Your glorious name, evermore praising You and saying:

PRAYER OF THANKSGIVING

Pastor: Blessed are You, O Lord our God, King of all creation, for You have had mercy on us and given Your only-begotten Son that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have eternal life. In the beginning, You created all things by Your Word, and in the fullness of time, Your Word became flesh and dwelt among us, full of grace and truth. Let Your Word made flesh dwell richly among us that, faithfully eating His body and drinking His blood, we may receive the fullness of Your grace and truth in Christ Jesus, our Lord. Hear us as we pray in His name and as He has taught us:

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 WORDS OF OUR LORD *Matthew 26:26–28; Mark 14:22–24; Luke 22:19–20; 1 Corinthians 11:23–25*

Pastor: Our Lord Jesus Christ, on the night when He was betrayed, took bread, and when He had given thanks, He broke it and gave it to the disciples and said: “Take, eat; this is My ✠ body, which is given for you. This do in remembrance of Me.”

In the same way also He took the cup after supper, and when He had given thanks, He gave it to them, saying: “Drink of it, all of you; this cup is the new testament in My ✠ blood, which is shed for you for the forgiveness of sins. This do, as often as you drink it, in remembrance of Me.”

PAX DOMINI

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

People: Amen.

DISTRIBUTION HYMNS

LSB 368 Angels We Have Heard on High

1 Angels we have heard on high,
Sweetly singing o'er the plains,
And the mountains in reply,
Echoing their joyous strains. *Refrain*

ref **Gloria in excelsis Deo.**
Gloria in excelsis Deo.

2 Shepherds, why this jubilee?
Why your joyous strains prolong?
What the gladsome tidings be
Which inspire your heav'nly song? *Refrain*

3 Come to Bethlehem and see
Him whose birth the angels sing;
Come, adore on bended knee
Christ the Lord, the newborn King.

Refrain Text: Public domain

LSB 366 It Came upon the Midnight Clear

1 It came upon the midnight clear,
That glorious song of old,
From angels bending near the earth
To touch their harps of gold:
“Peace on the earth, goodwill to all,
From heav’n’s all-gracious king.”
The world in solemn stillness lay
To hear the angels sing.

2 Still through the cloven skies they come
With peaceful wings unfurled,
And still their heav’nly music floats
O’er all the weary world.
Above its sad and lowly plains
They bend on hov’ring wing,
And ever o’er its babel sounds
The blessed angels sing.

3 All you, beneath your heavy load,
By care and guilt bent low,
Who toil along a dreary way
With painful steps and slow:
Look up, for golden is the hour,
Come swiftly on the wing,
The Prince was born to bring you peace;
Of Him the angels sing.

4 For lo, the days have come to pass
By prophets seen of old,
When down into the circling years
Came Christ as was foretold.
His word of peace shall to the earth
God’s ancient promise bring,
And all who take this gift will hear
The song the angels sing. *Text: Public domain*

POST-COMMUNION THANKSGIVING

Pastor: Let us pray.

O God the Father, the fountain and source of all goodness, who in loving-kindness sent Your only-begotten Son into the flesh, we thank You that for His sake You have given us pardon and peace in this Sacrament, and we ask You not to forsake Your children but always to rule our hearts and minds by Your Holy Spirit that we may be enabled constantly to serve You; through Jesus Christ, Your Son, our Lord, who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.

People: Amen.

BENEDICAMUS

Pastor: Let us bless the Lord.

People: Thanks be to God.

BENEDICTION *Numbers 6:24–26*

Pastor: The Lord bless you and keep you.

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

The Lord look upon you with favor and ✠ give you peace.

People: Amen.

CLOSING HYMN 367 Angels from the Realms of Glory

1 Angels from the realms of glory,
Wing your flight o'er all the earth;
Ye who sang creation's story,
Now proclaim Messiah's birth. *Refrain*

ref **Come and worship, come and worship;
Worship Christ, the newborn King.**

2 Shepherds in the field abiding,
Watching o'er your flocks by night,
God with us is now residing,
Yonder shines the Infant Light. *Refrain*

3 Sages, leave your contemplations,
Brighter visions beam afar;
Seek the great Desire of nations,
Ye have seen His natal star. *Refrain*

4 Saints before the altar bending,
Watching long in hope and fear,
Suddenly the Lord, descending,
In His temple shall appear. *Refrain*

^ 5 All creation, join in praising
God the Father, Spirit, Son,
Evermore your voices raising
To the eternal Three in One. *Refrain*

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