

The Order of Service for Home Worship

THE FIRST SUNDAY of CHRISTMAS



Hymn 1: In the bleak mid-winter

1. In the bleak mid-winter frosty wind made moan,
Earth stood hard as iron, water like a stone;
Snow had fallen snow on snow, snow on snow,
In the bleak mid-winter long ago.
2. Our God, heaven cannot hold him nor earth sustain;
Heaven and earth shall flee away when he comes to reign.
In the bleak mid-winter a stable place sufficed
The Lord God Almighty Jesus Christ.
3. Enough for him, whom cherubim worship night and day,
A breast-full of milk and a manger full of hay:
Enough for him, whom angels fall down before,
The ox and ass and camel which adore.
4. Angels and archangels may have gathered there,
Cherubim and seraphim thronged the air;
But only his mother in her maiden bliss
Worshipped the beloved with a kiss.
5. What can I give him, poor as I am?
If I were a shepherd I would bring a lamb;
If I were a wise man I would do my part,
Yet what I can I give him, give my heart.

In the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit. **Amen.**
Grace and peace be with you from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.

Father of glory, holy and eternal, look upon us now in power and mercy. May your strength overcome our weakness, your radiance transform our blindness, and your Spirit draw us to that love shown and offered to us by your Son, our Saviour Jesus Christ. Amen.

As we come into the presence of our heavenly Father let us seek his forgiveness of our sins that we may know his peace in our hearts.

Lord Jesus, mighty God and Prince of Peace.

Lord, have mercy.

Lord Jesus, Son of God and Son of Mary.

Christ, have mercy.

Lord Jesus, Word made flesh and splendour of the Father. **Lord, have mercy.**

May almighty God have mercy upon us, forgive us our sins and bring us to everlasting life. **Amen.**

Alleluia, alleluia, glory be to God on high;

Alleluia, to the Saviour who has gained the victory;

Alleluia to the Spirit, fount of love and sanctity;

Alleluia, Alleluia, to the Triune Majesty.

Collect: Almighty God, who wonderfully created us in your own image and yet more wonderfully restored us through your Son Jesus Christ: grant that, as he came to share in our humanity, so we may share the life of his divinity; who is alive and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and for ever. **Amen.**

A reading from the book of the prophet 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.

This is the Word of the Lord.

Thanks be to God.

Psalm 148. 7-14

Response: Praise the Lord for his glory is above all heav'n and earth.

Praise the Lord from the earth,
you sea monsters and all deeps,
fire and hail, snow and frost,
stormy wind fulfilling his command! (R)

Mountains and all hills,
fruit trees and all cedars!
Wild animals and all cattle,
creeping things and flying birds! (R)

Kings of the earth and all peoples,
princes and all rulers of the earth!
Young men and women alike,
old and young together! (R)

Let them praise the name of the Lord, for his name alone is exalted;
his glory is above earth and heaven.
He has raised up a horn for his people, praise for all his faithful,
for the people of Israel who are close to him. Praise the Lord! (R)

A reading from Paul's letter to the Galatians 4. 4-7

But 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.
This is the Word of the Lord. **Thanks be to God.**

The Gospel Acclamation:

Alleluia! Alleluia! Alleluia!
Let us praise the name of the Lord, for his name alone is exalted.
Alleluia! Alleluia! Alleluia!

Listen to the Gospel of Christ according to St. Luke 2. 15-21

Glorify to you, O Lord.
When the angels had left them and gone into heaven, the shepherds said to one another, 'Let us go now to Bethlehem and see this thing that has taken place, which the Lord has made known to us.' So they went with haste and found Mary and Joseph, and the child lying in the manger. When they saw this, they made known what had

been told them about this child; and all who heard it were amazed at what the shepherds told them. But Mary treasured all these words and pondered them in her heart. The shepherds returned, glorifying and praising God for all they had heard and seen, as it had been told them. After eight days had passed, it was time to circumcise the child; and he was called Jesus, the name given by the angel before he was conceived in the womb.

This is the Gospel of the Lord. **Praise to you, O Christ.**

Meditation:

We can only imagine the excitement and confusion felt by the Shepherds after the visit of the angels. How could they do anything other than go to Bethlehem to see the new born child which had been proclaimed to them by the heavenly hosts filling the sky. Could it all be true? When the Shepherds arrived they found everything just as the angels had told them. They found Mary and Joseph and the child lying in the manger. Here the Shepherds found the Saviour lying in a manger and excitedly they told everyone there all that the angels had told them. Mary, we are told, treasured all these words and pondered them in heart. "What did it all mean?" "What would it mean for her and her Son?" Questions we might ask ourselves. All the reports we are given about the birth of Christ reinforce the truth of the miracle of the incarnation - that in this child God has come into the world he created and is living among his people. The Good News that in Jesus Christ, the babe of Bethlehem, God is with us is confirmed by Luke in our Gospel reading today as he tells us how after eight days, in accordance with Jewish law, Joseph and Mary took the baby to be circumcised and he was named Jesus. In his circumcision Jesus is formally marked as a member of God's chosen people but he is also given the name of Jesus. This is the name that in Matthew's Gospel the angel had told Joseph to give to the boy. It is a name, Jesus, which means God saves. As Jesus is marked as a member of God's chosen people he is given the name which proclaims him as the Saviour. Although Jesus is circumcised according to the law of Moses he will, as the angels proclaimed, be the Saviour of all. In Jesus God offers peace to all people of goodwill. He is the one who will save all people who place their faith and trust in him from their sins and restore a right and full relationship between God and his people. In sharing our lives he will share with us the glory of his eternal life. This he will achieve by his giving of himself on the cross for love of us and all his people. The birth of Jesus is a gift from God to all people, his name is the name above all names, the name at which every knee will bow. Today we kneel with the shepherds before the new-born Christ child, like Mary we ponder in our hearts all that is said about him, we ask ourselves, "What does this mean?" "What does this mean for my life and how I live it?" "What does it mean for the world in which we live?" As we witness his circumcision we celebrate and glorify in his name. For in this child, God is with us, today and every day for Jesus is the Saviour. He is the one in whom God Saves, transforming our lives with his love, bringing hope and peace which will never disappoint to all who come to him. Amen.

In the power of the Holy Spirit and in union with Christ let us bring our prayers for the Church and for the world to our heavenly Father.

We pray for the Church throughout the world, for the leaders of the Church among them Andrew our Archbishop and Mary our Bishop. We pray for the clergy and people of our diocese and for our own churches; that the Church may proclaim the saving power of Jesus, the name above all names, to all people, Lord in your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

We pray for the people of the world, for the victims of violence and oppression, for all suffering the effects of natural disaster and for those suffering from famine or drought; May the saving power of Jesus bring reconciliation and peace wherever there is division and conflict.

Lord in your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

We pray for our own community, for our families, friends and neighbours. We give thanks for all who serve the needs of the vulnerable; may we share the saving love of Jesus with all we meet.

Lord in your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

We pray for all who are in need, for those who are sick, for those who are bereaved, for the lonely and isolated and for all in any kind of need. We hold in our hearts before God those known to us who are in need at this time and all whose names are recorded in our parish intercession books; may they be strengthened by the Holy Spirit and consoled with the love of Christ.

Lord in your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

We pray for all who have died. We remember before God our own departed loved ones and we pray for the recently departed and those whose anniversary of death falls at this time. May they share the eternal glory of heaven in the company of all the saints.

Lord in your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

We bring all our prayers to our heavenly Father as we pray together:

**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,
the power and the glory,
for ever and ever. Amen.**

The Peace:

Our Saviour Christ is the Prince of peace; of the increase of his government and of peace there shall be no end.

The peace of the Lord be with you and with all those whom you love.

And also with you.

Let us pray:

God our Father, whose Word has come among us in the Holy Child of Bethlehem: may the light of faith illumine our hearts and shine in our words and deeds; through him who is Christ the Lord. Amen.

The Blessing:

The Lord be with you. **And also with you.**

Christ, who by taking our flesh, gathered into one all things earthly and heavenly, fill you with all joy and peace and the blessing of God almighty, the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit be among you and remain with you always. **Amen.**

Let us go in peace to love and serve the Lord.

In the name of Christ. Amen.

Hymn 2: Joy to the World

- 1. Joy to the world! The Lord is come;
Let earth receive her King:
Let every heart prepare him room,
And heaven and nature sing,
And heaven and nature sing,
And heaven, and heaven and nature sing.**

- 2. Joy to the earth! The Saviour reigns;
Let us our songs employ:
While fields and floods,
Rocks, hills and plains
Repeat the sounding joy,
Repeat the sounding joy,
Repeat, repeat, the sounding joy.**

- 3. He rules the world with truth and grace,
And makes the nations prove
The glories of his righteousness,
And wonders of his love,
And wonder of his love,
And wonders, and wonders of his love.**

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