

**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 2:12**

“And this will be the sign to you: You will find a Babe wrapped in swaddling cloths, lying in a manger.”

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



**“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

The birth of the Christ child can be confessed by a little child. And yet, this mystery is so deep that we can spend the rest of eternity contemplating why the Word became flesh and dwelt among us. We will look at the banality of Christmas, how ordinary Luke's account seems. We will see the dark sides of Christmas, where persecution and cruelty attempt to snuff out the Prince of Peace and the Light of the World. We will see the culmination of Christmas, our new birth which comes from God and the inspired writings of St. John. Finally, we will read Psalm 89, which reminds us that Christ's kingdom shall endure forever, even if it is persecuted.

SUN

SCRIPTURE: Luke 2:1-14: The Banality of Christmas

This passage begins in a mundane way. It's like saying, "In the days of Reagan's presidency, during the governorship of Rudy Perpich." Emperors and Governors rule today. We need to pay taxes and be counted in a census. What's different? Well, in a sense, nothing is different. The Gospels are not fairy tales. They are our history, and one day, we too will be history. But history isn't blind. There is a Hand which guides all things for good. In 7 B.C., the Son of God entered history. The eternal, immortal Son of God took on our nature, our flesh. And, in this blessed birth, the beginning of our redemption was instigated. That baby Boy, whose name was on a census list, would be the Savior of all. *Lord Jesus, thank You for your incarnation. Amen.*

MON

SCRIPTURE: Matthew 23:34-39: The War on Christmas

Moderns complain about the "new war on Christmas." But, as the reading says, there has always been a war on Christmas. That's because there has always been a war on Christ. Herod tried to kill Him. Jerusalem killed the prophets. True believers and prophets have always been persecuted. Our reading says that this began with Abel and ended with Zechariah. But Christ doesn't return hatred for hatred. Instead, He laments over unbelief. He desires to gather sinners as a hen gathers her chicks. He was not born to pass judgment; He was born to die. The manger is always in the shadow of the cross. And the world can't win against that. *Lord Jesus, gather us under Your wings and give us the strength to endure persecution, just like the prophets. Amen.*

TUE

SCRIPTURE: John 21:19-24: The Culmination of Christmas

It may seem strange that we are hopping to the end of the Gospel, but it really isn't. The beginning always contains its end, its culmination. This is especially true of Christ's birth. John, the disciple whom Jesus loved, was chosen by the Holy Spirit to be His instrument. John recorded, not his own words, but the words and thoughts of God. He, along with Matthew, Mark and Luke, recorded this divine history for us so that we might have faith and be saved. Even this history, while strange, strengthens faith. God doesn't have the same plan for everyone. If He wants someone to live until He returns, what is that to you? But all are called to follow Christ. *Lord Jesus, strengthen our faith through the words of the Apostle John so that we might follow You. Amen.*



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WED

SCRIPTURE: Matthew 2:13-18: Cruelty at Christmas

We like to try to forget about all the bad things during the Christmas season. But the Holy Spirit doesn't. Amid great joy, there is great sorrow too. As we see God's grace and mercy in the Christ child, so too, we see the suspicious and murderous nature of the tyrant Herod. God's kingdom is always opposed by the devil's kingdom. As it was then, so it is now. But our God doesn't leave or forsake us. By saving His Son in the flight to Egypt, the Father was saving those murdered children and us from sin, death and the devil. We have an answer to evil. That answer is found in the atonement of Christ, where all evil and sin is covered. *Lord Jesus, You were saved so that You might fulfill Your Father's Will. Deliver us from evil. Amen.*

THU

SCRIPTURE: John 1:1-14: Creation at Christmas

The Gospel of John begins like Genesis: "In the beginning was the Word." This Word, this Wisdom from on High, is the second Person of the Trinity. He bears divine power and authority. He is God. He is with the Father from eternity. All things were created through the Divine Word. And now, the Word has become incarnate. This Word was made flesh. The almighty Son of the Father takes on our flesh so that He can begin a new kind of creation: "But as many as received Him, to them He gave the right to become children of God . . . who were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God." *Word become flesh, enlighten our minds with Your light so that we might rejoice in our new birth. Amen.*

FRI

SCRIPTURE: Hebrews 1:1-12: Comparisons at Christmas

We always are comparing things. It's how we learn to distinguish one thing from another. The Epistle to the Hebrews compares the angels to the Christ. The angels, while great and glorious creatures, are just that: creatures. They are servants. They worship God and they serve the saints. But Christ is qualitatively different. He bears God's excellent name. The angels are called to worship Him, as they did at the night of His birth. The Christ bears divine attributes. He shows He is almighty by creating. He shows that He is eternal by outlasting every created thing. Thanks be to God that He sent, not an angel, but His own Son to be our Savior! *Lord Jesus, You are higher than the angels. Send Your angels to guard and protect Your saints. Amen.*

SAT

SCRIPTURE: Psalm 89: A Covenant at Christmas

This Psalm is a prophecy concerning Christ and His Kingdom. "He shall cry to Me, 'You are my Father, My God, and the rock of my salvation.' Also I will make Him My firstborn, The highest of the kings of the earth." This covenant is not based upon our piety or goodness, but upon the Father and the Son's goodness: "My covenant I will not break, Nor alter the word that has gone out of My lips." Even though Christ's kingdom is plagued by sin and subverted by the Antichrist, it shall endure forever. Therefore, we should not despair, even though it seems like there is no church on earth. Christ's kingdom remains because He promised. *Lord, You have spoken and You will not break Your Word. Defend and govern Your kingdom, the church. Amen.*

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