

First Sunday after Christmas

A Service of readings and prayers for Christmas

Prelude

Hymn *Love Came Down At Christmas* #84

Dear friends in Christ, we gather in worship to praise God for the gift of his Son, Jesus Christ. In our worship today we hear again the message of the scriptures and how they point to the babe in a manger who is already up and afoot in the world manifesting a love which will transfigure the world. Today we pause to reflect on the mystery of the Incarnation of God through song and intercession and ancient prayer. Let us bring to this time a spirit of prayer and praise as we continue to welcome the Son of God. But first, let us consider this world for which Jesus came to die and rise again and let us pray to him for the needs of all his people for as the psalm reminds us, we are all God's people and the sheep of God's pasture; Let us echo the song of the angels who sang peace on Earth and let us remember the church which he continues to build and for which he gave his life; and let us recall that in Christ we find the true reconciliation which pulls down the dividing walls of difference to make us one in him. Let us remember those who God sends our way and those

through whom God reveals himself to us,... the poor, the cold, the hungry, the oppressed; the sick and those who mourn, the lonely and the unloved; the aged and the little children; and let us remember all who know not the Lord Jesus, or who love him not, or who by sin have grieved his heart of love. Let us remember especially all who are in the final moments of their life,... and for their families and loved one who find themselves wrapped in sorrow during this Christmas-tide. Lastly let us remember all those who rejoice with us, on another shore and in a greater light, that multitude who no one may number, whose hope was in the Word made flesh, and with whom, in this Lord Jesus, we for evermore are one. These prayers and praises let us humbly offer up to the throne of heaven, in the words that Christ himself has taught us.

The Lord's Prayer (in unison)

The Blessing

May the Almighty God bless us with divine grace, may Christ give us the joy of everlasting life, and unto the fellowship of the citizens above, may the Angels bring us all. Amen.

Hymn *T'was in the Moon of Wintertime* #114

First Lesson

A reading from the book of the Prophet Isaiah (63. 7-9)

Isaiah speaks of the steadfast love of God toward God's people.

I will recount the gracious deeds of the LORD, the praiseworthy acts of the LORD, because of all that the LORD has done for us, and the great favor to the house of Israel that he has shown them according to his mercy, according to the abundance of his steadfast love. For he said, "Surely they are my people, children who will not deal falsely"; and he became their savior in all their distress. It was no messenger or angel but his presence that saved them; in his love and in his pity he redeemed them; he lifted them up and carried them all the days of old. ***be to God.***

Collect: The Second Sunday after Christmas

O God, who didst wonderfully create, and yet more wonderfully restore, the dignity of human nature: Grant that we may share the divine life of him who humbled himself to share our humanity, thy Son Jesus Christ; who liveth and reigneth with thee, in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God, for ever and ever. Amen.

Psalm

Psalm 148 Laudate Dominum

The Psalmist records the song of all Creation praising God.

1 Hallelujah!

Praise the LORD from the heavens; *

praise him in the heights.

2 Praise him, all you angels of his; *

praise him, all his host.

3 Praise him, sun and moon; *

praise him, all you shining stars.

4 Praise him, heaven of heavens, *

and you waters above the heavens.

5 Let them praise the Name of the LORD; *

for he commanded, and they were created.

6 He made them stand fast for ever and ever; *

he gave them a law which shall not pass away.

7 Praise the LORD from the earth, *

you sea-monsters and all deeps;

8 Fire and hail, snow and fog, *

tempestuous wind, doing his will;

9 Mountains and all hills, *

fruit trees and all cedars;

10 Wild beasts and all cattle, *

creeping things and winged birds;

11 Kings of the earth and all peoples, *

princes and all rulers of the world;

12 Young men and maidens, *

old and young together.

13 Let them praise the Name of the LORD, *
for his Name only is exalted,
his splendor is over earth and heaven.

14 He has raised up strength for his people
and praise for all his loyal servants, *
the children of Israel, a people who are near him.
Hallelujah!

Hymn *In the Bleak Mid Winter* # 112

Second Lesson

A reading from the letter to the Hebrews (2:10-18)

The purpose of God's coming in Christ is foreshadowed in the letter to the Hebrews.

2:10 It was fitting that God, for whom and through whom all things exist, in bringing many children to glory, should make the pioneer of their salvation perfect through sufferings. For the one who sanctifies and those who are sanctified all have one Father. For this reason Jesus is not ashamed to call them brothers and sisters, saying, "I will proclaim your name to my brothers and sisters, in the midst of the congregation I will praise you." And again, "I will put my trust in him." And again, "Here am I and the children whom God has given me."

Since, therefore, the children share flesh and blood, he himself likewise shared the same things, so that through death he might destroy the one who has the power of death, that is,

the devil, and free those who all their lives were held in slavery by the fear of death.

For it is clear that he did not come to help angels, but the descendants of Abraham.

Therefore he had to become like his brothers and sisters in every respect, so that he might be a merciful and faithful high priest in the service of God, to make a sacrifice of atonement for the sins of the people.

Because he himself was tested by what he suffered, he is able to help those who are being tested.

The Collect: The Holy Name of Jesus.

Eternal Father, who didst give to thine incarnate Son the holy name of Jesus to be the sign of our salvation: Plant in every heart, we beseech thee, the love of him who is the Savior of the world, even our Lord Jesus Christ; who lives and reigns with thee and the Holy Spirit, one God, in glory everlasting. Amen.

Third Lesson

A reading from the Gospel of Matthew (2.13-23)

Matthew relates the story of the flight into Egypt and reveals that Fear and hatred will not overcome the light, nor extinguish the purposes of God

¹³Now after they had left, an angel of the Lord appeared to Joseph in a dream and said, 'Get up, take the child and his mother, and flee to Egypt, and remain there until I tell you;

for Herod is about to search for the child, to destroy him.’¹⁴ Then Joseph^[u] got up, took the child and his mother by night, and went to Egypt,¹⁵ and remained there until the death of Herod. This was to fulfil what had been spoken by the Lord through the prophet, ‘Out of Egypt I have called my son.’¹⁶ When Herod saw that he had been tricked by the wise men,^[u] he was infuriated, and he sent and killed all the children in and around Bethlehem who were two years old or under, according to the time that he had learned from the wise men.^[u]¹⁷ Then was fulfilled what had been spoken through the prophet Jeremiah:

¹⁸ ‘A voice was heard in Ramah,
wailing and loud lamentation,
Rachel weeping for her children;
she refused to be consoled, because they are no
more.’

¹⁹ When Herod died, an angel of the Lord suddenly appeared in a dream to Joseph in Egypt and said,²⁰ ‘Get up, take the child and his mother, and go to the land of Israel, for those who were seeking the child’s life are dead.’²¹ Then Joseph^[u] got up, took the child and his mother, and went to the land of Israel.²² But when he heard that Archelaus was ruling over Judea in place of his father Herod, he was afraid to go there. And after being warned in a dream, he went away to the district of Galilee.²³ There he made his home in a town called Nazareth, so that what had been spoken through the prophets might be fulfilled, ‘He will be called a Nazorean.’

HYMN *Unto us a Child is Born # 98*

The Selfish Giant, **by Oscar Wilde.**

Read by Grace Butcher

The story of The Selfish Giant, by Oscar Wilde, is a Christian Allegory full of symbolism. In it we hear echoes of the beautiful Garden of Eden from the Book of Genesis, and the Giant’s banishing of the children from his garden echoes God’s banishing of Adam and Eve – his children, in a sense. The one lonely boy becomes the Christ who goes away and returns as love himself. This story reminds us of the purposes of God in becoming human for our sake.

THE COLLECT.

WE beseech thee, O Lord, pour thy grace into our hearts; that, as we have known the incarnation of thy Son Jesus Christ by the message of an angel, so by his cross and passion we may be brought unto the glory of his resurrection; through the same Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

Hymn *Angels we have Heard on High #96*

Prayers of intercession and Blessing

Minister: The Lord be with you

People: And with thy spirit.

Minister: Let us pray.

The O Antiphons, traditionally prayed on the last eight nights of Advent ending at Christmas Eve, remind us of the ancient names of God, and invite us to call on God for the whole world. And so we pray the o Antiphons for people everywhere and in their need,...

***I ask your prayers** for the universal church and its mission to reconcile the world through our Lord Jesus Christ,...bishops and ministers,... for those preparing for any vocation in the life of faith and for all who long for a deeper faith and saving knowledge of God as it is revealed to us in the Christ Child,..for those preparing for any vocation in the life of faith,...*

Presider: O Lord, Hear our Prayer,

People: And let our cry come unto thee

ALL: O Wisdom, O holy Word of God, you govern all creation with your strong yet tender care: Come and show your people the way to salvation.

***I ask your prayers** for people everywhere who experience alienation loneliness and struggle,...for those who suffer war and violence,...*

Presider: O Lord, Hear our Prayer,

People: And let our cry come unto thee

ALL: O Sacred Lord of ancient Israel, who showed yourself to Moses in the burning bush, who gave him the holy law on Sinai mountain: Come, stretch out your mighty hand to set us free.

***I ask your prayers** for the needs and concerns of this community, for all who offer themselves in any ministry or service to community, for teachers first responders, civic leaders, pastors and others who help us thrive,...*

Presider: O Lord, Hear our Prayer,

People: And let our cry come unto thee

O Root of Jesse, you have been raised up as a sign for all peoples; kings stand silent in your presence; the nations bow down in worship before you. Come, let nothing keep you from coming to our aid.

***I ask your prayers** for all who have asked our prayers, for those in our intercessions, for those whose name is known to you alone, for those whom we name either silently or aloud,...*

Presider: O Lord, Hear our Prayer,

People: And let our cry come unto thee

O Key of David, O royal Power of Israel, controlling at your will the gate of heaven: Come, break down the prison walls of death for those who dwell in darkness and the shadow of death; and lead your captive people into freedom.

***I ask your prayers** for all who are dying or who have passed out of this life and who rest in the radiance of God's glory...*

Presider: O Lord, Hear our Prayer,

People: And let our cry come unto thee

O Radiant Dawn, splendor of eternal light, sun of justice: Come, shine on those who dwell in darkness and the shadow of death.

I ask your prayers for the whole of God's creation and for the entire human family that wars and divisions may cease as people hear again the good news of the Prince of Peace and key stone of our faith...)

Presider: O Lord, Hear our Prayer,

People: And let our cry come unto thee

O Keystone of the mighty arch of humankind: Come and save the creature you fashioned from the dust.

I ask your prayers that the one who is God with us may turn our hearts to his Kingdom ,....)

Presider: O Lord, Hear our Prayer,

People: And let our cry come unto thee

O Emmanuel, king and lawgiver, desire of the nations, Savior of all people: Come and set us free, Lord our God.

O God, you make us glad with the yearly remembrance of the birth of thy only son, Jesus Christ: Grant that as we joyfully receive him for our redeemer, so we may with sure confidence behold him, when he shall come to be our judge; who liveth and reigneth with thee and the Holy Spirit, one God, world without end.

All: Amen

Minister: May he who by his Incarnation, gathered into one,

things earthly and heavenly, grant you the fullness of inward peace and goodwill; and the blessing of God Almighty, the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit, be amongst you and remain with you always.

All: Amen

Hymn O Come All Ye Faithful # 83

Dismissal

“O Emmanuel”

O come, O come, and be our God-with-us
O long-sought With-ness for a world without,
O secret seed, O hidden spring of light.
Come to us Wisdom, come unspoken Name
Come Root, and Key, and King, and holy Flame,
O quickened little wick so tightly curled,
Be folded with us into time and place,
Unfold for us the mystery of grace
And make a womb of all this wounded world.
O heart of heaven beating in the earth
O tiny hope within our hopelessness,
Come to be born, to bear us to our birth,
To touch a dying world with new-made hands
And make these rags of time our swaddling bands.

by Malcolm Guite