

CHRISTMASTIDE FESTIVALS



The Festival of St. Stephen, December 26th
The Festival of St. John, December 27th
The Festival of the Holy Innocents, December 28th

Observed New Year's Eve, December 31, 2022

Have you ever wondered why we celebrate the birth of Jesus on December 25th? The reason for that date is primarily a result of an ancient church theologian Hippolytus who lived in approximately AD 170-235. He calculated that the date of Jesus' crucifixion was March 25th. This date is admittedly inexact. He also assumed (without any scriptural support) that since fractions would be imperfect, Jesus' life must have been exactly a whole number of years. Thus, he concluded that Jesus must have been conceived on the same day that he died. This is also why the celebration of the Annunciation (the angel Gabriel's appearance to Mary) is celebrated on March 25th. Nine months after March 25th places us at December 25th for the Lord's birth.

December 25th was already a day of celebration among the unbelieving Romans as a celebration of the Festival of the Sun, due to the winter solstice and the lengthening of the days. Church leaders took advantage of this deeply rooted observance and repurposed it to celebrate the birth of Jesus, the Sun of Righteousness. The first recorded date of Christmas being celebrated on December 25th was AD 336. Note: this is the date that the Western Church began celebrating Jesus' birth. The Eastern Church settled, for different reasons, on January 6th as the celebration of Jesus' birth, which the Western Church celebrates as Epiphany.

This choice of December 25th to celebrate Jesus' birth promptly attracted other feasts to the following days. As Saint Stephen, the first martyr for Christ, was an honored figure among many of the Early Christian Church, a festival began to be celebrated on December 26th in the fourth century. Sometime in the sixth century a festival also began to be celebrated on December 27th in honor of John, "the Beloved" disciple of the Lord. The festival of the Holy Innocents, an event that was closely connected to the birth of Christ, was commemorated on December 28th by the late fifth century (December 29th in the Eastern Church).

These feasts are connected by the common theme of martyrdom. St. Stephen experienced martyrdom in both will and deed; he was both willing to die for Christ and experienced the action of it. St. John experienced martyrdom in will, though not in deed; he was willing to die for Christ, yet never experienced a martyr's death, traditionally being the only apostle to die a natural death. The Holy Innocents were martyrs for Christ in deed, though not in will; they experienced death for the sake of Christ, though were not willing participants in that action.

These feasts remind us that the little babe born in Bethlehem came for a purpose. He came to live for us, and ultimately to die for us. Jesus was born to die so that by his death he would defeat death. Those who die trusting in Jesus, be it the death of a martyr or not, give up their lives in this world only to be welcomed to the eternal life with all the saints of God in heaven. Praise be to our God who shared in our human life that we may share in his eternal life.



The Christmastide Festivals

Welcome

Hymn

367 Across the Sky the Shades of Night

Stand

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

Amen.

O Lord, open my lips,

And my mouth will declare your praise.

Psalm 51:15

Hasten to save me, O God;

O Lord, come quickly to help me.

Psalm 70:1

Lord, you have been our dwelling place

Throughout all generations.

Psalm 90:1

You have set our iniquities before you,

Our secret sins in the light of your presence.

Psalm 90:8

Teach us to number our days aright

That we may gain a heart of wisdom.

Psalm 90:12

Satisfy us in the morning with your unfailing love

That we may sing for joy and be glad all our days.

Psalm 90:14

Eternal Father, before whom all generations rise and fall, teach us to think earnestly on the brevity of our lives and the immensity of your goodness. Help us to enter the new year trusting in the name of your Son and walking in the way of his peace; through your Son, Jesus Christ our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.

Amen.

Confession of Sins

Holy and merciful Father,

As I recall my life throughout the year now ending, I confess that I am sinful by nature and have sinned against you in my thoughts, words, and actions. I have not loved you with my whole heart; I have not loved others as I should. I deserve your punishment both now and forever. But Jesus, my Savior, paid for my sins with his innocent suffering and death. Trusting in him, I pray: God, have mercy on me, a sinner.

Silence for meditation and prayer

God, our heavenly Father, has been merciful to us and has given his only Son to be the atoning sacrifice for our sins. Therefore, as a called servant of Christ and by his authority, I forgive you all your sins, in the name of the Father and of the Son + and of the Holy Spirit.
Amen.

Hymn of Praise

892 By All Your Saints Still Striving v. 1

**By all your saints still striving, for all your saints at rest,
your holy name, O Jesus, forevermore be blessed.
You rose, our King victorious, that they might wear the crown
and ever shine in splendor reflected from your throne.**

Text: Horatio Bolton Nelson, 1823–1913, alt. Text: Public domain

Be seated

The Festival of St. Stephen, Deacon and Martyr



Prayer of the Day

Eternal Son of God, accompany us with your grace, that whenever we suffer for your Word, we may follow the example of Stephen, your first martyr, and like him, commending our cause to you, be ready to pray for those who would do us harm; for you live and reign with the Father and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.

Amen.

Reading

Acts 6:8—7:2a, 51–60

⁸ Now Stephen, full of grace and power, was doing great wonders and miraculous signs among the people. ⁹ Some men who were from what is called the Synagogue of the Freedmen (Cyrenians, Alexandrians, and some from Cilicia and Asia) rose up and disputed with Stephen. ¹⁰ But they were unable to stand up against the wisdom and the Spirit by whom he was speaking.

¹¹ Then they secretly induced some men to say, “We heard Stephen speak blasphemous words against Moses and against God.” ¹² They stirred up the people, the elders, and the experts in the law. They came, dragged Stephen away, and brought him before the Sanhedrin. ¹³ They presented false witnesses who said, “This man never stops making threats against this holy place and the law. ¹⁴ In fact, we have heard him say that this Jesus of Nazareth will destroy this place and will change the customs Moses handed down to us.” ¹⁵ All those who were sitting in the Sanhedrin were looking intently at Stephen, and they saw that his face was like the face of an angel.

¹ Then the high priest asked, “Are these things true?” ² Stephen said, “Gentlemen, brothers and fathers, listen!

⁵¹ “You stiff-necked people, with uncircumcised hearts and ears! You always resist the Holy Spirit! You are doing just what your fathers did. ⁵² Which of the prophets did your fathers not

persecute? They killed those who prophesied the coming of the Righteous One, and now you have become his betrayers and murderers— ⁵³you who received the law as transmitted by angels, but did not keep it.”

⁵⁴When they heard these things, they were furious and gnashed their teeth at him. ⁵⁵But Stephen, full of the Holy Spirit, gazed up into heaven and saw the glory of God and Jesus standing at the right hand of God. ⁵⁶He said, “Look, I see heaven opened, and the Son of Man standing at the right hand of God.”

⁵⁷But they screamed at the top of their voices, covered their ears, and rushed at him with one purpose in mind. ⁵⁸They threw him out of the city and stoned him. The witnesses laid their cloaks at the feet of a young man named Saul. ⁵⁹While they were stoning Stephen, he called out, “Lord Jesus, receive my spirit!” ⁶⁰Then he fell to his knees and cried out in a loud voice, “Lord, do not hold this sin against them.” After he said this, he fell asleep. (EHV)

The Word of the Lord.

Thanks be to God.

Psalm of the Day

Psalm 31:1-9, 13-16

The psalm will be read responsively, as noted.

All will join in the “Glory be...” at the end.

¹In you, Lord, I have taken refuge. Let me never be put to shame.

In your righteousness deliver me.

²Turn your ear toward me. Hurry! Rescue me!

Be a rock where I take refuge, a fortified place that saves me.

³Yes, you are my rocky cliff and my stronghold.

For the sake of your name you will lead me and guide me.

⁴You will pull me out of the net that they hid for me,

because you are my refuge.

⁵Into your hand I commit my spirit.

You have redeemed me, O Lord, the God of truth.

⁶I hate those who keep worthless idols,

but I trust in the Lord.

⁷I will be glad and rejoice in your mercy, because you saw my affliction.

You knew the distress of my soul.

⁸You have not left me in the hand of the enemy.

You have made my feet stand in a wide-open space.

⁹Be merciful to me, Lord, for I am in distress.

My eye grows weak with sorrow—my soul and my body too.

¹³Yes, I hear the slander of many. There is terror on every side.

When they conspire together against me, they plot to take my life.

¹⁴But I—I trust in you, O Lord.

I say, “You are my God.”

¹⁵ My times are in your hand.

Deliver me from the hand of my enemies and from those who pursue me.

¹⁶ Let your face shine on your servant.

Save me in your mercy.

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.

Stand

Gospel Acclamation

Matthew 5:10

Alleluia! Blessed are those who are persecuted because of righteousness,
because theirs is the kingdom of heaven. Alleluia!

Sung to the tune of “We Give Thee but Thine Own”

**Oh, I will surely bless
those suffering griefs and cares
because of me and righteousness.
Yes, heav’n is truly theirs.**

Gospel of the Day

Matthew 23:34–39

³⁴“Look, this is why I am sending you prophets, wise men, and experts in the law. Some of them you will kill and crucify, and some of them you will flog in your synagogues and persecute from town to town. ³⁵As a result, you will be held responsible for all the righteous blood shed on the earth, from the blood of righteous Abel to the blood of Zechariah son of Berekiah, whom you murdered between the sanctuary and the altar. ³⁶Amen I tell you: All these things will come upon this generation.

³⁷“Jerusalem, Jerusalem, who kills the prophets and stones those sent to her! How often I have wanted to gather your children together as a hen gathers her chicks under her wings, but you were not willing! ³⁸Look, your house is left to you desolate. ³⁹For I tell you, you will certainly not see me again until you say, ‘Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord!’” (EHV)

The Gospel of the Lord.

Praise be to you, O Christ!

Be seated

Hymn of the Day

892 By All Your Saints Still Striving v. 7

**All praise, O Lord, for Stephen, who, martyred, saw you stand
to help in time of torment, to plead at God’s right hand.
Like you, our suffering Savior, his enemies he blessed;
with “Lord, receive my spirit,” his faith, in death, confessed.**

Text: Horatio Bolton Nelson, 1823–1913, alt. Text: Public domain

The Festival of St. John, Apostle and Evangelist



Prayer of the Day

Merciful Lord, cast the bright beams of your light on the whole Christian church, that, being instructed by the teachings of your blessed apostle and evangelist John, we may always walk in the light of your saving truth, until at last we inherit the gift of eternal life; for you live and reign with the Father and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.

Amen.

Reading

1 John 1:1—2:2

¹ That which was from the beginning, which we have heard, which we have seen with our eyes, which we have observed and our hands have touched regarding the Word of Life— ² the life appeared, and we have seen it. We testify and proclaim to you the eternal life, which was with the Father and has appeared to us. ³ We are proclaiming what we have seen and heard also to you, so that you may have fellowship with us. Our fellowship is with the Father and his Son Jesus Christ. ⁴ We write these things to you so that our joy may be complete.

⁵ This is the message we heard from him and proclaim to you: God is light. In him there is no darkness at all. ⁶ If we say we have fellowship with him but still walk in darkness, we are lying and do not put the truth into practice. ⁷ But if we walk in the light, just as he is in the light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus Christ, his Son, cleanses us from all sin. ⁸ If we say we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us. ⁹ If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness. ¹⁰ If we say we have not sinned, we make him out to be a liar, and his Word is not in us.

¹ My children, I write these things to you so that you will not sin. If anyone does sin, we have an Advocate before the Father: Jesus Christ, the Righteous One. ² He is the atoning sacrifice for our sins, and not only for ours but also for the whole world. (EHV)

The Word of the Lord.

Thanks be to God.

Psalm of the Day

Psalm 119:89–96

*The psalm will be read responsively, as noted.
All will join in the “Glory be...” at the end.*

⁸⁹ To eternity, O Lord, your word is fixed firmly in the heavens.

⁹⁰ For generation after generation, your faithfulness remains.

You established the earth, and it stands.

⁹¹ As for your judgments, they stand to this day,
because all things are your servants.

⁹² Unless your law had been my delight,
I would have perished in my affliction.
⁹³ To eternity I will not forget your precepts,
because by them you have given me life.
⁹⁴ I am yours. Save me,
because I have sought your precepts.
⁹⁵ The wicked are lying in wait for me to kill me,
but I will ponder your testimonies.
⁹⁶ I see a limit to all perfection,
but your commandment has no limits.

**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.**

Stand

Gospel Acclamation

1 Corinthians 1:18

Alleluia! For the message of the cross is foolishness to those who are perishing,
but to us who are being saved, it is the power of God. Alleluia!

Sung to the tune of "We Give Thee but Thine Own"

**The cross is foolishness
to those who will not see.
And yet to those who grace possess,
it's pow'r and majesty.**

Gospel of the Day

John 21:20–25

²⁰ Peter turned and saw the disciple Jesus loved following them. This was the one who had leaned back against Jesus at the supper and asked, "Lord, who is going to betray you?" ²¹ When Peter saw him, he asked Jesus, "Lord, what about him?"

²² "If I want him to remain until I come," Jesus answered, "what is that to you? You follow me." ²³ And so it was said among the brothers that this disciple would not die. Yet Jesus did not say that he would not die, but, "If I want him to remain until I come, what is that to you?"

²⁴ This is the disciple who is testifying about these things and who wrote these things. We know that his testimony is true.

²⁵ Jesus also did many other things. If every one of them were written down, I suppose the world itself would not have room for the books that would be written. (EHV)

The Gospel of the Lord.
Praise be to you, O Christ!

Be seated

Hymn of the Day

892 *By All Your Saints Still Striving v. 8*

**For John, your loved disciple, exiled to Patmos' shore,
and for his faithful record we praise you evermore.**

**Praise for the mystic vision his words to us unfold;
instill in us his longing your glory to behold.**

Text: Horatio Bolton Nelson, 1823–1913, alt. Text: Public domain

The Festival of the Holy Innocents, Martyrs

Prayer of the Day

We remember today, O Lord, the slaughter of the holy innocents of Bethlehem by order of King Herod. Receive into the arms of your mercy all who lay down their lives for your sake, and prepare us by your grace to be ready at all times to live and die for you; for you live and reign with the Father and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.

Amen.

Reading

Jeremiah 31:15–17

¹⁵This is what the Lord says.

A voice is heard in Ramah,
weeping and great mourning,
Rachel is weeping for her children.
She refuses to be comforted for her children,
because they are no more.

¹⁶This is what the Lord says.

Stop your crying. Do not shed tears,
because your work will be rewarded, declares the Lord.
They will return from the land of the enemy.

¹⁷There is hope for your future, declares the Lord.

Your children will return to their own borders. (EHV)



The Word of the Lord.

Thanks be to God.

Psalm of the Day

Psalm 130:1-8

The psalm will be read responsively, as noted.

All will join in the “Glory be...” at the end.

¹ Out of the depths I have called to you, O Lord. ² Lord, hear my voice.

Let your ears be attentive to the sound of my cry for mercy.

³ If you, Lord, kept a record of guilt, O Lord, who could stand?

⁴ But with you there is pardon, so you are feared.

- ⁵ I wait for the Lord. My soul waits,
and in his word I have put my hope.
- ⁶ My soul waits for the Lord more than watchmen wait for the morning,
more than watchmen wait for the morning.
- ⁷ Israel, wait confidently for the Lord, because with the Lord there is mercy.
With him there is abundant redemption.
- ⁸ So he himself will redeem Israel from all its guilt.

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.

Stand

Gospel Acclamation

Psalm 116:15

Alleluia! Precious in the sight of the Lord
is the death of his faithful servants. Alleluia!

Hymn of the Day

892 By All Your Saints Still Striving v. 9

**Praise for your infant martyrs, whom your mysterious love
called early from life's conflicts to share your peace above.
O Rachel, cease your weeping; they rest from earthly cares.
Lord, grant us crowns as brilliant and faith as sure as theirs.**

Text: Horatio Bolton Nelson, 1823–1913, alt. Text: Public domain

Gospel of the Day

Matthew 2:13–18

¹³ After the Wise Men were gone, an angel of the Lord suddenly appeared to Joseph in a dream. He said, “Get up, take the child and his mother, and flee to Egypt. Stay there until I tell you, because Herod will search for the child in order to kill him.”

¹⁴ Joseph got up, took the child and his mother during the night, and left for Egypt. ¹⁵ He stayed there until the death of Herod. This happened to fulfill what was spoken by the Lord through the prophet: “Out of Egypt I called my son.”

¹⁶ When Herod realized that he had been outwitted by the Wise Men, he was furious. He issued orders to kill all the boys in Bethlehem and in all the surrounding countryside, from two years old and under. This was in keeping with the exact time he had learned from the Wise Men. ¹⁷ Then what was spoken through Jeremiah the prophet was fulfilled:

¹⁸ A voice was heard in Ramah, weeping and great mourning,
Rachel weeping for her children, and she refused to be comforted,
because they are no more. (EHV)

The Gospel of the Lord.
Praise be to you, O Christ!

Be seated

Hymn

978 All Hail! You Infant Martyr Flowers, vs. 1, 4-7



1 All hail! You in - fant mar - tyr flow'rs, cut off in
 4 Oh, what is gained from this of - fense? What prof - it
 5 A voice is heard in bit - ter pain as Ra - chel
 6 Of you, O lit - tle lambs, we sing, first vic - tims
 7 To you, the Vir - gin - born, we raise thanks - giv - ing



life's first dawn - ing hours; like rose - buds, snapped in
 comes from vi - o - lence? The Sav - ior - King sur -
 mourns the in - fants slain, re - fus - ing com - fort—
 slain for Christ our King: be - neath the heav'n - ly
 and e - ter - nal praise, whom with the Fa - ther



dread - ful strife, when Her - od sought our Sav - ior's life.
 lived the day, as Christ was safe - ly whisked a - way!
 sa - cred lore— be - cause her chil - dren are no more!
 al - tar's ray with mar - tyr - palms and crowns you play!
 we a - dore and Ho - ly Spir - it ev - er - more.

Text: tr. Peter M. Prange, b. 1972; Aurelius C. Prudentius, 348–after 405. Tune: Rheinfeßsich Deutsches Catholisches Gesangbuch, Augsburg, 1666
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Confession of Faith

The Augsburg Confession

Article IV: Justification and Article XXI: Concerning the Saints

Public confession is faith's response to God's saving Word. Christians composed the Augsburg Confession as the definitive statement of faith for the Lutheran Church when asked to give a confession and defense of their faith on June 25, 1530. Article IV deals with the heart of the day's controversy, that justification comes through Christ alone, and not from the merits of saints or our own works. Article XXI deals with the abuse of worshiping the saints of the past and praying to them for help. Our help comes from God, and so we are to worship and pray to him alone, as the closing quotation from 1 John 2:1 clearly states. We confess a portion of Article XXI as it deals with proper commemoration of the saints and martyrs today, not to worship them, but to set before us a godly example to follow, and to thank God for the example of the saints who have gone before us.

Our churches teach that people cannot be justified before God by their own strength, merits, or works. People are freely justified for Christ's sake, through faith, when they believe that they are received into favor and that their sins are forgiven for Christ's sake. By His death, Christ made satisfaction for our sins. God counts this faith for righteousness in His sight.

Our churches teach that the history of saints may be set before us so that we may follow the example of their faith and good works, according to our calling.

But the Scriptures do not teach that we are to call on the saints or to ask the saints for help. Scripture sets before us the one Christ as the Mediator, Atoning Sacrifice, High Priest, and Intercessor. He is to be prayed to. He has promised that He will hear our prayer. This is the worship that He approves above all other worship, that He be called upon in all afflictions. “If anyone does sin, we have an advocate with the Father.”

Connect Card

Please take a moment now to fill out a Connect Card.

Prayer of the Church for the New Year

It is fitting, Lord, in the final hours of this year, to express our gratitude for the countless gifts of grace we have received from you.

You have been faithful to your promises and loving toward all you have made.

Clothing and food, safety and health, possessions and money, even life itself—all these come to us from your generous hand.

You know what we need, and you give us all good things. We thank you for these blessings, and we ask that you continue to grant them to us.

We thank you especially for your Word and Holy Supper, which strengthen our faith, shield us from temptation, and equip us for service.

Increase our commitments to these precious gifts, so that we may continue to grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.

Almighty and eternal God, you have been gracious and compassionate, slow to anger, and rich in love. As you led your people Israel with a pillar of cloud by day and a pillar of fire by night, so lead us by the light of your Word that we may live our lives to your glory and be prepared to die in your peace.

We ask these things in the name of Jesus. In his name we began this year; in his name we bring it to a close. Amen.

Offering

Moved by God’s love in Christ, we offer him our first and best gifts, purely out of thanks to him. If the gospel message has moved you to give and you would like an electronic option, you can scan this QR code with your mobile phone. It will connect you with our website’s giving page.



Musical Offering

The Sacrament

Stand

Preface

The Lord be with you.

And also with you.

Lift up your hearts.

We lift them up to the Lord.

Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.

It is right to give him thanks and praise.

It is truly good and right that we should at all times and in all places give you thanks, O Lord, holy Father, almighty and everlasting God, through Jesus Christ our Lord, who in blessing his saints of the past has given us assurance and hope that, following their example, we may run the race marked out for us and receive the crown of glory that will never fade away. Therefore, with all the saints on earth and hosts of heaven, we praise your holy name and join their glorious song:

Hymn of Praise

331 From Heaven Above to Earth I Come vs. 7–9

7 **Come here, my friends, lift up your eyes, and see what in the manger lies.
Who is this child, so young and fair? It is the Christ Child lying there.**

8 **Welcome to earth, O noble Guest, through whom the sinful world is blest!
You came to share my misery, that you might share your joy with me.**

9 **Ah, Lord, though you created all, how weak you are, so poor and small,
that you should choose to lay your head where lowly cattle lately fed!**

Text: tr. Catherine Winkworth, 1827–1878, alt.; Martin Luther, 1483–1546. Text: Public domain

Prayer of Thanksgiving

Blessed are you, O Lord God, King of the universe. Before the creation of the world, you chose to redeem us with the precious blood of your Son,
a Lamb without blemish or defect.

We give you humble and heartfelt thanks that by the mystery of Christ's holy incarnation,
you have made him our brother and helper forever.

By his birth, life, and perfect obedience,
you have purified us from all sin.

By his baptism, fasting, and temptation,
you have become our righteousness, holiness, and redemption.

By his agony, bloody sweat, and cruel scourging,
you have crushed the head of our ancient enemy.

By his precious cross, death, and burial,
you have turned the gloomy portal of death into the bright gateway to everlasting life.

Remembering your Son's death and resurrection, we receive in repentance and joy his body and blood. Strengthen us through this gift for our pilgrimage on earth until, together at last, we shall eat and drink with our Savior anew in the kingdom of God.

Amen.

Lord's Prayer

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. Lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil. For the kingdom, the power, and the glory are yours now and forever. Amen.

Words of Institution

Our Lord Jesus Christ, on the night he was betrayed, took bread; and when he had given thanks, he broke it and gave it to his disciples, saying, "Take and eat; this is my + body, which is given for you. Do this in remembrance of me."

Then he took the cup, gave thanks, and gave it to them, saying, "Drink from it, all of you; this is my + blood of the new covenant, which is poured out for you for the forgiveness of sins. Do this, whenever you drink it, in remembrance of me."

The peace of the Lord be with you always.

Amen.

Hymn of Praise

331 From Heaven Above to Earth I Come vs. 10–12

- 10 **Were earth a thousand times as fair and set with gold and jewels rare,
it would be far too poor and small a cradle for the Lord of all.**
- 11 **Instead of soft and silken stuff you have but hay and straw so rough
on which as king, so rich and great, to be enthroned in royal state.**
- 12 **And so it pleases you to see this simple truth revealed to me:
that worldly honor, wealth, and might are weak and worthless in your sight.**

Text: tr. Catherine Winkworth, 1827–1878, alt.; Martin Luther, 1483–1546. Text: Public domain

Be seated

Distribution

Distribution Hymn

654 *Jesus Sinners Does Receive*

Stand

Give thanks to the Lord, for he is good;
his mercy endures forever.

Whenever we eat this bread and drink this cup,
we proclaim the Lord's death until he comes.

Hymn of Praise

331 *From Heaven Above to Earth I Come* sts. 13–15

- 13 **Ah, dearest Jesus, holy Child, prepare a bed, soft, undefiled
within my heart, made clean and new, a quiet chamber kept for you.**
- 14 **My heart for very joy must leap; my lips no more can silence keep.
I too must sing with joyful tongue that sweetest ancient cradle song:**
- 15 **Glory to God in highest heav'n, who unto us his Son has giv'n,
while angels sing with pious mirth a glad new year to all the earth!**

Text: tr. Catherine Winkworth, 1827–1878, alt.; Martin Luther, 1483–1546. Text: Public domain

Lord Jesus, as you once came to win our salvation wrapped in swaddling clothes and lying in a manger, you have also come to us wrapped in bread and wine to give us that same salvation. As we have received your body and blood, give us faith-filled and joyful hearts. Strengthen us by this holy meal to live lives that glorify and praise God for all that we have heard and seen.
Amen.

Blessing

May he who by his incarnation gathered things earthly and heavenly into one, fill us with such joy that comes with the knowledge of the forgiveness of sins and the hope of eternal life. And the blessing of God Almighty—the Father, the Son, + and the Holy Spirit—be upon you and remain with you always.

Amen.

Remain standing

Closing Hymn

892 *By All Your Saints Still Striving* v. 3

**Then let us praise the Father and worship God the Son
and sing to God the Spirit, eternal Three in One,
till all the ransomed number who stand before the throne
ascribe all pow'r and glory and praise to God alone.**

Text: Horatio Bolton Nelson, 1823–1913, alt. Text: Public domain



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