

Daily Office: Incarnate Lord
Alternative Christmas

Becoming present to God

Through a sign of attentiveness like lighting a candle

+ In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit

From lands that see the sun arise
to earth's remotest boundaries
let every heart awake and sing
the Son of Mary, Christ the King.

Behold, the world's creator wears
the form and fashion of a slave;
our very flesh our maker shares,
his fallen creature, us, to save.

(Medieval carol, tr. J.M.Neale, and J. Ellerton)

or

Now the angels sing
Gloria in excelsis Deo,
Glory to God in the highest.
**Now heaven draws close
to the child in a manger,
divine food in a feeding trough.**
Now the whole world trembles
with awe and wonder,
God has taken flesh and cries.
**Now we join the carol and sing
'O come let us adore him.'**

Celebrating the presence of God

King of Heaven
the angels celebrated your birth
announcing peace on earth
and your gracious goodwill to all
Your birth seeds hope to everyone

Good Shepherd,
ordinary men watching sheep
were the first
to hear of your coming
Your birth seeds justice to everyone.

Wisdom of God
magi saw your star
traveled long and hard
and came to bow down and worship
Your birth seeds wonder for everyone

Refugee God
even though Herod the King
sought your death
and weeping was heard in Ramah,
Your birth seeds compassion for everyone.

***Jesus, your birth sets the world alight with hope, and love; wonder and praise.
We come to your cradle, and bow down, and adore;
we come to your cross, and bow down and are silent;
we come to the empty tomb, and bow down and worship.***

A pause to name any specific thanks or praise

Acknowledging our Humanity

We hear the angels' song
and wonder what it might mean:
when we fail to worship and adore,
Lord have mercy, ***Christ have mercy***

We see the shepherd's obedience
and wonder what it might mean:
when we fail to run to Bethlehem,
Lord have mercy, ***Christ have mercy***

We watch Mary's tender care
as you feed at her breast:
when we find ourselves hungry and thirsty, longing for your presence,
Lord have mercy, ***Christ have mercy***

**We touch the manger
and plump the straw,
we wrap the Christ-child
and sing 'lulla', but
we find no peace until
we have cradled him in our heart.**
Lord have mercy, ***Christ have mercy***

***Christ, born of Mary,
We long to hold you in our arms
wind you on our shoulder,
rock you to sleep, and hold you safe.
But all we can do is carry you with our heart's fiercest love,
our closest obedience, and
our deepest tenderness.***

Listening for the Word of God

From *The Common Lectionary*

Canticle – Optional

The Righteous Reign of the Coming King

The people who walked in darkness
have seen a great light;
**those who lived in a land of deep darkness -
on them has light shined.**

You have multiplied the nation,
you have increased its joy;
**they rejoice before you
as with joy at the harvest,
as people exult when dividing plunder.**

For the yoke of their burden,
and the bar across their shoulders,
the rod of the oppressor,
you have broken as on the day of Midian.
**For all the boots of the tramping warriors
and all the garments rolled in blood
shall be burned as fuel for the fire**

For a child has been born for us,
a son given to us;
authority rests upon his shoulders,
and he is named

Wonderful Counsellor,

Mighty God,'

Everlasting Father,

Prince of Peace.

**His authority shall grow continually,
and there shall be endless peace
for the throne of David and his kingdom.**

He will establish it and uphold it
with justice and with righteousness
from this time onwards and for evermore.

The zeal of the Lord of hosts will do this.

Isaiah 9:27 (NRSV)

Or

O sing to the Lord a new song,
for he has done marvellous things.
His right hand and his holy arm
have gained him victory.

**The Lord has made known his victory;
he has revealed his vindication in the sight of the nations.**

He has remembered his steadfast love and faithfulness
to the house of Israel.

All the ends of the earth have seen the victory of our God.

Make a joyful noise to the Lord, all the earth;
break forth into joyous song and sing praises.

**Sing praises to the Lord with the lyre,
with the lyre and the sound of melody.**

With trumpets and the sound of the horn make a joyful noise before the King, the Lord.

**Let the sea roar, and all that fills it;
the world and those who live in it.**

let the floods clap their hands;
let the hills sing together for joy
at the presence of the Lord, for he is coming to judge the earth.

**He will judge the world with righteousness
and the peoples with equity.**

Psalms 98:1-9 (NRSV)

Reflecting on our roots

Living God, enable us this day
to be pilgrims and companions:
committed to the way of Christ,
faithful to the call of Christ,
discerning the mind of Christ,
offering the welcome of Christ,
growing in the likeness of Christ,
engaging in the mission of Christ,
in the world that belongs to Christ.

Bringing our concerns

God, who sent your Son into the world
that your saving power might be known among all people:

Remember the sick of soul, who in their pride do not know of your grace....

Remember the sick of body, who in their weakness suffer illness and infirmity....

Remember the sick of mind, who in their fear do not perceive your love....

Remember the sick of heart, who in their grief bereavement seems endless....

Free prayer

Lord, whose coming was bereft of earthly comforts, whose future was threatened by violence, whose kingly birth was attended by the least and the last, turn our world upside down by your kingdom rule, that we might see in your birth the signs of new creation for all. Amen.

The Lord's Prayer

**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.
Lead us not into temptation
but deliver us from evil.
For the kingdom, the power,
and the glory are yours
now and for ever. Amen.**

Going to love and serve

With the Shepherds
we run to see what God is doing
Give us ears to hear heaven's song today.

With the Magi,
we seek the birthing of Heaven's rule
Give us eyes to see where Christ is at work today.

With Mary and Joseph,
we hold Jesus close
Give us compassion to care for God's world today.

Optional:

+ In the name of the Father,
and of the Son,
and of the Holy Spirit

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