

As We Gather

Our world is filled with turmoil, strife, contention. Every time it seems that our nation or even our own lives are at peace, again something disrupts it. Peace is as elusive as a slippery eel. Today's Readings point us to the truth that the peace we seek cannot come from the powers of the world, nor can it come from anything in our own hearts or our spiritual potential. Real peace comes from what seems like the least promising place: a little town, through the young Virgin. Peace comes from Bethlehem, from where God comes to us. From God's Word. From the Bread of Life in Holy Communion. Real peace comes to us, often beyond our understanding, through the babe of Bethlehem, Jesus Christ, through whom God made peace with us by a cross.

OPENING MEDLEY**"You Are My All in All"**

Verse 1 You are my strength
When I am weak
You are the treasure
That I seek
You are my all in all
Seeking You as a precious jew'
Lord to give up I'd be a fool
You are my all in all

Verse 2 Taking my sin
My cross my shame
Rising again I bless Your name
You are my all in all
When I fall down You pick me up
When I am dry You fill my cup
You are my all in all **(Chorus)**

Chorus Jesus Lamb of God
Worthy is Your name
Jesus Lamb of God
Worthy is Your name

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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 the_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 the_incarinate Deity!
Pleased as Man with man to dwell,
Jesus, our Immanuel! **(Refrain)**

3 Hail, the heav'n-born 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)**

Invocation

- P** In the name of the Father and of the ✠ Son and of the Holy Spirit.
C Amen.

Opening Sentences

Luke 1:49–51, 54, adapt.

- P** The mighty Lord has done great things and holy is His name.
C **We thank You, O Lord!**
- P** The Lord's mercy is for those who fear Him from generation to generation.
C **We adore You, O Lord!**
- P** The Lord has shown the strength of His arm.
C **We praise You, O Lord!**
- P** The Lord has helped His servant Israel, in remembrance of His mercy.
C **We worship You, O Lord!**

Lighting of the Advent Wreath

All four Advent candles are lit.

- P** Let us pray.

O Lord, let the lighting of these candles signify that You are the light that shines in all the darkness of our lives. As we wait, watch, hope, and pray, guide us all to reflect Your light and let it shine; through Jesus Christ, our Lord.

- C** **Amen.**

Confession and Absolution

Psalm 25:6–7

- P** Having emerged from the waters of Baptism as God's new creation in Christ, we confess our sins to God and one another.

A time of silence is observed.

- P** We confess to You, O Lord, that we are captive to sin in thought, word, and deed. We have not always been instruments of Your peace. Our homes have at times been places of strife and turmoil by our own fault. Even in the church sometimes we have chosen to fight rather than to make peace.
C **Remember Your mercy, O LORD, and Your steadfast love, for they have been from of old.**

- P** Remember not the sins of my youth or my transgressions;
C **according to Your steadfast love remember me, for the sake of Your goodness, O LORD!**

HYMN "Kyrie for the Four Sundays in Advent" v.4

- 4 Forgive us, Lord, for times when love was lost,
and moments when we never thought to care,
For times when we destroy and subdue
The Word that brings Your people close to You.
Forgive, forgive, forgive us all our sins
And help us love so newness can begin.

- P** Almighty God in His mercy has given His Son to die for you and for His sake forgives you all your sins. As a called and ordained servant of Christ, and by His authority, I therefore forgive you all your sins in the name of the Father and of the ✠ Son and of the Holy Spirit.
- C** Amen.

WORD

Salutation

- P** The Lord be with you.
C And also with you.

Prayer of the Day

- P** Let us pray.

Stir up Your power, O Lord, and come and help us by Your might,

- C** that the sins which weigh us down may be quickly lifted by Your grace and mercy;
P for You live and reign with the Father and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.
C Amen.

Old Testament Reading

Isaiah 40:9

⁹Get you up to a high mountain,
O Zion, herald of good news;
lift up your voice with strength,
O Jerusalem, herald of good news;
lift it up, fear not;
say to the cities of Judah,
“Behold your God!”

- L** This is the Word of the Lord.
C Thanks be to God.

Epistle

Hebrews 10:5–10

⁵When Christ came into the world, he said,
“Sacrifices and offerings you have not desired,
but a body have you prepared for me;
⁶in burnt offerings and sin offerings
you have taken no pleasure.
⁷Then I said, ‘Behold, I have come to do your will, O God,
as it is written of me in the scroll of the book.’”

⁸When he said above, “You have neither desired nor taken pleasure in sacrifices and offerings and burnt offerings and sin offerings” (these are offered according to the law), ⁹then he added, “Behold, I have come to do your will.” He abolishes the first in order to establish the second. ¹⁰And by that will we have been sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all.

- L** This is the Word of the Lord.
C Thanks be to God.

Verse

Matthew 1:23a

- P** Alleluia! Alleluia!
C Alleluia! Alleluia!
- P** Behold, the virgin shall conceive and bear a son,
C and they shall call His name Immanuel. Alleluia! Alleluia!

Holy Gospel

Luke 1:39–45

P The Holy Gospel according to St. Luke, the first chapter.

C **Glory to You, O Lord.**

³⁹In those days Mary arose and went with haste into the hill country, to a town in Judah, ⁴⁰and she entered the house of Zechariah and greeted Elizabeth. ⁴¹And when Elizabeth heard the greeting of Mary, the baby leaped in her womb. And Elizabeth was filled with the Holy Spirit, ⁴²and she exclaimed with a loud cry, “Blessed are you among women, and blessed is the fruit of your womb! ⁴³And why is this granted to me that the mother of my Lord should come to me? ⁴⁴For behold, when the sound of your greeting came to my ears, the baby in my womb leaped for joy. ⁴⁵And blessed is she who believed that there would be a fulfillment of what was spoken to her from the Lord.”

P This is the Gospel of the Lord.

C **Praise to You, O Christ.**

Apostles’ Creed

C **I believe in God, the Father Almighty,
maker of heaven and earth.**

**And in Jesus Christ, His only Son, our Lord,
who was conceived by the Holy Spirit,
born of the virgin Mary,
suffered under Pontius Pilate,
was crucified, died and was buried.
He descended into hell.
The third day He rose again from the dead.
He ascended into heaven
and sits at the right hand of God the Father Almighty.
From thence He will come to judge the living and the dead.**

**I believe in the Holy Spirit,
the holy Christian Church,
the communion of saints,
the forgiveness of sins,
the resurrection of the body,
and the life † everlasting. Amen.**

SERMON SONG “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 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!

- 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!

Sermon

Offering

Offertory "Praise God, from Whom All Blessings Flow" LSB 805

△ Praise God, from whom all bless - ings flow; Praise Him, all
 crea - tures here be - low; Praise Him a - bove, ye heav'n - ly
 host: Praise Fa - ther, Son, and Ho - ly Ghost. A - men.

Prayer of the Church

P As we prepare our hearts and minds for Christ's coming, we turn to the Lord in prayer.

A brief time of silence may be observed.

P O Wisdom from on high, grant us peace. Move the leaders, pastors, teachers, and all the people of our Synod to be peacemakers. We pray,

C **hear us, coming Lord.**

P O Desire of nations, bless the leaders of nations, our president and Congress, our governors and local leaders. Move all leaders to cease envy and boastfulness, injustice and corruption. Guide our leaders to be honorable people who do not neglect the poor and who strive toward the flourishing of all human beings. Bless those who serve in our armed forces and lift up refugees and all victims of war. Bring peace between us and our enemies and let Your peace reign over this broken world. We pray,

C **hear us, coming Lord.**

P O Dayspring from on high, come to the aid of all who are in need. As You humbly entered this world as a vulnerable baby, help all of us humbly to enter the lives of those who are sick, facing surgery, or dying, to offer comfort and hope, [*especially . . .*]. Bring healing according to Your will and peace to those whose suffering endures. Thank You for the work of doctors, nurses, and other medical professionals who work toward healing and restoration of wholeness. Guide scientists searching for cures for diseases that bring suffering to the world that their work might lead to healing for many. We pray,

C **hear us, coming Lord.**

P O Key of David, let Your peace flow freely in and among the families of this congregation. Empower parents and grandparents to love their children and children to love their parents. Watch over all who travel and comfort families who are separated by many miles. Guide families to be places where Your love is demonstrated to strangers as well as to friends. We pray,

C **hear us, coming Lord.**

- P** O Lord of might, let the peace that surpasses human understanding, the peace that comes from being in Christ, so fill our hearts that we become signs of Your peace in this chaotic world. We pray,
- C** **hear us, coming Lord.**
- P** O Immanuel, You deliver Your people even from the grip of death. Comfort those who mourn and use us to express the hope that comes from trusting in You. Bring us to be with them on that great day to come, and until that day give us grace to endure life's difficulties, while also abiding in Your love. We pray,
- C** **hear us, coming Lord.**
- P** You, O Lord, know the thoughts of our hearts and hear those prayers that come to You in sighs too deep for words. All our prayer we entrust to You in the name of Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord.
- C** **Amen.**

SACRAMENT

Preface

- P** The Lord be with you.
- C** **And also with you.**
- P** Lift up your hearts.
- C** **We lift them to the Lord.**
- P** Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.
- C** **It is right to give Him thanks and praise.**

Sanctus

Prayer of Thanksgiving

- P** Thank You, Lord of all creation, for Your constant, abiding, seeking love, given to us now in the Supper of our Lord. You created the heavens, the earth, all creatures, and human beings. You promised a Savior when Adam and Eve rebelled against You. You made Your covenant with Abraham and Sarah to bless the world through their offspring. You saved the Israelites from slavery in Egypt and guided them through the wilderness. You sent prophets to people who had again rebelled against You. In the fullness of time, You sent to us Jesus, Your Son, who proclaimed, taught, and demonstrated the coming Kingdom and who suffered, died, rose, and ascended. You provide for us the body and blood of Christ to forgive our sins, and You empower us to love the world as You have first loved us. In You we find the peace that surpasses human understanding.
- C** **We thank You. We praise You. We adore You. Amen.**

The Words of Our Lord

- P** 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."

Proclamation of Christ

- P** As often as we eat this bread and drink this cup, we proclaim the Lord's death until He comes.
- C** **Amen. Come, Lord Jesus.**
- P** O Lord Jesus Christ, only Son of the Father, in giving us Your body and blood to eat and to drink, You lead us to remember and confess Your holy cross and passion, Your blessed death, Your rest in the tomb, Your resurrection

from the dead, Your ascension into heaven, and Your coming for the final judgment. So remember us in Your kingdom and teach us to pray:

Lord's Prayer

C 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.

Pax Domini

P The peace of the Lord be with you always.
C Amen.

† DISTRIBUTION SONGS †

“Away in a Manger”

- 1 Away in a manger, no crib for a bed,
The little Lord Jesus laid down His sweet head.
The stars in the sky looked down where He lay,
The little Lord Jesus asleep on the hay.
- 2 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 cradle till morning is nigh.
- 3 Be near me, Lord Jesus; I ask Thee to stay
Close by me forever and love me, I pray.
Bless all the dear children in Thy tender care,
And take us to heaven to live with Thee there.

“O Little Town of 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;
O come to us, abide with us,
Our Lord Immanuel!

Post-Communion Thanksgiving

P Let us pray.

Thank You, Lord, for the peace that comes to us through Christ's body and blood. Help us leave this Table so filled with Your peace that it overflows to our homes, our church, and our community; through Jesus Christ, Your Son, our Lord, who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.

C Amen.

Benediction

Luke 1:54–55; Numbers 6:24–26

P The Lord has helped His servant Israel, in remembrance of His mercy, as He spoke to our fathers, to Abraham and to his offspring forever.

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.

C Amen.

CLOSING SONG “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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