

Song: *God Rest Ye Merry Gentlemen*
God rest ye merry, gentlemen, let nothing you dismay,
Remember Christ our Savior was born on Christmas Day;
To save us all from Satan's power when we were gone astray.

Refrain
O tidings of comfort and joy, comfort and joy;
O tidings of comfort and joy.

*In Bethlehem, in Israel, this blessèd Babe was born,
And laid within a manger upon this blessèd morn;
The which His mother Mary did nothing take in scorn.*

Refrain
Now to the Lord sing praises all you within this place,
And with true love and brotherhood each other now embrace;
This holy tide of Christmas all others doth deface.

Advent Service Of Light



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Opening Rite

Leader: My friends, welcome to our Celebration of Light. The Advent season is a time of preparation. This evening, let us prepare ourselves for the coming of Our Lord, Jesus Christ, into our world and into our lives. Let us open ourselves to receive the Lord. Christ with us! Emmanuel!

All: *O Emmanuel, King and Lawgiver, Desire of the Nations, Savior of All People, come and set us free, Lord Our God.*

Song: *O Come, O Come Emmanuel
O come, O come, Emmanuel,
And ransom captive Israel,
That mourns in lonely exile here
Until the Son of God appear.*

Refrain

*Rejoice! Rejoice!
Emmanuel shall come to thee, O Israel.*

*O come, Thou Day-star, come and cheer
Our spirits by Thine advent here;
Disperse the gloomy clouds of night,
And death's dark shadows put to flight.*

Refrain

*O come, Thou Flower of Jesse's tree,
An ensign of Thy people be;
Before Thee rulers silent fall;
All peoples on Thy mercy call.*

Refrain

*O come, Thou Key of David, come,
And open wide our heavenly home;
Make safe the way that leads on high,
And close the path to misery.*

Refrain

Leader: Lord Jesus, show Yourself to those who have known You. Let us see the wonders of Your saving power. Let Your Name be preached to the ends of the earth, that all may find hope in You.

All: *You came first to save the world, now come again and save those who believe in You. You are worthy of praise, for You have the words of everlasting life, and sustain all things. Help us wait in joyful hope for the coming of Your glory.*

Closing Prayer

Leader: Come, Lord Jesus, do not delay: give new courage to Your people who trust in Your love. Grant that we who celebrate the mystery of Your light on earth, may also, one day, share more fully in the happiness of heaven, where You live and reign with the Father and the Holy Spirit, one God, forever and ever.

Blessing

Leader: We believe that the Son of God once came to us; we look for him to come again. May his coming bring us the Light of His Holiness and free us with His blessings.

All: *Amen.*

Leader: May God make us steadfast in faith, joyful in hope, and untiring in love, all the days of our lives.

All: *Amen.*

Leader: We rejoice that our Redeemer came to live with us as a man. When he comes again in glory, may he reward us with endless life.

All: *Amen.*

Leader: May Almighty God bless You, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit.

All: *Amen.*

Reader 6: In your minds you must be the same as Christ Jesus. His state was divine, yet he did not cling to his equality with God, but emptied himself to assume the condition of a slave, and became as all men and women are; and being as all men and women are, he was humbler yet, even to accepting death, death on a cross. But God raised him high and gave him the Name which is above all other names so that all beings, in the heavens, on earth, and under the earth, should bend the knee at the Name of Jesus and that every tongue should acclaim to the Glory of God the Father "Jesus Christ is Lord!" *The Letter to the Philippians*

Song: O Come, All Ye Faithful
*O come, all ye faithful, joyful and triumphant,
O come ye, O come ye, to Bethlehem.
Come and behold Him, born the King of angels;*

Refrain

*O come, let us adore Him,
O come, let us adore Him,
O come, let us adore Him,
Christ the Lord.*

*Sing, choirs of angels, sing in exultation;
O sing, all ye citizens of heaven above!
Glory to God, all glory in the highest;*

Refrain

*Adeste, fideles, laeti triumphantes;
Venite, venite in Bethlehem.
Natum videte Regem angelorum. Refrain*

Refrain

Concluding Rite

Leader: To Jesus Christ, Our Light, who came to bring Good News to the poor, and will come again in glory with great power, let us pray: Lord Jesus, You come to be Good News for all people.

All: *May we always proclaim Your saving work*

*O come, O come, great Lord of might,
Who to Thy tribes on Sinai's height
In ancient times once gave the law
In cloud and majesty and awe.*

Refrain

*O come, Thou Wisdom from on high,
Who orderest all things mightily;
To us the path of knowledge show,
And teach us in her ways to go.*

Refrain

*O come, Desire of nations, bind
In one the hearts of all mankind;
Bid Thou our sad divisions cease,
And be Thyself our King of Peace.*

Refrain

Opening Prayer

Leader: God, Our Father, has sent the Son to free us from the power of darkness. To Christ, Our Lord, the Light of the World, let us cry out with joy. Come Lord Jesus, dispel the darkness with the light of Your presence. Save us, O God, that we may praise Your Holy Name. Enkindle in our hearts the flame of Your Love and make us long to be united with You. Through faith, lead us into light that we may find everlasting joy with You when You come. You, who live and reign with the Father and the Holy Spirit, one God, forever and ever.

All: *Amen.*

Service of Light

Reader 1: Christ with us! Daystar!
Listen to me, Lord, and answer me, poor and needy as I am. May my prayer reach You; Hear my cries for help. You have plunged me to the bottom of the pit, to its deepest, darkest place. Why do You hide from me so that darkness is my only friend? *Psalm 88*

Leader: Let us pray that the Light of Christ will illumine our world. God who leads us in joy by the Light of glory, may our love more and more abound. For You have commanded that every loft mountain is to be made low, And the age old depths and gorges be filled to level ground. Let us Your people, advance securely in Your abundant Light and Glory.

All: ***O Daystar, Splendor of Eternal Light, Sun of Justice: come, shine on those who dwell in darkness and the shadow of death.***

Reader 1: And you, little child, you shall be called Prophet of the Most High, for you shall go before the Lord to prepare His way. To give His people knowledge of salvation by the forgiveness of their sins; In the tender compassion of our God, the rising Sun from on high shall break upon us, to shine on those who dwell in darkness and the shadow of death, and to guide our feet into the way of peace. *The Gospel of Luke*

Song: ***Do You Hear What I Hear?***
Said the night wind to the little lamb,
“Do you see what I see?
Way up in the sky, little lamb,
Do you see what I see?
A star, a star, dancing in the night
With a tail as big as a kite
With a tail as big as a kite”

Said the little lamb to the shepherd boy,
“Do you hear what I hear?
Ringing through the sky, shepherd boy,
Do you hear what I hear?
A song, a song, high above the trees
With a voice as big as the sea
With a voice as big as the sea”

Said the shepherd boy to the mighty king,
“Do you know what I know?
In your palace warm, mighty king,
Do you know what I know?
A Child, a Child shivers in the cold
Let us bring Him silver and gold
Let us bring Him silver and gold”

Reader 5: Now at that time Caesar Augustus issued a decree ordering a census of the whole world. This first census took place while Quirinius was governor of Syria. Everyone went to register, each to his own town. And so Joseph went from the town of Nazareth in Galilee to Judea, to the town of David called Bethlehem, since he was of the house and lineage of David, in order to be registered together with Mary, his espoused wife, who was with child. While they were there, the time came for her to have her child. She gave birth to a son, her first born. She wrapped him in swaddling cloths and laid him in a manger for there was no room for them in the inn. *The Gospel of Luke*

Song: ***Away in a Manger***
Away in a manger, no crib for a bed,
The little Lord Jesus laid down His sweet head.
The stars in the sky looked down where He lay,
The little Lord Jesus, asleep on the hay.

The cattle are lowing, the Baby awakes,
But little Lord Jesus, no crying He makes;
I love Thee, Lord Jesus, look down from the sky
And stay by my cradle til morning is nigh.

Be near me, Lord Jesus, I ask Thee to stay
Close by me forever, and love me, I pray;
Bless all the dear children in Thy tender care,
And fit us for Heaven to live with Thee there.

Reader 6: Christ with us! Lord!
If our life in Christ means anything to you, my people, if love can persuade at all, or the Spirit we have in common, or any tenderness and sympathy, then be united in your convictions and united in your love. *The Letter to the Philippians*

Leader: Let us pray for patience: rule by Your strong arm. Give us eyes to count with Your numbers the days and the years; thus may we be holy in conduct and devotion, looking for the coming of the day and trying to hasten it.

All: ***O Sacred Lord of Ancient Israel, who showed Yourself to Moses in the burning bush, who gave him the holy law on Sinai mountain: come stretch out Your might hand to set us free.***

*This, this is Christ the King,
Whom shepherds guard and angels sing;
Haste, haste, to bring Him laud,
The Babe, the Son of Mary.*

*Why lies He in such mean estate,
Where ox and ass are feeding?
Good Christians, fear, for sinners here
The silent Word is pleading.
Nails, spear shall pierce Him through,
The cross be borne for me, for you.
Hail, hail the Word made flesh,
The Babe, the Son of Mary.*

*So bring Him incense, gold and myrrh,
Come peasant, king to own Him;
The King of kings salvation brings,
Let loving hearts enthrone Him.
Raise, raise a song on high,
The virgin sings her lullaby.
Joy, joy for Christ is born,
The Babe, the Son of Mary.*

Reader 5: Christ with us! Wisdom!
Teach us to count how few days we have and so gain wisdom of heart. Let us wake in the morning filled with Your love and sing and be happy all our days; make our future as happy as our past was sad. Let Your servants see what You can do for them, let their children see Your glory. May the sweetness of the Lord be on us! Prosper the work of our hands! *Psalm 90*

Leader: Let us pray for the brace face of joy! May we rejoice always, never cease praying and render constant thanks. Dress us in a robe of salvation and a mantle of justice.

All: *O Wisdom, O Holy Word of God, You govern all creation with Your strong yet tender care. O come and show Your people the way to salvation.*

*Said the king to the people everywhere,
“Listen to what I say:
Pray for peace, people everywhere!
Listen to what I say:
The Child, the Child, sleeping in the night
He will bring us goodness and light
He will bring us goodness and light”*

Reader 2: Christ with us! Flower of Jesse’s Stem!
Have You human eyes, Lord, Do You see as we see? Is Your life mortal like ours? Do Your years pass as our days pass? We, born of woman, have a short life, Yet we have our fill of sorrow; We blossom and wither, like a flower, fleeting as a shadow, transient. And is this what You pay attention to? Do You chase a wind-blown leaf? *The Book of Job*

Leader: Let us pray for profound peace. May the wolf be a guest of the lamb, and the leopard lie down with the kid. Let the calf and the young lion browse together. See in the nations justice and faithfulness.

All: *O Flower of Jesse’s Stem, You have been raised up as a sign for all peoples, kings stand silent in Your presence; the nations bow down in worship before You. Come, let nothing keep You from coming to our aid.*

Reader 2: We must never let go of the faith we have professed. For it is not as if we had a high priest who was incapable of feeling our weaknesses with us. But we have one who has been tempted in every way that we are, though He is without sin. During His life on earth, He offered up prayer and appeal, out loud and in silent tears, to the one who had the power to save Him out of death, and He submitted so humbly that his prayer was heard. Let us be confident, then, in approaching the throne of grace. *The Letter to the Hebrews*

Song: *Lo, How a Rose E’er Blooming (#415, 221, or 742)
Lo, how a Rose e’er blooming from tender stem hath sprung!
Of Jesse’s lineage coming, as those of old have sung.
It came, a floweret bright, amid the cold of winter,
When half spent was the night.*

*Isaiah 'twas foretold it, the Rose I have in mind;
With Mary we behold it, the virgin mother kind.
To show God's love aright, she bore to us a Savior,
When half spent was the night.*

*O Savior, Child of Mary, Who felt our human woe,
O Savior, King of glory, Who dost our weakness know;
Bring us at length we pray, to the bright courts of heaven,
And to the endless day!*

Reader 3: Christ with us! Key of David!

I cannot understand my own behavior. I don't do the things I want to do, and I find myself doing the very things I hate. My body follows a different law that battles against the law of reason. Wretched people we are! Who will rescue us from these bodies doomed to death? *The Letter to the Romans*

Leader: Let us pray that the Lord may show us the way to salvation and unlock for us the gates of eternal life. May we come to realize more fully the freedom won for us by Christ.

All: ***O Key of David, O Royal Power of Israel, controlling at Your own will the gate of heaven: come, break down the prison wall of death for those who dwell in darkness and in the shadow of death; lead Your captive people into freedom.***

Reader 3: On this mountain the Lord will prepare for all peoples a banquet of rich food, a banquet of fine wines, of food rich and juicy, of fine strained wines. On this mountain he will remove the mourning veil covering all peoples, and the shroud enwrapping all nations, he will destroy death forever. The Lord will wipe away the tears from every cheek; He will take away the people's shame everywhere on earth, for the Lord has said so. *The Book of Isaiah*

Song: ***O Little Town of Bethlehem (#231, 751 or 480)**
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 tonight.*

*For Christ is born of Mary, and gathered all above,
While mortals sleep, the angels keep their watch of wondering
love.*

*O morning stars together, proclaim the holy birth,
And praises sing to God the King, and peace to men on earth!*

*How silently, how silently, the wondrous Gift is giv'n;
So God imparts to human hearts the blessings of His Heav'n.
No ear may hear His coming, but in this world of sin,
Where meek souls will receive Him still, the dear Christ enters in.*

Reader 4: Christ with us! King!

Bring us back, God our Savior, master Your resentment against us. Do You mean to be angry with us forever, to prolong Your wrath age after age? Will You not give us life again, for Your people to rejoice in You? Lord, show us Your love, grant us Your saving help. I am listening, What is the Lord saying? What God is saying means peace for his people, for his friends, if only they renounce their folly; for those who fear him, his saving help is near, and glory will then live in our country. *Psalms 85*

Leader: Let us pray for the Church during this new year of grace. God, who made us blameless for the day of Christ, awaken Your people during the Advent watch. Help us to be on guard and ready for Your coming. Hide neither Your face nor Your spirit from us.

All: ***O King of All the Nations, the Only Joy of Every Human Heart:
O Keystone of the Mighty Arch of Humanity, come and save the creature You fashioned from the dust.***

Reader 4: He is the image of the unseen God and the first-born of all creation; for in him all were created – all things in heaven and earth; everything visible and everything invisible, thrones, dominations, sovereignties, powers – all things were created through him and for him. Before anything was created, he existed, and he holds all things in unity. *The Letter to the Colossians*

Song: ***What Child is This?**
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?*