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**Christmas Eve**

“The Lord has sworn and will not change His mind, ‘You are a priest forever after the order of Melchizedek.’” *Psalm 110:4*

**AS WE GATHER**

We do not often emphasize the psalms during the Advent season, instead being eager to read about the prophecies anticipating Jesus’ coming. Yet the psalms are God’s Word during terrible times to people who lived before God’s promises were fulfilled in our Savior’s coming. This Advent we have focused on several psalms as we use them to prepare to celebrate our Lord’s birth with open eyes and ears.

The traditional psalm for Christmas Eve, Psalm 110, looks forward to the Christ who would be King. The child come as a baby in a manger will reign over heaven and earth forever. Come and proclaim the Savior’s birth!

**INVOCATION and OPENING SENTENCES** *Great O Antiphons*

Pastor: In the name of the Father and of the +Son and of the Holy Spirit.

**People: Amen.**

Pastor: O Wisdom, proceeding from the mouth of the Most High, pervading and permeating all creation, mightily ordering all things:

**People: Come and teach us the way of prudence.**

Pastor: O Adonai and ruler of the house of Israel, who appeared to Moses in the burning bush and gave him the Law on Sinai:

**People: Come with an outstretched arm and redeem us.**

Pastor: O Root of Jesse, standing as an ensign before the peoples, before whom all kings are mute, to whom the nations will do homage:

**People: Come quickly to deliver us.**

Pastor: O Key of David and scepter of the house of Israel, You open and no one can close, You close and no one can open:

**People: Come and rescue the prisoners who are in darkness and the shadow of death.**

Pastor: O Dayspring, splendor of light everlasting:

**People: Come and enlighten those who sit in darkness and in the shadow of death.**

Pastor: O King of the nations, the ruler they long for, the cornerstone uniting all people:

**People: Come and save us all, whom You formed out of clay**.

Pastor: O Emmanuel, our king and our Lord, the anointed for the nations and their Savior:

**People: Come and save us, O Lord our God.**

**CAROLS** *“Angels We Have Heard on High” and “O Come, All Ye Faithful”*

Angels we have heard on high, sweetly singing over the plains,  
And the mountains in reply, echoing their joyous strains.  
Glo-ria in excelsis Deo; Glo-ria in excelsis Deo.

Shepherds, why this jubilee? Why your joyous strains prolong?  
What the gladsome tidings be which inspire your heav’nly song?  
Glo-ria in excelsis Deo; Glo-ria in excelsis Deo.

Come to Bethlehem and see Him whose birth the angels sing;  
Come, adore on bended knee Christ the Lord, the newborn King.  
Glo-ria in excelsis Deo; Glo-ria in excelsis Deo.

O come, all ye faithful joyful and triumphant  
O come ye, oh come ye, to Bethlehem;  
Come and behold Him born the King of angels:  
Oh come let us adore Him, Oh come let us adore Him  
Oh come let us adore Him Christ the Lord

Highest, most holy, Light of Light eternal,

Born of a virgin, a mortal He comes;

Son of the Father now in flesh appearing!

Oh come let us adore Him, Oh come let us adore Him  
Oh come let us adore Him Christ the Lord

Sing, choirs of angels, sing in exultation,  
Sing all ye citizens of heaven above!  
Glory to God in the highest  
Oh come let us adore Him, Oh come let us adore Him  
Oh come let us adore Him Christ the Lord

Yea, Lord we greet Thee, born this happy morning  
Jesus to Thee be glory giv’n  
Word of the Father now in flesh appearing  
Oh come let us adore Him, Oh come let us adore Him  
Oh come let us adore Him Christ the Lord.

**PRAYER**

Pastor: Let us pray. O Almighty God, who has come into Your own creation, we praise Your eternal power and ask that You would mercifully grant us fallen creatures forgiveness of all our sins, through Jesus Christ, Your Son, our Lord, who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.

**People: Amen.**

**OLD TESTAMENT** Isaiah 7:10-14

Again the Lord spoke to Ahaz: “Ask a sign of the Lord your God; let it be deep as Sheol or high as heaven.” But Ahaz said, “I will not ask, and I will not put the Lord to the test.” And he said, “Hear then, O house of David! Is it too little for you to weary men, that you weary my God also? Therefore the Lord himself will give you a sign. Behold, the virgin shall conceive and bear a son, and shall call his name Immanuel.

Pastor: This is the Word of the Lord.

**People: Thanks be to God.**

**EPISTLE** 1 John 4:7-16

Beloved, let us love one another, for love is from God, and whoever loves has been born of God and knows God. Anyone who does not love does not know God, because God is love. In this the love of God was made manifest among us, that God sent his only Son into the world, so that we might live through him. In this is love, not that we have loved God but that he loved us and sent his Son to be the propitiation for our sins. Beloved, if God so loved us, we also ought to love one another. No one has ever seen God; if we love one another, God abides in us and his love is perfected in us.

By this we know that we abide in him and he in us, because he has given us of his Spirit. And we have seen and testify that the Father has sent his Son to be the Savior of the world. Whoever confesses that Jesus is the Son of God, God abides in him, and he in God. So we have come to know and to believe the love that God has for us. God is love, and whoever abides in love abides in God, and God abides in him.

Pastor: This is the Word of the Lord.

**People: Thanks be to God.**

**CHRISTMAS GOSPEL** Matthew 1:18-25

Now the birth of Jesus Christ took place in this way. When his mother Mary had been betrothed to Joseph, before they came together she was found to be with child from the Holy Spirit. And her husband Joseph, being a just man and unwilling to put her to shame, resolved to divorce her quietly. But as he considered these things, behold, an angel of the Lord appeared to him in a dream, saying, “Joseph, son of David, do not fear to take Mary as your wife, for that which is conceived in her is from the Holy Spirit. She will bear a son, and you shall call his name Jesus, for he will save his people from their sins.” All this took place to fulfill what the Lord had spoken by the prophet:

“Behold, the virgin shall conceive and bear a son,  
    and they shall call his name Immanuel” (which means, God with us).

When Joseph woke from sleep, he did as the angel of the Lord commanded him: he took his wife, but knew her not until she had given birth to a son. And he called his name Jesus.

Pastor: This is the Gospel of the Lord.

**People: Praise to You, O Christ.**

**CAROL** *“Hark! The Herald Angels Sing”*

Hark! The herald angels sing, "Glory to the newborn King;  
Peace on earth and mercy mild, God and sinners reconciled."  
Joyful, all ye nations, rise; join the triumph of the skies;  
With the’angelic hosts proclaim: "Christ is born in Bethlehem!"  
Hark! The herald angels sing, "Glory to the newborn King!"

Christ, by highest heaven adored, Christ, the everlasting Lord,  
Late in time behold Him come, Offspring of a virgin’s womb.  
Veiled in flesh the Godhead see! Hail, the incarnate deity!  
Pleased as man with man to dwell, Jesus, our Emmanuel!  
Hark! The herald angels sing, "Glory to the newborn King!"

Hail the heav’n-born Prince of Peace! Hail the sun of righteousness!  
Light and life to all He brings, ris’n with healing in His wings.  
Mild He lays His glory by, born that man no more may die,  
Born to raise the sons of earth, Born to give them second birth.  
Hark! The herald angels sing, "Glory to the newborn King!"

**PSALM** 110:1–4

Pastor: The Lord sends forth from Zion Your mighty scepter. The Lord says to my Lord: “Sit at My right hand, until I make Your enemies Your footstool.”

**People: The Lord sends forth from Zion Your mighty scepter. Rule in the midst of Your enemies!**

Pastor: Your people will offer themselves freely on the day of Your power, in holy garments; from the womb of the morning, the dew of Your youth will be Yours. The Lord has sworn and will not change His mind, “You are a priest forever after the order of Melchizedek.”

**All: Glory be to the Father and to the Son and to the Holy Spirit; as it was in the beginning, is now, and will be forever. Amen. The Lord sends forth from Zion Your mighty scepter.**

**SERMON *“Reign”***

# PRAYER OF THE CHURCH and LORD’S PRAYER

Pastor: On this most holy night, let us go to God in prayer for all people in their various needs.

**People: “The birth of Jesus Christ took place in this way.”**

Pastor: Grant guidance to all who make and administer the laws of the nations, that they serve You in their positions, work for justice in all they do, and strive for peace around the world.

**People: “Joseph, son of David, do not fear.”**

Pastor: Provide justice to all, including those who have been forgotten by society. Lord Jesus, remind them of Your love for us all.

**People: “Take Mary as your wife.”**

Pastor: Bring healing and comfort to all who face illness and grief this day. Grant that families come together in comfort and joy, and that the lonely be surrounded with caring friends. Guide all in the healing professions to use their gifts to Your glory, heavenly Father.

**People: “When Joseph woke from sleep.”**

Pastor: Strengthen all who work long hours, who tend fields and flocks, and who distribute goods and services, gracious God. Grant that many people find nourishing food, warm clothing, and decent shelter through their efforts.

**People: “He will save His people from their sins.”**

Pastor: We raise songs of praise for the gift of Your Son, heavenly Father. Grant that the Church around the world be filled with the joyful news of our Savior’s birth, spreading the proclamation of glory to God in the highest and peace to God’s people on earth.

**People: “They shall call His name Immanuel.”**

Pastor: Be with us all, Lord our God, so that the peace and joy we know today will continue into the new year, for we bring all these prayers to Your heavenly throne in the name of our newborn Savior, Jesus Christ, our Lord. Amen.

**CAROL** *“Joy to the World”*

Joy to the world, the Lord is come! Let earth receive her King;  
Let ev’ry heart prepare Him room and heav’n and nature sing,  
and heav’n and nature sing, and heav’n, and heav’n and nature sing.

Joy to the earth, the Savior reigns! Let men their songs employ  
While fields and floods, rocks, hill, and plains repeat the sounding joy,  
repeat the sounding joy, repeat, repeat the sounding joy.

No more let sin and sorrow grow nor thorns infest the ground:  
He comes to make His blessings flow far as the curse is found,  
far as the curse is found, far as, far as the curse is found.

He rules the world with truth and grace and makes the nations prove   
The glories of His righteousness and wonders of His love,  
and wonders of His love, and wonders, wonders of His love.

**THE LIGHTING OF THE CANDLES**

(*The pastor takes the light from the Christ candle and gives to those assisting. They pass the light on to the congregation. Tip only the unlighted candle. Holding the lit candles straight up prevents the wax from dripping.*)

**BENEDICTION**

**CAROL** *“Silent Night, Holy Night”*

Silent night, holy night! All is calm, all is bright  
Round yon virgin mother and child. Holy Infant, so tender and mild,  
Sleep in heavenly peace, Sleep in heavenly peace.

Silent night, holy night! Shepherds quake at the sight;  
Glories stream from heaven afar, heav’nly hosts sing, Alleluia!  
Christ, the Savior, is born! Christ, the Savior, is born!

Silent night, holy night! Son of God, love’s pure light  
Radiant beams from Your holy face with the dawn of redeeming grace,  
Jesus, Lord, at Thy birth, Jesus, Lord, at Thy birth.

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**All are welcome …**

**… Christ is honored.**