

the Son of God later in His life. Jesus was the Son of God in His incarnation. Matthew explained the way that Jesus is God and Man (Mary was "found to be with Child through the Holy Spirit.") By the way, this is the only place in the Bible where Joseph is called the "son of David." Joseph as a son of David also established Jesus' legal descent from David through Joseph. Joseph wasn't strictly the father of Jesus (more of an adopted father.) He was the one appointed by God to take on the legal requirements of a father. This Man, born of Mary, was David's Son by Joseph's legal paternity and God's Son by the Holy Spirit. (God always follows and fulfills the rules so that Jesus was fully legitimate in every sense.)

PRAYER OF THE CHURCH

℟ Blessed God and Father, You are the fountain and source of all wisdom and grace. In ages past You promised Your people deliverance from sin. In deepest humility we give You our thanks and praise for remembering Your covenant and fulfilling that promise in the gift of Your Only Begotten Son Jesus Christ. We thank You for allowing us to know His truth. In spirit we stand in holy awe and reverence before the manger of the Christ Child.

For giving us Your Son, we thank You, O heavenly Father. We praise Your Holy name forever. As we assemble to worship and to contemplate the mysteries of the incarnation, where the Son of the Most High took on Himself the form of a servant and was made in the likeness of a man, grant us a sense of gratitude and joy, that life, and faith may be renewed in each of us, and that each one may find in this Babe of Bethlehem the way of salvation, and deliverance from sin and every evil.

Grant that our incarnate Savior may rule in the hearts of all people everywhere. Extend the dominion of the Prince of Peace to all the nations of the Earth. Give growth in grace and knowledge of the Lord Jesus Christ to Your Church, that we may abound in love, joy and peace, and in faith and every good work. To that end, help us, O God, to proclaim the Good News of our Savior's birth in church, in home, in school, in our work places, and in the market places. Use each of us, young and old, according to our talents and abilities. Glory to God in the highest, and peace on Earth, good will to men.

Hear us as we bring to You our private petitions. (**Time of silent prayer.**)

For the gift which no words can describe, the gift of Jesus, we pray, O heavenly Father, that this gift may be ours in faith. Grant that our hearts are a fit dwelling place for Your Son and that we will know the joy of His presence, the blessing of following Him and have life in His name.

© Amen.

CHRISTMAS EVE

Chant Tone



Introit

I will tell of — the decree:*

The Lord said to me, "You are My Son; today I have be — gotten You."

The Earth is the Lord's and the full | ness thereof,*

the world and those who | dwell therein.

Who shall ascend the hill | of the Lord?*

And who shall stand in His | holy place?

He who has clean hands and a — pure heart,*

who does not lift up his soul to what is false and does not swear de | ceitfully. He will receive blessing | from the Lord* and righteousness from the God of his sal — vation.

Glory be to the Father and | to the Son* and to the Holy — Spirit; as it was in the be — ginning,* is now, and will be forever. — Amen.

I will tell of — the decree:*

The Lord said to me, "You are My Son; today I have be — gotten You."

(Antiphon, Psalm 2:7;
Psalm 24:1, 3-5)

Collect of the Day

O God, You make us glad with the yearly remembrance of the birth of Your Only-Begotten Son, Jesus Christ. Grant that as we joyfully receive Him as our Redeemer, we may with sure confidence behold Him when He comes to be our Judge; through the same Jesus Christ, our Lord, Who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, One God, now and forever.

Gradual

For to us a child is born, to us a Son is — given;*

and the government shall be upon His — shoulder,

And His name shall be called Wonderful Counselor, | Mighty God,*

Everlasting Father, | Prince of Peace.

Oh sing to the Lord a — new song,*

for He has done — marvelous things!

(Isaiah 9:6; Psalm 98:1a)

ENTRANCE PRAYER: Praise, honor, and glory to You, O Lord our God. With angels and archangels we magnify Your name. We adore Your Love and divine goodness. We praise You for sending deliverance to Zion and for including us in the fulfillment of Your promises. Bless the reception of this Good News of the birth of our Savior, in the hearts of those who hear it. Bless, O Lord, the spread of the Christmas message throughout the world. May these glad tidings bring assurance to the discouraged and peace to the troubled. May the peace of Christmas fill our nation and the nations of the world. This we ask in the name of our Savior, Christ the Lord. Amen (So be it, Lord.)

ON THE DAY AFTER TOMORROW WE BEGIN THE TWELVE DAYS OF CHRISTMAS, MADE IMMORTAL IN A SONG THAT TELLS THE STORY OF RECEIVING GIFTS FROM OUR TRUE LOVE,

For the world the season of Christmas ends the day after tomorrow. The stores will begin to fill their shelves with Valentine paraphernalia. Your neighbors will take down the decorations. For Christians the season of Christmas begins tomorrow and runs through January 6. Beyond that, for Christians every day is Christmas and every Sunday is Easter. Every day we receive from our true God the gift of the birth of His Only Begotten Son and every Sunday we sing His praise for the victory over death and the grave that He has imputed in us.

THEME OF THE DAY:

The Birth of our Savior

INTROIT—(Antiphon: Psalm 2:7;) Psalm 24:1, 3-5

Psalm 2 was written by Ezra. In Psalm 2 he introduced us to the Son of God, the king of kings. We use the latter part of verse 7 to remember the promise of His birth made 950 years before His incarnation. Psalm 24 was written by David. It concerns the kingdom of Christ. While born in human flesh, Jesus' kingdom extends far beyond the boundaries of Jerusalem. We Gentiles are therefore included in His reign.

COLLECT

This is one of the longest Collects in our entire three year series, but of course it is. We have come to the most important event in the church; the celebration of the birth of our Savior. We ask to be reminded that He is our Redeemer and look forward to seeing Him as Judge.

OLD TESTAMENT LESSON—Isaiah 7:10-14

Isaiah was sent to Ahaz to persuade him to trust in God rather than to rely on political alliances. He was warned that judgment was coming on his allies. Instead of trusting God, Ahaz gave his allegiance to Assyria. Isaiah told Ahaz that Assyria would also be destroyed unless he believed in God. God offered Ahaz a sign as proof. Ahaz pretended that he didn't want to test God. The truth is that Ahaz didn't want to believe. Ahaz wore out God's patience and received the sign of our marvelous virgin born Savior, not in his lifetime, but in the Fullness of Time.

GRADUAL—Isaiah 9:6; Psalm 98:1a

Isaiah 9:6 is a statement of victory. God won a victory in the Birth of the Savior. Psalm 98 is a prophecy of the Messiah. We use the first half of verse 1 to express our wonder over the birth of God in human flesh.

EPISTLE LESSON—1 John 4:7-16

Love is complete only when it comes from God and lives in God. John identified the essence of the attributes of God by narrowing them to the self-giving love that manifested itself in the giving of the most precious gift of God's Son to we who were the least worthy to receive Him by reason of our sin. The perfect Love of God creates a complete trust in the will of God for all believers. We are then freed to love each other. We have received the indwelling of the Holy Spirit, Who will show forth our love of God by demonstrating God's Love in us to others.

GOSPEL LESSON—Matthew 1:18-25

Matthew concentrated on the Man Jesus, a man Who lived in first century Palestine. Matthew showed that at all times and in every way, the Man Jesus, was in the same instance the Son of God. Jesus did not become