

Joint Liturgical Group
of Great Britain

*Glory to
Christ our
Saviour*

**Four Celebrations for the
Christmas & Epiphany Season**

The Promise Fulfilled

Christmas Eve

Light to the Nations

The Glory of Christ Revealed

Notes

As an alternative to using one of the local churches this festival may be held in a concert hall or a public meeting place.

The First Christmas Celebration — **The Promise Fulfilled**

is a Sequence of Scripture Readings interspersed with Christmas hymns, songs and carols. It begins with the Blessing of God for Christ the Light and concludes with A Visit to the Crib.

- The Christmas Greeting
- The Blessing of God for Christ the Light
- Hymn
- A Sequence of Readings — The Promise of Redemption
- A Visit to the Crib
- Carol
- Blessing

The Second Christmas Celebration — **‘Christmas Eve’**

is a Traditional Sequence of Scripture Readings interspersed with Christmas hymns, songs and carols. It begins with A Bidding Prayer and concludes with A Proclamation and Sharing of Peace.

- Carol
- Bidding Prayer
- Sequence of Readings
- Carol
- A Christmas Proclamation
- Peace
- Carol
- A Prayer for Christmas Eve
- A Christmas Blessing

The First Epiphany Celebration — **Light to the Nations**

is a Sequence of Scripture Readings interspersed with Epiphany hymns, songs and carols. It begins with the Blessing of God for Christ the Light and concludes with A Christingle Ceremony.

- The Christmas Greeting
- The Blessing of Light
- Hymn
- A Sequence of Readings – The Light of God’s Glory
- A Christingle Ceremony
- A Prayer of Intercession
- Final Collect and Blessing

The Second Epiphany Celebration — **The Glory of Christ Revealed**

is a short Sequence of Gospel Readings interspersed with Epiphany hymns, songs and carols and concludes with The Signs of the Epiphany.

- Carol
- Introduction
- Sequence — The Glory of Christ is revealed
- A Prayer of Thanksgiving
- Carol
- Blessing

First Celebration

The Promise Fulfilled

A Sequence of Scripture Readings interspersed with Christmas hymns, songs and carols beginning with the Blessing of God for Christ the Light and concluding with A Visit to the Crib.

The Christmas Greeting

A child is born for us, a son given to us.
Jesus Christ, the light of the world.

The Blessing of God for Christ the Light

The central white candle on the Advent Wreath, or a prominently placed Christingle or some other prominent candle is lit.

Blessed are you, gracious God,
in the darkness of the world,
your light shines for all.
In the face of Jesus Christ,
the radiance of your glory is revealed.
A Saviour is born,
a son is given to us,
the Word becomes flesh.

With Mary and Joseph we give you thanks,
with the angels we give you praise,
with the shepherds we rejoice,
and with the Magi we offer our worship.
Christ is the King of glory,
the only Son of the eternal Father.
Blessed be God forever.

Hymn

One of the following or some other hymn or song welcoming Christ the Light.

The light of light to darkness came,
The word eternal to proclaim;
The Word which was before all time,
In time now dwells, the Christ, divine.

Our God from all eternity,
Made flesh in our humanity,
Now cradled in a manger lies,
His kingship hidden from our eyes.

Jesus, the everlasting Word,
In you the Father's voice is heard;
In you, the saviour of our race,
We see the brightness of God's face.

True radiance of the Father's light,
Revealed in weakness to our sight,
Redeemer, prophet, priest and king,
Your wondrous birth with joy we sing.

All praise to you, incarnate Son,
With Father and with Spirit one;
To you, O blessed Trinity,
Be praise through all eternity.

*The Community of Saint Mary the Virgin, Wantage
LM Suggested Tune: O Waly Waly or Gonfalon Royal*

O little town of Bethlehem,
how still we see thee lie!
above thy deep and dreamless sleep
the silent stars go by.
Yet in thy dark streets shineth
the everlasting light;
the hopes and fears of all the years
are met in thee to-night.

O morning stars, together
proclaim the holy birth
and praises sing to God the King,
and peace to all the earth;
for Christ is born of Mary;
and, gathered all above,
while mortals sleep, the angels keep
their watch of wondering love

How silently, how silently,
the wondrous gift is given!
so God imparts to human hearts
the blessings of his heaven.
No ear may hear his coming;
but in this world of sin,
where meek souls will receive him, still
the dear Christ enters in.

O holy child of Bethlehem,
descend to us, we pray;
cast out our sin, and enter in,
be born in us today.
We hear the Christmas angels
the great glad tidings tell:
O come to us, abide with us,
our Lord Emmanuel.

Phillips Brooks (1835–1893) alt..

What child is this, who, laid to rest
On Mary's lap is sleeping?
Whom angels greet with anthems sweet,
While shepherds watch are keeping?
This, this is Christ the King,
Whom shepherds worship and angels sing:
Haste, haste, to bring him praise
The Babe, the son of Mary.

Why lies he in such mean estate,
Where ox and ass are feeding?
Come, have no fear, God's son is here,
His love all loves exceeding:
Nails, spear, shall pierce him through,
The cross be borne for me, for you:
Hail, hail, the Saviour comes,
The Babe, the son of Mary.

So bring him incense, gold and myrrh,
All tongues and peoples own him,
The King of kings salvation brings,
Let every heart enthrone him:
Raise, raise your song on high
While Mary sings a lullaby,
Joy, joy, for Christ is born,
The Babe, the son of Mary.

William Chatterton Dix (1837-1898) alt.
Tune: Greensleeves

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- *It was on a starry night when the hills were bright* — Joy Webb
 - *or another hymn or song welcoming Christ the Light*
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A Sequence of Readings — The Promise of Redemption

Isaiah 9.2, 6, 7	<i>The prophecy of the Messiah's birth</i>
Isaiah 11.1-9	<i>The prophecy of the Messiah's kingdom of peace</i>
Isaiah 35	<i>The wilderness and the dry land shall be glad</i>
Isaiah 40.1-11 or Isaiah 52.7-10	<i>A voice cries in the wilderness: Prepare the way of the Lord How beautiful on the mountains</i>
Luke 1.5-25	<i>The Annunciation to Zechariah</i>
Luke 1.26-38	<i>The Annunciation to Mary</i>

A Visit to the Crib

Dear friends, as we celebrate the birth of Christ,
let us pray that God will
bless our visit to this crib,
and as we worship Christ the Son of God,
born of the Virgin Mary,
may we come to share in his life and glory.

During the singing of carols or hymns those who wish are directed in procession to the Crib.

When the visits to the Crib are complete this or some other prayer.

Let us pray.

Lord Jesus Christ, Son of God and Son of Mary,
who humbled yourself to share our birth and our death:
bring us with the shepherds and the wise men
to adore you in the humility of your cradle on earth
and to worship in the glory of your angels in heaven;
where with the Father and the Holy Spirit you live and reign,
God, world without end.

Amen.

Carol

An appropriate hymn or carol

The Blessing

May the wisdom of the Wonderful Counsellor guide you;
may the strength of the Mighty God defend you;
may the love of the Everlasting Father enfold you
and may the blessing of the Prince of Peace rest upon you;
now and always.

Amen.

Second Celebration

'Christmas Eve'

A Sequence of traditional Scripture Readings interspersed with Christmas hymns, songs and carols beginning with the Bidding Prayer and concluding with A Proclamation and Sharing of Peace to God's People.

Carol

This, or some other carol

Once in royal David's city
stood a lowly cattle shed,
where a mother laid her baby
in a manger for his bed:
Mary was that Mother mild,
Jesus Christ her little child.

He came down to earth from heaven
who is God and Lord of all,
and his shelter was a stable,
and his cradle was a stall;
with the poor and meek and lowly
lived on earth our Saviour holy.

And through all his wondrous childhood
he would honour and obey,
love and watch the lowly mother,
in whose gentle arms he lay:
Christian children all must be
mild, obedient, good as he.

For he is our childhood's pattern,
day by day like us he grew,
he was little, weak, and helpless,
tears and smiles like us he knew;
and he feeleth for our sadness,
and he shareth in our gladness.

And our eyes at last shall see him,
through his own redeeming love,
for that child so dear and gentle
is our Lord in heaven above;
and he leads his children on
to the place where he has gone.

Not in that poor lowly stable,
with the oxen standing by,
we shall see him; but in heaven,
set at God's right hand on high;
where like stars his children crowned
all in white shall wait around.

Cecil Frances Alexander (1818-1895)

A traditional Bidding Prayer

Beloved in Christ, be it this Christmastide our care and delight to 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, and the Babe lying in a manger.

Therefore let us read and mark in Holy Scripture the tale of the loving purposes of God from the first days of our disobedience unto the glorious Redemption brought us by this Holy Child.

But first, let us pray for the needs of the whole world; for peace on earth and goodwill among all his people; for unity and brotherhood within the Church he came to build, and especially in this city (town, village) of . . .

And because this of all things would rejoice his heart, let us remember, in his name, the poor and helpless, the cold, the hungry, and the oppressed; the sick and them that mourn, the lonely and the unloved, the aged and the little children; all those who know not the Lord Jesus, or who love him not, or who by sin have grieved his heart of love.

Lastly, let us remember before God all those who rejoice with us, but upon another shore, and in a greater light, that multitude which no man can number, whose hope was in the Word made flesh, and with whom in the Lord Jesus we are for ever one.

These prayers and praises let us humbly offer up to the Throne of Heaven, in the words which Christ himself has taught us:

**Our Father,
which art in heaven,
hallowed be thy name;
thy kingdom come;
thy will be done;
in earth as it is in heaven.
Give us this day our daily bread.
And forgive us our trespasses,
as we forgive them that 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.**

May the Almighty God bless us with his grace;
Christ give us the joys of everlasting life,
and unto the fellowship of the citizens above
may the King of Angels bring us all.

Amen.

Or, the leader uses these or similar words

Sisters and brothers, we have come together in our Father's presence, to celebrate the great festival of Christmas.

In this service let us hear the good news of the birth of Christ and offer our thanksgiving to God in prayer and carols of praise.

As we gather together in the name of Christ, let us pray for the world that Christ loves and which he came to save.

Let us pray for the Church, that through its mission and service it may share the good news of God's love in a needy world.

Let us pray that people everywhere may recognize their responsibility for our planet and its future and that together we may work for justice, freedom and peace.

Let us pray for all in special need, the sick, the anxious, the lonely, those who are afraid and those who are bereaved, that the peace and light of the Christ-child may bring them hope and healing.

Let us remember all whom we love, or who have asked for our prayers, and let us commend to God all who have died rejoicing in the Word made flesh and light of his glory.

This our festive prayer and praise let us offer to God our Father in the words that Christ himself has given 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,
and the power, and the glory,
for ever and ever. Amen.**

**Our Father in heaven,
hallowed be your name,
your kingdom come,
your will be done,
on earth as in heaven.**

**Give us today our daily bread.
Forgive us our sins
as we forgive those
who sin against us.
Save us from the time of trial
and deliver us from evil.**

**For the kingdom the power,
and the glory are yours
now and for ever. Amen.**

A Traditional Sequence of Readings

The selected Bible readings are interspersed with appropriate carols, hymns, anthems.

The readers may be selected to represent different groups within the community.

The readings may be read without announcement or conclusion or may end with ‘Thanks be to God’

(A full text of readings is printed in the Appendix)

Genesis 3.8-14	<i>The Fall</i>
Genesis 22.1-19 or Genesis 22.15-18	<i>The promise to Abraham</i>
Isaiah 9.2,6-7	<i>The prophecy of the Messiah’s birth</i>
Isaiah 11.1-9 or Micah 5.2-5	<i>The prophecy of the Messiah’s kingdom of peace The Messiah will be born in Bethlehem</i>
Luke 1.26-38 or Isaiah 60.1-6, 19	<i>The Annunciation to Mary The coming of the glory of the Lord</i>
Matthew 1.18-23 or Luke 2.1-7	<i>The birth of Emmanuel The birth of Jesus</i>
Luke 2.8-16	<i>The shepherds go to the manger</i>
Matthew 2.1-11	<i>The magi are led by a star to Jesus</i>
John 1.1-14	<i>The incarnation of the Word of God</i>

Carol

The sequence ends with an appropriate Christmas hymn or carol, such as ‘O come, all ye faithful’.

A Christmas Proclamation

I bring you good news of great joy:

a Saviour has been born, who is Christ the Lord.

**Glory to God in the highest heaven, and on earth peace
to all in whom he delights.**

Unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given,
and his name shall be called the Prince of Peace.

**Glory to God in the highest heaven, and on earth peace
to all in whom he delights.**

God has caused his light to shine in our hearts,
to give knowledge of his glory in the face of Jesus Christ.

**Glory to God in the highest heaven, and on earth peace
to all in whom he delights.**

The Peace

The peace of the Lord be always with you.
And also with you.

All may be invited to exchange a sign of peace.

Carol

A final Christmas hymn or carol such as 'Hark! The herald angels sing'.

A Prayer for Christmas Eve

Almighty God,
you make us glad with the yearly remembrance
of the birth of your Son Jesus Christ:
grant that, as we joyfully receive him as our redeemer,
we may with sure confidence behold him
when he shall come to be our judge;
who is alive and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit,
one God, now and for ever.

Amen.

A Christmas Blessing

Christ, who by his incarnation gathered into one
all things earthly and heavenly,
fill you with peace and goodwill;
and the blessing of God almighty,
the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit,
be among you and remain with you always.

Amen.

Third Celebration

A Light to the Nations

A Sequence of Scripture Readings interspersed with Epiphany hymns, songs and carols beginning with the Blessing of God for Christ the Light and concluding with A Christingle Ceremony.

The Christmas Greeting

A child is born for us, a son given to us.
Jesus Christ, the light of the world.

The Blessing of Light

The central white candle on the Advent Wreath, or a prominently placed Christingle or some other prominent candle is lit.

Blessed are you, gracious God,
in the darkness of the world,
your light shines for all.
In the face of Jesus Christ,
the radiance of your glory is revealed.
A Saviour is born,
a son is given to us,
the Word becomes flesh.

With Mary and Joseph we give you thanks,
with the angels we give you praise,
with the shepherds we rejoice,
and with the Magi we offer our worship.
Christ is the King of glory,
the only Son of the eternal Father.
Blessed be God forever.

Hymn

One of the following or some other hymn or song welcoming Christ the Light.

The light of light to darkness came,
The word eternal to proclaim;
The Word which was before all time,
In time now dwells, the Christ, divine.

Our God from all eternity,
Made flesh in our humanity,
Now cradled in a manger lies,
His kingship hidden from our eyes.

Jesus, the everlasting Word,
In you the Father's voice is heard;
In you, the saviour of our race,
We see the brightness of God's face.

True radiance of the Father's light,
Revealed in weakness to our sight,
Redeemer, prophet, priest and king,
Your wondrous birth with joy we sing.

All praise to you, incarnate Son,
With Father and with Spirit one;
To you, O blessed Trinity,
Be praise through all eternity.

*The Community of Saint Mary the Virgin, Wantage
LM Suggested Tune: O Waly Waly or Gonfalon Royal*

Songs of thankfulness and praise,
Jesus, Lord, to you we raise;
light revealed, when heaven's star
brought the wise men from afar.

Branch of royal David's stem
in your birth at Bethlehem,
Word before the world began,
Son of God and Son of Man.

Christ revealed at Jordan's stream,
prophet, priest and king supreme;
Cana's guest with power divine
changing water into wine.

Christ the judge at last will shine,
all will see the glorious sign;
all will then the trumpet hear,
all will see the Son appear.

Christopher Wordsworth (1807-1885)alt.

Bethlehem, a noble city,
has been blessed beyond compare,
for the gracious God of heaven
once became incarnate there.

Fairer than the sun at morning
was the star that told his birth,
to the world its God announcing,
seen in human form on earth.

From the east came men of wisdom
bringing treasures prized of old,
tributes to a greater wisdom,
gifts of incense, myrrh, and gold.

Sacred gifts of mystic meaning:
incense shows that God has come,
gold proclaims him king of nations,
myrrh foretells his saving tomb.

Holy Jesus, in your brightness
to the gentile world displayed,
with the Father and the Spirit
endless praise to you be paid.

*'O sola magnarum urbium'
Aurelius Clemens Prudentius (348-c.410), translated by Edward Caswall (1814-1878)*

A Sequence of Readings – The Light of God’s Glory

The texts of the readings can be found in the Appendix.

Genesis 1.1-5	<i>Let there be light</i>
Isaiah 60.1-6, 19	<i>Arise, shine for your light has come</i>
Isaiah 49.6b-13	<i>I will give you as light to the nations</i>
Isaiah 41.8-20	<i>You are my servant, I have chosen you</i>
Haggai 2.5b-9	<i>I will fill this house with splendour</i>
Revelation 21.22-22.5	<i>The temple of the Lamb</i>
Matthew 2.1-12	<i>The Magi follow the star</i>

A Christingle Ceremony

A carol or hymn is sung during which unlit Christingle are distributed

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- *Round orange, round orange, you serve as a sign* — Elizabeth Cosnett
 - *Creator of our age-old globe* — Mark Bishop
-

A central Christingle which is already lit is held before the people and its symbolism briefly explained

Jesus, light of the world.

We worship and adore you.

The life of Christ is the light that shines in the dark.

A light that darkness cannot overpower.

The true light is even now coming into the world.

Christ is in the world and the world does not know him.

By the shedding of Christ’s blood we are redeemed.

By death Christ has conquered death.

Let us pray

Father of lights,

from whom comes every good and perfect gift:

keep us in the light of Christ,

to shine in your world,

that all may believe in you

through Jesus Christ our Lord.

Amen.

The light of Christ is shared until every Christingle has been lit.

If there is a procession further carols or hymns are sung.

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- *Now we hold the ripened orange* — Peter Dewdney
 - *O round as the world is the orange you give us!* — Fred Pratt Green
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A Prayer of Intercession

For all people in their daily life and work.

Lord hear us.

For our families, friends and neighbours, and for all those who are alone.

Lord hear us.

For the just and responsible use of your creation.

Lord hear us.

For the victims of hunger, fear and injustice.

Lord hear us.

For those in danger, sorrow, or any kind of trouble.

Lord hear us.

For those who minister to the sick, the lonely, and the needy.

Lord hear us.

For the peace and unity of the Church of God.

Lord hear us.

For our own needs and for the needs of others.

Lord hear us.

Final Collect and Blessing

May the Father,
who has loved the eternal Son
from before the foundation of the world,
shed that love upon his children.

Amen.

May Christ,
who by his incarnation gathered into one
things earthly and heavenly, fill us with joy and peace.

Amen.

May the Holy Spirit,
by whose overshadowing Mary became the God-bearer,
give us grace to carry the good news of Christ.

Amen.

And the blessing of God almighty,
the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit,
be among us and remain with us always.

Amen.

Fourth Celebration

The Glory of Christ Revealed

A short Sequence of Gospel Readings interspersed with Epiphany hymns, songs and carols concluding with The Signs of the Epiphany.

Carol

This, or some other Epiphany hymn or carol

As with gladness men of old
did the guiding star behold,
as with joy they hailed its light,
leading onward, beaming bright;
so, most gracious God, may we
evermore your glory see.

As with joyful steps they sped,
Saviour to your lowly bed,
there to bend the knee before
Christ whom heaven and earth adore;
so may we with willing feet
ever seek your mercy-seat.

As they offered gifts most rare
at your cradle rude and bare,
so may we with holy joy,
pure and free from sin's alloy,
all our costliest treasures bring,
Christ, to you, our heavenly King.

Holy Jesus, every day
keep us in the narrow way,
and, when earthly things are past,
bring our ransomed souls at last
where thy need no star to guide,
where no clouds your glory hide.

In the heavenly country bright
need they no created light;
Christ its light, its joy, its crown,
Christ its sun which goes not down;
there for every may we sing
alleluias to our King.

William Chatterton Dix (1837-1898)

Introduction

Three great moments in the gospel story reveal the glory of Christ.

A star leads the wise men to the Christ-child.

Glory to Christ our Saviour.

Water is made wine at the wedding feast.

Glory to Christ our Saviour.

Jesus is revealed as the Christ in the waters of baptism.

Glory to Christ our Saviour.

The Glory of Christ is Revealed to the Magi

The people are seated while a suitable hymn or carol is sung or music is played.

Those portraying the Wise Men, move with their gifts of gold, frankincense and myrrh to the crib.

Scripture verses may be read from Matthew 2.1-2, 8-11 (texts are given in the Appendix).

The gifts may be placed before the crib..

Let us pray.

Eternal God,

who by the shining of a star

led the wise men to the worship of your Son:

guide by his light the nations of the earth,

that the whole world may behold your glory;

through Jesus Christ our Lord.

Amen.

The Glory of Christ is Revealed in the Water made Wine

The people are seated while a suitable hymn or carol is sung or music is played.

A small procession, with a chalice or flagon of wine, moves forward .

Scripture verses may be read from John 2.1-11.

The chalice or flagon of wine is placed on the holy table or near the crib.

Let us pray.

Almighty God,

in Christ you make all things new:

transform the poverty of our nature by the riches of your grace,

and in the renewal of our lives

make known your heavenly glory;

through Jesus Christ your Son our Lord.

Amen.

The Glory of Christ is Revealed in the Waters of Baptism

The people are seated while a suitable hymn or carol is sung or music is played.

A small procession, with a bowl of water, moves forward.

Scripture verses may be read from Mark 1:4-5, 7-11.

The bowl or flagon of water is placed on the holy table or near the crib, or poured into the font or baptistery.

Let us pray.

Eternal Father,
who at the baptism of Jesus
revealed him to be your Son,
anointing him with the Holy Spirit:
grant to us, who are born again by water and the Spirit,
that we may be faithful to our calling as your adopted children;
through Jesus Christ your Son our Lord,
who is alive and reigns with you,
in the unity of the Holy Spirit,
one God, now and for ever.

Amen.

During the singing of suitable carols or hymns or the playing of music those who wish are directed in procession to the water and to dip their hands in it as a reminder of their baptism.

When the visits to the water are complete this or some other prayer.

A Prayer of Thanksgiving

Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.

It is right to give thanks and praise.

Father, for your gift of water in creation.

We give you thanks and praise.

For your Spirit, sweeping over the waters, bringing light and life.

We give you thanks and praise.

For your Son Jesus Christ our Lord, baptized in the river Jordan.

We give you thanks and praise.

For your new creation, brought to birth by water and the Spirit.

We give you thanks and praise.

For your grace bestowed upon us your children, washing away our sins.

We give you thanks and praise.

May your Holy Spirit, who has brought us to new birth
in the family of your Church,
raise us in Christ, our anointed Lord,
to full and eternal life.

Amen

Carol

A suitable Epiphany hymn or carol

The Blessing

May God the Father,
who led the wise men by the shining of a star
to find the Christ, the Light from light,
lead us also in our pilgrimage to find the Lord.

Amen.

May God the Son,
who turned water into wine at the wedding feast at Cana,
transform our lives and make glad our hearts.

Amen.

May God the Holy Spirit,
who came upon the beloved Son
at his baptism in the river Jordan,
pour out his gifts on us
who have come to the waters of new birth.

Amen.

And the blessing of God almighty,
the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit,
be among us and remain with us always.

Amen.

Appendix — First Celebration: Readings

A Sequence of Readings — The Promise of Redemption

Reading 1

Isaiah 9.2, 6, 7

A reading from the Prophet Isaiah — *The prophecy of the Messiah's birth*

The people who walked in darkness
have seen a great light;
those who lived in a land of deep darkness—
on them light has shined

For a child has been born for us,
a son given to us;
authority rests upon his shoulders;
and he is named

Wonderful Counsellor, Mighty God,
Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace.

His authority shall grow continually,
and there shall be endless peace
for the throne of David and his kingdom.

He will establish and uphold it
with justice and with righteousness
from this time onward and forevermore.

The zeal of the LORD of hosts will do this,

Reading 2

Isaiah 11.1-9

A reading from the Prophet Isaiah — *The prophecy of the Messiah's kingdom of peace*

A shoot shall come out from the stump of Jesse,
and a branch shall grow out of his roots.

The spirit of the LORD shall rest on him,
the spirit of wisdom and understanding,
the spirit of counsel and might,
the spirit of knowledge and the fear of the LORD.

His delight shall be in the fear of the LORD.

He shall not judge by what his eyes see,
or decide by what his ears hear;
but with righteousness he shall judge the poor,
and decide with equity for the meek of the earth;
he shall strike the earth with the rod of his mouth,
and with the breath of his lips he shall kill the wicked.

Righteousness shall be the belt around his waist,
and faithfulness the belt around his loins.

The wolf shall live with the lamb,
the leopard shall lie down with the kid,
the calf and the lion and the fatling together,
and a little child shall lead them.

The cow and the bear shall graze,
their young shall lie down together;
and the lion shall eat straw like the ox.

The nursing child shall play over the hole of the asp,
and the weaned child shall put its hand on the adder's den.
They will not hurt or destroy
on all my holy mountain;
for the earth will be full of the knowledge of the LORD
as the waters cover the sea.

Reading 3

Isaiah 35

A reading from the Prophet Isaiah —*The wilderness and the dry land shall be glad*

The wilderness and the dry land shall be glad,
the desert shall rejoice and blossom;
like the crocus it shall blossom abundantly,
and rejoice with joy and singing.
The glory of Lebanon shall be given to it,
the majesty of Carmel and Sharon.
They shall see the glory of the LORD,
the majesty of our God.

Strengthen the weak hands,
and make firm the feeble knees.
Say to those who are of a fearful heart,
“Be strong, do not fear!
Here is your God.
He will come with vengeance,
with terrible recompense.
He will come and save you.”

Then the eyes of the blind shall be opened,
and the ears of the deaf unstopped;
then the lame shall leap like a deer,
and the tongue of the speechless sing for joy.
For waters shall break forth in the wilderness,
and streams in the desert;
the burning sand shall become a pool,
and the thirsty ground springs of water;
the haunt of jackals shall become a swamp,
the grass shall become reeds and rushes.

A highway shall be there,
and it shall be called the Holy Way;
the unclean shall not travel on it,
but it shall be for God's people;
no traveller, not even fools, shall go astray.
No lion shall be there,
nor shall any ravenous beast come up on it;
they shall not be found there,
but the redeemed shall walk there.
And the ransomed of the LORD shall return,
and come to Zion with singing;
everlasting joy shall be upon their heads;
they shall obtain joy and gladness,
and sorrow and sighing shall flee away.

Reading 4

Isaiah 40.1-11

A reading from the Prophet Isaiah

— *A voice cries in the wilderness: Prepare the way of the LORD*

Comfort, O comfort my people,
says your God.
Speak tenderly to Jerusalem,
and cry to her
that she has served her term,
that her penalty is paid,
that she has received from the LORD 's hand
double for all her sins.

A voice cries out:

“In the wilderness prepare the way of the LORD,
make straight in the desert a highway for our God.
Every valley shall be lifted up,
and every mountain and hill be made low;
the uneven ground shall become level,
and the rough places a plain.
Then the glory of the LORD shall be revealed,
and all people shall see it together,
for the mouth of the LORD has spoken.”

A voice says, “Cry out!”

And I said, “What shall I cry?”

All people are grass,
their constancy is like the flower of the field.
The grass withers, the flower fades,
when the breath of the LORD blows upon it;
surely the people are grass.
The grass withers, the flower fades;
but the word of our God will stand forever.
Get you up to a high mountain,
O Zion, herald of good tidings;
lift up your voice with strength,
O Jerusalem, herald of good tidings,
lift it up, do not fear;
say to the cities of Judah,
“Here is your God!”
See, the LORD God comes with might,
and his arm rules for him;
his reward is with him,
and his recompense before him.
He will feed his flock like a shepherd;
he will gather the lambs in his arms,
and carry them in his bosom,
and gently lead the mother sheep.

A reading from the Prophet Isaiah — *How beautiful on the mountains*

How beautiful upon the mountains
 are the feet of the messenger who announces peace,
 who brings good news,
 who announces salvation,
 who says to Zion, "Your God reigns."
 Listen! Your sentinels lift up their voices,
 together they sing for joy;
 for in plain sight they see
 the return of the LORD to Zion.
 Break forth together into singing,
 you ruins of Jerusalem;
 for the LORD has comforted his people,
 he has redeemed Jerusalem.
 The LORD has bared his holy arm
 before the eyes of all the nations;
 and all the ends of the earth shall see
 the salvation of our God.

Reading 5

Luke 1.5-25

A reading from the Gospel of Luke — *The Annunciation to Zechariah*

In the days of King Herod of Judea, there was a priest named Zechariah, who belonged to the priestly order of Abijah. His wife was a descendant of Aaron, and her name was Elizabeth. Both of them were righteous before God, living blamelessly according to all the commandments and regulations of the LORD. But they had no children, because Elizabeth was barren, and both were getting on in years.

Once when he was serving as priest before God and his section was on duty, he was chosen by lot, according to the custom of the priesthood, to enter the sanctuary of the LORD and offer incense. Now at the time of the incense offering, the whole assembly of the people was praying outside. Then there appeared to him an angel of the LORD, standing at the right side of the altar of incense. When Zechariah saw him, he was terrified; and fear overwhelmed him. But the angel said to him, "Do not be afraid, Zechariah, for your prayer has been heard. Your wife Elizabeth will bear you a son, and you will name him John. You will have joy and gladness, and many will rejoice at his birth, for he will be great in the sight of the LORD. He must never drink wine or strong drink; even before his birth he will be filled with the Holy Spirit. He will turn many of the people of Israel to the LORD their God. With the spirit and power of Elijah he will go before him, to turn the hearts of parents to their children, and the disobedient to the wisdom of the righteous, to make ready a people prepared for the LORD." Zechariah said to the angel, "How will I know that this is so? For I am an old man, and my wife is getting on in years." The angel replied, "I am Gabriel. I stand in the presence of God, and I have been sent to speak to you and to bring you this good news. But now, because you did not believe my words, which will be fulfilled in their time, you will become mute, unable to speak, until the day these things occur."

Meanwhile the people were waiting for Zechariah, and wondered at his delay in the sanctuary. When he did come out, he could not speak to them, and they realized that he had seen a vision in the sanctuary. He kept motioning to them and remained unable to speak. When his time of service was ended, he went to his home.

After those days his wife Elizabeth conceived, and for five months she remained in seclusion. She said, "This is what the LORD has done for me when he looked favourably on me and took away the disgrace I have endured among my people."

Reading 6

Luke 1.26-38

A reading from the Gospel of Luke — *The Annunciation to Mary*

In the sixth month the angel Gabriel was sent by God to a town in Galilee called Nazareth, to a virgin engaged to a man whose name was Joseph, of the house of David. The virgin's name was Mary.

And he came to her and said, "Greetings, favoured one! The LORD is with you." But she was much perplexed by his words and pondered what sort of greeting this might be. The angel said to her, "Do not be afraid, Mary, for you have found favour with God. And now, you will conceive in your womb and bear a son, and you will name him Jesus. He will be great, and will be called the Son of the Most High, and the LORD God will give to him the throne of his ancestor David. He will reign over the house of Jacob forever, and of his kingdom there will be no end."

Mary said to the angel, "How can this be, since I am a virgin?" The angel said to her, "The Holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the Most High will overshadow you; therefore the child to be born will be holy; he will be called Son of God. And now, your relative Elizabeth in her old age has also conceived a son; and this is the sixth month for her who was said to be barren. For nothing will be impossible with God."

Then Mary said, "Here am I, the servant of the LORD; let it be with me according to your word." Then the angel departed from her.

Second Celebration: Readings

A Traditional Sequence of Readings

Reading 1

Genesis 3.8-14

A reading from book of Genesis—*The Fall*

They heard the sound of the LORD God walking in the garden at the time of the evening breeze, and the man and his wife hid themselves from the presence of the LORD God among the trees of the garden. But the LORD God called to the man, and said to him, “Where are you?” He said, “I heard the sound of you in the garden, and I was afraid, because I was naked; and I hid myself.” He said, “Who told you that you were naked? Have you eaten from the tree of which I commanded you not to eat?” The man said, “The woman whom you gave to be with me, she gave me fruit from the tree, and I ate.” Then the LORD God said to the woman, “What is this that you have done?” The woman said, “The serpent tricked me, and I ate.”

The LORD God said to the serpent,
“Because you have done this,
cursed are you among all animals
and among all wild creatures;
upon your belly you shall go,
and dust you shall eat
the days of your life.”

Reading 2

Genesis 22.1-19

A reading from book of Genesis — *The promise to Abraham*

God said to Abraham, “Abraham!” And he said, “Here I am.” He said, “Take your son, your only son Isaac, whom you love, and go to the land of Moriah, and offer him there as a burnt offering on one of the mountains that I shall show you.” So Abraham rose early in the morning, saddled his donkey, and took two of his young men with him, and his son Isaac; he cut the wood for the burnt offering, and set out and went to the place in the distance that God had shown him. On the third day Abraham looked up and saw the place far away. Then Abraham said to his young men, “Stay here with the donkey; the boy and I will go over there; we will worship, and then we will come back to you.” Abraham took the wood of the burnt offering and laid it on his son Isaac, and he himself carried the fire and the knife. So the two of them walked on together. Isaac said to his father Abraham, “Father!” And he said, “Here I am, my son.” He said, “The fire and the wood are here, but where is the lamb for a burnt offering?” Abraham said, “God himself will provide the lamb for a burnt offering, my son.” So the two of them walked on together.

When they came to the place that God had shown him, Abraham built an altar there and laid the wood in order. He bound his son Isaac, and laid him on the altar, on top of the wood. Then Abraham reached out his hand and took the knife to kill his son. But the angel of the LORD called to him from heaven, and said, “Abraham, Abraham!” And he said, “Here I am.” He said, “Do not lay your hand on the boy or do anything to him; for now I know that you fear God, since you have not withheld your son, your only son, from me.” And Abraham looked up and saw a ram, caught in a thicket by its horns. Abraham went and took the ram and offered it up as a burnt offering instead of his son. So Abraham called that place “The LORD will provide”; as it is said to this day, “On the mount of the LORD it shall be provided.”

The angel of the LORD called to Abraham a second time from heaven, and said, “By myself I have sworn, says the LORD: Because you have done this, and have not withheld your son, your only son, I will indeed bless you, and I will make your offspring as numerous as the stars of heaven and as the

sand that is on the seashore. And your offspring shall possess the gate of their enemies, and by your offspring shall all the nations of the earth gain blessing for themselves, because you have obeyed my voice.” So Abraham returned to his young men, and they arose and went together to Beer-sheba; and Abraham lived at Beer-sheba.

or

Genesis 22.15-18

A reading from the book of Genesis —*The promise to Abraham*

The angel of the LORD called to Abraham a second time from heaven, and said, “By myself I have sworn, says the LORD: Because you have done this, and have not withheld your son, your only son, I will indeed bless you, and I will make your offspring as numerous as the stars of heaven and as the sand that is on the seashore. And your offspring shall possess the gate of their enemies, and by your offspring shall all the nations of the earth gain blessing for themselves, because you have obeyed my voice.

Reading 3

Isaiah 9.2,6-7

A reading from the prophet Isaiah—*The prophecy of the Messiah’s birth*

The people who walked in darkness
have seen a great light;
those who lived in a land of deep darkness
— on them light has shined

For a child has been born for us,
a son given to us;
authority rests upon his shoulders;
and he is named
Wonderful Counsellor, Mighty God,
Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace.
His authority shall grow continually,
and there shall be endless peace
for the throne of David and his kingdom.
He will establish and uphold it
with justice and with righteousness
from this time onward and forevermore.
The zeal of the LORD of hosts will do this.

Reading 4

Isaiah 11.1-9

A reading from —*The prophecy of the Messiah’s kingdom of peace*

A shoot shall come out from the stump of Jesse,
and a branch shall grow out of his roots.
The spirit of the LORD shall rest on him,
the spirit of wisdom and understanding,
the spirit of counsel and might,
the spirit of knowledge and the fear of the LORD.
His delight shall be in the fear of the LORD.
He shall not judge by what his eyes see,
or decide by what his ears hear;
but with righteousness he shall judge the poor,
and decide with equity for the meek of the earth;

he shall strike the earth with the rod of his mouth,
and with the breath of his lips he shall kill the wicked.
Righteousness shall be the belt around his waist,
and faithfulness the belt around his loins.

The wolf shall live with the lamb,
the leopard shall lie down with the kid,
the calf and the lion and the fatling together,
and a little child shall lead them.

The cow and the bear shall graze,
their young shall lie down together;
and the lion shall eat straw like the ox.

The nursing child shall play over the hole of the asp,
and the weaned child shall put its hand on the adder's den.

They will not hurt or destroy
on all my holy mountain;
for the earth will be full of the knowledge of the LORD
as the waters cover the sea.

or

Micah 5.2-5

A reading from the Prophet Micah — *The Messiah will be born in Bethlehem*

But you, O Bethlehem of Ephrathah,
who are one of the little clans of Judah,
from you shall come forth for me
one who is to rule in Israel,
whose origin is from of old,
from ancient days.

Therefore he shall give them up until the time
when she who is in labour has brought forth;
then the rest of his kindred shall return
to the people of Israel.

And he shall stand and feed his flock in the strength of the LORD,
in the majesty of the name of the LORD his God.
And they shall live secure, for now he shall be great
to the ends of the earth;
and he shall be the one of peace.

Reading 5

Luke 1.26-38

A reading from Gospel of Luke — *The Annunciation to Mary*

In the sixth month the angel Gabriel was sent by God to a town in Galilee called Nazareth, to a virgin engaged to a man whose name was Joseph, of the house of David. The virgin's name was Mary.

And he came to her and said, "Greetings, favoured one! The LORD is with you." But she was much perplexed by his words and pondered what sort of greeting this might be. The angel said to her, "Do not be afraid, Mary, for you have found favour with God. And now, you will conceive in your womb and bear a son, and you will name him Jesus. He will be great, and will be called the Son of the Most High, and the LORD God will give to him the throne of his ancestor David. He will reign over the house of Jacob forever, and of his kingdom there will be no end."

Mary said to the angel, "How can this be, since I am a virgin?" The angel said to her, "The Holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the Most High will overshadow you; therefore the child to be born will be holy; he will be called Son of God. And now, your relative Elizabeth in her old age has

also conceived a son; and this is the sixth month for her who was said to be barren. For nothing will be impossible with God.”

Then Mary said, “Here am I, the servant of the LORD; let it be with me according to your word.” Then the angel departed from her.

or

Isaiah 60.1-6, 19

A reading from the Prophet Isaiah —*The coming of the glory of the LORD*

Arise, shine; for your light has come,
and the glory of the LORD has risen upon you.

For darkness shall cover the earth,
and thick darkness the peoples;

but the LORD will arise upon you,
and his glory will appear over you.

Nations shall come to your light,
and kings to the brightness of your dawn.

Lift up your eyes and look around;
they all gather together, they come to you;
your sons shall come from far away,
and your daughters shall be carried on their nurses’ arms.

Then you shall see and be radiant;
your heart shall thrill and rejoice,
because the abundance of the sea shall be brought to you,
the wealth of the nations shall come to you.

A multitude of camels shall cover you,
the young camels of Midian and Ephah;
all those from Sheba shall come.

They shall bring gold and frankincense,
and shall proclaim the praise of the LORD.

The sun shall no longer be
your light by day,
nor for brightness shall the moon
give light to you by night;
but the LORD will be your everlasting light,
and your God will be your glory.

Reading 6

Matthew 1.18-23

A reading from the Gospel of Matthew —*The birth of Emmanuel*

Now the birth of Jesus the Messiah took place in this way. When his mother Mary had been engaged to Joseph, but before they lived together, she was found to be with child from the Holy Spirit. Her husband Joseph, being a righteous man and unwilling to expose her to public disgrace, planned to dismiss her quietly. But just when he had resolved to do this, an angel of the LORD appeared to him in a dream and said, “Joseph, son of David, do not be afraid to take Mary as your wife, for the child conceived in her is from the Holy Spirit. She will bear a son, and you are to name him Jesus, for he will save his people from their sins.” All this took place to fulfill what had been spoken by the LORD through the prophet:

“Look, the virgin shall conceive and bear a son,
and they shall name him Emmanuel,”

which means, “God is with us.”

A reading from the Gospel of Luke —*The birth of Jesus*

In those days a decree went out from Emperor Augustus that all the world should be registered. This was the first registration 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 David called Bethlehem, because he was descended from the house and family of David. He went to be registered with Mary, to whom he was engaged 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 son and wrapped him in bands of cloth, and laid him in a manger, because there was no place for them in the inn.

Reading 7

Luke 2.8-16

A reading from the Gospel of Luke —*The shepherds go to the manger*

There were shepherds living in the fields, keeping watch over their flock by night. Then an angel of the LORD stood before them, and the glory of the LORD shone around them, and they were terrified. But the angel said to them, “Do not be afraid; for see—I am bringing you good news of great joy for all the people: to you is born this day in the city of David a Saviour, who is the Messiah, the LORD. 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 angel a multitude of the heavenly host, praising God and saying,

“Glory to God in the highest heaven,
and on earth peace among those whom he favours!”

When the angels had left them and gone into heaven, the shepherds said to one another, “Let us go now to Bethlehem and see this thing that has taken place, which the LORD has made known to us.” So they went with haste and found Mary and Joseph, and the child lying in the manger.

Reading 8

Matthew 2.1-11

A reading from the Gospel of Matthew —*The magi are led by a star to Jesus*

In the time of King Herod, after Jesus was born in Bethlehem of Judea, wise men from the East came to Jerusalem, asking, “Where is the child who has been born king of the Jews? For we observed his star at its rising, and have come to pay him homage.” When King Herod heard this, he was frightened, and all Jerusalem with him; and calling together all the chief priests and scribes of the people, he inquired of them where the Messiah was to be born. They told him, “In Bethlehem of Judea; for so it has been written by the prophet:

‘And you, Bethlehem, in the land of Judah,
are by no means least among the rulers of Judah;
for from you shall come a ruler
who is to shepherd my people Israel.’”

Then Herod secretly called for the wise men and learned from them the exact time when the star had appeared. Then he sent them to Bethlehem, saying, “Go and search diligently for the child; and when you have found him, bring me word so that I may also go and pay him homage.” When they had heard the king, they set out; and there, ahead of them, went the star that they had seen at its rising, until it stopped over the place where the child was. When they saw that the star had stopped, they were overwhelmed with joy. On entering the house, they saw the child with Mary his mother; and they knelt down and paid him homage. Then, opening their treasure chests, they offered him gifts of gold, frankincense, and myrrh.

Reading 9

John 1.1-14

A reading from the Gospel of John —*The incarnation of the Word of God*

In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was in the beginning with God. All things came into being through him, and without him not one thing came into being. What has come into being in him was life, and the life was the light of all people. The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness did not overcome it.

There was a man sent from God, whose name was John. He came as a witness to testify to the light, so that all might believe through him. He himself was not the light, but he came to testify to the light. The true light, which enlightens everyone, was coming into the world.

He was in the world, and the world came into being through him; yet the world did not know him. He came to what was his own, and his own people did not accept him. But to all who received him, who believed in his name, he gave power to become children of God, who were born, not of blood or of the will of the flesh or of the will of man, but of God.

And the Word became flesh and lived among us, and we have seen his glory, the glory as of a father's only son, full of grace and truth.

Third Celebration: Readings

A Sequence of Readings – The Light of God’s Glory

Reading 1

Genesis 1.1-5

A reading from the book of Genesis — *Let there be light*

In the beginning when God created the heavens and the earth, the earth was a formless void and darkness covered the face of the deep, while a wind from God swept over the face of the waters. Then God said, “Let there be light”; and there was light. And God saw that the light was good; and God separated the light from the darkness. God called the light Day, and the darkness he called Night. And there was evening and there was morning, the first day.

Reading 2

Isaiah 60.1-6, 19

A reading from the Prophet Isaiah — *Arise, shine for your light has come*

Arise, shine; for your light has come,
and the glory of the LORD has risen upon you.
For darkness shall cover the earth,
and thick darkness the peoples;
but the LORD will arise upon you,
and his glory will appear over you.
Nations shall come to your light,
and kings to the brightness of your dawn.
Lift up your eyes and look around;
they all gather together; they come to you;
your sons shall come from far away,
and your daughters shall be carried on their nurses’ arms.
Then you shall see and be radiant;
your heart shall thrill and rejoice,
because the abundance of the sea shall be brought to you,
the wealth of the nations shall come to you.
A multitude of camels shall cover you,
the young camels of Midian and Ephah;
all those from Sheba shall come.
They shall bring gold and frankincense,
and shall proclaim the praise of the LORD.
The sun shall no longer be
your light by day,
nor for brightness shall the moon
give light to you by night;
but the LORD will be your everlasting light,
and your God will be your glory.

Reading 3

Isaiah 49.6b-13

A reading from the Prophet Isaiah — *I will give you as light to the nations*

“I will give you as a light to the nations,
that my salvation may reach to the end of the earth.”

Thus says the LORD,
the Redeemer of Israel and his Holy One,
to one deeply despised, abhorred by the nations,
the slave of rulers,
“Kings shall see and stand up,
princes, and they shall prostrate themselves,
because of the LORD, who is faithful,
the Holy One of Israel, who has chosen you.”

Thus says the LORD:
In a time of favour I have answered you,
on a day of salvation I have helped you;
I have kept you and given you
as a covenant to the people,
to establish the land,
to apportion the desolate heritages;
saying to the prisoners, “Come out,”
to those who are in darkness, “Show yourselves.”
They shall feed along the ways,
on all the bare heights shall be their pasture;
they shall not hunger or thirst,
neither scorching wind nor sun shall strike them down,
for he who has pity on them will lead them,
and by springs of water will guide them.
And I will turn all my mountains into a road,
and my highways shall be raised up.
Lo, these shall come from far away,
and lo, these from the north and from the west,
and these from the land of Syene.
Sing for joy, O heavens, and exult, O earth;
break forth, O mountains, into singing!
For the LORD has comforted his people,
and will have compassion on his suffering ones.

Reading 4

Isaiah 41.8-20

A reading from the Prophet Isaiah — *You are my servant, I have chosen you*

You, Israel, my servant,
Jacob, whom I have chosen,
the offspring of Abraham, my friend;
you whom I took from the ends of the earth,
and called from its farthest corners,
saying to you, “You are my servant,
I have chosen you and not cast you off”;
do not fear, for I am with you,
do not be afraid, for I am your God;

I will strengthen you, I will help you,
I will uphold you with my victorious right hand.

Yes, all who are incensed against you
shall be ashamed and disgraced;

those who strive against you
shall be as nothing and shall perish.

You shall seek those who contend with you,
but you shall not find them;

those who war against you
shall be as nothing at all.

For I, the LORD your God,
hold your right hand;
it is I who say to you, "Do not fear,
I will help you."

Do not fear, you worm Jacob,
you insect Israel!

I will help you, says the LORD;
your Redeemer is the Holy One of Israel.

Now, I will make of you a threshing sledge,
sharp, new, and having teeth;

you shall thresh the mountains and crush them,
and you shall make the hills like chaff.

You shall winnow them and the wind shall carry them away,
and the tempest shall scatter them.

Then you shall rejoice in the LORD;
in the Holy One of Israel you shall glory.

When the poor and needy seek water,
and there is none,
and their tongue is parched with thirst,
I the LORD will answer them,
I the God of Israel will not forsake them.

I will open rivers on the bare heights,
and fountains in the midst of the valleys;

I will make the wilderness a pool of water,
and the dry land springs of water.

I will put in the wilderness the cedar,
the acacia, the myrtle, and the olive;

I will set in the desert the cypress,
the plane and the pine together,

so that all may see and know,
all may consider and understand,
that the hand of the LORD has done this,
the Holy One of Israel has created it.

Reading 5

Haggai 2.5b-9

A reading from the Prophet Haggai — *I will fill this house with splendour*

My spirit abides among you; do not fear. For thus says the LORD of hosts: Once again, in a little while, I will shake the heavens and the earth and the sea and the dry land; and I will shake all the nations, so that the treasure of all nations shall come, and I will fill this house with splendour, says the LORD of hosts. The silver is mine, and the gold is mine, says the LORD of hosts. The latter splendour of this house shall be greater than the former, says the LORD of hosts; and in this place I will give prosperity, says the LORD of hosts.

Reading 6

Revelation 21.22-22.5

A reading from the book of Revelation — *The temple of the Lamb*

I saw no temple in the city, for its temple is the LORD God the Almighty and the Lamb. And the city has no need of sun or moon to shine on it, for the glory of God is its light, and its lamp is the Lamb. The nations will walk by its light, and the kings of the earth will bring their glory into it. Its gates will never be shut by day—and there will be no night there. People will bring into it the glory and the honour of the nations. But nothing unclean will enter it, nor anyone who practices abomination or falsehood, but only those who are written in the Lamb's book of life.

Then the angel showed me the river of the water of life, bright as crystal, flowing from the throne of God and of the Lamb through the middle of the street of the city. On either side of the river is the tree of life with its twelve kinds of fruit, producing its fruit each month; and the leaves of the tree are for the healing of the nations. Nothing accursed will be found there any more. But the throne of God and of the Lamb will be in it, and his servants will worship him; they will see his face, and his name will be on their foreheads. And there will be no more night; they need no light of lamp or sun, for the LORD God will be their light, and they will reign forever and ever.

Reading 7

Matthew 2.1-12

A reading from the Gospel of Matthew — *The Magi follow the star*

In the time of King Herod, after Jesus was born in Bethlehem of Judea, wise men from the East came to Jerusalem, asking, "Where is the child who has been born king of the Jews? For we observed his star at its rising, and have come to pay him homage." When King Herod heard this, he was frightened, and all Jerusalem with him; and calling together all the chief priests and scribes of the people, he inquired of them where the Messiah was to be born. They told him, "In Bethlehem of Judea; for so it has been written by the prophet:

'And you, Bethlehem, in the land of Judah,
are by no means least among the rulers of Judah;
for from you shall come a ruler
who is to shepherd my people Israel.'"

Then Herod secretly called for the wise men and learned from them the exact time when the star had appeared. Then he sent them to Bethlehem, saying, "Go and search diligently for the child; and when you have found him, bring me word so that I may also go and pay him homage." When they had heard the king, they set out; and there, ahead of them, went the star that they had seen at its rising, until it stopped over the place where the child was. When they saw that the star had stopped, they were overwhelmed with joy. On entering the house, they saw the child with Mary his mother; and they knelt down and paid him homage. Then, opening their treasure chests, they offered him gifts of gold, frankincense, and myrrh. And having been warned in a dream not to return to Herod, they left for their own country by another road.

Fourth Celebration: Readings

The Glory of Christ Revealed

Reading 1

Matthew 2.1-2, 8-11

A reading from the Gospel of Matthew — *The Glory of Christ is Revealed to the Magi*

In the time of King Herod, after Jesus was born in Bethlehem of Judea, wise men from the East came to Jerusalem, asking, “Where is the child who has been born king of the Jews? For we observed his star at its rising, and have come to pay him homage.”

Then he sent them to Bethlehem, saying, “Go and search diligently for the child; and when you have found him, bring me word so that I may also go and pay him homage.” When they had heard the king, they set out; and there, ahead of them, went the star that they had seen at its rising, until it stopped over the place where the child was. When they saw that the star had stopped, they were overwhelmed with joy. On entering the house, they saw the child with Mary his mother; and they knelt down and paid him homage. Then, opening their treasure chests, they offered him gifts of gold, frankincense, and myrrh.

Reading 2

John 2.1-11

A reading from the Gospel of John

— *The Glory of Christ is Revealed in the Water made Wine*

There was a wedding in Cana of Galilee, and the mother of Jesus was there. Jesus and his disciples had also been invited to the wedding. When the wine gave out, the mother of Jesus said to him, “They have no wine.” And Jesus said to her, “Woman, what concern is that to you and to me? My hour has not yet come.” His mother said to the servants, “Do whatever he tells you.” Now standing there were six stone water jars for the Jewish rites of purification, each holding twenty or thirty gallons. Jesus said to them, “Fill the jars with water.” And they filled them up to the brim. He said to them, “Now draw some out, and take it to the chief steward.” So they took it. When the steward tasted the water that had become wine, and did not know where it came from (though the servants who had drawn the water knew), the steward called the bridegroom and said to him, “Everyone serves the good wine first, and then the inferior wine after the guests have become drunk. But you have kept the good wine until now.” Jesus did this, the first of his signs, in Cana of Galilee, and revealed his glory; and his disciples believed in him.

Reading 3

Mark 1.4-5,7-11

A reading from the Gospel of Mark

— *The Glory of Christ is Revealed in the Waters of Baptism*

John the baptizer appeared in the wilderness, proclaiming a baptism of repentance for the forgiveness of sins. And people from the whole Judean countryside and all the people of Jerusalem were going out to him, and were baptized by him in the river Jordan, confessing their sins.

He proclaimed, “The one who is more powerful than I is coming after me; I am not worthy to stoop down and untie the thong of his sandals. I have baptized you with water; but he will baptize you with the Holy Spirit.”

In those days Jesus came from Nazareth of Galilee and was baptized by John in the Jordan. And just as he was coming up out of the water, he saw the heavens torn apart and the Spirit descending like a dove on him. And a voice came from heaven, “You are my Son, the Beloved; with you I am well pleased.”

Acknowledgments

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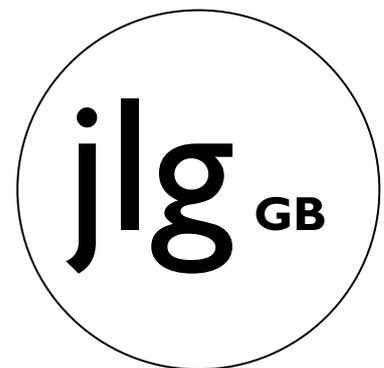
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