

# First Sunday of Christmas Service of Readings and Carols

December 28, 2025

## WELCOME

## INTRODUCTION

Today we celebrate with joy the in-breaking of God's light. The angel had declared to the shepherds that the newborn child would bring good news of great joy for all the people (Luke 2:10). Now again, Christ brings joy to all. Through word and song, we are invited to rise and shine, for our light has come, and the glory of the Lord is risen upon us.

## OPENING DIALOGUE

In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit.  
**Amen.**

I am bringing you good news of great joy for all the people:  
to you is born this day in the city of David a Saviour, who is Christ the Lord.  
**A holy day has dawned upon us.**

Come you nations and adore the Lord,  
**for a great light has come upon the earth.**

And you shall call his name Jesus,  
**for he shall save his people from their sin.**

## "Angels, from the Realms of Glory" ELW 275



- 1 An - gels, from the realms of glo - ry, wing your flight o'er all the earth;
- 2 Shep-herds, in the fields a - bid - ing, watch-ing o'er your flocks by night,
- 3 Sa - ges, leave your con - tem-pla-tions, bright-er vi - sions beam a - far;
- 4 All cre - a - tion, join in prais-ing God, the Fa - ther, Spir - it, Son,



once you sang cre - a - tion's sto - ry, now pro - claim Mes - si - ah's birth:  
God with us is now re - sid - ing, yon - der shines the in - fant light.  
seek the great de - sire of na - tions, you have seen his na - tal star.  
ev - er - more your voic - es rais - ing to the e - ter - nal Three in One.

*Refrain*



Come and wor-ship, come and wor-ship, wor-ship Christ, the new-born king.

### GREETING AND PRAYER OF THE DAY

The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, Emmanuel, God with us, be with you all.

**And also with you.**

Let us pray. Incarnate God, on the dawn of this new day and on the dawn of this coming year, we give you thanks for sending your Son to bring light to our darkness. Grant that we – like shepherds who come and see and go and tell, like wise men who worship on bended knee, like all those who have rejoiced at your coming – grant that we may sing your praises with our hearts and lives. Amen.

## **LUKE 2:15-20 *Shepherds Glorify God!***

When the angels had left them and gone into heaven, the shepherds said to one another, "Let us go now to Bethlehem and see this thing that has taken place, which the Lord has made known to us." So they went with haste and found Mary and Joseph, and the child lying in the manger. When they saw this, they made known what had been told them about this child; and all who heard it were amazed at what the shepherds told them. But Mary treasured all these words and pondered them in her heart. The shepherds returned, glorifying and praising God for all they had heard and seen, as it had been told them.

### **REFLECTIONS FROM A SHEPHERD**

Well, I was one of those shepherds. The ones you heard about this past week. When the sky exploded with light, with angels, with song. It was one of the most terrifying things I have known in my life. Terrifying and, at the same time, wonder-filled, unbelievable, hopeful and doubtful. After all, we are shepherds. When everything in the world says important messages – messages of God – should come to kings and rulers, to priests and rabbis; the message came to us. Even now it all seems a little surreal that God would entrust this message of hope to us. And if to us, who would listen?

But we went and we saw the child just as we had been told. In truth, he looked like an ordinary boy, born to parents of no notice, in a stable filled with sheep. But something touched us that night. Something filled us with wonder and joy. And we couldn't help but believe. Well, now we are back on this hillside. Tending sheep just as we always have had. But things are not the same. And we cannot help but tell the story to whoever will listen. The story of a Saviour born in Bethlehem. A story of joy to the world!

## "Joy to the World" – v 1 & 2 ELW 267

1 Joy to the world, the Lord is come! Let earth re -  
2 Joy to the earth, the Sav - ior reigns! Let all their

ceive her king; let ev - 'ry heart pre - pare him  
songs em - ploy, while fields and floods, rocks, hills, and

room and heav'n and na - ture sing, and heav'n and na - ture  
plains re - peat the sound-ing joy, re - peat the sound-ing

sing, and heav'n, and heav'n and na - ture sing.  
joy, re - peat, re - peat the sound - ing joy.

### REFLECTIONS FROM JOSEPH: A NEW FATHER, NEW RESPONSIBILITIES

This has all happened so fast. And maybe for you it seems like in one short week it's all over. The joy has been celebrated, the songs have been sung, and for a moment you have paused like shepherds and so many others to find a child—our child, Mary's and mine—in a humble stable in a cow's trough. But for me it is only beginning.

Being a father comes with so much mixed emotion—joy, wonder, hope, confusion, great responsibility. As I look at Mary sleeping so peacefully, even as I hold my Son, who is Son of God, as I look at ten tiny fingers, ten tiny toes, long eyelashes, a button nose—already I love him with all my heart. But how will I provide for not only Mary who will be my wife, but now also a child? And how can I be father to a Son who is born Messiah of the world?

I am a Jew's Jew, of this I am sure. And I, like so many others have waited for this day, have hoped for it, have held to the tradition of faith even when it seemed as if God's anointed would never come. But now, in my arms, the weight of the nation. And very soon, the eighth day, the day of circumcision, his naming day. "You shall call his name Jesus, for he shall save his people from their sins." It was what the angel said. And maybe for you the story of this child ends in a manger, but already we journey again. To the temple. To offer the sacrifice. To offer our Son as holy to the Lord. To call him Jesus. Because he is our child, God's child, child for the world; for he will save his people from their sin.

**"What Child is This?" ELW 296**



- 1 What child is this, who, laid to rest, on Mar-y's lap is sleep-ing?  
2 Why lies he in such mean es-tate where ox and ass are feed-ing?  
3 So bring him in - cense, gold, and myrrh; come, peas-ant, king, to own him.



Whom an - gels greet with an-thems sweet while shep-herds watch are keep - ing?  
Good Chris-tian, fear; for sin-ners here the si - lent Word is plead - ing.  
The King of kings sal - va - tion brings; let lov - ing hearts en-throne him.



This, this is Christ the king, whom shep-herds guard and an-gels sing;  
Nails, spear shall pierce him through, the cross be borne for me, for you;  
Raise, raise the song on high, the vir-gin sings her lul-la-by;



haste,	haste	to	bring	him	laud,	the	babe,	the	son	of	Mar - y!
hail,	hail	the	Word	made	flesh,	the	babe,	the	son	of	Mar - y!
joy,	joy,	for	Christ	is	born,	the	babe,	the	son	of	Mar - y!

**LUKE 2:22-32** *Jesus is Named*

After eight days had passed, it was time to circumcise the child; and he was called Jesus, the name given by the angel before he was conceived in the womb.

When the time came their purification according to the law of Moses, they brought him up to Jerusalem to present him to the Lord, (as it is written in the law of the Lord, "Every firstborn male shall be designated as holy to the Lord"), and they offered a sacrifice according to what is stated in the law of the Lord, a pair of turtle doves, or two young pigeons."

Now there was a man in Jerusalem whose name was Simeon; this man was righteous and devout, looking forward to the consolation of Israel, and the Holy Spirit rested on him. It had been revealed to him by the Holy Spirit that he would not see death before he had seen the Lord's Messiah. Guided by the Spirit, Simeon came into the temple; and when the parents brought in the child Jesus, to do for him what was customary under the law, Simeon took him in his arms and praised God saying,

“Master, now you are dismissing your servant in peace, according to your word; for my eyes have seen your salvation, which you have prepared in the presence of all peoples, a light for the revelation to the Gentiles and for glory to your people Israel.”

## REFLECTIONS FROM SIMEON: NO FOOL LIKE AN OLD FOOL

There's no fool like an old fool. That's what they say. And they have not minced words – I am that old fool. For I have been in this temple each and every day praying, looking, hoping, holding on to the promise of God that a Messiah would come. That I would see it myself, with my very own eyes. Truthfully, I am not the only one. There are many who yet hold to this promise. But doesn't it depend too, on what kind of Messiah you look for? For many, it is a political Messiah they long and hope for. One to storm the gates of Rome, to take back this temple and all rule and power and authority. For some, it is only a king they look for. And maybe this is part of it. But to me, a Messiah, a Saviour, is not just another dictator, but someone who is Saviour of the poor, the sick, the weak, the small. A Saviour of us all. Has it always been easy? Shamefully, I have to say no. There were times I doubted. Times I came when my prayers seemed like empty words falling on deaf ears, when my heart was empty and could not believe. And now I am old. My eyes are dimming. I am ready to die. But one more time I am going to pray. To hope. To believe.

Ooops! I guess I should watch where I'm going! So sorry, sir. So sorry, miss. I hope I haven't hurt you or your baby... Um. Wait a minute! Can it really be true? Is this the day I have waited for for so long? She hands me her child. Why, I am not sure. But now as wrinkled folds of newborn skin lay nestled against my own, I know it! "It's him! Lord, I know this is your Son! With my very eyes I have seen your salvation!"

Well, there is no fool like an old fool. But now this old fool can die in peace. And we all can live in joy. For this child has come to save us all.

## "Good Christian Friends Rejoice" v 1-2 ELW 288



1 Good Chris - tian friends, re - joice with heart and soul and voice;  
2 Good Chris - tian friends, re - joice with heart and soul and voice;



give ye heed to what we say: Je - sus Christ is born to - day;  
now ye hear of end - less bliss: Je - sus Christ was born for this!



ox and ass be - fore him bow, and he is in the man - ger now.  
He has o - pened heav - en's door, and we are blest for - ev - er - more.



Christ is born to - day! Christ is born to - day!  
Christ was born for this! Christ was born for this!

### LUKE 2:36-39 *An Old Woman's Joy*

There was also a prophet, Anna the daughter of Phanuel, of the tribe of Asher. She was of a great age, having lived with her husband seven years after her marriage, then as a widow to the age of eighty- four. She never left the temple but worshiped there with fasting and prayer night and day. At that moment she came, and began to praise God and to speak about the child to all who were looking for the redemption of Jerusalem. When they had finished everything required by the law of the Lord, they returned to Galilee, to their own town of Nazareth.

### REFLECTIONS FROM ANNA: WHAT COULD THIS MEAN?

Strange times. Strange people. Amazing words. Old men, women prophets, "A light to the Gentiles, the glory of Israel, the redemption of Jerusalem! The Messiah for the world!" I looked at Mary, I could see it in her eyes. Both of us stunned! Amazed! It is too much to take in or understand. And it is time to move on again.

Maybe things will go back to normal when we get back home to Nazareth. But I doubt it. And then again, as I look at the world we are in, is normal what we really want? We have called him Jesus now. And Jesus is who he is— come to save his people. But save us from what? What could that really mean?

## **"Good Christian Friends Rejoice" v 3 ELW 288**

**Good Christian friends, rejoice with heart and soul and voice;  
now ye need not fear the grave; Jesus Christ was born to save!  
Calls you one and calls you all to gain the everlasting hall.  
Christ was born to save! Christ was born to save!**

### **MATTHEW 2:7-12 *The Visit of the Wise Men***

Then Herod secretly called for the wise men and learned from them the exact time when the star had appeared. Then he sent them to Bethlehem, saying, "Go and search diligently for the child; and when you have found him, bring me word so that I may also go and pay him homage."

When they had heard the king, they set out; and there, ahead of them, went the star that they had seen at its rising, until it stopped over the place where the child was. When they saw the star had stopped, they were overwhelmed with joy. On entering the house, they saw the child with Mary his mother; and knelt down and paid him homage. Then, opening their treasure chests, they offered him gifts of gold, frankincense, and myrrh.

And having been warned in a dream not to return to Herod, they left for their own country by another road.

### **REFLECTIONS FROM A SHEPHERD: A RETURN TO THE HILLSIDE**

Well, you have heard some of the story. The story of the night when the sky exploded with light, with angels, with song. When we raced to a stable to see a baby. When we returned to the hillside praising God and telling everyone the Good News of God's coming that night.

By now you know that the story didn't end in that stable. But it was only the beginning. The beginning of hope, the beginning of joy, the beginning of people from all walks of life who came to see Jesus—old men, wise men, kings, children, women, prophets, regular people like Mary and Joseph, parents, grandparents, carpenters, and don't forget shepherds.

And still, the story doesn't end. And this story is not only of joy, but one of pain, heartbreak, power and fear. Maybe you don't even know the rest. That Herod asks the same kinds of questions we all have asked, "What kind of king could this be?" Full of fear, threatened by his own power fading, he orders the death of hundreds maybe even thousands of babies. The cries of childless mothers, the anguish of heartbroken fathers rising into the night. And it seems the end of hope.

But the Child lives on. Jesus comes. Comes to the poor, the hungry, the weak, the grieving, the sick. Jesus comes in the power of love that threatens the powers of this world. What kind of king can *this* be? And once again we think the story has ended. As the powers of this world, backed in a corner come out snarling, as Jesus is raised high to die on a cross. And still love prevails. And still Jesus comes to rise from a grave to take all this world can give, all this world must bear. And the story still does not end. The story still goes on. Even in your world.



For Christmas is the story of Jesus coming in flesh to be just as we are. And Christmas goes on until all the pain of this world ends in the life of Jesus who has come, until in joy we all can join in the angel's song. Until with wise men we fall in worship. Until with shepherds just like me, we come and see and in joy go and tell, that the Child lives on. And still Jesus comes. Comes to be the salvation, the hope, the life for us all. This is Jesus. This is our King. The Child who has come. This is joy!

### "Holy Child within the Manger" WOV 638

1 Ho - ly Child with - in the man - ger, long a -  
 2 Once a - gain we tell the sto - ry— how your  
 3 Ho - ly Child with - in the man - ger, lead us

go yet ev - er near; come as friend to ev - 'ry  
 love for us was shown, when the im - age of your  
 ev - er in your way, so we see in ev - 'ry

stran - ger, come as hope for ev - 'ry fear.  
 glo - ry wore an im - age like our own.  
 stran - ger how you come to us to - day.

As you lived to heal the bro - ken, greet the  
 Come, en - light - en with your wis - dom, come and  
 In our lives and in our liv - ing give us

out - cast, free the bound, as you taught us love un -  
 fill us with your grace. May the fire of your com -  
 strength to live as you, that our hearts might be for -

spo - ken, teach us now where you are found.  
 pas - sion kin - dle ev - 'ry land and race.  
 giv - ing and our spir - its strong and true.

## SHARING THE PEACE

The peace of the Lord be with you always.  
**And also with you.**

## OFFERING PRAYER

God of glory, great are your wonders among us and many are the blessings you bestow.  
Use us and these your gifts for the needs of the world, that all the ends of the earth may rejoice  
in your saving grace, through Christ our Savior. **Amen.**

## RESPONSIVE PRAYER

Let us pray. Gracious God, you come from heaven into the midst of our world.  
**Fill our hearts with the joy of your angels at your birth.**

You come as light to guide our path.  
**Fill our lips with the message of your salvation.**

You come to redeem all creation.  
**Replenish the earth—the lands and seas, plants and animals—all that you have made**

You come to the lowliest of human conditions.  
Watch over those in need, the sick, the hungry, the grieving, especially Alice, Don and Carol,  
Arne, Kate, Karen, Janet C, Victor and Judy, Janet D, Dave, Tiffany, Lori, Corrie, Alice, Patrick,  
Joel and Ellen, Linda H, Murray, Shirley, Derek, Hugh and Ally, Jim N., Donna, Helga, Margaret  
and Clayton, Nancy, Sheila, Cindy, Ray, Alan T, and all who mourn the death of Margaret  
Pommen.  
**Hold us all in your loving care.**

You come to walk the way of the cross.  
**Guide us to follow your path of forgiveness, mercy and peace.**

You come to become flesh and live among us.  
**May we see your glory, full of grace and truth.**

You come from that we might be your people.  
**Bless us and keep us, we pray, in the name of Jesus our Saviour and Lord. Amen.**

We join our voices together to pray as Jesus taught us . . .

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.  
Save us from the time of trial  
and deliver us from evil.  
For the kingdom, the power,  
and the glory are yours, now and forever. **Amen.**

## **BLESSING**


May Christ, the light who banishes darkness, shine upon you to lighten your days. **Amen.**

May Emmanuel, God-with-us, travel with you to lead the way. **Amen.**


May God, who is the Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the end,  
grant you grace and peace at the dawn of this New Year;  
in the name of the Father, and of the + Son, and of the Holy Spirit. **Amen.**

## "Go Tell it on the Mountain" ELW 290


*Refrain*



Go tell it on the moun - tain, o-ver the hills and ev - 'ry - where;




go tell it on the moun - tain that Je - sus Christ is born!



1 While shep-herds kept their watch-ing o'er si - lent flocks by night,  
 2 The shep-herds feared and trem-bled when, lo, a - bove the earth  
 3 Down in a lone - ly man - ger the hum-ble Christ was born;

*Refrain*



be - hold, through-out the heav-ens there shone a ho - ly light.  
 rang out the an - gel cho - rus that hailed our Sav - ior's birth.  
 and God sent us sal - va - tion that bless-ed Christ-mas morn.

### SENDING

Go in peace. Christ is born.  
 Glory to God in the highest!

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