

Once in Royal David's City

Introduction

Leader: Welcome in the name of Christ
God's grace, mercy and peace be with you

All: and also with you

Leader: Two thousand years ago, a baby was born amongst people living with rules imposed by the government of the day, a world of shortages, outcasts, refugees and asylum seekers. Jesus came into this world as a dependent, vulnerable and helpless baby, shielded by the care and protection of his parents.

At this Christmas time we hear again the message of the angels, and in heart and mind to go even unto Bethlehem and see this thing which is come to pass.

"The virgin will conceive and give birth to a son, and they will call him Immanuel" (which means "God with us").

O Little Town of Bethlehem

Reading 1: The prophets promise the Saviour

The Lord himself will give you a sign:
The virgin will conceive and give birth to a son, and will call him Immanuel.

"The days are coming," declares the Lord, "when I will raise up for David a righteous Branch, a King who will reign wisely and do what is just and right in the land. In his days Judah will be saved and Israel will live in safety.

This is the name by which he will be called: The Lord Our Righteous Saviour.

Bethlehem Ephrathah, though you are small among the clans of Judah, out of you will come for me one who will be ruler over Israel, whose origins are from of old, from ancient times. He will stand and shepherd his flock in the strength of the Lord, in the majesty of the name of the Lord his God.

To us a child is born, to us a son is given, and the government will be on his shoulders. And he will be called Wonderful Counsellor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace.

Thanks be to God.

It Came Upon a Midnight Clear

Collect 1

Leader: Everlasting Father,
you sent your Son to live amongst us, promised by the prophets of old;
as we celebrate the gift of the Christ-child, may he be for us a living hope:
All: Immanuel, God with us.
Amen.

Reading 2 The Birth of Jesus

The Emperor Augustus ordered a census to be taken throughout the Roman Empire.

When this first census took place, Quirinius was the governor of Syria. Everyone went to their own town to register.

Joseph went from the town of Nazareth in Galilee to the town of Bethlehem in Judaea, the birthplace of King David.

Joseph went there he was a descendant of David.

He went to register with Mary, who was promised in marriage to him. She was pregnant, and while they were in Bethlehem, the time came for her to have her baby. She gave birth to her first son, wrapped him in strips of cloth and laid him in a manger.

There was no room for them to stay in the inn.

Thanks be to God.

Silent Night

Collect 2

Leader: Everlasting Father, in the stillness of the night you sent your Son, the Word made flesh; as we recognise his presence among us, may he quiet our fears in uncertain times:
All: Immanuel, God with us. Amen.

Reading 3 Good News of Great Joy

There were shepherds living out in the fields near Bethlehem, keeping watch over their flocks at night. An angel of the Lord appeared to them, and the glory of the Lord shone around them, and they were terrified. But the angel said to them:

Do not be afraid. I bring you good news of great joy that will be for all the people. Today in the town of David a Saviour has been born to you; he is Christ the Lord. This will be a sign to you: You will find a baby wrapped in strips of cloth and lying in a manger.

Suddenly a great company of the heavenly host appeared with the angel, praising God:

Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace to all on whom his favour rests. Thanks be to God

While Shepherds Watched.

Collect 3

Leader: Everlasting Father,
you sent your Son, the child in a manger,
worshipped by shepherds and angels;
as we draw near to the child in the manger may he fill our hearts with joy and peace:
All: Immanuel, God with us. Amen.

TALK

PRAYERS

Leader: Jesus, born into a human family, we pray for families and households, facing Christmas separated from loved ones. Help us to support one another in new ways, reaching out to the lonely and vulnerable within our communities. Jesus, our Emmanuel,
All: be with us now and hear our prayer.

Jesus, cradled in a manger, we pray for the homeless and refugees, remembering at this season all who lack food or shelter. Help us to share generously with others that the poor and hungry may be satisfied. Jesus, our Emmanuel,
All: be with us now and hear our prayer.

Jesus, born under government restrictions, we pray for all in authority, facing difficult decisions and challenges day after day. Direct this and every nation in the ways of justice and peace, that they may work together for the common good. Jesus, our Emmanuel,
All: be with us now and hear our prayer.

Jesus, worshipped by angels and shepherds, we pray for the mission of the church, remembering at this season the message of hope. Strengthen us to proclaim good news of great joy that your glory may be revealed throughout the world. Jesus, our Emmanuel,
All: be with us now and hear our prayer.

Jesus, God with us, we pray for all who are sick, or anxious, or bereaved, remembering that you came as Prince of Peace. Bring comfort and healing to all who suffer, that they might find courage and hope in their troubles. Jesus, our Emmanuel,
All: you know us and love us, you share our lives and hear our prayer. Glory to you for ever. Amen.

The Lord's Prayer

Leader: Rejoicing in the presence of God here among us
let us pray with confidence as our Saviour has taught us:

**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, the
power and the glory, for
ever and ever.
Amen.**

Hark the Herald Angels Sing

Reading 4: The Promise of Light and Life

In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was with God in the beginning. Through him all things were made; without him nothing was made that has been made. In him was life, and that life was the light of all people. The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness has not overcome it. The Word became flesh and made his dwelling among us. We have seen his glory, the glory of the One and Only, who came from the Father, full of grace and truth.

The Blessing

Leader: God sent his angels from glory to bring to shepherds the good news of Jesus' birth.

All: Amen. We thank you, Lord.

We have heard his story, the story of God's own Son.

All: Amen. We thank you, Lord.

May he fill you with joy and peace in the knowledge that he remains Immanuel, God with us.

All Amen. We thank you, Lord.

And the blessing of God almighty
the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit, be among you and remain with you this Christmas
time and always.

All Amen.