

5 PRAY THE PSALM OF THE WEEK **Isaiah 9:2, 6, 1, 2, 5**

The people that have walked in darkness have seen | a great light.*
Unto us a | Child is born.
His name shall be called wonderful counselor, the | mighty God,*
the everlasting Father, the | Prince of Peace.
The Lord reigns, He is clothed with | majesty;*
The Lord is clothed, He has girded Him- | self with strength.
Surely the world is es-/ tablished,*
so that it can- | not be moved.
Your throne is established | from of old;*
You are from ever- | lasting.
Your testimonies are | very sure;*
Holiness adorns Your house, O Lord, for- | ever.

6 SAY TOGETHER THE VERSE OF THE WEEK **Luke 2:14**

“Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good will toward men!”

7 READ THE SCRIPTURE AND DEVOTION (OTHER SIDE OF THE PAGE)

8 PRAY THE PRAYER OF THE WEEK

Lord God, gracious Father, who in the fullness of time sent Your Son to become man, assume our flesh, and become our Brother, we implore You to keep us in true knowledge of our Redeemer, by whose birth we are delivered from sin, death, Satan, and hell, that with all the holy angels we may rejoice at His Nativity and behold Him who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. Amen.

9 PRAYER FOR OURSELVES AND OTHERS

10 SING OR SAY THE HYMN OF THE WEEK
All Praise to Thee, Eternal God

TLH 80, LSB 382
Martin Luther



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| <p>1. All praise to Thee, eternal God,
Who, clothed in garb of flesh and
blood,
Dost take a manger for Thy throne,
While worlds on worlds are Thine
alone.
Hallelujah!</p> | <p>4. Thou comest in the darksome night
To make us children of the light,
To make us in the realms divine,
Like Thine own angels, round Thee
shine.
Hallelujah!</p> |
| <p>3. A little Child, Thou art our Guest
That weary ones in Thee may rest;
Forlorn and lowly is Thy birth
That we may rise to heaven from earth.
Hallelujah!</p> | <p>5. All this for us Thy love hath done;
By This to Thee our love is won;
For this our joyful songs we raise
And shout our thanks in ceaseless
praise.
Hallelujah!</p> |



“The Birth of the Christ-Child”

1 BLESS YOURSELF WITH THE HOLY CROSS AND SAY:
In the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit.

2 SAY THE APOSTLES' CREED
I believe in God, the Father Almighty,
Maker of heaven and earth.
And in Jesus Christ, His only Son, our
Lord, who was conceived by the Holy
Spirit, born of the Virgin Mary, suffered
under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, died
and was buried. He descended into hell.
The third day He rose again from the
dead. He ascended into heaven and sits at
the right hand of God, the Father
Almighty. From thence He will come to
judge the living and the dead.

I believe in the Holy Spirit, the holy
Christian church, the communion of
saints, the forgiveness of sins, the
resurrection of the body, and the life
everlasting. Amen.

3 PRAY THE LORD'S PRAYER
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 and ever. Amen.

4 PRAY THE MORNING OR EVENING PRAYER

Morning. I thank You, my
heavenly Father, through Jesus
Christ, Your dear Son, that You
have kept me this night from all
harm and danger; and I pray that
You would keep me this day also
from sin and every evil, that all my
doings and life may please You.
For into Your hands I commend
myself, my body and soul, and all
things. Let Your holy angel be with
me, that the evil foe may have no
power over me. Amen.

Evening. I thank you, my
heavenly Father, through Jesus
Christ, Your dear Son, that You
have graciously kept me this day;
and I pray that You would forgive
me all my sins where I have done
wrong, and graciously keep me this
night. For into Your hands, I
commend myself, my body and
soul, and all things. Let Your holy
angel be with me, that the evil foe
may have no power over me. Amen.

THEME OF THE WEEK: **The Birth of the Christ-Child**

Conceived and knit together in the secret depths of His mother's womb, the eternal Lord entered His created realm as part of His created realm. For nine months His frame was being made in secret, "intricately woven in the depths of the earth." "Then stepped forth the Lord of all from His pure and kingly hall." The Virgin has conceived and given birth to a Son. "All praise to Thee eternal God, Who clothed in garb of flesh and blood, dost take a manger for Thy throne, while worlds on worlds are Thine alone." "This is Christ, our God and Lord, Who in all need shall aid afford; He will Himself your Savior be from all your sins to set you free."

SUN

SCRIPTURE: **John 1:19-28 A Voice Cries in the Wilderness**

Sin makes the way of the Lord crooked and broken. Fissures of guilt and cracks of iniquity make the path impassible. What can pass between the Lord and His fallen creation? His people try to make their own paths of works to the Lord, but they lead into the ravines of despair, the desolate summits of pride, and, finally, into the darkness of death. A voice cries in wilderness, "Make straight in the desert a highway for our God!" The high places are brought low by the cry of judgment. The valleys are lifted by the cry of comfort. John's preaching justifies because the Word is not his own, but the Lord's, Whose sandal the Baptist is not worthy to untie. The Lord makes His own path through His flesh given as a ransoming sacrifice for many. *Alleluia! Amen.*

MON

SCRIPTURE: **John 20:24-31 Life in Jesus' Name by Believing**

Written words and spoken promises seem a poor substitute for experiencing the living flesh of Christ with sight and touch. Thomas wouldn't let hearing about Jesus raised from the dead convince or comfort him. "Unless I see in His hands the mark of the nails and place my finger into the mark of the nails, and place my hand into His side, I will never believe." Thomas demands God to satisfy the empirical tribunal of his reason and senses. Is he the judge? Yet, Christ, in mercy, presents Himself for Thomas' examination. He comes not only in body, but in Word. He preaches, "Peace!" and "Do not disbelieve, but believe." As the Lord speaks, so it happens. Thomas' heart is filled with saving faith. *Grant me to apprehend You by the Word alone. Amen.*

TUE

SCRIPTURE: **Philippians 4:4-7 The Lord is at Hand!**

When the world looks at the church, what should it see? A people full of worries and sorrow? No, St. Paul says. They should see our "reasonableness." Reasonably, if Christ has died and been raised, if we are justified, then what room is there for dreadful mutterings of despair? What room do we have for anger and bitterness? None. The Lord is at hand! He is among us through His promise. He is among us in body and blood that we eat and drink for the forgiveness of sins and the strengthening of faith. Anxiety? Be gone! With thanksgiving, we pray to God. What room is there for doubt? The peace of God, made known in the atoning death and resurrection of God's Son, is ours. Rejoice always, dear saints. *Grant me believing joy, O Lord. Amen.*

WED

SCRIPTURE: **Isaiah 40:1-8 Comfort, Comfort, Ye My People**

Every calamity testifies to the Lord's judgment. Rather than thinking that we live in an indifferent universe, learn to see God's hand at work everywhere, from plagues to the falling of rulers. Tumults remind us to fear God, to remember His Law, and to sorrow over sins. This is how God reveals Himself in the world through the law, but the Lord does not want to be known this way. He says to His preachers, "Comfort, comfort my people." Why? Her warfare, her unholy rebellion, is ended. God's Son suffered sin's full penalty. For His sake, our iniquity is pardoned. Instead of wrath, we receive double for all our sin. Our sins are washed away, and we gain Christ's own righteousness to be called children of God. *Never let me lose the comfort of faith. Amen.*

THU

SCRIPTURE: **Luke 2:1-14 Sermons from Heaven**

Folks often read the Bible like a textbook, as if it is only a repository of information. Undeniably, the Bible is full of true history, like Caesar taxing his empire, or the world's creation in six days. And it certainly contains the true religious convictions of men and women who were part of that history, like Mary and Joseph traveling to Bethlehem knowing the child was from God. Most importantly, the Bible conveys sermons from heaven, preaching from God's majestic throne. Attend the angels' sermon of peace to the shepherds. God's glory fills the skies to fill human hearts with joyful faith in a Savior, Christ the Lord. God opens heaven to preach peace to the men whom He favors for Christ's sake. *Grant me faith in Your sermons from heaven, O Lord. Amen.*

FRI

SCRIPTURE: **John 1:1-14 The Word Became Flesh**

The eternal God has spoken. His Word, unlike our own, does not imperfectly represent His inmost thoughts and purposes. It does not just give a sign and symbol of who He is. God's Word is God Himself! Nothing of the divine majesty is lost between the Begetter of the Word and the Begotten Word. How this is possible is impossible to know. It can only be believed. But as we are still staggered in holy awe from the first mystery, we hear a second mystery no less profound and wonderous. "The Word became flesh and dwelt among us." God and creation have become one in the person of Jesus Christ our Savior. Reason and imagination fail. Faith alone grasps the mystery for our joy, salvation, and peace. *All praise to Thee, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. Amen.*

SAT

SCRIPTURE: **Matthew 23:34-39 A Holy Birth and a Holy Martyr**

Christmas Day's comforting images of the Christ Child gently cradled in Mary's arms are followed by the remembrance of violence that befell St. Stephen, the first of the Christ's holy martyrs. It is fitting. Remember the hymn. "Good Christian, fear; for sinners here the silent Word is pleading. Nails, spear shall pierce Him through, the cross be borne for me, for you." Jesus was born to bear our sins. He came to expiate them through His atoning, divine blood. God has been propitiated through His death. As the world hated Jesus, so it hates those who boldly confess His redemption. But for you who have Christ's second birth through Baptism and faith, death has lost its power. Learn with St. Stephen to pray, *Lord Jesus, receive my spirit. Amen.*

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