

Light every person needs for eternal life. The truth? Christ is the eternal Word of God. As the Word of God He is the self expression of the Father's grace and Love toward humanity. The truth is rejected in the darkness of a man's heart. Jesus told the truth of God. Sinners deserve wrath and hell, and they are pardoned for the sake of Jesus and His work in the flesh. Sinners have lost eternal life by countless offenses and corrupted hearts. Their spiritual life has become deep darkness. The Lord is a compassionate and gracious God. God regenerates hearts. Jesus manifests the divine plan of redeeming the fallen world by becoming flesh in order to dwell among us and suffer and die for our sin.

PRAYER OF THE CHURCH

⑨ O God, the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, in eternity You appointed a time for the sending of Your Holy Child Jesus. By Your Spirit, You caused the Virgin to conceive and bear a Son our Savior. In Love You made Him true God begotten from eternity, and true man, born of a woman. Accept the thanks of Your grateful people for Your Love.

Help each of us enter into the true joy of this day and welcome the Savior into our hearts. Implant within us such an understanding of this divine visitation that from our very inmost being, we may give glory and honor and thanksgiving to You. Open our hearts to receive in faith the Lord of life under whose feet You have put all things.

Grant, O Father, that the whole Earth may come to the obedience of the Child born in the Manger and cause everyone everywhere to know Him as Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace. We pray that people all over the world, would acknowledge Mary's Child as Lord and Savior, the only incarnate God. Let the light of this truth reach the hardest of hearts and the most stubborn of wills; let it shatter the brittle ideologies of men; and let it pierce the darkness of all who dwell in the shadow of fear and death.

Let the glad tidings of the true Christmas enter every home this day, so that all children and parents may know the greatest gift of all, the Child of Bethlehem.

Look with compassion on all who are in any want or need this day. We lift up for Your compassion the lonely and the forsaken, the sick and the troubled, the sorrowing and the dying. Give them the assurance that in Christ You are with all who call on Your name.

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

All this we pray in the name of Jesus, Who was born to redeem us and in Whom alone is the wonderful knowledge of salvation.

© Amen.

CHRISTMAS DAY

Chant Tone



Introit

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!
His right hand and His | holy arm*
have worked salva | tion for Him.
The Lord has made known His
| salvation;*
He has revealed His righteousness
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 salvation | of our God.
Make a joyful noise to the Lord, | all the
Earth*

break forth into joyous song and sing
—praises.

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.

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.

(Antiphon, Isaiah 9:6;
Psalm 98:1-4)

Collect of the Day

Almighty God, grant that the birth of Your only-begotten Son in the flesh may set us free from the bondage of sin; through Jesus Christ, Your Son, our Lord, Who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, One God, now and forever.

Gradual

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.
Sing to the Lord a—new song,*
for He has done —marvelous things!

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

ENTRANCE PRAYER: Even though we have no merit or worthiness in us, You have once again this Christmas assured us of Your Love, O God, our Father. Instead of punishing us for our sin, You have sent us salvation in the birth of Your Son. In spite of our many transgressions You have made salvation possible in this gift of mercy. We are forever grateful in words we cannot express. Bless the musicians, singers, and messengers who help us rejoice in Your Son's birth. Bless the spread of the true Christmas message throughout the world. Let these glad tidings bring assurance to the discouraged and peace to the troubled. In Jesus' name we pray. Amen (So be it, Lord.)

THIS IS THE DAY THE CHURCH SET ASIDE TO CELEBRATE THE BIRTH OF CHRIST. On one episode of Bonanza, we discovered that Pa, (Ben Cartwright) did not know on what day he had been born. In fact because of the circumstances, he didn't even know the year he was born. His sons worked very hard and were able to receive information on the month, day and year of his birth from a relative in the old country. This gave Pa trouble. Ben had chosen a special day to call his birthday, the "real" day meant nothing. The twenty-fifth of December may or may not be the day of the birth of Jesus. However, the twenty-fifth of December is the day we (the church) have chosen to celebrate, and that makes it special. By the Fourth Century, the Church had chosen a day, and made it special through celebration in song and worship. (By the way, we are given permission by God to establish any day as special in Romans 14:6.) We welcome all who have chosen this day to celebrate the birth of Christ. We gather around the manger, to see the new born babe.

THEME OF THE DAY:

The Birth of our Savior

INTROIT—(Antiphon: Isaiah 9:6;) Psalm 98:1-4

Our Gradual for the Christmas season is made up of Isaiah 9:6 and Psalm 98:1. Today we expand the Gradual and use it for the Introit. God had Isaiah tell the 10 Northern tribes that they were to be carried off for their apostasy. God also had Isaiah tell the two Southern tribes there was something to which they could look forward. Chapter 9 is full of the wonder they would enjoy in the birth of our Savior. Psalm 98 is an unattributed Psalm that is a prophecy of the blessings we will gain in the kingdom of the Messiah. The new song is our response to His work of redemption.

COLLECT

While we are celebrating the First Advent of our Savior, by gathering to celebrate His birthday, we acknowledge that we are still sinners. We ask to be set free through the One Who came to save us.

OLD TESTAMENT LESSON—Isaiah 52:7-10

It would be enough if our lesson only read verse 7. Paul repeated verse 7 in Romans 10:15 to indicate that those who bring the Good News to us are important people. Isaiah told so much bad news to the people, that when he was able to point them to a prophecy of the coming Savior, he did it with a joy that over flowed into poetry. John (the Baptist) had beautiful feet. Paul had beautiful feet. John (the Apostle) had beautiful feet, and you have beautiful feet (you are standing on holy ground,) as you are involved today in the proclamation of the Gospel.

GRADUAL—Isaiah 9:6, Psalm 98:1a

(See the Introit.)

EPISTLE LESSON—Hebrews 1:1-12

In my world, Luke wrote the book of Hebrews. He wrote it first, before the book of Luke and Acts. Luke had been introduced to the Gospel by Paul. Luke, being a Gentile, wanted those of us who are non-Jews (for whom the Old Testament isn't a part of our family history) to connect to the promise and wonder of the birth of God in human flesh. The words are vivid and the connection to our Gospel Lesson from John is clear. The Son is the exact imprint of God's nature, "the Word was God," "and the world was made through Him." Hebrews says, "You, Lord, laid the foundation of the Earth in the beginning." The excitement because of the incarnation of the Savior is spoken in both.

GOSPEL LESSON—John 1:1-18

We are the witnesses to the truth about Jesus. John the Baptist was sent as a witness to testify to the Incarnate Word. He pointed to Him as the