



Christmas Day The Nativity of our Lord

The readings focus on the seemingly ordinary theme of God's coming to us in Christ. However, the key issue in this coming, is in our capacity to see it, to recognise it, to appropriate it and to make it seen. The surprise, perhaps, of this celebration – that should keep us open-minded and open hearted, and constantly mindful and aware – is that it was the most unlikely people who got to see the birth of Christ, and the expected ones who missed it completely.

May our eyes and be opened to see again for the first time (to borrow a phrase from Marcus Borg) the power of the incarnation for us and our world.

INTRODUCTIONS

For use by lectors, in order of service, parish bulletins and magazines

Isaiah 9 : 2-7

The bible readings in Advent have prepared us to celebrate the coming of the Lord. His people longed for him, and we know the joy of living with him here and now. So, we understand Isaiah's prophecy as greeting the birth of a child whose new kingdom of righteousness will last forever.

The Psalm - Psalm 96

A song of praise for God's greatness and glory, anticipating God's coming as righteous judge.

Titus 2 : 11-14

The new morning of the world has dawned, says this writer. As we learn how to live in this bright new light, in gratitude for the first coming of Jesus who has made us his own, we await the greater glory when Christ will come again.

Luke 2 : 1-14, 15-20

Luke, the master storyteller, gives us pictures we shall never forget, of the humble birth at Bethlehem of the Saviour of the world, and the shining glory which brought shepherds to worship the Lamb of God.

[Click here to view the readings](#)

http://bible.oremus.org/?show_adj=no&passages=Isaiah%209:%202-7%0Acw%20Psalm%2096%0ATitus%202:%2011-14%0ALuke%202:%201-14,%2015-20

COLLECTS OF THE DAY

The Nativity of our Lord (Day)

Collect One

O God,
who makest us glad with the yearly remembrance
of the birth of thy only Son Jesus Christ;
Grant that, as we joyfully receive him for our Redeemer,
so we may with sure confidence,
behold him when he shall come to be our Judge,
who liveth and reigneth with thee and the Holy Spirit,
one God, world without end.

Almighty God,
who hast given us thy only-begotten Son
to take our nature upon him,
and as at this time to be born of a pure virgin;
Grant that we being regenerate,
and made thy children by adoption and grace,
may daily be renewed by thy Holy Spirit;
through the same our Lord Jesus Christ,
who liveth and reigneth with thee and the same Spirit,
ever one God, world without end.

Collect Two

Almighty God,
you make us glad with the yearly remembrance
of the birth of your Son Jesus Christ:
Grant that, as we joyfully receive him as our redeemer,
we may with sure confidence behold him

when he shall come to be our judge;
who is alive and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit,
one God, now and for ever.

Almighty God,
you have given us your only-begotten Son
to take our nature upon him
and as at this time to be born of a pure virgin:
Grant that we, who have been born again
and made your children by adoption and grace,
may daily be renewed by your Holy Spirit;
through Jesus Christ our Lord.

PRAYERS OF THE PEOPLE

In the brightness and peace of this Christmas morning, let us pray to our God, responding, "Amen."

Gracious Creator, in the beginning was the Word and through the Word were all things created. Continue your creative work in your people the Church and place your Word in our hearts, and minds and mouths, through that same living Word, Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

Ruler of heaven and earth, who has created the peoples for yourself, may wars cease and weapons be surrendered. Make each believer a vessel and instrument of your peace in the world, serving peace, speaking peace, through the living Word, Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

Compassionate God, hope of all who have no other hope, be with those who are alone or who mourn a lost loved one at this time. Bring the lonely to our minds and guide our steps to those in need of your special care. Give us words of friendship to share, through the living Word, Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

Wonderful Counsellor, who shares your wisdom with the humble poor and the little children, take away our pride, any self-centred desires, and pompous ambitions, making us little and poor before you, ready to receive whatever you have for us in your living Word, Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

God of Glory, grant what we ask, as you see that it is good for us. Nourish us through your Word and at your holy Table with the living Christ. **Amen.**

POST COMMUNION

God for whom we wait,
you feed us with the bread of eternal life:
Keep us ever watchful, that we may be ready
to stand before the Son of Man, Jesus Christ our Lord.

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.

PRAYERS

INTERCESSIONS

Let us pray for the people of this world who are in need this day as we celebrate Christmas.

Child of Bethlehem, smile upon the church all over the world: may the Holy Spirit may guide us, and grant that we may pursue truth, unity, peace and righteousness. We pray especially for the church in Britain at the moment, being tested by difficult questions and challenged by the threat of disunity. We pray for the work of the church here and for our own ministries as we live our lives.

Lord in your mercy, **Hear our prayer**

Child of Bethlehem, smile upon all those charged with the responsibility of government, both here in Britain and all over the world, that they might rule in peace, justice and mercy, that people may honour one another and seek the common good.

Lord in your mercy, **Hear our prayer**

Child of Bethlehem, smile upon those who will not enjoy Christmas this season, for whom life is a struggle for survival as a result of poverty, famine, disease, war, or the greed of others. We pray, too, for those striving to rebuild their lives after the devastation of natural disasters and of terrorism.

Lord in your mercy, **Hear our prayer**

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Child of Bethlehem, smile upon all who are troubled, anxious or sick in mind, body or spirit and for those who love and care for them. Give them courage and hope in their troubles and bring them the joy of your salvation. We remember now anyone known to us who is in special need of our prayers, and name them in a moment of silence

Lord in your mercy, **Hear our prayer**

Jesus Christ is the light of the world, a light which no darkness can quench. We remember before God those who have died and light a candle to symbolise the light of Christ, which eternally shines and brings hope. We remember

You turn our darkness into light: in your light shall we see light.

Merciful Father,

accept these prayers for the sake of your Son, our Saviour Jesus Christ.

Amen.

Gathering our prayers into one, let us, with confidence, say the Lord's Prayer together.

PRAYER OF ADORATION

In which images from Isaiah 9:2-7 are used to reflect on our less than perfect world.

Father, Redeemer and Spirit of grace, we adore you.

You give hope to those who are yoked

To the burden of injustice, oppression, loneliness, and grief:

In loving kindness you have shone a great light into the deep darkness of our world.

You give hope to those who suffer under the rod of famine and war:

In your faithfulness you have established a kingdom of endless peace.

You give hope to those whose shoulders ache under the bar of apartheid and religious persecution:

in solidarity with humanity you establish justice without end.

You give hope to those crushed by the tramping warriors of homelessness, unemployment, intolerance:

by grace you reveal to us your action for putting things right.

Therefore we adore you, Holiest Trinity,

Father, Son and Holy Spirit:
one God, for ever and ever. **Amen**

Christ, worshipped by the shepherds,
give peace on earth to all who are oppressed.
Jesus, Saviour,
hear our prayer.

Christ, before whom the wise men knelt,
give humility and wisdom to all who govern.
Jesus, Saviour,
hear our prayer.

Christ, whose radiance filled a lowly manger,
give the glory of your resurrection to all who rest in you.
Jesus, Saviour,
hear our prayer.

Jesus, Saviour, child of Mary,
you know us and love us,
you share our lives
and hear our prayer.
Glory to you for ever. **Amen.**

O Holy One,
heavenly angels spoke to earthly shepherds
and eternity entered time in the child of Bethlehem.
Through the telling of the Christmas story,
let our temporal lives be caught up in the eternal
in that same child,
that we might join shepherds and all the heavenly host
in praising the coming of Jesus Christ, our Saviour. **Amen.**

God of glory,
your splendour shines from a manger in Bethlehem,
where the Light of the world is humbly born
into the darkness of human night.
Open our eyes to Christ's presence in the shadows of our world,
so that we, like him, may become beacons of your justice,
and defenders of all for whom there is no room. **Amen.**

Light of life, you came in flesh,

born into human pain and joy,
and gave us power to be your children.
Grant us faith, O Christ, to see your presence among us,
so that all of creation may sing new songs of gladness
and walk in the way of peace. **Amen.**

We bless you, Abba, Father,
for you have visited your people
in one like us in all things but sin,
and in human fragility you have revealed
the face of divinity.
Gather into your arms
all the peoples of the world,
so that in your embrace
we may find blessing, peace,
and the fullness of our inheritance
as your daughters and sons. **Amen.**

God of incarnation,
your angel host announces
that peace has been born among us,
embodied in fragile flesh.
With confidence in the power of that miracle,
we bring before you our prayers for the church and the world.
By your grace, transform our prayers from words to deeds,
that we may live as a holy people
in the dawn of your peace,
redeemed from all that divides us. **Amen.**

Christ, our God,
whom humble shepherds worshiped at a manger,
you are holy and most high, merciful and mighty.
Startle us to wakefulness,
that we may rejoice in your new and glorious dawn,
and, in your holy name,
act to mend this suffering world. **Amen.**

Tender and precious God,
from ancient times
the promise of your salvation
has sustained your people. With Mary and Joseph,
teach us to treasure in our hearts the birth of Jesus,

and with shepherds and angels,
lead us to praise his holy name. **Amen.**

Christmas Blessings

May there be harmony in all your relationships. May sharp words, envious thoughts, and hostile feelings be dissolved.

May you give and receive love generously. May this love echo in your heart like the joy of church bells on a clear December day.

May each person who comes into your life be greeted as another Christ. May the honour given the Babe of Bethlehem be that which you extend to every guest who enters your presence.

May the hope of this sacred season settle in your soul. May it be a foundation of courage for you when times of distress occupy your inner land.

May the wonder and awe that fills the eyes of children be awakened within you. May it lead you to renewed awareness and appreciation of whatever you too easily take for granted.

May the bonds of love for one another be strengthened as you gather with your family and friends around the table of festivity and nourishment.

May you daily open the gift of your life and be grateful for the hidden treasures it contains.

May the coming year be one of good health for you. May you have energy and vitality. May you care well for your body, mind and spirit.

May you keep your eye on the Star within you and trust this Luminescent Presence to guide and direct you each day.

May you go often to the Bethlehem of your heart and visit the One who offers you peace. May you bring this peace into our world.

May our lives and our prayers be like lights shining in dark places.
And may the Blessing of God –
Father, Son and Holy Spirit –
fill our hearts and homes

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with light this Christmas and in the new year to come.

**ONLINE SERMON SOURCES &
CHILDREN'S SERMONS - see separate post on site**

HYMN SUGGESTIONS

Joy To The World
O Come, O Come Immanuel
O Little Town Of Bethlehem
Do You Hear What I Hear?
Emmanuel (Hallowed Manger Ground)
A King Is Born (Link to YouTube video)
Born In Bethlehem
Welcome To Our World
Hymn Suggestions:
Who Is He In Yonder Stall
Hark! The Herald Angels Sing
Come Thou Long Expected Jesus
Joy to The World
What Child Is This?
Here Is Our King
Joy Has Dawned
Winter Snow
Do You Hear What I Hear

Please commend this resource to colleagues - to obtain passwords and to receive notifications of postings they simply send an email to churchnewsireland@gmail.com with the message 'Passwords' in the title