



Jesus is the reason for the season

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Advent service

P: For to us a child is born,
to us a son is given,
and the government will be on his shoulders.
And he will be called
Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God,
Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace.
Of the greatness of his government and peace
there will be no end.
He will reign on David's throne
and over his kingdom,
establishing and upholding it
with justice and righteousness
from that time on and forever.
The zeal of the Lord Almighty
will accomplish this. Isaiah 9;6-7

Opening Hymn

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!
O come, let us adore Him,
O come, let us adore Him,
O come, let us adore Him,
Christ, the Lord.

Sing, choirs of angels;
Sing in exultation
Sing, all ye citizens
Of heaven above!
Glory to God,
Glory in the highest
O come, let us adore Him,
O come, let us adore Him,
O come, let us adore Him,
Christ, the Lord.

Yea, Lord, we greet Thee,

Born this happy morning
Jesus, to Thee be
All glory given!
Word of the Father,
Now in flesh appearing

O come, let us adore Him,
O come, let us adore Him,
O come, let us adore Him,
Christ, the Lord.

Songwriter: Paul Bateman

Kauma

P. †Glory be to the Father our Creator, to the Son our Redeemer and to the Holy Spirit who sanctifies us.

C. As it was in the beginning, is now and ever shall be, world without end. Amen.

P. Holy, holy, holy, Lord God of power and might, heaven and earth are full of your glory, Hosanna in the highest.

C. Blessed is He that has come and is to come again in the name of the Lord. Hosanna in the highest.

P. Holy art thou, O God.

C. Holy art thou, Almighty Lord.

P. Holy art thou, Immortal Lord.

C. O Lord, the Messiah who was crucified for us † have mercy on us. **(To be repeated thrice)**

P. O Lord, have mercy on us.

C. O Lord, have mercy on us and bless us.

P. O Lord, accept our prayers and worship and have mercy on us.

C. Glory be to you, O God.

P. Glory be to you, O Creator.

C. Glory be to you, O King the Messiah; who has mercy on us sinners. Bless us, O Lord.

(Let us sing together the prayer that Jesus taught us)

***All: Our Father who art in heaven, Hallowed be thy name,
Thy kingdom come, Thy will be done, On earth as it is done in heaven.***

Give us this day our daily bread.

And forgive us our debts as we forgive our debtors.

And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil.

For thine is the kingdom, the power, and the glory, Forever. Amen.

(Cong. to be seated)

Lesson 1 Isaiah 55:6-13

Lesson 2 Hebrews 4:1-13

Meditation

L: What Christmas Really Means

The children were putting on the annual Christmas play at church. To show the radiance of the newborn Savior, a light bulb was hidden in the manger. At the appropriate moment, all the stage lights were to be turned off except for that one. But the boy controlling the light panel got confused and shut off all the lights. There was a dark moment of silence, broken when one of the shepherds said in a loud whisper, "Hey, you switched off Jesus!"

Even though we all know that Christmas is about the birth of the Savior, it's easy to get caught up in the cultural approach to the holiday and switch off Jesus. While there's nothing wrong with dreaming of a fun filled Christmas or having a Christmas tree, or giving gifts to one another, the real meaning of Christmas deals with a much more urgent matter, namely, salvation.

Our greatest need at Christmas time is not for more things. Neither is it for personal fulfillment, though many think that's what they need and madly try to find it. The greatest need of every person is for salvation, by fully trusting in God. God's salvation reconciles us with Him and gives us true hope, both for time and eternity.

This Christmas make sure that Jesus is at the centre of your celebrations.

<https://bible.org/seriespage/christmas-2007-what-christmas-really-means-luke-167-79>

A Gentle Night in Bethlehem

L: Tonight we walk beneath a gentle sky
where stars are warm and whisper, "Peace, be still."
The silence beckons softly, as the moon
shines clear and bright upon a distant hill.

My eyes look up, and in the glow I see
reflections of another gentle night,
when over the quiet hills of Bethlehem,
one star proclaimed the everlasting light.

The Everlasting Light, Emmanuel...
A Child was born, by prophecy foretold.
A humble barn was shelter to a King
who lived and died to make our hearts as gold.

**O holy night! The stars are brightly shining,
It is the night of our dear Saviour's birth.
Long lay the world in sin and error pining.
Till He appeared and the Soul felt its worth.
A thrill of hope the weary world rejoices,
For yonder breaks a new and glorious morn.
Fall on your knees! Oh, hear the angel voices!
O night divine, O night when Christ was born;
O night divine, O night, O night divine!**

**Truly He taught us to love one another,
His law is love and His gospel is peace.
Chains shall he break, for the slave is our brother.
And in his name all oppression shall cease.
Sweet hymns of joy in grateful chorus raise we,
Let all within us praise His holy name.**

**Christ is the Lord! O Praise his name for ever,
His power and glory ever more proclaim!
His power and glory ever more proclaim!**
(Written by Placide Cappeau de Roquemaure in 1847.
Music - Adolphe Charles Adams)

A mother who had never known a man...
A father who received her, and believed.
Together, they would walk a lonely road,
in service to the Babe that was conceived.

Though reverence was their due, it went unpaid.
Few people understood what was in store.
Then Caesar, bent to fulfil the prophesy,
levied a grievous tax upon the poor.

So Joseph went with Mary to be taxed,
the glory of their calling still unknown.
And willingly, though she was great with child,
she bore the weight for all of us, alone.

She carried every hope and every dream
across a barren land and then pushed on
through pain and sorrow, with Joseph at her side,
to Bethlehem in Judea, until her strength was gone.

**C: 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!**

The time was nigh, the Baby would be born.
Where would the weary travelers find their rest?
Inside the city, none would take them in,
and so a lowly stable was their nest.

**Why lies He in such mean estate,
Where ox and ass 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!**

A child was born of Mary, as foretold,
and in her loving arms He gently lay.
The Hope of all the world had come at last...
a baby, cradled in the new-mown hay.

**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 a lullaby.
Joy, Joy, for Christ is born,
The Babe, the Son of Mary!**
(William Chatterton, 1865)

The Son of Mary and the Son of God—
a newborn King descended from on high.
For lo, an angel voice proclaimed the birth
to shepherds watching o'er their flocks nearby.

And they were sore afraid, but they did hear
glad tidings, for the promise had been kept.
Their eyes beheld a star, a wondrous star...
above that sacred place where Jesus slept.

***C: Away in a manger, no crib for his bed,
the little Lord Jesus laid down his sweet head.
The stars in the bright sky looked down where he lay,
the little Lord Jesus asleep on the hay.***

***The cattle are lowing, the baby awakes,
but little Lord Jesus no crying he makes.
I love thee, Lord Jesus! Look down from the sky,
and stay by my side until morning is nigh.***

***Be near me, Lord Jesus; I ask thee to stay
close by me for ever, and love me I pray.
Bless all the dear children in thy tender care,
and fit us for heaven, to live with thee there.***
(attributed to John Thomas McFarland, 1906)

A host of angels filled the evening sky
rejoicing, shouting praises through the air.
As time stood still, the earth and heavens were joined...
for you and I, and all of us, were there.

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

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

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

The Wise Men brought Him gifts of purest gold;
rich frankincense and myrrh were in their hands.
They sought the newborn King to honor Him,
making their way in haste from distant lands.

***C: We three kings of Orient are
Bearing gifts we traverse afar
Field and fountain, moor and mountain
Following yonder star***

***O Star of wonder, star of night
Star with royal beauty bright
Westward leading, still proceeding
Guide us to thy Perfect Light***

***Glorious now behold Him rise
King and God and Sacrifice
Alleluia, Alleluia
Sounds through the earth and skies***
(John Henry Hopkins, Jr. in 185)

Deliverance was the promise He fulfilled
when He descended from His throne above,
but He did not do battle with a sword.
Our Lord came bearing gifts of peace and love.

And peace and love were in the air that night—
that wondrous night when earth and heaven met.
Remember Him on this and every day...
and tell His story, lest we all forget;
and tell his story, lest we all forget.

***C: Joy to the world, the Lord is come!
Let earth receive her King;
Let every heart prepare Him room,
And Heaven and nature sing,
And Heaven and nature sing,
And Heaven, and Heaven, and nature sing.***

***Joy to the world, the Savior reigns!
Let men their songs employ;
While fields and floods, rocks, hills and plains
Repeat the sounding joy, Repeat the sounding joy,
Repeat, repeat, the sounding joy.***
(Author: Isaac Watts, 1719)Composer: Georg F. Handel, 1742

A Gentle Night in Bethlehem - ©2005 Susan Noyes Anderson

<http://susannoyesandersonpoems.com/2009/07/01/a-gentle-night-in-bethlehem/>

Cong. To stand

PRAYER OF CONFESSION

*Kyrie Elieson, Kyrie Elieson, Kyrie Elieson
Lord have mercy, Christ have mercy, Lord have mercy*

P: Lord of Christmas Peace,
we have done wrong.
We have tarnished the gift of love you gave freely.
We have forgotten to share that love.

C: We have buried you so deeply in our hearts, the world doesn't see you.
We have not followed our Christ,
we have ignored His teachings,
we have built fences and fortresses to push people away,
and we have silenced the screams of those in need.

Forgive us, we pray.
Free us from our sin and doubt,
Help us to reach out to our neighbour
Change us to a live a life in Joy through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen

*Kyrie Elieson, Kyrie Elieson, Kyrie Elieson
Lord have mercy, Christ have mercy, Lord have mercy*

Gospel Reading

P: †Peace be with you all.
C: May the Lord make us all worthy to listen to His Word.

P: The Holy Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ, which proclaims life and salvation to the world as recorded by Luke 1:57-66

C: Blessed is He that has come and will come again. Praise to the Father who sent him for our Salvation. May His blessings be ever upon us.

P: In the days of Jesus Christ, our Lord and Saviour, the Word of life, God incarnate of the blessed Virgin Mary, it happened in this way.

C: So we believe and affirm.

(After reading the Gospel, the priest says, †'Peace be with you all')

C: We thank you, Lord, that you have given us your gospel which is indeed the light of the world, that we may be drawn closer to you through the living words from your gospel which we have now heard.

The Nicene Creed

We believe in the one true God, the Father Almighty, Maker of heaven and earth, and of all things visible and invisible.

We believe in one Lord Jesus Christ, the only-begotten Son of God, begotten of the Father before all world; 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. He was crucified also for us in the days of Pontius Pilate; suffered and died and was buried. The third day He rose again, by His Father's holy will, 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 and of His kingdom there will be no end. We believe in the Holy Spirit, the Lord and Giver of Life; who proceeds from the Father; who with the Father and the Son together is worshipped and glorified; who spoke by the prophets and the apostles. We believe in one Holy Catholic and apostolic Church. We acknowledge one baptism for the remission of sins; and look forward to the resurrection of the dead, and the new life of the world to come. Amen.

(Cong. to be seated)

Birthday, Wedding Anniversary & Thanksgiving

O come, O come, Emmanuel
And ransom captive Israel
That mourns in lonely exile here
Until the Son of God appear

*Rejoice! Rejoice! Emmanuel
Shall come to thee, O Israel.*

O come, Thou Rod of Jesse, free
Thine own from Satan's tyranny
From depths of Hell Thy people save
And give them victory o'er the grave

O come, Thou Day-Spring, come and cheer
Our spirits by Thine advent here
Disperse the gloomy clouds of night
And death's dark shadows put to flight.

O come, Thou Key of David, come,
And open wide our heavenly home;
Make safe the way that leads on high,
And close the path to misery.

O come, O come, Thou Lord of might,
Who to Thy tribes, on Sinai's height,
In ancient times once gave the Law,
In cloud, and majesty and awe.

(Author: unknown; Translated into English by: John Mason Neale in 1851)

Offertory

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 the angelic host proclaim:
"Christ is born in Bethlehem"
Hark! The herald angels sing
"Glory to the newborn King!"

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 the incarnate Deity
Pleased as man with man to dwell
Jesus, our Emmanuel
Hark! The herald angels sing
"Glory to the newborn King!"

Hail the heav'n-born Prince of Peace!
Hail the Son 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
Hark! The herald angels sing
"Glory to the newborn King!"

Written by Charles Wesley, Music: Felix Mendelssohn

MESSAGE

Closing Prayer

P: In Bethlehem, God gave to us
The source of Christmas joy;
A star shone on a miracle:
The virgin birth of a boy.

C: He was born both God and man,
A Savior for us all,
The only way to our heavenly home,
Is if we just heed His call.

So as we shop and spend and celebrate
And enjoy the Christmas season,
Let's keep in mind the sacred truth:
Jesus is the reason. Amen
By Joanna Fuchs

Benediction

"But you, Bethlehem Ephrathah,
though you are small among the clans of Judah,
out of you will come for me
one who will be ruler over Israel,
whose origins are from of old,
from ancient times."
3 Therefore Israel will be abandoned
until the time when she who is in labor bears a son,
and the rest of his brothers return
to join the Israelites.
4 He will stand and shepherd his flock
in the strength of the Lord,
in the majesty of the name of the Lord his God.
And they will live securely, for then his greatness
will reach to the ends of the earth. Mic 5:2-4

Therefore, go out into the world with great joy
And May the grace of Bethlehem's matchless Child,
the love of God who never ceases to amaze,
and the fellowship of the Spirit who never wearies,
be with you through this season and for evermore. Amen

Closing Hymn and Kiss of Peace

Go, tell it on the mountain,
Over the hills and everywhere;
Go, tell it on the mountain,
That Jesus Christ is born.

While shepherds kept their watching
O'er silent flocks by night,
Behold, throughout the heavens
There shone a holy light.

Down in a lowly manger
The humble Christ was born,
And God sent us salvation
That blessed Christmas morn.

John Wesley Work, Jr., 1907
Based on an African-American Spiritual, early 1800s

Primrose Mar Thoma Church - Dec 2017