

For personal household use, curated 2026

By: Brian McLain

TRC HYMNS & CAROLS

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Why celebrate Advent?

The church calendar was created and established over time, by the church, as a way for Christians to mark time in a redemptive way. There have been various iterations of this calendar throughout the church's history, but the basic structure of the calendar as it has been commonly practiced in our Protestant tradition is to focus on two great cycles of the year: the Christmas cycle and the Easter cycle.

The Christmas cycle begins with Advent, which starts on the 4th Sunday before Christmas Day, and continues through the twelve days of Christmas, ending with Epiphany. The season of Advent starts the new church year. The word Advent means "coming" and refers to the coming of Jesus. In the celebration of Advent, we focus on three aspects of our Lord's coming: His coming in the flesh at His birth in Bethlehem, His coming to us in grace through Word and Sacrament, and His coming in glory at the day of His judgment.

The mood of Advent is one of longing, of expectation, and of waiting. Yet we do not wait as those without hope, but as those who share in Christ's victory over death. We long for an end to tyranny and injustice and we wait in the expectation that our Deliverer hears the cries of His people and will come to them. We long for Jesus to return and make all things new and we rejoice and feast in the certainty of His coming.

How to use this Advent liturgy

This guide contains both Advent and Christmastide liturgies. Christmastide always begins on Christmas Day - December 25th - and ends 12 days later on January 6th. However, Advent can vary in the number of days, with as many as 28 days or as little as 22 days. This guide contains 28 readings for Advent in order to cover the maximum of days. In those years where there are less than 28 days of Advent, you would only read the number equivalent to the days of Advent, and just leave off the rest. .

One note on the Christmastide liturgy: The Christmastide liturgy covers the birth narrative of Jesus in chronological order, using both Matthew and Luke. However, I've chosen to include the birth of Jesus as the Christmas Day reading, even though it is "out of order." So on Christmas Day you read about the birth of Jesus, but then on the following day you move backward in the story and start at the beginning. You could do it however you desired, but it felt more appropriate to read the birth of Jesus on Christmas Day, which is already a common tradition for many families.

Each day contains an Old Testament reading and a New Testament reading, covering Old Testament prophecies and events and their New Testament fulfillments. There are also responsive readings throughout. The leader will say the part in regular type and the rest of the participants will say the part in bold. There are Advent hymns suggested for each week, but you can choose whichever hymns you prefer. I have included the hymn numbers for those who have the Cantus Christi hymnals. Also, the closing tune for Advent, The Magnificat, is not in the Cantus, but is the same tune as Cantus #352, which should be familiar.

The goal of this liturgy is to provide an easy guide for families to follow during the Advent and Christmas seasons. The most important thing to remember is to make it as simple as you need—which is especially important when you have wiggly little children. People will get sick, and schedules will get hectic. If you miss a day, don't be discouraged; just jump back in the next day. Above all, remember to have fun and make it joyful! You don't want family worship to be a chore, but rather a family tradition that creates many wonderful memories.

THE FIRST WEEK OF ADVENT

Behold, a virgin shall conceive and bear a son!
And His name shall be called Emmanuel!

Let us pray: **Almighty God,**
Give us grace to cast away the works of darkness,
And put on the armor of light,
Now in the time of this mortal life
In which your Son Jesus Christ
Came to visit us in great humility;
That in the last day,
When He shall come again in His glorious majesty
To judge both the living and the dead,
We may rise to the life immortal;
Through Him who lives and reigns
With You and the Holy Spirit,
One God, now and forever. Amen.

Hymn: O Come, O Come, Emmanuel (Cantus #547)

Why do we light the Advent candle?
Jesus said, "I am the light of the world. He who follows me will not walk in darkness, but will have the light of life."

Lighting of the First Candle

Scripture Reading & Instruction

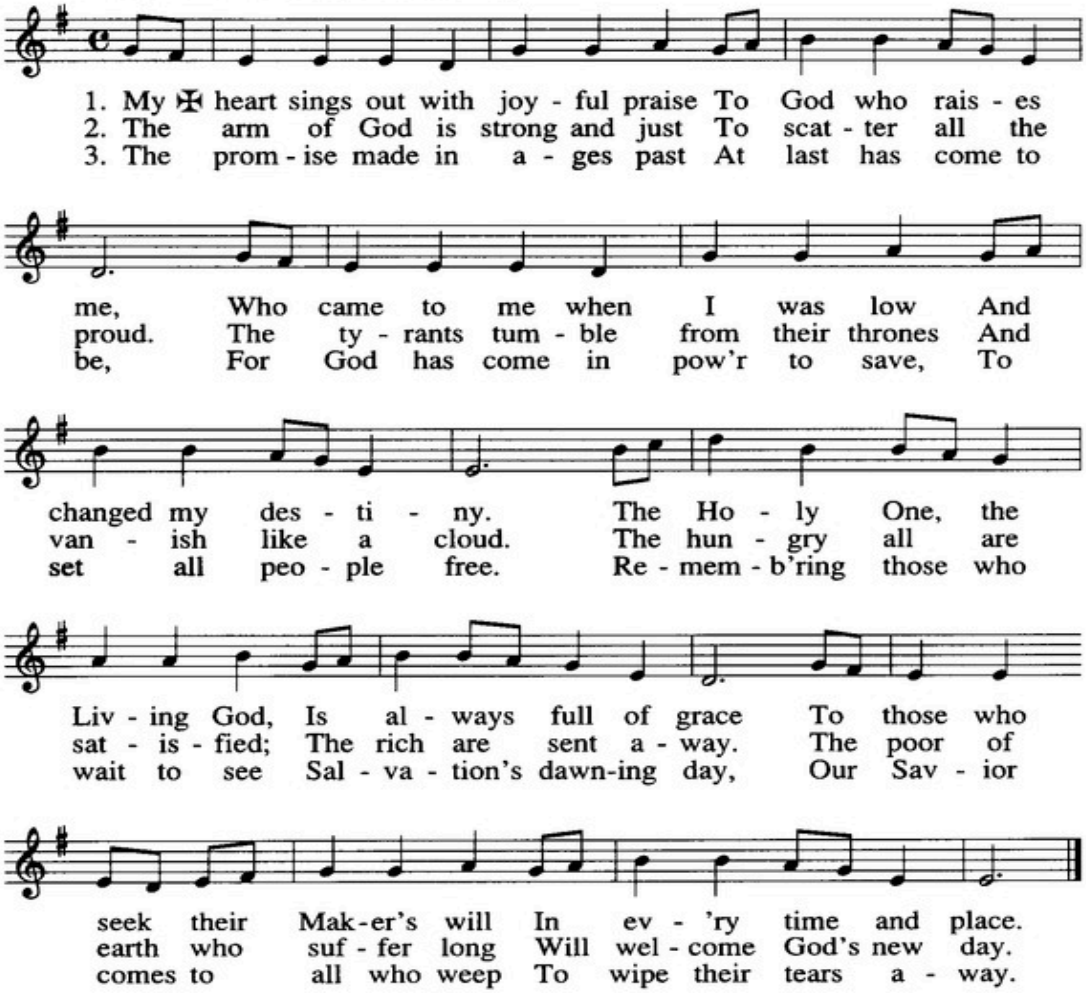
Sunday: ***Creation*** - Genesis 1:1-5; John 1:1-5
Monday: ***Adam*** - Genesis 2:4-9; 1 Corinthians 15:45-49
Tuesday: ***The Fall*** - Genesis 3:1-15; Romans 5:18-21
Wednesday: ***The Ark*** - Genesis 7:1-12; 1 Peter 3:18-22
Thursday: ***Babel*** - Genesis 11:1-9; Acts 2:1-11
Friday: ***Abram*** - Genesis 12:1-3; Galatians 3:7-14
Saturday: ***Melchizedek*** - Genesis 14:14-20; Hebrews 6:13 - 7:3

The Word of the Lord!
Thanks Be To God!

Psalm 96:9-13

Worship the LORD in the beauty of holiness // **Let the whole earth tremble before Him.**
Tell it out among the nations // **The LORD is King!**
He has made the world so firm that it cannot be moved // **He will judge the peoples with equity.**
Let the heavens rejoice // **and let the earth be glad!**
Let the sea thunder and all that is in it // **Let the field be joyful and all that is therein.**
Then shall all the trees of the wood shout for joy //
Before the LORD when He comes, when He comes to judge the earth.
He will judge the world with righteousness // **And the peoples with His truth.**

Closing Hymn: The Magnificat



Text: *Magnificat*, Luke 1:46-55; Ruth Duck, b.1947, © 1992, GIA Publications, Inc.
Tune: KINGSFOLD, CMD; English traditional; harm. by Ralph Vaughan Williams, 1872-1958, © Oxford University Press

THE SECOND WEEK OF ADVENT

Behold, a virgin shall conceive and bear a son!
And His name shall be called Emmanuel!

Let us pray: **Almighty God,**
Give us grace to cast away the works of darkness,
And put on the armor of light,
Now in the time of this mortal life
In which your Son Jesus Christ
Came to visit us in great humility;
That in the last day,
When He shall come again in His glorious majesty
To judge both the living and the dead,
We may rise to the life immortal;
Through Him who lives and reigns
With You and the Holy Spirit,
One God, now and forever. Amen.

Hymn: Come, Thou Long Expected Jesus (Cantus #561)

Why do we light the Advent candle?
Jesus said, "I am the light of the world. He who follows me will not walk in darkness, but will have the light of life."

Lighting of the First Two Candles

Scripture Reading & Instruction

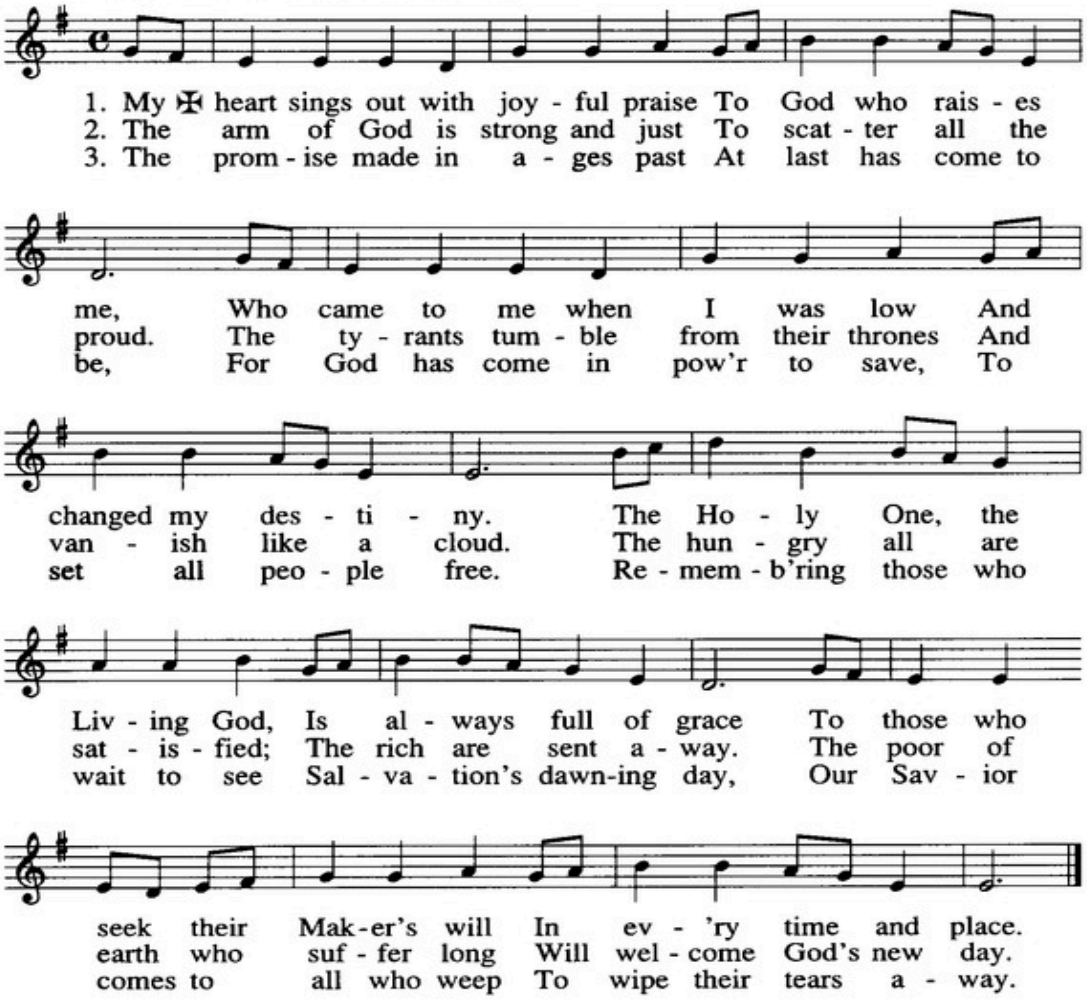
Sunday: ***Isaac*** - Genesis 22:1-14; Hebrews 11:17-19
Monday: ***Jacob*** - Genesis 28:10-17; John 1:43-51
Tuesday: ***Judah*** - Genesis 49:8-12; Revelation 5:1-5
Wednesday: ***Joseph*** - Genesis 50:15-26; Luke 23:50-56
Thursday: ***Moses*** - Exodus 3:1-12; Hebrews 3:1-6
Friday: ***The Paschal Lamb*** - Exodus 12:1-13; 1 Corinthians 5:6-8
Saturday: ***Manna*** - Exodus 16:9-19; John 6:41-51

The Word of the Lord!
Thanks Be To God!

Psalm 28:6-9

Blessed be the LORD! // **For He has heard the voice of my pleas for mercy.**
The LORD is my strength and my shield // **In Him my heart trusts, and I am helped;**
My heart exults // **And with my song I give thanks to Him.**
The LORD is the strength of His people // **He is the saving refuge of His anointed.**
Oh, save Your people and bless Your heritage! // **Be their shepherd and carry them forever.**

Closing Hymn: The Magnificat



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THE THIRD WEEK OF ADVENT

Behold, a virgin shall conceive and bear a son!
And His name shall be called Emmanuel!

Let us pray: **Almighty God,**
Give us grace to cast away the works of darkness,
And put on the armor of light,
Now in the time of this mortal life
In which your Son Jesus Christ
Came to visit us in great humility;
That in the last day,
When He shall come again in His glorious majesty
To judge both the living and the dead,
We may rise to the life immortal;
Through Him who lives and reigns
With You and the Holy Spirit,
One God, now and forever. Amen.

Hymn: Comfort, Comfort, Ye My People (Cantus #558)

Why do we light the Advent candle?
Jesus said, "I am the light of the world. He who follows me will not walk in darkness, but will have the light of life."

Lighting of the First Three Candles

Scripture Reading & Instruction

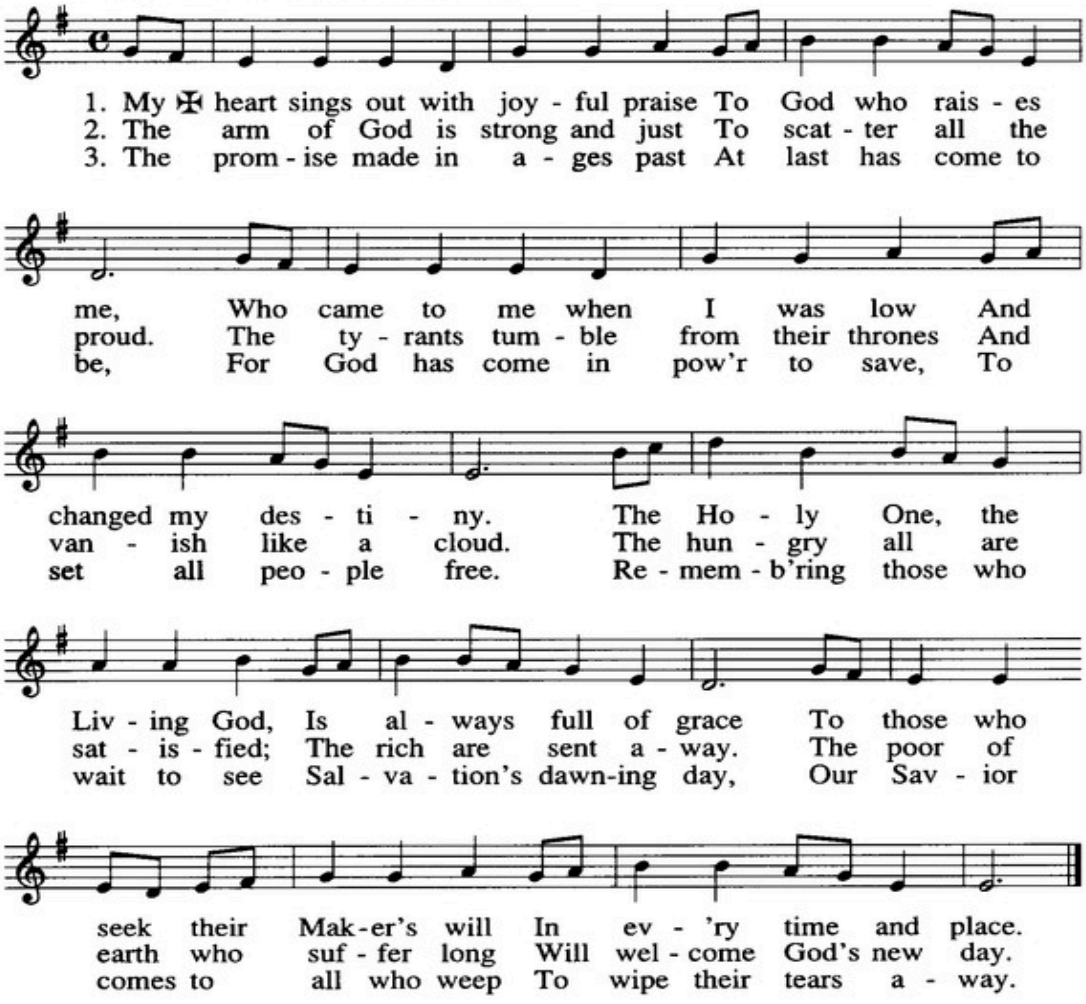
Sunday: ***The Rock*** - Exodus 17:1-7; 1 Corinthians 10:1-5
Monday: ***The Law*** - Exodus 20:1-17; Galatians 3:19-29
Tuesday: ***The Tabernacle*** - Exodus 40:34-38; John 1:14-18
Wednesday: ***Atonement*** - Leviticus 16:29-34; Romans 5:6-11
Thursday: ***The Bronze Serpent*** - Numbers 21:4-9; John 3:11-17
Friday: ***Joshua*** - Joshua 1:1-9; Hebrews 4:1-11
Saturday: ***Samson*** - Judges 13:1-7; Matthew 27:45-50

The Word of the Lord!
Thanks Be To God!

Psalm 98:1-4

Oh sing to the LORD a new song // **For He has done marvelous things!**
His right hand and His holy arm // **Have worked salvation for Him.**
The LORD has made known His salvation //
He has revealed His righteousness in the sight of the nations.
He has remembered His steadfast love and faithfulness to the house of Israel //
All the ends of the earth have seen the salvation of our God.
Make a joyful noise to the LORD, all the earth // **Break forth into joyous song and sing praises!**

Closing Hymn: The Magnificat



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Tune: KINGSFOLD, CMD; English traditional; harm. by Ralph Vaughan Williams, 1872-1958, © Oxford University Press

THE FOURTH WEEK OF ADVENT

Behold, a virgin shall conceive and bear a son!
And His name shall be called Emmanuel!

Let us pray: **Almighty God,**
Give us grace to cast away the works of darkness,
And put on the armor of light,
Now in the time of this mortal life
In which your Son Jesus Christ
Came to visit us in great humility;
That in the last day,
When He shall come again in His glorious majesty
To judge both the living and the dead,
We may rise to the life immortal;
Through Him who lives and reigns
With You and the Holy Spirit,
One God, now and forever. Amen.

Hymn: Lift Up Your Heads, Ye Mighty Gates (Cantus #551)

Why do we light the Advent candle?
Jesus said, "I am the light of the world. He who follows me will not walk in darkness, but will have the light of life."

Lighting of the First Four Candles

Scripture Reading & Instruction

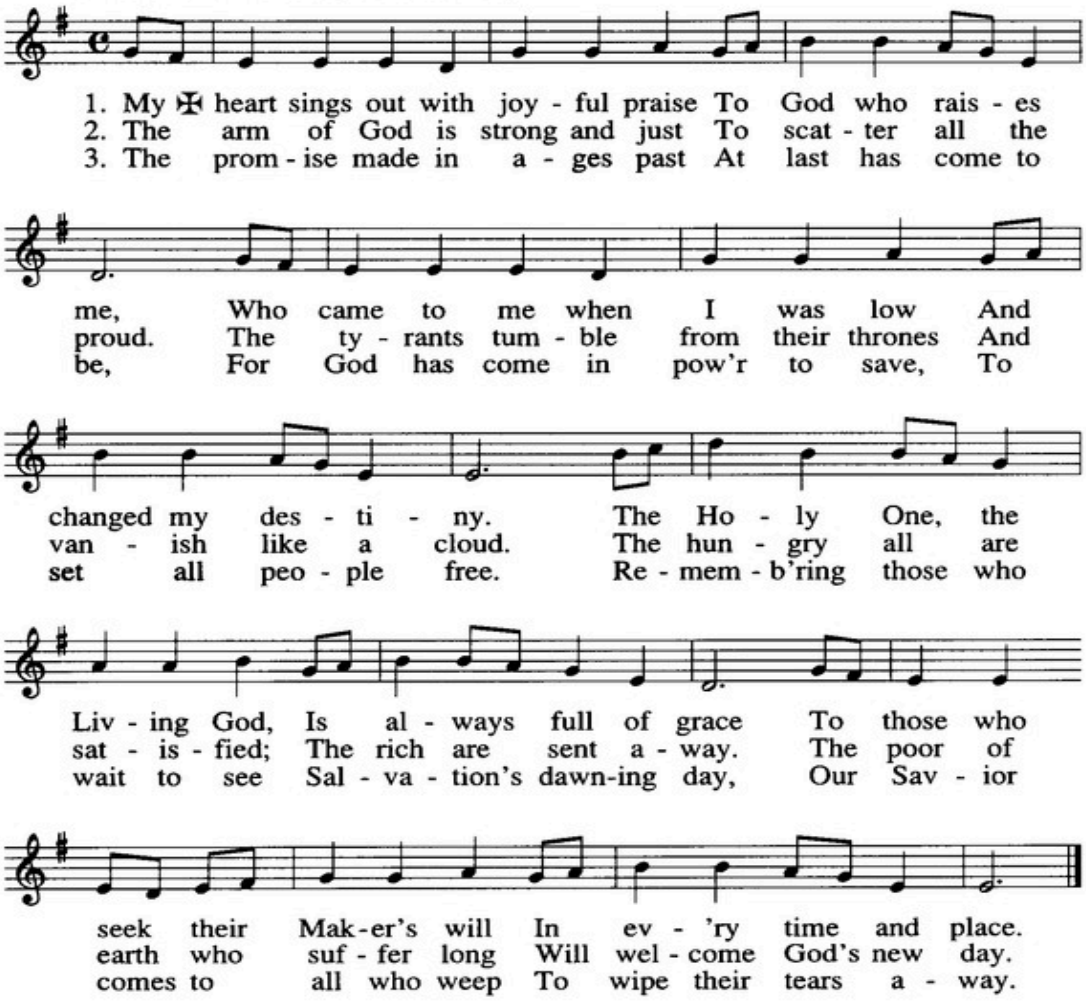
Sunday: ***Boaz*** - Ruth 4:9-17; Galatians 4:4-7
Monday: ***David & Goliath*** - 1 Samuel 17:33-51; John 19:16b-19
Tuesday: ***Nehemiah*** - Nehemiah 2:11-20; Matthew 27:32-44
Wednesday: ***Esther*** - Esther 4:10-17; Romans 8:18-28
Thursday: ***Daniel*** - Daniel 6:16-23; Matthew 28:1-8
Friday: ***Jonah*** - Jonah 1:1-17; Matthew 12:38-42
Saturday: ***The Branch*** - Zechariah 6:9-15; Hebrews 4:14-16

The Word of the Lord!
Thanks Be To God!

Psalm 24: 7-10

Lift up your heads, O gates! //
And be lifted up, O ancient doors, that the King of glory may come in.
Who is this King of glory? // **The LORD, strong and mighty; the LORD, mighty in battle!**
Lift up your heads, O gates! //
And lift them up, O ancient doors, that the King of glory may come in.
Who is this King of glory? // **The LORD of hosts, He is the King of glory!**

Closing Hymn: The Magnificat



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CHRISTMASTIDE

Behold, a virgin shall conceive and bear a son!
And His name shall be called Emmanuel!

Let us pray:

**O God, You make us glad by the yearly festival of the birth of Your only Son, Jesus Christ:
Grant that we, who joyfully receive Him as our Redeemer,
May with sure confidence behold Him when He comes to be our Judge;
Who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit,
One God, now and forever. Amen.**

Hymn: Joy to the World! (Cantus #566)

Why do we light the Christ candle?
Jesus said, "I am the light of the world. He who follows me will not walk in darkness, but will have the light of life."

Lighting of all Five Candles

Scripture Reading & Instruction

A Partridge in a Pear Tree: ***A Child is Born!*** - Isaiah 9:1-7; Luke 2:1-20
2 Turtle Doves: ***A Son of David*** - 2 Samuel 7:8-13; Matthew 1:1-17
3 French Hens: ***Prepare the Way*** - Isaiah 40:1-5; Luke 1:5-25
4 Calling Birds: ***A King Forever*** - Jeremiah 23:5-6; Luke 1:26-38
5 Golden Rings: ***The Magnificat*** - Psalm 146; Luke 1:39-56
6 Geese a-Laying: ***The Benedictus*** - Psalm 18:1-6; Luke 1:57-80
7 Swans a-Swimming: ***A Virgin Shall Bear a Son*** - Isaiah 7:10-14; Matthew 1:18-25
8 Maids a-Milking: ***Bethlehem*** - Micah 5:1-5a; Luke 2:1-21
9 Ladies Dancing: ***A Risen Star*** - Isaiah 60:1-3; Matthew 2:1-12
10 Lords a-Leaping: ***Lamentation*** - Exodus 1:15-22; Matthew 2:13-18
11 Pipers Piping: ***Purification*** - Leviticus 12:1-8; Matthew 2:19-21; Luke 2:22-24
12 Drummers Drumming: ***A Light to the Nations*** - Isaiah 42:1-9; Matthew 2:22-23; Luke 2:25-40

The Word of the Lord!
Thanks Be To God!

Psalm 148

Hallelujah! Praise the LORD from the heavens // **Praise Him in the heights.**
Praise Him, all you angels of His // **Praise Him, all His host.**
Praise Him, sun and moon // **Praise Him, all you shining stars.**
Praise Him, heaven of heavens // **And you waters above the heavens.**
Let them praise the Name of the LORD // **For He commanded, and they were created.**
He made them stand fast for ever and ever // **He gave them a law which shall not pass away.**
Praise the LORD from the earth // **You sea monsters and all deeps;**
Fire and hail, snow and fog // **Tempestuous wind, doing His will;**
Mountains and all hills // **Fruit trees and all cedars;**
Wild beasts and all cattle // **Creeping things and winged birds;**
Kings of the earth and all peoples // **Princes and all rulers of the world;**
Young men and maidens // **Old and young together.**
Let them praise the name of the LORD //
For His name only is exalted, His splendor is over the earth and heaven.
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!**

Closing Hymn: The Song of Simeon (Cantus #732 - tempo 180)

