



# Hodie Christus Natus Est

The First Sunday of Christmas

December 29, 2024

The Prelude

The Opening Hymn

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\*\*\*\*\* The Greeting \*\*\*\*\*

*P: The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God and the  
Communion of the Holy Spirit be with you all.*

**C: And also with you.**

~~~~~ The Prayer of the Day ~~~~~

*P: Let us pray.*

**C: Almighty God, in the days of old you spoke to your people through the prophets, but now in these last days you speak to us by your Son. As we celebrate the gift that you give to us, let us be drawn toward Him to find the fulfillment of Your promise of salvation. We ask this in the name of the One who took on our nature for our sake, Jesus the Christ. Amen.**

~~~~~ The Lessons and Carols ~~~~~

God's Word of Promise to Zechariah and Elizabeth

*A Reading from Genesis, Chapters 7 & 12*

Yahweh said to Abram, "Go you forth: from your land, from your kindred, from your father's house to the land that I will let you see. I will make a great nation of you, and I will give-you-blessing, and will make your name great. Be a blessing! I will bless those who bless you, he who curses you, I will damn. Through you all the families of the soil bless themselves!" So Abram went, as Yahweh had told him; and Lot went with him. . . After these things the word of Yahweh came to Abram in a vision,

"Do not be afraid, Abram,  
I am your shield;  
your reward shall be very great."

But Abram said, "My Lord, Yahweh, what will you give me, for I continue childless, and the heir of my house is Eliezer of Damascus?" And Abram said, "To me you have not given seed, so here, the son of my relative must be my heir."

But the word of Yahweh came to him, "This man shall not be your heir; no one but your very own issue shall be your heir."

He brought him outside and said, "Look toward heaven and count the stars, if you are able to count them."

Then he said to him, "So shall your descendants be."

And he believed Yahweh; and Yahweh reckoned it to him as righteousness.

## *A Reading from the Gospel According to Luke, Chapter 1*

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.

And it came about 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 hour 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 fathers 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 word, which will be fulfilled in their time, you will become mute, unable to speak, until the critical time these things occur."

*P: The Word of the Lord.*

**C: Thanks be to God!**

## God's Word is Fulfilled in the Birth of John

*Reading from the Gospel According to Luke, Chapter 1*

But the day for Elizabeth to give birth was fulfilled, and she bore a son. And her neighbors and relatives heard that the Lord had declared his great mercy with her, and they joined her in rejoicing. It came about that on the eighth day they came to circumcise the child, and they were calling him in the name of his father, Zechariah.

But his mother said, "No; he is to be called John."

They said to her, "None of your relatives has this name."

Then they began motioning to his father to find out what name he wanted to give him.

He asked for a writing tablet and wrote, "His name is John."

And all of them were amazed. Immediately his mouth was opened and his tongue was released, and he began to speak, praising God. And it came about that fear was over all their neighbors, and throughout the entire hill country of Judea everyone was talking about these words. Everyone having listened in their heart, kept them, saying, "What then will this child become?"

For, indeed, the hand of the Lord was with him. . . The child grew and became strong in spirit, and he was in the wilderness until the day he was manifested to Israel.

*P: The Word of the Lord. C: Thanks be to God!*

Carol

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## God's Word of Promise to King David

*A Reading from Second Samuel, Chapter 7*

Then King David went in and sat before the Lord, and said,

"Who am I, O Lord God, and what is my house, that you have brought me thus far? And yet this was a small thing in your eyes, O Lord God; you have spoken also of your servant's house for a great while to come. May this be instruction for the people, O Lord God! And what more can David say to you? For you know your servant, O Lord God! Because of your promise, and according to your own heart, you have wrought all this greatness, so that your servant may know it. Therefore you are great, O Lord God; for there is no one like you, and there is no God besides you, according to all that we have heard with our ears. Who is like your

people, like Israel? Is there another nation on earth whose God went to redeem it as a people, and to make a name for himself, doing great and awesome things for them, by driving out before his people nations and their gods? And you established your people Israel for yourself to be your people forever; and you, O Lord, became their God. And now, O Lord God, as for the word that you have spoken concerning your servant and concerning his house, confirm it forever; do as you have promised. Thus your name will be magnified forever in the saying, 'The Lord of hosts is God over Israel'; and the house of your servant David will be established before you. For you, O Lord of hosts, the God of Israel, have made this revelation to your servant, saying, 'I will build you a house'; therefore your servant has found courage to pray this prayer to you.

And now, O Lord God, you are God, and your words are true, and you have promised this good thing to your servant; now therefore may it please you to bless the house of your servant, so that it may continue forever before you; for you, O Lord God, have spoken, and with your blessing shall the house of your servant be blessed forever."

### *A Reading from the Gospel According to Luke, Chapter 2*

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.

*P: The Word of the Lord. C: Thanks be to God!*

Carol

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### God's Word is Fulfilled in the Birth of Jesus

#### *A Reading from the Prophet Micah, Chapter 5*

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 labor 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.

***A Reading from the Gospel According to Luke, Chapter 2***

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.

*P: The Word of the Lord. C: Thanks be to God!*

Carol

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**Jesus is Dressed Like Solomon**

*A Reading from the Wisdom of Solomon, Chapter 7*

I, Solomon, descendent of David, am wisest King of Israel. I am also a mortal like everyone else. I am a descendant of the first child of earth, and in the womb of my mother I was molded into flesh. When I was born, I began to breathe the common air and I fell upon the common earth. My first sound was a cry, as is true of all. I was nursed with care and wrapped in swaddling clothes. For no king has had a different beginning of existence. There is for all one entrance into life and one way out.

***A Reading from the Gospel According to Luke, Chapter 2***

And she gave birth to her firstborn son and wrapped him in swaddling clothes.

*P: The Word of the Lord. C: Thanks be to God!*

Carol

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**Jesus is the Manger that Israel Will Not Know**

*A Reading from the Prophet Isaiah, Chapter 1*

Hear, O heavens, and listen, O earth; for the Lord has spoken: I reared children and brought them up, but they have rebelled against me. The ox knows its owner, and the donkey its manger; but Israel, Israel does not know, and my people do not understand. Ah, sinful nation, people laden with iniquity, offspring who do evil, children who deal corruptly, who

have forsaken the Lord, who have despised the Holy One of Israel, who are utterly estranged!

*A Reading from the Gospel According to Luke, Chapter 2*

And she . . . laid him in a manger.

P: *The Word of the Lord*

C: **Thanks be to God!**

Carol

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Jesus is not a Stranger who needs a Guest Room

*A Reading from the Prophet Jeremiah, Chapter 14*

The word of the Lord that came to Jeremiah concerning the drought: Judah mourns and her gates languish; they lie in gloom on the ground, and the cry of Jerusalem goes up. Her nobles send their servants for water; they come to the cisterns, they find no water, they return with their vessels empty. They are ashamed and dismayed and cover their heads, because the ground is cracked. Because there has been no rain on the land the farmers are dismayed; they cover their heads. Even the doe in the field forsakes her newborn fawn because there is no grass. The wild asses stand on the bare heights, they pant for air like jackals; their eyes fail because there is no herbage. Although our iniquities testify against us, act, O Lord, for your name's sake; our apostasies indeed are many, and we have sinned against you. O hope of Israel, its savior in time of trouble, why should you be like a stranger in the land, like a traveler looking to stay in a guest room for the night? Why should you be like someone confused, like a mighty warrior who cannot give help? Yet you, O Lord, are in the midst of us, and we are called by your name; do not forsake us!

*A Reading from the Gospel According to Luke, Chapter 2*

And she gave birth to her firstborn son and wrapped him in swaddling clothes, and laid him in a manger because there was no place for them in the guest room.

P: *The Word of the Lord*

C: **Thanks be to God!**

*Jesus Clothes and Manger are a Sign of God's Mercy*  
*A Reading from the Gospel According to Luke, Chapter 2*

In that region 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 afraid with a great fear.

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 today in the city of David a Savior, 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 army, praising God and saying,

"Glory to God in the highest heaven,  
and on earth peace among those whom he favors!"

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 word 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. 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 preserved the memory of them in her heart.

The shepherds returned, glorifying and praising God for all they had heard and seen, as it had been told them.

*P: The Word of the Lord*

**C: Thanks be to God!**



\*\*\*\*\* The Nicene Creed \*\*\*\*\*

We believe in one God, the Father, the Almighty, maker of heaven and earth, of all that is, seen and unseen.

We believe in one Lord, Jesus Christ, the only Son of God, eternally begotten of the Father, God from God, Light from Light, true God from true God, begotten, not made, of one Being with the Father; through him all things were made. For us and for our salvation he came down from heaven, was incarnate of the Holy Spirit and the virgin Mary and became truly human. For our sake he was crucified under Pontius Pilate; he suffered death and was buried. On the third day he rose again in accordance with the scriptures; he ascended into heaven and is seated at the right hand of the Father. He will come again in glory to judge the living and the dead, and his kingdom will have no end.

We believe in the Holy Spirit, the Lord, the giver of life, who proceeds from the Father and the Son, who with the Father and the Son is worshiped and glorified, who has spoken through the prophets. We believe in one holy catholic and apostolic church. We acknowledge one baptism for the forgiveness of sins. We look for the resurrection of the dead, and the life of the world to come. Amen.

\*\*\*\*\* The Prayers of the Church \*\*\*\*\*

*P: Let us pray for this night and our celebration of the birth of Jesus.*

**C:** Gracious God, thank you for coming to us as the baby in the manger. Jesus is a sign of your delight in us. He is your gift of grace and love. Let the joy we feel this day continue as we listen to His word in the rest of the year, that we will follow this child faithfully with our lives.

*P: Let us pray for the nations.*

**C:** Wonderful Counselor, bring your wisdom to the leaders of our world, that they will govern all people with the peace and justice of God. Bring down the tyrants. Overpower evil. Strengthen the good. Bless those who seek to be a blessing to all.

*P: Let us pray for the Church*

**C: Heavenly Father, your Son gave us the gift of the Church. As you watched over and empowered his ministry, watch over and empower the ministry of every Church. Always remember us here at Grace. Make us light in the dark places of peoples' lives.**

*P: Let us pray for God to be a healing presence with those who need him most.*

**C: Mighty God, there are many who are in need today. Inspire us to reach out and minister as we are able. Guide and strengthen those who are working to care for the sick, the lonely, the dying, the homeless, the aged, the abused and the hungry. In this season, bring them all your gifts of healing, comfort and hope.**

*P: Let us pray for all families.*

**C: Father, bless all parents and children with strong and healthy relationships. As families gather in celebration of Jesus' birth let there be joy and happiness. Where there has been pain, let there be the hope of moving on, or let there be healthy reconciliation and renewal.**

*P: Let us pray for those who are traveling.*

**C: As you watched over and guided the Holy family's travels, watch over and guide all those who travel this holiday. Give them good weather, infinite patience, and a safe journey.**

*P: Let us pray for ourselves.....All this we ask in the name of the child laid in the manger, our Savior, Jesus the Christ.*

**C: Amen**

*P: The peace of the Lord be with you all.*

**C: And also with you.**

~~~~~ The Offering ~~~~~

1. We three kings of Orient are;  
bearing gifts we traverse afar,  
field and fountain, moor and  
mountain,  
following yonder star.

*Refrain:*

O star of wonder, star of light,  
star with royal beauty bright,  
westward leading, still proceeding,  
guide us to thy perfect light.

5. Glorious now behold him arise;  
King and God and sacrifice:  
Alleluia, Alleluia,  
sounds through the earth and  
skies. [*Refrain*]

*A: Let us pray:*

**C: Gracious God, joining those people long ago who brought their gifts to your infant Son, we now bring our gifts of praise, adoration and thanks. Receive them as a response to the abundant blessings you provide us every day. We pray that You are pleased with our offerings and that you will use them to accomplish Your holy will. In Jesus' name, Amen.**

~~~~~ The Great Thanksgiving ~~~~~

*P: The Lord be with you.*

**C: And also with you.**

*P: Lift up your hearts.*

**C: We lift them to the Lord.**

*P: Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.*

**C: It is right to give him thanks and praise.**

*P: It is indeed right and responsible that we should at all times and in all places offer thanks and praise to you almighty and merciful God, through our Savior, Jesus, the Christ; who was born in a manger in a Shepherd's town, but took his throne in the holy city of God's Kings to overcome death and the grave on the cross. Because Jesus is born with our birth, we take hope in our re-birth through His resurrection. And so, in great joy this day, we now join our voices with those of the angels who sang over fields on that blessed night:*

Come to Bethlehem and see  
him whose birth the angels sing;  
come, adore on bended knee  
Christ the Lord, the new-born King.  
Gloria in excelsis Deo  
Gloria in excelsis Deo!

## The Lord's Prayer

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, forever and ever. Amen

## Distribution Hymns

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## The Post Communion Blessing & Prayer

## The Benediction

## The Recessional

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## The Dismissal