

An Ancient-Future Faith Community

December 25, 2016 (The Incarnation of the Lord)

A Service of Scripture, Sharing and Song

GATHERING

Lord, open our lips;

And our mouths shall proclaim Your praise.

Glory to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit;

As it was in the beginning, is now, and shall be ages unto ages.

Amen.

Come, let us worship the LORD,

and consider what wondrous things God has done:

Alleluia! The Lord is come!

For unto us a child is born, unto us a Son is given!

O come, let us adore Him;

let us consider what wondrous things God has done:

The peoples who dwelt in darkness have seen a great Light!

The glory of the Lord has risen upon us.

O come, let us bow in worship before the LORD,

and consider what wondrous things God has done:

Christ, the Word made flesh, unveils to us God's hidden mystery,

that we have become joint heirs of the promise of salvation!

In the past, God spoke to our ancestors through the prophets

at many times and in various ways;

But in these last days He has spoken to us by His Son,

whom He appointed heir of all things,

and through whom also He made the universe.

The Son is the radiance of God's glory

and the exact representation of His being,

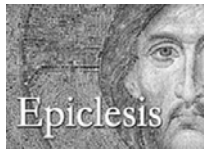
sustaining all things by His powerful word.

O come, let us worship the LORD,

for God has done wondrous things!

— based on Isaiah 9:2, 6; John 1:14; Hebrews 1

THE NATIVITY OF CHRIST



O Come All Ye Faithful

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!

Yea, Lord, we greet Thee, born this happy morning;
Jesus, to Thee be all glory giv'n;
Word of the Father, now in flesh appearing.

O come let us adore Him...

Sing choirs of angels, sing in exultation;
O sing, all ye citizens of heav'n above!
Glory to God, all glory in the highest!

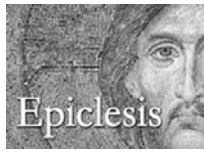
O come let us adore Him...

Words: John Francis Wade, c. 1743. Hymn tune: ADESTE FIDELES.

PRAYERS OF ADORATION, INVOCATION AND THANKS

Calling on our Father God, in the Name of Jesus, inspired by the Spirit





FIRST READING

Psalm 98

Joy to the World

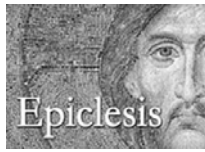
Joy to the world! The Lord is come;
Let earth receive her King.
Let every heart prepare Him room,
And heav'n and nature sing,
And heav'n and nature sing,
And heav'n, and heav'n, and nature sing.

Joy to the earth! 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.

No more let sin and sorrow grow,
Nor thorns infest the ground.
He comes to make His blessings flow
Far as the curse is found,
Far as the curse is found,
Far as, far as the curse is found.

He rules the worlds with truth and grace
And makes the nations prove
The glories of His righteousness
And wonders of His love,
And wonders of His love,
And wonders, wonders of His love.

Text: Isaac Watts. Music: George Frederick Handel.



SECOND READING
Isaiah 52:7-10

It Came Upon the Midnight Clear

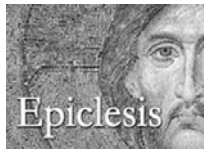
It came upon the midnight clear,
That glorious song of old,
From angels bending near the earth
To touch their harps of gold.
“Peace on the earth, good will to men,
From heav’n’s all gracious King!”
The world in solemn stillness lay
To hear the angels sing.

Still through the cloven skies they come
With peaceful wings unfurled,
And still their heavenly music floats
O’er all the weary world.
Above its sad and lowly plains
They bend on hovering wing;
And ever o’er its Babel sounds
The blessed angels sing.

For lo! the days are hastening on,
By prophet seen of old,
When with the ever-circling years
Shall come the time foretold;
When peace shall over all the earth
Its ancient splendors fling,
And the whole world send back the song
Which now the angels sing.

Words: Edmund H. Sears, c.1849.
Hymn Tune: CAROL, Richard S. Willis, 1850.





THIRD READING

Luke 2:1-20

The First Noel

The first Noel, the angel did say,
Was to certain poor shepherds in fields as they lay;
In fields where they lay keeping their sheep,
On a cold winter's night that was so deep.

Refrain:

Noel, Noel, Noel, Noel,
Born is the King of Israel.

They lookèd up and saw a star
Shining in the East, beyond them far.
And to the earth it gave great light,
And so it continued both day and night.

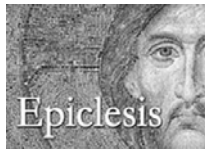
Refrain

Then let us all with one accord
Sing praises to our heav'nly Lord,
That hath made heav'n and earth of naught,
And with His blood mankind hath bought.

Refrain

Traditional English carol, 13th century.





FOURTH READING

Titus 2:11-14, 3:4-7

God Rest Ye, Merry Gentlemen

God rest ye, merry gentlemen, let nothing you dismay;
Remember Christ our Savior was born on Christmas Day,
To save us all from Satan's pow'r when we were gone astray.

Refrain

O tidings of comfort and joy, comfort and joy;
O tidings of comfort and joy.

From God our heav'nly Father the blessèd angel came;
And unto certain shepherds brought tidings of the same;
How that in Bethlehem was born the Son of God by name.

Refrain

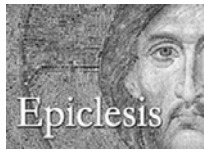
The shepherds at those tidings rejoicèd much in mind,
And left their flocks a-feeding in tempest, storm and wind,
And went to Bethl'em straightaway this blessèd Babe to find.

Refrain

Now to the Lord sing praises all you within this place;
And with true love and brotherhood each other now embrace,
This holy tide of Christmas all others doth deface.

Refrain

Public domain. Traditional English carol.



SENDING FORTH
The Life of the Body

Go, Tell It On the Mountain

Refrain:

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.

Refrain

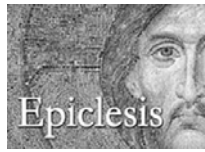
The shepherd feared and trembled,
When lo! Above the earth,
Rang out the angel chorus
That hailed the Savior's birth.

Refrain

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

Refrain

Music: Traditional African-American Spiritual;
Words: John W. Work, Jr., 1907.



Benediction:

Jesus, from the beginning, is the Word, made flesh in our midst.

May His incarnation fill our hearts with joy and peace.

Jesus is the promised Savior, born of Mary.

May His birth among us renew our hope.

Jesus is the King of kings and the Lord of lords.

May the gift of His presence bring forth rejoicing.

Almighty God, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit,

bless you now and forever.

Thanks be to God. Alleluia! Alleluia! Alleluia!

A thought about worship...— “The incarnation is the starting point for our spirituality. . . . God united himself with humans in order for men and women to be united with God. The incarnation is not something unrelated to us; it has everything to do with our spirituality—for the incarnation not only brings God to human nature but brings human nature to God.” (Robert E. Webber, *Ancient-Future Time: Forming Spirituality through the Christian Year* [Grand Rapids: Baker Books, 2004], 62).

Lectionary for next week: Isaiah 63:7-9; Psalm 148; Hebrews 2:10-18;
Matthew 2:13-23



Epiclesis: An Ancient-Future Faith Community

www.Epiclesis.org | Info line: (916)572-9113

Sunday mornings at The Carmichael Chapel, 4600 Winding Way
(Corner of Winding Way and Pasadena), Sacramento, CA 95841.

Informal gathering: 10:00 AM; Worship at 10:30 AM.

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