

The First Sunday of Christmas Year A - December 29, 2013

As is usual for this time of year, the Lectionary emphasises our hope in Christ, the coming of God's reign in Christ, and the challenge for us to live from this hope, remembering God's comings in the past, recognising God's comings now, and awaiting God's comings into our future.

This week, let's celebrate and open ourselves to the power of God's gift of hope in Christ.

INTRODUCTIONS

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

Isaiah 63:7-9: A Psalm of praise for God's love for God's people, and God's deliverance and mercy which carries them.

Psalm 148: A call for creation to praise God, for God's glory is over all, and God uplifts and strengthens God's people.

Hebrews 2:10-18: Through Jesus, who became human, like us, and who was tempted, like us, God has brought us, as Christ's sisters and brothers, into God's glory.

Matthew 2:13-23: Herod slaughters all boys two years and younger after being outwitted by the wise men, but Jesus and his parents, after being warned by God, have already fled to Egypt. After Herod's death, they return to the land of Israel and settle in Nazareth.

[Click here to view the readings](http://bible.oremus.org/?show_adj=no&passages=Isaiah%2063:%207-9%0Acw%20Psalm%20148%0AHebrews%202:%2010-18%0AMatthew%202:%2013-23)

http://bible.oremus.org/?show_adj=no&passages=Isaiah%2063:%207-9%0Acw%20Psalm%20148%0AHebrews%202:%2010-18%0AMatthew%202:%2013-23

COLLECTS OF THE DAY

Collect One

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,
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;

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who is alive and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit,
one God, now and for ever.

PRAYERS OF THE PEOPLE

P Mindful of the Lord's steadfast love, we call upon Him in prayer.

P O God, our Saviour, You fulfilled Your promises to our forefathers by humbling Yourself to be born of the Virgin Mary for us and for our salvation. Grant that the whole church on earth resound in praise for Your incarnate presence in the flesh, and the forgiveness which You deliver to us in and through Jesus Christ. Lord, in Your mercy,

C hear our prayer.

P O God, our Saviour, by an angel You protected Your people Israel as they journeyed to the promised land and by another angel You protected Your Son from Herod's merciless slaughtering. Continue to send Your holy angels to protect Your people, especially the unborn, the aged, and the developmentally challenged. Cause us to see all life as proof of Your wondrous creation and evermore lead us to care for and preserve all life. Lord, in Your mercy,

C hear our prayer.

P O God, grant that the light of Christ's forgiveness illuminate, permeate, and change the lives of those lost in sin. Bless the work of all who proclaim Your saving Word to the lost and erring, especially missionaries, parish clergy, teachers, and laity. Through Your Law, lead people to repentance that they may heartily receive Your Gospel promises. May all those who believe, cling relentlessly to Christ Jesus who became flesh, destroying sin's dreadful curse that we may have abundant life. Lord, in Your mercy,

C hear our prayer.

P O God, our Saviour, ruler of the world, sustain those in authority over us, especially , _____, and all those who hold positions in the military, in the police and in state, and local offices. Instill upon them the conviction that they are Your servants to guide, protect, defend, and to promote peace and good order in our land. Lead them to act honestly and justly for the welfare of all. Lord, in Your mercy,

C hear our prayer.

P O God, our Saviour, at the right time You became flesh to redeem us who are born under the Law. By Your redemption on the cross, we are now considered Your children. Comfort those who are in need (*especially* _____). Give them patience and fortitude in facing all afflictions. Remove doubt and assure them of Your abiding presence through Your holy Word and Sacraments. Comfort those who mourn the departing of the saints, (*especially* _____). Strengthen them in the knowledge that those who die in the faith are at home in Your heavenly kingdom. Lord, in Your mercy,

C hear our prayer.

POST COMMUNION

Post Communion Prayer

Heavenly Father,
you have refreshed us with this heavenly sacrament.
As your Son came to live among us,
grant us grace to live our lives,

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united in love and obedience,
as those who long to live with him in heaven;
through Jesus Christ our Lord.

PRAYERS

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.

Nurturing God,
remembering the exile of the holy family
and Herod's slaughter of the children,
we remember all who need our sustaining love.
Hear our prayers for the church and the community in the world.

Grant that all people may hear together the song of joy,
and find their homes in the garden of justice and hope,
that we may experience the fullness of life,

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which is your will for all,
in the coming of Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

Praise is our cry, O Holy One of Israel,
for you have come among us and borne our burdens.
Give us open hearts,
that we might embrace our suffering sisters and brothers,
and welcome Jesus in the hospitality
we show to exiles. Amen.

O come, O come Emmanuel. Come into our lives in this season of new beginnings,
precious traditions, and the longing deep in our hearts for what we have learned to call the
Day of our Lord, your day; a day when you come with love and power and justice and
mercy, a day when we stand up and become all that you have created us to be.

So come to us, Emmanuel, this day and this season. May this day be the day in which
swords will be beaten into ploughshares and spears into pruning hooks. When cold hearts
melt and relationships warm and the hungry are fed, and there is peace...in our hearts, our
homes, our communities, our nation, and our world. In the name of the Prince of Peace we
pray. Amen.

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, in the
unity of the Holy Spirit, one God, now and for ever. Amen. *Common Worship*

God in Trinity, eternal unity of perfect love: gather the nations to be one family, and draw
us into your holy life through the birth of Emmanuel, our Lord Jesus Christ. *Common
Worship Shorter Collect*

Radiant God, in Jesus Christ your light shines in our darkness, giving joy in our sorrow and
revealing your presence in our loneliness. Fill our hearts with your light that in the
darkness of this world our lives may shine with your eternal splendour. *Methodist Worship*

Lord Jesus, at this time we can look back to the old year, and forward to the new. We give
thanks for the blessings of the past year, and we place into your hands the mistakes we
have made. As you are "the Light of the world", take away the darkness in our lives. As you
are "the Way", lead us in the year ahead. As you are "the gate of the sheepfold", protect us
from danger. We entrust the past to your mercy, Lord, the present to your love, and the
future to your providence. Amen.

Let your mighty hand and your outstretched arm, O Lord, be our defence. Let your mercy
and loving-kindness in Christ Jesus be our protection. May your true and faithful Word be
our instruction and guide; and may the grace of your life-giving Spirit be our comfort and
strength, to the end and in the end, now and for ever. Amen.
John Knox, 1513-1572

O most loving Shepherd, in the deepest of all waters we will trust you. In the darkest of all
valleys we will rejoice in your presence. In the worst of our days we shall rest at peace in
your arms. In the most troubled of our nights we shall be comforted by your saints. Amen.
Archibald Campbell Tait, 1811-1882

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Preserve us, O God, in the faith of your saints, a faith both tried and trusted. May we enjoy both now and for ever the eternal love of the Father, the abiding love of the Son and the indwelling of love of the Holy Spirit, one God in glory and majesty, world without end.

Amen ;

Hilary of Poitiers, 315-367

O Lord, whose way is perfect, help us always to trust in your goodness, to walk in the way of faith, and to follow in the path of simplicity. Teach us to cast our cares on your providence, that we may possess a quiet mind and a contented spirit; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen

Christina Georgina Rossetti, 1830-1894

LECTIONARY NOTES

REFLECTIONS ON THEME:

This is a tough day in the Lectionary, coming right after the Christmas celebration. While it can be tempting to avoid the obvious difficulties with today's readings and just stay with expressions of faith and rejoicing in the coming of Christ and the promise of God's deliverance, even from enemies who would seek to destroy God's purposes, to do this is to do our people – and the Scriptures – a disservice. While it is good to affirm that God's plan of salvation is worked out throughout biblical history, and in our own times and lives, the shocking image of the innocent children who are slaughtered as Christ escapes cannot be avoided. Neither can the reality of the millions of innocent children who die daily through poverty, war, curable diseases and human trafficking. To ignore this horrific story, or to focus only on Christ's escape, is to paint God as a heartless manipulator of history, and human beings as expendable pawns. Rather, the challenge of this passage is to seek to understand the impact that Herod's cold abuse of power had on Christ and his life. It is to recognise the grief of God in the cry of the mothers who lost their children. And it is to recognise God's grief for the lost innocents of our world today. Then, as our hearts are broken, we cannot help but follow Christ into a life of protecting the most vulnerable, and of holding our leaders accountable to justice and integrity for the sake of the poor. The message of Christmas, then, is not just that God is with us, but that through us, God seeks to be with all people, especially those who are grieving, suffering and marginalised.

CONNECTING WITH LIFE:

GLOBAL APPLICATION: It would be wonderful to be able to say that Herods no longer exist in the halls of power in our world, but we all know this is not the case. Some of our leaders are deliberately corrupt, feeling nothing for bringing suffering and devastation on their nation and people, while they enjoy privilege, prosperity and power. Others are simply weak, unable to resist the temptations of power and greed, and unable to stand against those who lead them into corruption through promises of financial and political support. And all the while, people in poverty-stricken, debt-crippled countries suffer and die, ignored by the powerful and wealthy. In this scenario, though, there are leaders – of government, of business, of faith communities, of the arts – that stand with integrity and courage against injustice. It is important for us to identify these leaders and support them in prayer and in any other way we can. But, it is equally important for us, as followers of the ultimate leader, Christ, to speak out against any slaughters of innocents we become aware of, and to do what we can to work for the healing and restoration of those who are being harmed or ignored. Among the issues we need to be involved with, human trafficking stands out as a modern "slaughter of the innocents" which must call us to prayer and action in Christ's name.

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LOCAL APPLICATION: Preachers have a tough time this Sunday. It is quite possible that, after the Christmas joy, this Sunday's service could feel like a wet blanket. However, it can also be a celebration of justice and a call to life if handled well. Two emphases that can help to make this happen are as follows: 1. God is at work to save and protect the innocent, the marginalised and the poor. God is also at work, in Christ, leading us, as God's people, into the abundant life Christ promised. God hears both the cry of the most vulnerable, and our cry. This is a gift of grace and a source of tremendous hope and joy. 2. As in Christ, God came to raise up the least and to include and restore the marginalised, so God invites us to participate in this work of joy-bringing, life-giving and saving. And it is as we participate in God's reign – which has come to us in Christ – that we discover life, guidance and salvation for ourselves. As we embrace these two emphases, and the life they offer, we can begin to identify the grieving and hurting ones in our midst and make a commitment to speak for them, to serve them and to protect them in any way we can.

SERMON STARTER 1

Having been to Bethlehem and seen the cave which Christians venerate as the birthplace of Jesus, I am struggling this year with trying to understand what happened that first Christmas night. We are told that Mary and Joseph had to leave Nazareth and go to Bethlehem, because it was the home town of Joseph and the Roman were conducting a census. So off they trekked across the desert from Nazareth. When they arrived, Mary was about to give birth to the baby Jesus. Imagine that you were Joseph in this position.

Your wife is about to give birth, what do you do? I suspect that we would all go to the home of our very best friends and beg a favour. We are told that there was no room for them at the inn.

The word used by Luke which we choose to translate in this instance as 'inn' is 'katalumati.' Later in the Gospel (22:11) Luke will use the same word to describe the place where the last supper will be held, there it is often translated as 'guest room.' We all have pictures in our minds of nativity scenes in which a friendly hotelier takes pity on Mary and Joseph and finds them a place. The truth is probably very different. The phrase 'there was no room' might be intended to convey a much more cruel fact, that not even the friends and relatives of Joseph wanted to provide shelter for him and his disgraced wife. Had the news of the pregnant Mary reached Bethlehem before the couple arrived? There is nothing juicier than a bit of gossip about an unmarried mother, such news travels faster, even in an age deprived of the telephone. The fact that there was no room for Mary and Joseph in the 'katalumati' whatever one of those was, gives a huge insight into the attitudes of their friends and family. We can be sure of the fact that the place of birth was one which was not desirable, it was chosen because there was 'no room' in the place where Joseph and Mary would have chosen. This place was a place devoid of the usual comforts, because the baby Jesus was laid in a manger. Babies are not normally put into feeding troughs, a mother would only do this out of necessity. It is a striking point and no wonder that Luke mentions it three times in his nativity story.

So here we have a rejected couple, giving birth in an undesirable place, finding no suitable hospitality in the home town of Joseph. Little wonder that in the passage from Matthew today we read that Joseph decides to escape to Egypt. Given the lack of hospitality which Joseph has received in Bethlehem there is little reason to suppose that the couple will find protection. Any protective father would feel equally fearful for the family.

Those of you who know your Old Testament will remember that Pharaoh also gave orders to kill male Hebrew infants because he was warned in a dream of a new born Hebrew who

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would be threat to his kingdom. If were to examine the language used in Exodus and in Matthew we would see remarkable similarities. There can be no doubt that Matthew has in mind the story of Moses as he tells the story of Jesus, Pharaoh becomes Herod, whilst Moses becomes Jesus. Moses saved the people from bondage and slavery, now Jesus will save the people from their sins.

Such similarities between Old Testament passages and the nativity stories in Matthew have resulted in the passage from Matthew being seen as Christian midrash. Midrash was a way in which rabbis at the time of Jesus interpreted scripture in manner very different from our literal understanding of truth. It involved story telling and interpreting truth in new ways from previous events. This is not to say that these events never took place. We know that killing babies was exactly the kind of thing which Herod would have done.

Herod was enraged that the Magi hadn't "reported" back to him and he was prone to fly into a rage. Herod ruled from about 37BC until 4BC, (due to errors in the calendar we believe that Jesus was born about 6BC!), the Jewish historian Josephus records that Herod's later years were full of attempts to defend his throne against the Jewish Hasmonians, the descendants of the Maccabees. This was a man who executed his own wife Mariamne and three sons Alexander, Aristobulus and Antipater. He had an elaborate network of spies, and he often executed people for real or imagined conspiracies against his throne. Josephus (Jos. Ant 17.6.6) even talks about a plan, never carried out, to have all the Jewish nobility slaughtered at the time of his own death to ensure that everyone would be mourning at his death.

So we read in Matthew that Herod had a fit of rage and ordered that all of the male infants in Bethlehem under two years of age be killed. Early Christians tradition reported that perhaps 14,000 (Byzantine) or 64,000 (Syrian) babies might have died. The number is actually much smaller. Bethlehem was a small town of only perhaps 500-1,000 people, so it is possible that about 20 babies might have been killed. Nevertheless such a slaughter was a most dreadful action which would have brought enormous fear and mourning to the town. We need to remember that this is the reality of that first Christmas. It will never appear on our Christmas cards and yet it is much more a feature of the birth of Jesus than the idyllic scene of 'cattle lowing' and a waking baby Jesus who doesn't cry. Mary and Joseph are refused hospitality, they and the baby are now in real danger of being killed in the ensuing bloodbath. It was a very brutal Christmas in the present context of slaughter in places like Darfur, Zimbabwe and Iraq it perhaps has more to say to our world than we are prepared to allow.

We are told by Matthew that eventually the family return and go to live in Nazareth. Such a detail is also important. I love the fact that wherever I go I bump into people with whom I have an instant affinity, because we immediately recognise our origins in Merseyside. Being born in Liverpool means that you belong to a very easily identifiable group, the cheery disposition, and charming accent are just two of the qualities inherent in the Scouser. Liverpudlians love nothing better than sharing their good nature and friendly humour with others who have not had the benefit of such a birthplace. However there is also a flip side, there are those who think that anybody who comes from Liverpool must be horribly vulgar, steal cutlery and can't pronounce 'grass.' We are seldom intimidated by this behaviour and we have expressions which characterise these ignorant people.

I say this because if Jesus was born in England, I think that he would have been born in Liverpool. For this reason alone the 'Liverpool Nativity' which was on television over Christmas was very appropriate. Let me explain, Jesus grew up in Nazareth in Galilee.

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Nazareth was not far from the major commercial trade routes, only several miles from Sepphoris an important city. Yet this was a place despised by many Jewish people at the time. It was just as unlikely that a Messiah would come from Nazareth as it was for Anakin Skywalker to come from Tatooine. If a Messiah was to come from anywhere it would be Jerusalem, not the uncultured North.

Quite a few things about Jesus and the Gospels start to make sense when we understand this. In John 1:46 we read that Philip found Nathanael and told him, "We have found the one Moses wrote about in the Law, and about whom the prophets also wrote it is Jesus of Nazareth, the son of Joseph." The response of Nathaniel was "Nazareth! Can anything good come from there?"

People from this northern region stood out. When Jesus was arrested and Peter was accused of being with Jesus by the servant girl, (Mark 14:67) she said "You also were with that Nazarene, Jesus". We all know that Peter denied any contact with Jesus, but as soon as he opened his mouth Peter gave himself away, because he would have spoken with a Northern accent! So we are told Peter is accused himself of being 'a Galilean.' Jesus never argued about the title, he would never shake it off, and presumably people would know where Jesus came from every time he said 'grass.' Jesus seemed to bear the disdain of others about his roots throughout his adult life. So it was that Pilate had would have thought it a kind of joke to write 'Jesus of Nazareth, King of the Jews'

So the hopeless scene of an asylum seeking Joseph and Mary wandering around the streets of Liverpool is not too far from the truth. How could Jesus be born anywhere else, a messiah from Tunbridge Wells would just be too ridiculous. *Charles Royden*

SERMON STARTER 2

I recently visited the Church of the Nativity in Bethlehem. It is the oldest surviving church in Europe, it was saved from the destruction which involved the invasion from Persia, this was because the invading army saw in the church a picture of the Magi. Recognising them as coming from the same country they decided not to destroy the church, which survives to this day.

In our reading to day we hear of the reaction of Herod the Great to the birth of Jesus. Herod has all the infants in the Bethlehem area killed because he fears that Jesus may succeed to his throne, rather than a son of his. He is completely opposed to the birth of Jesus and will persecute the Holy Family as they set off to escape to Egypt. Hence Jesus becomes a member of a persecuted family chased by soldiers who wish to see him dead. This is the kind of God which we worship this Christmas time, one who lives alongside us, sharing in the most vulnerable and difficult of human circumstances.

The "Wise men from the East" by contrast come to Herod asking "Where is the child that has been born king of the Jews?" They subsequently visited the child with Mary, paid him homage and offered him gifts. Now at Christmas time many people will discover some of their spiritual roots and make the annual pilgrimage to church. They are not against Jesus, but neither are they committed to the challenge of the Christian faith either. They are somewhat ambivalent and most probably just too preoccupied with other things.

There are many people who will speak of the decline of morality and the breakdown in society, but who have given up the practice of attending church. Our failure as a nation to hold on to our spiritual values is affected deeply by the decline in church attendance. The problem is that it is impossible to be a Christian in isolation, the Christian faith is about

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community, being called by God to belong to a Christian family. Since people have stopped going to church, they are culpable in whatever breakdown of morality they perceive there to be in our community. Not only have they become cut off from their spiritual roots, they have contributed to the decline of the church and its influence in society. If people cease attending church then they will wither, just as surely as the Christmas trees which are cut off from their roots and are now dropping their needles all over the place. Moreover if we all ceased going to church, then churches will increasingly close as we can only afford to pay for fewer and fewer clergy, and church building will literally crumble. I am assuming from experience that these people do not have standing orders with the local church to help it to pay its bills in their absence! So the next time somebody tells you that they are a Christian but that they do not go to church, please alert them to the financial facts of life.

It is important that we are prepared to be engaged in the important spiritual act of witness, as we too go to worship the Christ child. We take our stand with those wise people and shepherds who were prepared to stand up and be counted. Each time we Christians enter our church during these special holy days of Christmas and then on throughout the year, we declare to the whole world our belief. We demonstrate our firm conviction that, at a certain point in history, the one and only God entered into the constraints of space and time, was clothed in human skin, felt the warmth of a mother's love. We say that our very God took on flesh and then took tools into his hands and worked for a living, rejoiced at wedding receptions, cried at the death of a friend, fed those who were hungry, healed the sick and raised the dead. He who was a baby refugee, still walks as God with us.

In this holy season we celebrate the doctrine called the Incarnation. This teaches the mystery of God entering into human flesh; the doctrine from which flows our conviction that, there is nothing...nothing in this world that escapes the loving embrace of God. as we come together and worship as a Christian community so we proclaim Christ to our world.
Charles Royden

SERMON OUTLINE

Matthew 2:13-23 flee to Egypt.....

The wise men had come & gone – had offered their gifts.... & now were on their way home having been warned v12 in a dream not to go back to Herod. As they went they were unaware of developments unfolding in Bethlehem – dramatic & traumatic for families living in & around the town....

1. The Flight to Egypt:- documented by Coptic Church...

a) the Warning of the angel – *get up, take the child & his mother & flee to Egypt & remain there until I tell you for Herod is about to search for the child to destroy him* – typical

b) the Woe of the parents – of Bethlehem as Herod put his wicked plan into action – *he was infuriated (16) & he sent & killed all the children in & around Bethlehem who were 2 yrs & under....* Imagine the heartbreak & sorrow for the parents!

2. The Fulfilment of Prophecy:- 2 pieces in the passage...

a) Hosea 11.1: *out of Egypt have I called my son...*

b) Jer 31.15: *weeping & great wailing, Rachel weeping for her children* – as the Jews were taken into exile in 586BC. Matthew sees all such fulfilment of prophecy as proof that God is at work!

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3. The Failure of Herod:- & his deadly plot as the Holy Child is protected & preserved - & finally Herod dies in 4BC & the Family were able to return to the land of Israel v21 - & so another ancient prophecy was fulfilled v23 *he shall be called a Nazorean as the Holy Family settled in the district of Galilee in a town called Nazareth - & the rest is history!* Matthew sees this whole episode in terms of God's providential guardianship of the family & the protection of His son as He works out his plan & purpose for the Salvation of mankind in & through his Son..... *By Norman Porteous*

ONLINE SERMON SOURCES

"The New Normal," the Rev. Dr. James Lamkin, *Day 1*.
http://day1.org/2534-the_new_normal

"The Word Became Flesh and Dwelt among Us Full of Grace and Truth," the Very Rev. Samuel G Candler, *Day 1*. (Episcopal lectionary texts.)
http://day1.org/1071-the_word_became_flesh_and_dwelt_among_us_full_of_grace_and_truth

"Celebrate the Christ-Child and Remember the Children," Rev. Garth Wehrfritz-Hanson, *Dim Lamp*
<http://dimlamp.wordpress.com/2007/12/28/sermon-1-christmas-yr-a/>

Church of Scotland
http://www.churchofscotland.org.uk/data/assets/pdf_file/0006/18177/29_December_2013.pdf

CHILDREN

Worshipping with Children, Christmas 1, Including children in the congregation's worship, using the Revised Common Lectionary, Carolyn C. Brown, 2013.
<http://worshippingwithchildren.blogspot.co.uk/2013/11/year-first-sunday-after-christmas.html>

"Joy to the World, Rejoice," Christmas 1, Lesson Plans that Work, *Episcopal Digital Network*, 2013.
<http://episcopaldigitalnetwork.com/lessons/2013/11/21/joy-to-the-world-rejoice/>

Proclaiming Faith, discussion, prayer, activities for primary grades, activities, 2013.
http://www.cyberfaith.com/proclaiming_faith.cfm?id=146

Making Resolutions, Anna Shirey, *Anna's Hosannas*, Children's Lesson for Christmas 1 / New Year, 2011.
<http://annashosannas.net/New-Years-A.php>

"Sermon of the Week," Sermons 4 Kids, Charles Kirkpatrick, Object Lessons & Children's Sermons, Coloring Pages, Puzzles. Sermons4Kids.com.
http://www.sermons4kids.com/herod_the_grinch.htm