

PRELUDE

A Reading from the Gospel attributed to John 1:1-5, 10-14, 18

In the beginning was the Word, Wisdom.
The Word, Wisdom, was with God,
and the Word, which was Wisdom, was God.
The Word, Wisdom, was in the beginning with God.
Through God's Word, through Wisdom, all things came into being.
Not one thing came into being except through it.
What has come into being in the Word, in Wisdom, was Life,
Life that was light for all creation.
This light was not like the lights of this world,
but an eternal radiance, -
an interplay of light and darkness,
a flaring forth that has never ended.

This light, born of nurturing darkness, -
This radiance through which all created things came into being, -
was in the universe,
Earth, our world, came into being through it;
yet many did not recognize it...

In the fullness of time,
the Word became flesh,
Wisdom pitched a tent among us.
And we have seen this glory,
- the very glory of God,
full of grace and truth.
No one has ever seen the Holy One,
but all that is close to the heart of Holy Mystery,
makes God known.

FIRST READING

A Reading from the Prophet Isaiah 9:2-9

In darkness a light was born;
From deep darkness a crest of dawn shines.
You enlarged life
and Your people were born.

Even though they knew pain and suffering,
You increased their joy.
They rejoice before You
as with joy at the harvest,
as children exult at play,
and delight in sharing gifts.

For You have shattered the yoke that burdens them,
the bar across their shoulders,
the rod of their oppressor.
Every warrior's boot used in battle
and every garment rolled in blood
will be destined for burning,
will be fuel for the fire.

For to us a baby is born,
to us a child is given,
on whose shoulders our future rests.

The child will be called:
Wonderful Counselor, Strength of God,
Everlasting One, Champion of Peace.
And of the peace this Child brings,
there will be no end.

Readings for Christmas Liturgy, December 24/25, 2017

From the ancestral House of David and Bathsheba
this child will come,
bringing a reign built on justice,
upheld with right living,
from that time forward and forever.

The zeal of our Cosmic God will accomplish this.

The Word of First Isaiah.
Thanks be to God.

Readings for Christmas Liturgy, December 24/25, 2017

PSALM

Psalm 97:1-6, 11 (or 11-12)

The Psalm response is: Delight in God, O people.

R: Delight in God, O people.

God is! Let all the earth rejoice!
From heartlands to coastlands—celebrate!
Clouds and thick darkness circle 'round You;
Righteousness and justice anchor You.

R: Delight in God, O people.

Fire blazes out before You,
Flaming high up the craggy mountains.
Your lightning illumines the land;
Earth sees and quakes.
The mountains melt before You,
melt like wax before the God of the earth.

R: Delight in God, O people.

In truth, the whole cosmos echoes Your justice,
All nations behold this glory.
Dawn comes for the cause of the just!
Joy arrives for the upright of heart!

R: Delight in God, O people.

Delight in God, O people!
You were wrapped in divine darkness and born into holy light,
Give thanks to the Radiant One!

R: Delight in God, O people.

SECOND READING

A Reading from a Letter to the Colossians 1:15-20

We look at the Christ and see the God who cannot be seen;
the Christ is firstborn of all creation.

We look at this Christ and see the One in whom
all things in the cosmos were created.

For everything, absolutely everything, above and below,
visible and invisible, even ranks of angels,
were created through this Cosmic Christ and for Christ.
The Christ was there before any of it came into existence
and the Cosmic Christ holds all things together.

If the church is the body, Christ is its head,
for the Christ is firstborn from among the dead.
So spacious, so roomy is the Christ,
that everything of God finds its place without crowding.
The broken and dislocated pieces of the universe –
people, things, animals and atoms,
will know healing
and fit together in vibrant harmonies,
reconciled.
For death did not stop the Christ's love
from pouring out into the cosmos.

The Word of a Pauline writer.

Thanks be to God

GOSPEL

Our God is with you...

A Reading from the Good News attributed to Luke

2:1-14, or 1-20

Glory to you, O God.

In those days, a decree went out from Emperor Augustus that all the world should be registered. This was the first census and was taken while Quirinius was governor of Syria. All went to their own towns to be registered. Joseph also went from the town of Nazareth in Galilee to Judea, to the city of Bethlehem, the home of David's family, because he was descended from the house and family of David and Bathsheba. He went to be registered with Mary, to whom he was pledged to be married and who was expecting a child. While they were there, the time came for her to deliver her child. And she gave birth to her firstborn child and wrapped him in bands of cloth, and laid the newborn in a warm manger, because there was no place for them in the inn.

In that region there were shepherds living in the fields, keeping watch over their flocks by night. Then an angel, a messenger of God, stood before them, and the glory of God shone around them, and they were terrified. But the angel said to them, "Do not be afraid; for look—I am bringing you good news of great joy for all people:

To you is born this day in the city of David's family, a Messiah, the Anointed One. This will be a sign for you: you will find a child wrapped in bands of cloth and lying in a manger." And suddenly there was with the messenger a multitude of the heavenly beings, praising God and singing, "Glory to God in the highest heaven, and on earth peace among all God's people!"

Readings for Christmas Liturgy, December 24/25, 2017

(verses 15-20)

When the angels had left them, dissipating into cosmic splendor, the shepherds said to one another, "Let us go now to Bethlehem and see this thing that has taken place, which God has made known to us. "So they went with haste and found Mary and Joseph, and the child lying in the manger. When they saw this, they made known what had been told them about this child; and all who heard it were amazed at what the shepherds told them. But Mary treasured all these words and pondered them in her heart. The shepherds returned to their pastures, glorifying and praising God for all they had heard and seen, as it had been told them.

The Gospel of Our God.

Praise to you, Jesus the Christ.