

Worship Plan for The First Sunday of Christmas, December 31, 2023

BRIEF ORDER FOR CONFESSION AND FORGIVENESS

In the name of the Father, and of the ✝ Son, and of the Holy Spirit.

Amen.

Almighty God, to whom all hearts are open, all desires known, and from whom no secrets are hid: Cleanse the thoughts of our hearts by the inspiration of your Holy Spirit, that we may perfectly love you and worthily magnify your holy name, through Jesus Christ our Lord.

Amen

If we say we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us. But if we confess our sins, God who is faithful and just will forgive our sins and cleanse us from all unrighteousness.

Most merciful God,

we confess that we are in bondage to sin and cannot free ourselves. We have sinned against you in thought, word, and deed, by what we have done and by what we have left undone. We have not loved you with our whole heart; we have not loved our neighbors as ourselves. For the sake of your Son, Jesus Christ, have mercy on us. Forgive us, renew us, and lead us, so that we may delight in your will and walk in your ways, to the glory of your holy name. Amen

In the mercy of almighty God, Jesus Christ was given to die for us, and for his sake God forgives us all our sins. To those who believe in Jesus Christ he gives the power to become the children of God and bestows on us the Holy Spirit.

Amen

ENTRANCE HYMN WOV# 643 *“Once in Royal David’s City”*



1 Once in roy - al Da - vid's cit - y stood a low - ly cat - tle shed,
2 He came down to earth from heav - en who is God and Lord of all,
3 And our eyes at last shall see him, through his own re - deem - ing love;
4 Not in that poor low - ly sta - ble, with the ox - en stand - ing by,



where a moth - er laid her ba - by in a man - ger for his bed:
and his shel - ter was a sta - ble, and his cra - dle was a stall;
for that child so dear and gen - tle is our Lord in heav'n a - bove;
we shall see him; but in heav - en, set at God's right hand on high;



Mar - y was that moth - er mild, Je - sus Christ, her lit - tle child.
with the poor and meek and low - ly, lived on earth our Sav - ior ho - ly.
and he leads his chil - dren on to the place where he is gone.
there his chil - dren gath - er round, bright like stars, with glo - ry crowned.

Text: Cecil Frances Alexander, 1818–1895
Music: IRBY, Henry J. Gauntlett, 1805–1876

GREETING

The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God, and the communion of the Holy Spirit be with you all.

And also with you.

KYRIE

Lord, have mercy.

Christ, have mercy.

Lord, have mercy.

The Lord be with you.

And also with you.

Let us pray. . .

Almighty God, you wonderfully created the dignity of human nature and yet more wonderfully restored it. In your mercy, let us share the divine life of the one who came to share our humanity, Jesus Christ, your Son, our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.

Amen

FIRST LESSON: Isaiah 61:10—62:3

I will greatly rejoice in the Lord,
my whole being shall exult in my God;
for he has clothed me with the garments of salvation,
he has covered me with the robe of righteousness,
as a bridegroom decks himself with a garland,
and as a bride adorns herself with her jewels.
For as the earth brings forth its shoots,
and as a garden causes what is sown in it to spring up,
so the Lord God will cause righteousness and praise
to spring up before all the nations.

For Zion's sake I will not keep silent,
and for Jerusalem's sake I will not rest,
until her vindication shines out like the dawn,
and her salvation like a burning torch.
The nations shall see your vindication,
and all the kings your glory;
and you shall be called by a new name
that the mouth of the Lord will give.
You shall be a crown of beauty in the hand of the Lord,
and a royal diadem in the hand of your God.

The Word of the Lord.

Thanks be to God.

PSALM: Psalm 148



The splen - dor of the LORD is o - ver earth and heav'n.

Hallelujah! Praise the LORD | from the heavens;
praise God | in the heights.

Praise the LORD, | all you angels;
sing praise, all you | hosts of heaven.

Praise the LORD, | sun and moon;
sing praise, all you | shining stars.

**Praise the LORD, heav- | en of heavens,
and you waters a- | bove the heavens.**

Let them praise the name | of the LORD,
who commanded, and they | were created,
**who made them stand fast forev- | er and ever,
giving them a law that shall not | pass away. R**

Praise the LORD | from the earth,
you sea monsters | and all deeps;
**fire and hail, | snow and fog,
tempestuous wind, do- | ing God's will;**

mountains | and all hills,
fruit trees | and all cedars;
**wild beasts | and all cattle,
creeping things and | flying birds;**
sovereigns of the earth | and all peoples,
princes and all rulers | of the world;

**young | men and maidens,
old and | young together. R**

Let them praise the name | of the LORD,
whose name only is exalted, whose splendor is over | earth and heaven.

**The LORD has raised up strength for the people and praise for all |
faithful servants,**

the children of Israel, a people who are near the LORD. | Hallelujah! R

SECOND LESSON: Galatians 4:4-7

When the fullness of time had come, God sent his Son, born of a woman, born under the law, in order to redeem those who were under the law, so that we might receive adoption as children. And because you are children, God has sent the Spirit of his Son into our hearts, crying, "Abba! Father!" So you are no longer a slave but a child, and if a child then also an heir, through God.

The Word of the Lord.

Thanks be to God.



GOSPEL: Luke 2:22-40

The Holy Gospel according to Luke the 2nd chapter.



When the time came for their purification according to the law of Moses, [Joseph and Mary] brought [Jesus] 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 turtledoves 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,

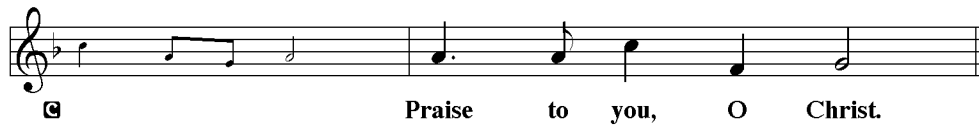
“Master, now you are dismissing your servant in peace,
 according to your word;
 for my eyes have seen your salvation,
 which you have prepared in the presence of all peoples,
 a light for revelation to the Gentiles
 and for glory to your people Israel.”

And the child’s father and mother were amazed at what was being said about him. Then Simeon blessed them and said to his mother Mary, “This child is destined for the falling and the rising of many in Israel, and to be a sign that will be opposed so that the inner thoughts of many will be revealed—and a sword will pierce your own soul too.”

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. The child grew and became strong, filled with wisdom; and the favor of God was upon him.

The Gospel of the Lord.



SERMON

HYMN OF THE DAY LBW#58 "Lo, How a Rose Is Growing"



1 Lo, how a rose is grow - ing, a bloom of fin - est grace;
2 The rose of which I'm sing - ing, I - sa - iah had fore - told.
3 The shep - herds heard the sto - ry the an - gels sang that night:
4 This flow'r, so small and ten - der, with fra - grance fills the air;
5 O Sav - ior, child of Mar - y, who felt all hu - man woe;



the proph - ets had fore - told it: a branch of Jes - se's race
He came to us through Mar - y who shel - tered him from cold.
how Christ was born of Mar - y; he was the Son of light.
his bright - ness ends the dark - ness that kept the earth in fear.
O Sav - ior, king of glo - ry, who tri - umphed o'er our foe:



would bear one per - fect flow'r here in the cold of
Through God's e - ter - nal will this child to us was
To Beth - le - hem they ran to find him in the
True God and yet true man, he came to save his
bring us at length, we pray, to the bright courts of



win - ter and dark - est mid - night hour.
giv - en at mid - night calm and still.
man - ger as an - gel her - alds sang.
peo - ple from earth's dark night of sin.
heav - en and in - to end - less day.

Text: German, 15th cent.; tr. Gracia Grindal, b. 1943
Music: ES IST EIN ROS, *Alte Catholische Geistliche Kirchengesäng*, Köln, 1599

Text © 1978 *Lutheran Book of Worship*, admin. Augsburg Fortress

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;
by the power of the Holy Spirit
he became incarnate from the virgin Mary,
and was made man.**

**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.**

With the Father and the Son he is worshiped and glorified.

He has spoken through the prophets.

We believe in one holy catholic 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**

OFFERING

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 to me the
joy of your sal-va - tion, and up-hold me with your free Spir - it.

THE PRAYERS

Trusting in God's good news of great joy for all people, we offer our prayers for ourselves, our neighbors, and the world God loves.

You inspire faith in our hearts and call us to rejoice with our whole selves at the salvation you bring. Make our churches places of belonging for all people in the fullness of their being. Raise up the gifts and the witness of people who are neurodivergent, living with disability, or bearing invisible illness. Hear us, O God.

Your mercy is great.

Your praise is sung throughout creation in all times and seasons. As the new year turns, ground us in your changeless and sustaining love. Keep us attentive to the rhythms of the cosmos and inspire us to live in harmony with all the earth. Hear us, O God.

Your mercy is great.

Give hope and stamina to leaders who work tirelessly for the sake of the most vulnerable. We pray especially for organizations working on behalf of children to provide basic needs, to protect from abuse and neglect, to address trauma, and to rescue from trafficking. Hear us, O God.

Your mercy is great.

Sustain all people who, like Simeon and Anna, have been waiting for salvation and wholeness (especially). We pray especially for anyone living with cancer or chronic illness, all people who are in physical rehabilitation or addiction recovery, and those experiencing complications from long COVID. Hear us, O God.

Your mercy is great.

Let this community of faith be a joyful and welcome place for all ages and generations. Teach us to honor the wisdom of children, the inquisitiveness of youth, the thoughtfulness of adults, and the knowledge of elders. Hear us, O God.

Your mercy is great.

We give thanks for all the beloved who lived with expectation and departed this life in peace (especially). Sustain us in joy until we join them around your throne. Hear us, O God.

Your mercy is great.

Abide with us, O God of mercy, and receive our prayers according to your abundant grace.

Amen.

THANKSGIVING FOR THE WORD

Let us pray.

Praise and thanks to you, holy God, for by your Word you made all things: you spoke light into darkness, called forth beauty from chaos, and brought life into being. For your Word of life, O God,
we give you thanks and praise.

By your Word you called your people Israel to tell of your wonderful gifts: freedom from captivity, water on the desert journey, a pathway home from exile, wisdom for life with you. For your Word of life, O God,
we give you thanks and praise.

Through Jesus, your Word made flesh, you speak to us and call us to witness: forgiveness through the cross, life to those entombed by death, the way of your self-giving love. For your Word of life, O God,
we give you thanks and praise.

Send your Spirit of truth, O God; rekindle your gifts within us: renew our faith, increase our hope, and deepen our love, for the sake of a world in need. Faithful to your Word, O God, draw near to all who call on you; through Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord, to whom, with you and the Holy Spirit, be honor and glory forever.

Amen.

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.**

BLESSING

**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.
Amen**

CLOSING HYMN LBW#47 “Let All Together Praise Our God”



1 Let all to - geth - er praise our God be - fore his glo - rious
 2 The Fa - ther sends him from his throne to be an in - fant
 3 With - in an earth-born form he hides his all - cre - at - ing
 4 He un - der - takes a great ex - change, puts on our hu - man



throne; to - day he o - pens heav'n a - gain to
 small and lie here poor - ly man - gered now in
 light; to serve us all he hum - bly cloaks the
 frame, and in re - turn gives us his realm, his



give us his own Son, to give us his own Son.
 this cold, dis - mal stall, in this cold, dis - mal stall.
 splen - dor of his might, the splen - dor of his might.
 glo - ry, and his name, his glo - ry, and his name.

5 He is a servant, I a lord:
 how great a mystery!
 How strong the tender Christchild's love!
 No truer friend than he,
 no truer friend than he.

6 He is the key, and he the door
 to blessed paradise;
 the angel bars the way no more.
 To God our praises rise,
 to God our praises rise.

7 Your grace in lowliness revealed,
 Lord Jesus, we adore,
 and praise to God the Father yield
 and Spirit evermore;
 we praise you evermore.

Text: Nikolaus Herman, c. 1480–1561; tr. F. Samuel Janzow, b. 1913
 Music: LOBT GOTT. IHR CHRISTEN, Nikolaus Herman, c. 1480–1561

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**A Go in peace. Serve the Lord.
 Thanks be to God.**

POSTLUDE

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