

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 1 Timothy 3:16**

“And without controversy great is the mystery of godliness: God was manifest in the flesh, justified in the Spirit, seen of angels, preached unto the Gentiles, believed on in the world, received up into glory.”

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



- |   |   |
|---|---|
| <p>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!</p> <p>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!</p> | <p>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!</p> <p>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!</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**

Sunday *morning* (Advent IV) Advent concludes with the church's supplication, "Drop down ye heavens, from above, and let the skies pour down righteousness: let the earth open, and let them bring forth salvation" (Is 45:8). On Sunday *evening* the church's expectant prayer is fulfilled: "When all was still, and it was midnight: Thine almighty Word, O Lord, descended from the royal throne" (Wisdom 18:14). The "Word of the Father, *now* in flesh appearing" (LSB 379.4) brings the mystery of godliness to you this week in three minor festivals, a "kingdom reading" from Hebrews, and a Davidic psalm of royalty to give glory to the newborn King.

SUN

SCRIPTURE: **Luke 2:1-14 Christ was Manifest in the Flesh**

See how, in the words of Martin Luther's Christmas hymn from 1523, "The Light Eternal breaks through" (LSB 382.4) the darkness of sin, death, and the devil as Christ is manifest in the flesh. The Light began to flicker when Mary gave birth to the Christ-Child in abject poverty. It beamed with angelic splendor as the angels appeared to faithful shepherds, giving glory to God and foreshadowing the company of preachers, through whom God still casts the bright beams of the gospel over all the earth. And the light still shines with the dawn of redeeming grace, especially midnight tonight, as you kneel in penitent faith to receive Christ-mass. *We praise You, Jesus, at Your birth: Clothed in flesh You came to earth . . . Alleluia! (LSB 382.1). Amen.*

MON

SCRIPTURE: **John 1:1-14 'Great is the Mystery of Godliness'**

O great mystery and admirable sacrament: Christ took on your flesh and blood, but without your sin! In words both creedal and baptismal, St. John describes Jesus as the Word, which first spoke all things into being; the Light, which pierces the darkness of your corruption; and the Life, which conquers death for you. This Christ was preached to the Gentiles, from John the Baptist to the present day, dividing all men between those who love darkness and those who abide in the Light Eternal. This Word, Light, and Life was "Born to raise the sons of earth, Born to give [you] second birth" (LSB 380.3) through Holy Baptism. *O holy Child of Bethlehem, Descend to us, we pray; Cast out our sin, and enter in, Be born in us today (LSB 361.4). Amen.*

TUE

SCRIPTURE: **Matthew 23:34-39 'O Jerusalem, Jerusalem!'**

Jerusalem was the city of peace, and yet it killed the faithful prophets and exalted false teachers, and was the object of extensive laments by Jeremiah and Jesus. No wonder God destroyed the city through the Roman army in AD 70, just as Jesus predicted and Josephus recorded. Today the church remembers one of Jerusalem's victims, Stephen, "The martyr first whose eagle eye / Could pierce beyond the grave" (LSB 661.2), and whose blood is the seed of the church. Likewise you have been confirmed in a martyr's faith, ready to "suffer all, even death" rather than forsake the new Jerusalem. *O God, Thy soldiers' crown and guard, And their exceeding great reward: From all transgressions set us free, Who sing Thy martyr's victory. Amen.*

WED

SCRIPTURE: **John 21:19-24 The Abiding Testimony of the Beloved Apostle**

Stephen was a martyr in word and deed. The Holy Innocents were martyrs in deed, but not in word. John was a martyr in word, but not in deed. So the color today is white, for John did not die a martyr's death. This has led some false teachers to speculate about John still being alive, but Jesus taught no such thing. Rather, John makes it clear that His testimony remains to this day, an abiding and abundant *testimony* for all generations (vss. 24–25). Thus is it fitting for you, though but a dying sinner, to go where Christ lays in his manger for you: in the apostolic preaching of the cross and at the holy altar, where He abides with you. *For Your beloved disciple, Exiled to Patmos' shore, And for his faithful record, we praise You evermore (LSB 517.8). Amen.*

THU

SCRIPTURE: **Matthew 2:13-18 The Slaughter of the Holy Innocents**

The journey from Egypt to Nazareth fulfills the words of the prophet, "Out of Egypt have I called my son" (Hos. 11:1). In old Israel's exodus, God's heavily-armored enemies died and His unarmed people lived. And now, at the advent of the New Israel, Herod's soldiers slay the "sweet flowerets of the martyr band" (TLH 273.1), but ultimately lose the war to the Child in Mary's arms. Thus do all the baptized, though spiritually helpless without Jesus, rest in quiet confidence in this holy Child. *All praise for infant martyrs, Whom Your mysterious love / Called early from their warfare, To share Your home above. O Rachel, cease your weeping; They rest from earthly cares! Lord, grant us crowns as brilliant, And faith as sure as theirs (LSB 517.9). Amen.*

FRI

SCRIPTURE: **Hebrews 12:15-29 'For Thine is the Kingdom'**

Writing to believing Jews in the first century, the author of Hebrews contrasts the old and new testaments. Old Israel trembled in God's presence at fire, darkness, gloom, etc.—holy objects that made God's people cower in fear. But the old (temporal) has passed away and the new (eternal) has come! You worship in Mt. Zion, the city of the living God, the kingdom without end, etc.—holy things for the holy ones—where you are sanctified by Jesus, the mediator of a new covenant and the blood that speaks more powerfully than Abel's, now pooled in the chalice for you. *Christ, to Thee, with God the Father, And, O Holy Ghost, to Thee / Hymn and chant and high thanksgiving, And unending praises be . . . Evermore and evermore (LSB 384.5). Amen.*

SAT

SCRIPTURE: **Introduction to Psalm 110: 'God was . . . Received up into Glory'**

St. Augustine said, "The new [testament] is in the old concealed; the old is in the new revealed." Psalm 110, the most frequently quoted Old Testament text in the entire New Testament, is a textual case in point. Here you pray and proclaim the good news that "the Lord" (God the Father) received "my Lord" (God the Son) at His right hand as the greater Enoch (v. 1): that Christ, once "deep in prophets' sacred page [and] grand in the poets' winged word (LSB 810.2)," was preached to the Gentiles (vss. 2–4); and that the (Holy) Spirit of the Lord is forever on the Christ, just as Isaiah said (vss. 5–9). *O Savior of the world, King of kings, lifted high in triumph, set me at Your right hand in the final judgment that I may partake of Your divine nature. Amen.*

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