



ST. JOHN'S EPISCOPAL CHURCH, NORTHAMPTON MA
Morning Prayer for Christmas Day
December 25, 2020 at 10 AM

Opening Sentence *Luke 2:10, 11*

Behold, I bring you good news of a great joy which will come to all the people; for to you is born this day in the city of David, a Savior, who is Christ the Lord.

The Invitatory and Psalter

Presider Lord, open our lips.

People **And our mouths shall proclaim your praise.**

Antiphon: Alleluia. To us a child is born: Come let us adore. Alleluia.

Jubilate *Psalms 100*

Be joyful in the Lord, all you lands; * serve the Lord with gladness
and come before his presence with a song.

**Know this: The Lord himself is God; * he himself has made us, and we are his;
we are his people and the sheep of his pasture.**

Enter his gates with thanksgiving; go into his courts with praise; *
give thanks to him and call upon his Name.

**For the Lord is good; his mercy is everlasting; *
and his faithfulness endures from age to age.**

Antiphon: Alleluia. To us a child is born: Come let us adore. Alleluia.

Psalm 2 *Quare fremuerunt gentes?*

1 Why are the nations in an uproar? * Why do the peoples mutter empty threats?

**2 Why do the kings of the earth rise up in revolt,
and the princes plot together, *
against the Lord and against his Anointed?**

3 "Let us break their yoke," they say; * "let us cast off their bonds from us."

4 He whose throne is in heaven is laughing; * the Lord has them in derision.

5 Then he speaks to them in his wrath, * and his rage fills them with terror.

6 "I myself have set my king * upon my holy hill of Zion."

7 Let me announce the decree of the Lord: * he said to me, "You are my Son;
this day have I begotten you.

**8 Ask of me, and I will give you the nations for your inheritance *
and the ends of the earth for your possession.**

9 You shall crush them with an iron rod * and shatter them like a piece of pottery."

10 And now, you kings, be wise; * be warned, you rulers of the earth.

11 Submit to the Lord with fear, * and with trembling bow before him;

12 Lest he be angry and you perish; * for his wrath is quickly kindled.

13 Happy are they all * who take refuge in him!

Psalm 85 *Benedixisti, Domine*

1 You have been gracious to your land, O Lord, *
you have restored the good fortune of Jacob.

**2 You have forgiven the iniquity of your people *
and blotted out all their sins.**

3 You have withdrawn all your fury *
and turned yourself from your wrathful indignation.

4 Restore us then, O God our Savior; * let your anger depart from us.

5 Will you be displeased with us for ever? *
will you prolong your anger from age to age?

6 Will you not give us life again, * that your people may rejoice in you?

7 Show us your mercy, O Lord, * and grant us your salvation.

**8 I will listen to what the Lord God is saying, *
for he is speaking peace to his faithful
people and to those who turn their hearts to him.**

9 Truly, his salvation is very near to those who fear him, *
that his glory may dwell in our land.

**10 Mercy and truth have met together; *
righteousness and peace have kissed each other.**

11 Truth shall spring up from the earth, *
and righteousness shall look down from heaven.

**12 The Lord will indeed grant prosperity, *
and our land will yield its increase.**

13 Righteousness shall go before him, *
and peace shall be a pathway for his feet.

**Glory to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit: *
as it was in the beginning, is now, and will be for ever. Amen.**

**SHARED SCRIPTURE REFLECTION USING AFRICAN BIBLE STUDY METHOD FROM LAMBETH
CONFERENCE (1998): ZECHARIAH. 2:10-13**

New Revised Standard Version: Zechariah. 2:10-13

Sing and rejoice, O daughter Zion! For lo, I will come and dwell in your midst, says the Lord. Many nations shall join themselves to the Lord on that day, and shall be my people; and I will dwell in your midst. And you shall know that the Lord of hosts has sent me to you. The Lord will inherit Judah as his portion in the holy land, and will again choose Jerusalem. Be silent, all people, before the Lord; for he has roused himself from his holy dwelling.

Question: What word or phrase that catches your attention? Each person who wishes to do so shares the word or phrase with the group, without discussion.

Contemporary English Version: Zechariah. 2:10-13

City of Zion, sing and celebrate! The Lord has promised to come and live with you. When he does, many nations will turn to him and become his people. At that time you will know that I am a prophet of the Lord All-Powerful. Then Judah will be his part of the holy land, and Jerusalem will again be his chosen city. Everyone, be silent! The Lord is present and moving about in his holy place.

Question: Where does this passage touch your life today? Each person who wishes to do so briefly shares this, without discussion.

Complete Jewish Bible: Zechariah. 2:10-13

“Sing, daughter of Tziyon; rejoice! For, here, I am coming; and I will live among you,” says *Adonai*. When that time comes, many nations will join themselves to *Adonai*. “They will be my people, and I will live among you.” Then you will know that it was *Adonai-Tzva’ot* who sent me to you. *Adonai* will take possession of Y’hudah as his portion in the holy land, and he will again make Yerushalayim his choice. Be silent, all humanity, before *Adonai*; for he has been roused from his holy dwelling.’

Question: From what you have heard and shared, what do you believe God wants you/us to do or be? How is God inviting you/us to change?”

Suffrages A

V. Show us your mercy, O Lord;

R. And grant us your salvation.

V. Clothe your ministers with righteousness;

R. Let your people sing with joy.

V. Give peace, O Lord, in all the world;

R. For only in you can we live in safety.

V. Lord, keep this nation under your care;

R. And guide us in the way of justice and truth.

V. Let your way be known upon earth;

R. Your saving health among all nations.

V. Let not the needy, O Lord, be forgotten;

R. Nor the hope of the poor be taken away.

V. Create in us clean hearts, O God;

R. And sustain us with your Holy Spirit.

Collect for the Day

O God, you make us glad by the yearly festival of the birth of your only Son Jesus Christ: Grant that we, who joyfully receive him as our Redeemer, may with sure confidence behold him when he comes to be our Judge; who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and for ever. **Amen.**

Prayers of the People for Christmas (*Adapted from prayers by Rev. Stephen M. Fearing, Shelter Island Presbyterian Church, NY found on www.liturgylink.net)*)

God of our Salvation,
we come to you on this wondrous day, to gather in praise.
In the beginning, your creative work began with a word,
and today, your creation continues with the Word made flesh.
On this holiest of days, we join the everlasting chorus saying:

Glory to God on highest! Great is your name in all the earth!

Like Mary, we ponder these things in our hearts,
and wonder how you could love us so much
as to actually become one of us, one with us.
We remember these stories that remind us of your steadfast love,
that affirm that you have never, and will never, give up on your children.

Thank you for your steadfast presence in our lives!

Yet even as we celebrate the fulfillment of love,
we recognize that there are many who are still waiting for fulfillment:
the fulfillment of adequate food and shelter;
the fulfillment of peace and the end of violence;
the fulfillment of reprieve from the fierce grip of pandemic and grief;
the fulfillment of a restoration of relationships and of work and school lives;
the fulfillment of health in body, mind, and spirit;
the fulfillment of an end to racism, division, and oppression;

**Gracious God, give us the courage to do your work in the world
and to share your peace and presence**

We pray for those who have for those who have lost loved ones this year;
for those who work on Christmas, especially health care workers and first
responders; for those on our parish prayer list: David Rosenberger, Lorna, Nancy
Elliott, Janet, the Brandt family, Betty and Donnie Willard, Norma Keough, Bre,
BettyLou DeTurck, Melissa, Vanessa, Jeanette, the Winternitz family, Mary
Thurber, Mary Wozniak and her mother Mildred Lindsay, and our Manna guests
and volunteers.

Participants may add additional intercessions and thanksgivings.

Restore us and make your face to shine that we might be saved.
In all that we do and in all that we are, send your Spirit to send us forward
to share the grace we find in the newborn Savior with everyone we meet.

This we pray in the name of the One who taught us to pray saying:
**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 and the power and the glory, forever. Amen.**

A Christmas Prayer of St. Ephraim the Syrian (306-373)

The feast day of your birth resembles You, Lord
because it brings joy to all humanity.
Old people and infants alike enjoy your day.
Your day is celebrated from generation to generation.
Kings and emperors may pass away,
And the festivals to commemorate them soon lapse.
But your festival will be remembered until the end of time.
Your day is a means and a pledge of peace.
At Your birth heaven and earth were reconciled,
Since you came from heaven to earth on that day
You forgave our sins and wiped away our guilt.
You gave us so many gifts on the day of your birth:
A treasure chest of spiritual medicines for the sick;
Spiritual light for the blind; The cup of salvation for the thirsty;
The bread of life for the hungry. In the winter when trees are bare,
You give us the most succulent spiritual fruit.
In the frost when the earth is barren, You bring new hope to our souls. **Amen.**

Christmas Blessing

May Almighty God, who sent his Son to take our nature upon him, bless you in this
holy season, scatter the darkness of sin, and brighten your heart with the light of
his holiness. **Amen.**

May God, who sent his angels to proclaim the glad news of the Savior's birth, fill
you with joy, and make you heralds of the Gospel. **Amen.**

May God, who in the Word made flesh joined heaven to earth and earth to heaven, give you his peace and favor. **Amen.**

And the blessing of our gracious and loving God, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit, be upon you and remain with you forever. **Amen.**

Dismissal

Let us bless the Lord. **Thanks be to God.**