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Introduction to the Season

The celebration of Christ's incarnation at Christmas is one of the two poles of the Christian year. The wonderful mystery of God's dwelling among us in the fullness of humanity, as Emmanuel, foretold by the prophets and born of Mary, provides the material of the feast:

Hark, hark, the wise eternal word,

like a weak infant cries!

In form of servant is the Lord,

and God in cradle lies.

(Thomas Pestel)

Christmas is much more than simply the celebration of Jesus' birth, and neither of the great Christmas morning readings (Hebrews 1 and John 1) is taken from the infancy narratives. The task of the Christmas liturgy is to recall us, amid all the joyful customs and celebrations of Christmas, to this central truth of the Word made flesh for our salvation.

It is, of course, Christ's nativity that has provided the occasion for this festival of the incarnation, since the end of the third century. The Christmas crib and the nativity play can both be said to descend from the tableau of Christ's birth that Francis of Assisi arranged when he celebrated Christmas at Greccio in 1223. Christmas carols are a medieval tradition, which has been notably developed from the end of the nineteenth century. The Festival of Lessons and Carols is itself an influential English creation of the late nineteenth century, made widespread by the choir of King's College, Cambridge, in the first half of the twentieth.

The Christmas season is often celebrated for twelve days, ending with the Epiphany. Contemporary use has sought to express an alternative tradition, in which Christmas lasts for a full forty days, ending with the Feast of the Presentation on 2 February. The days around 25 December are a principal holiday in the secular calendar of Britain, and commercial pressures have led to much of Christmas celebration being displaced into Advent. It has become a still greater challenge to celebrate as they deserve the saints of the Christmas season: Stephen, who first paid with his life for following the incarnate Lord; John, who was believed to have lived to great old age in profound meditation on the Word made flesh; and the Holy Innocents, who draw our attention to the plight of children in a world where the implications of the birth of the Christ-child are not yet manifest. Resources for these days may be found in *Common Worship: Festivals*. New Year's Day is an important moment in the civil rather than the Christian calendar, but it provides the original occasion for the searching Covenant Renewal service of the Methodist tradition.

Seasonal Material

Invitations to Confession

A1

Hear the words of the angel to Joseph:

'You shall call his name Jesus,

for he will save his people from their sins.'

Therefore let us seek the forgiveness of God

through Jesus the Saviour of the world.

cf Matthew 1.21

A2

(particularly during the night)

Christ the light of the world has come

to dispel the darkness of our hearts.

Let us turn to the light and confess our sins.

A3

(particularly in the morning)

The sun of righteousness has dawned

with healing in his wings.

Let us come to the light of Christ,

confessing our sins in penitence and faith.

cf Malachi 4.2

For other Invitations to Confession, see [here](#).

Kyrie Confession

B1

God our Father,

you sent your Son full of grace and truth:

forgive our failure to receive him.

Lord, have mercy.

Lord, have mercy.

Jesus our Saviour,

you were born in poverty and laid in a manger:

forgive our greed and rejection of your ways.

Christ, have mercy.

Christ, have mercy.

Spirit of Love,

your servant Mary responded joyfully to your call:

forgive the hardness of our hearts.

Lord, have mercy.

Lord, have mercy.

For another Kyrie Confession, see [here](#).

Confession

C1

Lord of grace and truth,

we confess our unworthiness

to stand in your presence as your children.

We have sinned:

forgive and heal us.

The Virgin Mary accepted your call

to be the mother of Jesus.

Forgive our disobedience to your will.

We have sinned:

forgive and heal us.

Your Son our Saviour

was born in poverty in a manger.

Forgive our greed and rejection of your ways.

We have sinned:

forgive and heal us.

The shepherds left their flocks

to go to Bethlehem.

Forgive our self-interest and lack of vision.

We have sinned:

forgive and heal us.

The wise men followed the star

to find Jesus the King.

Forgive our reluctance to seek you.

We have sinned:

forgive and heal us.

Absolutions

E1

May the God of all healing and forgiveness

draw *you* to himself

and cleanse *you* from all *your* sins,

that *you* may behold the glory of his Son,

the Word made flesh,

Jesus Christ our Lord.

Amen.

E2

May God who loved the world so much

that he sent his Son to be our Saviour

forgive *us our* sins

and make *us* holy to serve him in the world,

through Jesus Christ our Lord.

Amen.

Gospel Acclamation

G1

Alleluia, alleluia.

The Word became flesh and dwelt among us,

and we have seen his glory.

cf John 1.14

Alleluia.

Intercessions

H1

Let us pray to Jesus our Saviour.

Christ, born in a stable,

give courage to all who are homeless.

Jesus, Saviour,

hear our prayer.

Christ, for whom the angels sang,

give the song of the kingdom to all who weep.

Jesus, Saviour,

hear our prayer.

Christ, worshipped by the shepherds,

give peace on earth to all who are oppressed.

Jesus, Saviour,

hear our prayer.

Christ, before whom the wise men knelt,

give humility and wisdom to all who govern.

Jesus, Saviour,

hear our prayer.

Christ, whose radiance filled a lowly manger,

give the glory of your resurrection to all who rest in you.

Jesus, Saviour,

hear our prayer.

Jesus, Saviour, child of Mary,

you know us and love us,

you share our lives

and hear our prayer.

Glory to you for ever. Amen.

H2

The phrase 'in this holy night' makes this prayer particularly appropriate for use on Christmas Eve during the night. With the omission of this phrase (or its replacement with 'at this holy time') it is suitable for use on other occasions during the Christmas season.

In peace let us pray to the Lord.

Father, [*in this holy night*] your Son our Saviour

was born in human flesh.

Renew your Church as the Body of Christ.

Holy God

hear our prayer.

[*In this holy night*] there was no room for your Son in the inn.

Protect with your love those who have no home

and all who live in poverty.

Holy God

hear our prayer.

[In this holy night] Mary, in the pain of labour,

brought your Son to birth.

Hold in your hand [...and] all who are in pain or distress.

Holy God

hear our prayer.

[In this holy night] your Christ came as a light shining in the darkness.

Bring comfort to [...and] all who suffer in the sadness of our world.

Holy God

hear our prayer.

[In this holy night] the angels sang, 'Peace to God's people on earth.'

Strengthen those who work for peace and justice

in [...and in] all the world.

Holy God

hear our prayer.

[In this holy night] shepherds in the field heard good tidings of joy.

Give us grace to preach the gospel of Christ's redemption.

Holy God

hear our prayer.

[In this holy night] strangers found the Holy Family,

and saw the baby lying in the manger.

Bless our homes and all whom we love.

Holy God

hear our prayer.

[In this holy night] heaven is come down to earth,

and earth is raised to heaven.

Hold in your hand [...and] all those who have passed through death

in the hope of your coming kingdom.

Holy God

hear our prayer.

[In this holy night] Christians the world over celebrate Christ's birth.

Open our hearts that he may be born in us today.

Holy God

hear our prayer.

Father,

[in this holy night] angels and shepherds worshipped at

the manger throne.

Receive the worship we offer in fellowship with Mary,

Joseph and the saints

through him who is your Word made flesh,

our Saviour Jesus Christ.

Amen.

H3

A Litany for the World

Unto us a child is born, unto us a Son is given.

Let us bring before God the needs of the world.

Wonderful counsellor,

give your wisdom to the rulers of the nations.

Lord, in your mercy

hear our prayer.

Mighty God,

make the whole world know

that the government is on your shoulders.

Lord, in your mercy

hear our prayer.

Everlasting Father,

establish your reign of justice and righteousness for ever.

Lord, in your mercy

hear our prayer.

Prince of peace,

bring in the endless kingdom of your peace.

Lord, in your mercy

hear our prayer.

Almighty Lord,

hear our prayer

and fulfil your purposes in us,

as you accomplished your will

in our Lord Jesus Christ. Amen.

H4

Let us pray to our incarnate Lord,
who has brought us out of darkness
and into his own marvellous light.

Christ born for us,

Son of God given for us:

help us to know you,

to worship and to serve you ...

Lord, in your mercy

hear our prayer.

Wonderful counsellor,

you order all things with your wisdom:

help the Church to reveal the mystery of your love

and fill her with the Spirit of truth ...

Lord, in your mercy

hear our prayer.

Mighty God,

the government is on your shoulders:

guide the leaders of the nations

and bring in your kingdom of justice and righteousness ...

Lord, in your mercy

hear our prayer.

Everlasting Father,

you call us to live together in unity:

protect by your mercy all your children,

bless our families and renew our communities ...

Lord, in your mercy

hear our prayer.

Prince of peace,

you bring reconciliation through the cross:

by your healing power give to all who suffer ...

your gift of wholeness and peace.

Lord, in your mercy

hear our prayer.

Lord Jesus Christ,

Son of the Father,

full of the Spirit,

hear our prayer,

receive our praises,

fill our lives. Amen.

H5

For use when small children are present; the prayer should be very simple, if possible drawing from the children the subjects for intercession.

Jesus, whose mother was Mary:

we pray for ... [*families*].

Lord Jesus,

hear our prayer.

Jesus, cradled in a manger:

we pray for ... [*the homeless, refugees*].

Lord Jesus,

hear our prayer.

Jesus, sharing the stable with the animals:

we pray for ... [*the creation*].

Lord Jesus,

hear our prayer.

Jesus, worshipped by shepherds and kings:

we pray for ... [*nations, races, peoples*].

Lord Jesus,

hear our prayer.

Jesus, our Emmanuel:

we pray for ... [*those in particular need*].

Lord Jesus,

hear our prayer.

Introductions to the Peace

J1

Unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given,

and his name shall be called the Prince of Peace.

Isaiah 9.6

J2

Glory to God in the highest heaven, and on earth peace

to all in whom he delights.

Luke 2.14

Prayer at the Preparation of the Table

K1

Word made flesh, life of the world,

in your incarnation you embraced our poverty:

by your Spirit may we share in your riches.

Amen.

Prefaces

L1

And now we give you thanks

because, by the power of the Holy Spirit,

he took our nature upon him

and was born of the Virgin Mary his mother,

that being himself without sin,

he might make us clean from all sin.

L2

And now we give you thanks

because in coming to dwell among us as man,

he revealed the radiance of your glory

and brought us out of darkness

into your own marvellous light.

L3

And now we give you thanks

because, in the incarnation of the Word,

a new light has dawned upon the world;

you have become one with us

that we might become one with you in your glorious kingdom.

L4

And now we give you thanks

because for love of our fallen race

he most wonderfully and humbly chose to be made man,

and to take our nature as nevermore to lay it by,

so that we might be born again by your Spirit

and restored in your image.

L5

The Holy Family

And now we give you thanks

because in his earthly childhood

you entrusted him to the care of a human family.

In Mary and Joseph you give us an example

of love and devotion to him,

and also a pattern of family life.

L6

The Blessed Virgin Mary

And now we give you thanks

because in choosing the Blessed Virgin Mary

to be the mother of your Son

you have exalted the humble and meek.

Your angel hailed her as most highly favoured;

with all generations we call her blessed

and with her we rejoice and magnify your holy name.

Extended Preface

M1

All glory and honour be yours always and everywhere,

mighty creator, ever-living God.

We give you thanks and praise for your Son,

our Saviour Jesus Christ,

who for love of our fallen race humbled himself,

and [*on this night*] was born of the Virgin Mary

by the power of your Spirit,

and lived as one of us.

In this mystery of the Word made flesh

you have caused his light to shine in our hearts,

to give knowledge of your glory in the face of Jesus Christ.

In him we see our God made visible

and so are caught up in the love of the God we cannot see.

Therefore with all the angels of heaven

we lift our voices to proclaim the glory of your name

and sing our joyful hymn of praise:

Blessings

P1

Christ, who by his incarnation gathered into one

things earthly and heavenly,

fill you with peace and goodwill

and make you partakers of the divine nature;

and the blessing ...

P2

May the joy of the angels,

the eagerness of the shepherds,

the perseverance of the wise men,

the obedience of Joseph and Mary,

and the peace of the Christ-child

be yours this Christmas;

and the blessing ...

P3

Christ the Son of God, born of Mary,

fill you with his grace to trust his promises and obey his will;

and the blessing ...

P4

May the Father,

who has loved the eternal Son

from before the foundation of the world,

shed that love upon you his children.

Amen.

May Christ,

who by his incarnation gathered into one

things earthly and heavenly,

fill you with joy and peace.

Amen.

May the Holy Spirit,

by whose overshadowing Mary became the God-bearer,

give you grace to carry the good news of Christ.

Amen.

And the blessing ...

For other blessings and endings, see [here](#).

Acclamations

R1

The people who walked in darkness

have seen a great light.

For to us a child is born

to us a Son is given.

His name will be called

Wonderful counsellor, mighty God,

the everlasting Father,

the Prince of Peace.

Glory to God in the highest

and peace to his people on earth.

R2

Blessed be the Lord, the God of Israel,

he has come to his people and set them free.

Light has sprung up for the righteous

and joyful gladness for those who are true-hearted.

Glory to God in the highest

and peace to his people on earth.

R3

The Word of life which was from the beginning

we proclaim to you.

The darkness is passing away

and the true light is already shining;

the Word of life which was from the beginning.

That which we heard, which we saw with our eyes,

and touched with our own hands,

we proclaim to you.

For our fellowship is with the Father,

and with his Son, Jesus Christ our Lord.

The Word of life which was from the beginning

we proclaim to you.

R4

See what love the Father has given us

that we should be called the children of God.

You are my sons and daughters:

this day I have begotten you.

See what love the Father has given us.

As many as received him,

to them he gave power to become the children of God.

See what love the Father has given us.

Glory to the Father and to the Son

and to the Holy Spirit.

See what love the Father has given us

that we should be called the children of God.

R5

Let us bless the living God:

He was born of the Virgin Mary,

revealed in his glory,

worshipped by the angels,

proclaimed among the nations,

believed in throughout the world,

exalted to the highest heavens.

Blessed be God, our strength and our salvation,

now and for ever. Amen.

R6

The Word became flesh and dwelt among us,

full of grace and truth.

The Word became flesh and dwelt among us,

full of grace and truth.

And we have seen his glory,

the glory as of a father's only son,

full of grace and truth.

Glory to the Father and to the Son

and to the Holy Spirit.

The Word became flesh and dwelt among us,

full of grace and truth.

from John 1

Short Passages of Scripture

S1

The people who walked in darkness have seen a great light;

those who dwelt in a land of deep darkness,

on them has light shined.

Isaiah 9.2

S2

I am bringing you good news of great joy for all the people:

to you is born this day in the city of David a Saviour,

who is Christ, the Lord.

Luke 2.10,11

S3

The shepherds said to one another,

'Let us go now to Bethlehem

and see this thing that has taken place,

which the Lord has made known to us.'

Luke 2.15

S4

And the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us,

and we beheld his glory.

John 1.14

S5

The bread of God is he who comes down from heaven

and gives life to the world.

John 6.33

Eucharist of Christmas Night or Morning

¶ The Gathering □

The service may begin at the crib.

A hymn or carol may be sung.

These words may be said

Welcome all wonders in one sight!

Eternity shut in a span.

Summer in winter, day in night,

heaven in earth and God in man.

Great little one whose all-embracing birth

brings earth to heaven, stoops heaven to earth.

(or)

'Do I not fill heaven and earth?' says the Lord.

All **Now the Word is made flesh and laid in a narrow manger.**

From eternity to eternity you are God,

All **and now we see you as a newborn child.**

The Greeting

The president greets the people

Grace, mercy and peace

from God our Father

and the Lord Jesus Christ

be with you

All **and also with you.**

Blessing of the Crib

If there is no dedication of the crib, the service continues with the Prayers of Penitence.

Dear friends, as we meet to celebrate the birth of Christ, let us pray that God will bless this crib, that all who worship his Son, born of the Virgin Mary, may come to share his life in glory.

God our Father,

on this night [*day*]

your Son Jesus Christ was born of the Virgin Mary

for us and for our salvation:

bless this crib,

which we have prepared to celebrate that holy birth;

may all who see it be strengthened in faith

and receive the fullness of life he came to bring,

who is alive and reigns for ever.

All **Amen.**

Prayers of Penitence

The Prayers of Penitence may be used at the crib.

A minister uses this Invitation to Confession or other suitable words

Christ the light of the world has come

to dispel the darkness of our hearts.

In his light let us examine ourselves and confess our sins.

Silence is kept.

God our Father,

you sent your Son full of grace and truth:

forgive our failure to receive him.

Lord, have mercy.

All **Lord, have mercy.**

Jesus our Saviour,

you were born in poverty and laid in a manger:

forgive our greed and rejection of your ways.

Christ, have mercy.

All **Christ, have mercy.**

Spirit of love,

your servant Mary responded joyfully to your call:

forgive the hardness of our hearts.

Lord, have mercy.

All **Lord, have mercy.**

Or another authorized form of confession may be used.

The president uses this or another authorized absolution

May the God of all healing and forgiveness

draw you to himself,

that you may behold the glory of his Son,

the Word made flesh,

and be cleansed from all your sins,

through Jesus Christ our Lord.

All **Amen.**

The ministers move from the crib to the place where the Liturgy of the Word is celebrated.

Gloria in Excelsis

The Gloria in excelsis may be used.

The Collect

The president introduces a period of silent prayer with the words

Let us pray in the peace of this Christmas celebration

that our joy in the birth of Christ will last for ever.

Silence is kept.

At night

Eternal God,

who made this most holy night

to shine with the brightness of your one true light:

bring us, who have known the revelation of that light on earth,

to see the radiance of your heavenly glory;

through Jesus Christ your Son our Lord,

who is alive and reigns with you,

in the unity of the Holy Spirit,

one God, now and for ever.

All **Amen.**

In daytime

Almighty God,

you have given us your only-begotten Son

to take our nature upon him

and as at this time to be born of a pure virgin:

grant that we, who have been born again

and made your children by adoption and grace,

may daily be renewed by your Holy Spirit;

through Jesus Christ your Son our Lord,

who is alive and reigns with you,

in the unity of the Holy Spirit,

one God, now and for ever.

All **Amen.**

(or)

Lord Jesus Christ,

your birth at Bethlehem

draws us to kneel in wonder at heaven touching earth:

accept our heartfelt praise

as we worship you,

our Saviour and our eternal God.

All **Amen.**

¶ *The Liturgy of the Word* □

Readings

Either one or two readings from Scripture precede the Gospel reading.

At the end of each the reader may say

This is the word of the Lord.

All **Thanks be to God.**

A Song of God's Chosen One or a psalm follows the first reading, or other hymns and carols may be used between the readings.

Refrain:

All **The Spirit of the Lord shall rest upon him.**

1 There shall come forth a shoot from the stock of Jesse, □

and a branch shall grow out of his roots.

2 And the Spirit of the Lord shall rest upon him, □

the spirit of wisdom and understanding,

3 The spirit of counsel and might, □

the spirit of knowledge and the fear of the Lord. *[R]*

4 He shall not judge by what his eyes see, □

or decide by what his ears hear,

5 But with righteousness he shall judge the poor, □

and decide with equity for the meek of the earth. *[R]*

6 The wolf shall dwell with the lamb, □

and the leopard shall lie down with the kid.

7 The calf, the lion and the fatling together, □

with a little child to lead them.

8 They shall not hurt or destroy in all my holy mountain, □

for the earth shall be full of the knowledge of the Lord

as the waters cover the sea.

Isaiah 11.1, 2, 3b-4a, 6, 9

All **The Spirit of the Lord shall rest upon him.**

Gospel Reading

One of these acclamations may herald the Gospel reading

Today Christ is born:

All **alleluia.**

Today the Saviour has come:

All **alleluia.**

Today the angels sing on earth:

All **alleluia. Glory to God in the highest.**

(or)

All Alleluia, alleluia.

The Word became flesh and dwelt among us,

and we have seen his glory.

All **Alleluia.**

When the Gospel is announced the reader says

Hear the Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ according to *N.*

All **Glory to you, O Lord.**

At the end

This is the Gospel of the Lord.

All **Praise to you, O Christ.**

Sermon

The Creed

An authorized translation of the Nicene Creed is used.

Prayers of Intercession

The following form may be used. Insertions should be brief. When used during the day, the words 'on this holy day' are substituted for 'in this holy night'.

In peace let us pray to the Lord.

Father, [*in this holy night*] your Son our Saviour

was born in human flesh.

Renew your Church as the Body of Christ.

Holy God

All **hear our prayer.**

[*In this holy night*] there was no room for your Son in the inn.

Protect with your love those who have no home

and all who live in poverty.

Holy God

All **hear our prayer.**

[*In this holy night*] Mary, in the pain of labour,

brought your Son to birth.

Hold in your hand [...and] all who are in pain or distress.

Holy God

All **hear our prayer.**

[In this holy night] your Christ came as a light shining in the darkness.

Bring comfort to [...and] all who suffer in the sadness of our world.

Holy God

All **hear our prayer.**

[In this holy night] the angels sang, 'Peace to God's people on earth.'

Strengthen those who work for peace and justice

in [...and in] all the world.

Holy God

All **hear our prayer.**

[In this holy night] shepherds in the field heard good tidings of joy.

Give us grace to preach the gospel of Christ's redemption.

Holy God

All **hear our prayer.**

[In this holy night] strangers found the Holy Family,

and saw the baby lying in the manger.

Bless our homes and all whom we love.

Holy God

All **hear our prayer.**

[In this holy night] heaven is come down to earth,

and earth is raised to heaven.

Hold in your hand [...and] all those who have passed through death

in the hope of your coming kingdom.

Holy God

All **hear our prayer.**

[In this holy night] Christians the world over celebrate Christ's birth.

Open our hearts that he may be born in us today.

Holy God

All **hear our prayer.**

Father,

[in this holy night] angels and shepherds worshipped at

the manger throne.

Receive the worship we offer in fellowship with Mary,

Joseph and the saints

through him who is your Word made flesh,

our Saviour Jesus Christ.

All **Amen.**

The Liturgy of the Sacrament

The Peace

At night

This holy night the angels sang,

'Glory to God in the highest heaven,

and on earth peace to all in whom he delights.'

Luke 2.14

In daytime

Unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given,
and his name shall be called the Prince of Peace.

Isaiah 9.6

The peace of the Lord be always with you

All **and also with you.**

These words may be added

Let us offer one another a sign of peace.

All may exchange a sign of peace.

Preparation of the Table

Taking of the Bread and Wine

A hymn may be sung.

The gifts of the people may be gathered and presented.

The table is prepared and bread and wine are placed upon it.

This prayer may be said

Word made flesh, life of the world,

in your incarnation you embraced our poverty:

by your Spirit may we share in your riches.

All **Amen.**

The president takes the bread and wine.

The Eucharistic Prayer

The president uses one of the authorized Eucharistic Prayers.

One of the following Proper Prefaces may be used where appropriate

And now we give you thanks

because, in the incarnation of the Word,

a new light has dawned upon the world;

you have become one with us

that we might become one with you in your glorious kingdom.

(or)

And now we give you thanks

because for love of our fallen race

he most wonderfully and humbly chose to be made man,

and to take our nature as nevermore to lay it by,

so that we might be born again by your Spirit

and restored in your image.

(or)

All glory and honour be yours always and everywhere,

mighty creator, ever-living God.

We give you thanks and praise for your Son,

our Saviour Jesus Christ,

who for love of our fallen race humbled himself,

and [*on this night*] was born of the Virgin Mary

by the power of your Spirit,

and lived as one of us.

In this mystery of the Word made flesh

you have caused his light to shine in our hearts,

to give knowledge of your glory in the face of Jesus Christ.

In him we see our God made visible

and so are caught up in the love of the God we cannot see.

Therefore with all the angels of heaven

we lift our voices to proclaim the glory of your name

and sing our joyful hymn of praise:

The Lord's Prayer

The Lord's Prayer is said

Rejoicing in the presence of God here among us,

as our Saviour taught us, so we pray

All **Our Father in heaven ...**

(or)

Rejoicing in the presence of God here among us,

let us pray with confidence as our Saviour has taught us

All **Our Father, who art in heaven ...**

Breaking of the Bread

The president breaks the consecrated bread.

We break the bread of life,

and that life is the light of the world.

All **God here among us,**

light in the midst of us,

bring us to light and life.

The Agnus Dei may be used as the bread is broken.

Giving of Communion

The president says this or another invitation to communion

Christ is the true bread which has come down from heaven.

All **Lord, give us this bread always.**

The Prayer of Humble Access may be used (Common Worship: Services and Prayers for the Church of England, page 181).

The president and people receive communion.

Authorized words of distribution are used and the communicant replies

Amen.

During the distribution, hymns, carols and anthems may be sung.

The Common Worship provision is followed for consecration of additional bread and wine, and for disposing of what remains (Common Worship: Services and Prayers for the Church of England, page 182).

Prayer after Communion

Silence is kept.

The Post Communion or another suitable prayer is said

At night

God our Father,

in this night you have made known to us again

the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ:

confirm our faith and fix our eyes on him

until the day dawns

and Christ the Morning Star rises in our hearts.

All **To him be glory both now and for ever. Amen.**

In daytime

God our Father,

whose Word has come among us

in the Holy Child of Bethlehem:

may the light of faith illumine our hearts

and shine in our words and deeds;

through him who is Christ the Lord.

All **Amen.**

All may say one of these prayers

All **Almighty God,**

we thank you for feeding us

with the body and blood of your Son Jesus Christ.

Through him we offer you our souls and bodies

to be a living sacrifice.

Send us out

in the power of your Spirit

to live and work

to your praise and glory. Amen.

(or)

All **Father of all,**

we give you thanks and praise,

that when we were still far off

you met us in your Son and brought us home.

Dying and living, he declared your love,

gave us grace, and opened the gate of glory.

May we who share Christ's body live his risen life;

we who drink his cup bring life to others;

we whom the Spirit lights give light to the world.

Keep us firm in the hope you have set before us,

so we and all your children shall be free,

and the whole earth live to praise your name;

through Christ our Lord. Amen.

The Dismissal

A hymn may be sung.

The Dismissal Gospel

A minister may proclaim the prologue to the Gospel according to John (John 1.1-14). This may be done either before or after the Blessing.

Hear the good news of the Word made flesh according to John.

All **Glory to you, O Lord.**

At the end

This is the Gospel of the Lord.

All **Praise to you, O Christ.**

The Blessing

The president uses this or another Christmas Blessing

May the Father,

who has loved the eternal Son

from before the foundation of the world,

shed that love upon you his children.

All **Amen.**

May Christ,

who by his incarnation gathered into one

things earthly and heavenly,

fill you with joy and peace.

All **Amen.**

May the Holy Spirit,

by whose overshadowing Mary became the God-bearer,

give you grace to carry the good news of Christ.

All **Amen.**

And the blessing of God almighty,

the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit,

be among you and remain with you always.

All **Amen.**

The Dismissal

A minister dismisses the people.

These words may be used

Go in peace. Proclaim the Word made flesh.

All **Glory, thanks and praise to God.**

The ministers and people depart.

Carol Services in the Christmas Season

Bidding Prayers and Introductions

1

The Service of Nine Lessons with Carols was first drawn up by Edward Benson when Bishop of Truro for use in his cathedral. It was simplified and adapted for use in the chapel of King's College, Cambridge, in 1918 by the Dean, Eric Milner-White, who wrote the Bidding Prayer that follows.

Beloved in Christ, be it this Christmastide our care and delight to hear again the message of the angels, and in heart and mind to go even unto Bethlehem and see this thing which is come to pass, and the Babe lying in a manger.

Therefore let us read and mark in Holy Scripture the tale of the loving purposes of God from the first days of our disobedience unto the glorious redemption brought us by this Holy Child.

But first, let us pray for the needs of the whole world; for peace on earth and goodwill among all his people; for unity and brotherhood within the Church he came to build, and especially in this city [*town, village*] of ... and diocese of ...

And because this of all things would rejoice his heart, let us remember, in his name, the poor and helpless, the cold, the hungry and the oppressed; the sick and them that mourn, the lonely and the unloved, the aged and the little children; all those who know not the Lord Jesus, or who love him not, or who by sin have grieved his heart of love.

Lastly, let us remember before God all those who rejoice with us, but upon another shore, and in a greater light, that multitude which no man can number, whose hope was in the Word made flesh, and with whom in the Lord Jesus we are for ever one.

These prayers and praises let us humbly offer up to the throne of heaven, in the words which Christ himself hath taught us:

All **Our Father, which art in heaven,**

hallowed be thy name;

thy kingdom come;

thy will be done,

in earth as it is in heaven.

Give us this day our daily bread.

And forgive us our trespasses,

as we forgive them that trespass against us.

And lead us not into temptation;

but deliver us from evil.

For thine is the kingdom,

the power and the glory,

for ever and ever.

Amen.

May the almighty God bless us with his grace;

Christ give us the joys of everlasting life,

and unto the fellowship of the citizens above may the King of angels bring us all.

All **Amen.**

2

I welcome you, on behalf of ...

We have come together as the family of God, in our Father's presence, to celebrate the great festival of Christmas. In this service we hear and receive the good news of the birth of Christ and we offer to God our thanksgiving in the joyful singing of carols.

As we gather together in the name of Christ, we pray for the world he came to save:

for the Church, that it may be enabled in our generation to surrender anew to God's holy Wisdom, and bear the good news of God's love to a needy world;

for the world, which is already Christ's, that all its peoples may recognize their responsibility for its future, and may be inspired by the message of Christmas to work together for the establishment of justice, freedom and peace everywhere;

for all in special need, the sick, the anxious, the lonely, the fearful and the bereaved, that the peace and light of the Christ-child may bring hope and healing to all who sit in darkness.

We commend all whom we love, or who have asked for our prayers, to the unfailing mercy of our heavenly Father, and say together, as Christ himself taught us:

The Lord's Prayer is said.

3

My brothers and sisters: in the name of Christ I welcome you. We have come together as Christmas draws near to prepare for our celebration of the birth of God's beloved Son. Through the days of Advent we have followed the light of Christ, and now we travel in spirit with Mary and Joseph to Bethlehem to acclaim with the multitude of the heavenly host the coming of the Prince of Peace. Through Scripture and silence, prayer and song, let us hear again the wonderful story of our redemption, and, hearing, let us rejoice and respond with lively faith.

All pray in silence for a while.

Almighty God,

you make us glad with the yearly remembrance

of the birth of your Son Jesus Christ:

grant that, as we joyfully receive him as our redeemer,

we may with sure confidence behold him

when he shall come to be our judge;

who is alive and reigns with you,

in the unity of the Holy Spirit,

one God, now and for ever.

All **Amen.**

The service should conclude with an acclamation or blessing from the seasonal material ([here](#)).

Patterns of Readings

Sequence 1: Good news for the poor

These readings are also suitable for Christmas Eve.

1 Micah 5.2-4 – Bethlehem, from you shall come forth a ruler

Psalm 89.1-4

2 Isaiah 35 – The wilderness and the dry land shall be glad

Psalm 126

3 Haggai 2.5b-9 – I will fill this house with splendour

or

Jeremiah 22.13-16; 23.5,6 – Your Father judged the cause of the poor

Psalm 96.7-12

4 Isaiah 11.1-9 – There shall come forth a shoot from the stump of Jesse

Psalm 132.10-16

5 Isaiah 52.7-10 – How beautiful on the mountains

or

Isaiah 40.1-11 – A voice cries in the wilderness: Prepare the way of the Lord

Psalm 85.8-13

6 Philippians 2.5-11 – He took the form of a servant

Canticle

Magnificat (The Song of Mary) (*Common Worship: Daily Prayer*, pages 607–609)

Gospel

In Advent

Luke 1.26-38 – The Annunciation

At Christmas Luke 2.1-20 – The birth of Jesus

Sequence 2: The Gospel of Luke

In Christmastide, Readings 1 and 4 might be omitted. This pattern of readings might also be used before Christmas, when Readings 6 and 7 (and possibly 5) might be omitted. But there is virtue in reading the whole infancy narrative with hymns, songs and canticles interspersed.

1 Luke 1.5-25 – The Annunciation to Zechariah

2 Luke 1.26-38 – The Annunciation to Mary

3 Luke 1.39-56 – The visit of Mary to Elizabeth

or 39-49 if the Magnificat is used as a canticle

4 Luke 1.57-80 – The birth of John

or 57-67 if the Benedictus is used as a canticle

5 Luke 2.1-7 – The birth of Jesus

6 Luke 2.8-20 – The shepherds

7 Luke 2.22-40 – The Presentation in the Temple

or 22-28 if the Nunc dimittis is used as a canticle

Canticle

Benedictus (The Song of Zechariah) (*Common Worship: Daily Prayer*, pages 610–612)

Canticle

Magnificat (The Song of Mary) (*Common Worship: Daily Prayer*, pages 607–609)

Canticle

Nunc dimittis (The Song of Simeon) (*Common Worship: Daily Prayer*, page 613)

Final Reading

Titus 2.11-14, 3.3-7 – The Grace of God has appeared for the salvation of all

Sequence 3: Christmas Eve

Pattern from King's College, Cambridge

This pattern is traditionally introduced by the Bidding Prayer [here](#).

1 Genesis 3.8-14 – The Fall

2 Genesis 22.1-19 – The promise to Abraham

or 22.15-18

3 Isaiah 9.2,6,7 – The prophecy of the Messiah's birth

4 Isaiah 11.1-9 – The prophecy of the Messiah's kingdom of peace

or Micah 5.2-4 – The Messiah will be born in Bethlehem

5 Luke 1.26-38 – The Annunciation to Mary

or Isaiah 60.1-6,19 – The coming of the glory of the Lord

6 Matthew 1.18-23 – The birth of Emmanuel

or Luke 2.1-7 – The birth of Jesus

7 Luke 2.8-16 – The shepherds go to the manger

8 Matthew 2.1-11 – The magi are led by the star to Jesus

9 John 1.1-14 – The Incarnation of the Word of God

Christingle Services and Crib Services

Two service outlines are provided here (for a Christingle Service and a Crib Service), followed by a resource section. These outlines suggest, rather than prescribe, a pattern. Care will be needed to adapt the outlines to local custom and context, taking into account the range of ages and Christian experience of those present.

Whatever structure and shape is adopted, the telling of the story should lead to praise and thanksgiving, and be concluded by prayer. In any of the acts of thanksgiving, the lighting of one prominently placed large single candle, or a Christingle, or the candles of the Advent Wreath, may provide a helpful focus.

An Outline for a Christingle Service

¶ Greeting

¶ Lighting of a Candle

¶ Thanksgiving

¶ Ministry of the Word

Reading

Talk or Address

¶ Offering of Gifts

¶ Prayers

¶ The Lord's Prayer

¶ Lighting/Presentation of Christingles

¶ Ending/Blessing

An Outline for a Crib Service

¶ Greeting

¶ Lighting of a Candle

¶ Penitential Section

¶ Collect

¶ Ministry of the Word

Reading

Building up of Crib while Telling the Story

Talk or Address

¶ Thanksgiving

¶ Prayers

¶ The Lord's Prayer

¶ Ending/Blessing

Greeting / Introduction / Acclamation

1

Christ has brought us out of darkness:

to live in his marvellous light.

Brothers and sisters in Christ, welcome to ... today.

We have come together in the presence of God our Father to rejoice

in the gift of Jesus to us as the light of the world, to hear and receive

the story and message of the coming of Christ, and to offer to God

our thanksgiving in prayer and song.

2

Today we remember Jesus and the story of his birth;

Jesus is our King.

As a candle is lit

Jesus Christ is the light of the world;

Jesus is our Way.

With Jesus even dark places are light;

Jesus is the Truth.

In Jesus we shall live for ever:

Jesus is our Life.

3

We meet to celebrate the coming of Christ into the world.

The Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us

and we beheld his glory.

4

I bring you good news of great joy:

a Saviour has been born to you. Alleluia.

Unto us a child is born,

unto us a Son is given. Alleluia.

[Hear the words of St Luke:

When the angels had gone from them into heaven,

the shepherds said to one another,

‘Let us go to Bethlehem and see this thing that has happened

which the Lord has made known to us.’

So they hastened, and found Mary and Joseph,

and the baby lying in a manger.]

He is Christ the Lord. Alleluia.

We worship and adore him. Alleluia.

5

The glory of the Lord has been revealed

and all flesh shall see it together.

As a candle is lit

Jesus Christ is the light of the world:

a light no darkness can quench.

The shepherds kept watch by night,

and your glory shone round about them.

The darkness is not dark to you,

the night is as bright as the day.

Let your light scatter the darkness

and fill your Church with your glory.

6

Holy Jesus,

by being born one of us,

and lying humbly in a manger,

you show us how much God loves the world.

Let the light of your love always shine in our hearts,

until we reach our home in heaven,

and see you on your throne of glory.

Amen.

Invitations to Confession

A4

Christ the light of the world has come

to dispel the darkness of our hearts.

In his light let us examine ourselves and confess our sins.

A5

As we kneel with the shepherds before the newborn Christ-child,

we open our hearts in penitence and faith.

Kyrie Confession

B2

You were born for our salvation:

Lord, have mercy.

Lord, have mercy.

You came as Saviour to bring wholeness and peace:

Christ, have mercy.

Christ, have mercy.

You come to bring light into the darkness of our lives:

Lord, have mercy.

Lord, have mercy.

Prayer of Penitence

D1

A prayer for use with small children

Father God,

we are sorry

for the things we do and say and think

which make you sad,

and for not thinking of others

before ourselves.

Please forgive us,

and help us to love you and other people

more and more.

Amen.

Absolutions

E1

May the God of all healing and forgiveness

draw *us* to himself

and cleanse *us* from all *our* sins,

that *we* may behold the glory of his Son,

the Word made flesh,

Jesus Christ our Lord.

Amen.

E2

May God who loved the world so much

that he sent his Son to be our Saviour

forgive *us our* sins

and make *us* holy to serve him in the world,

through Jesus Christ our Lord.

Amen.

Thanksgivings

One prominently placed Christingle, or a large candle, or the candles of the Advent Wreath, may be lit.

1

Gracious God, we give you thanks and praise

for Jesus Christ our Lord:

for he was the Word before all creation.

Through him all things come to be;

not one thing has its being but through him.

Jesus, light of the world,

we worship and adore you.

His life is the light that shines in the dark,

a light that darkness cannot overpower.

Jesus, light of the world,

we worship and adore you.

The Word was the true light coming into the world.

He was in the world

that had its being through him,

and the world did not know him.

Jesus, light of the world,

we worship and adore you.

He came to his own, and they did not accept him.

But to all who accept him

he gives power to become children of God.

Jesus, light of the world,

we worship and adore you.

The Word was made flesh and lived among us,

and we have seen his glory,

as of the only Son of the Father,

full of grace and truth.

Jesus, light of the world,

we worship and adore you.

To God our creator,

born as one of us,

be all praise and glory.

With all the company of heaven, we worship, saying:

Holy, holy, holy is the Lord God almighty,

who was, and is, and is to come;

to him be glory and honour for ever and ever. Amen.

2

Blessed are you, God of all glory,

through your Son the Christ.

His name is Jesus

because he saves his people from their sin.

He will be called Emmanuel:

God is with us.

Let us praise the Lord, the God of Israel:

he has come to his people and set them free.

He gave up the glory of heaven

and took the form of a servant.

The Word was made flesh

and we beheld his glory.

In humility he walked the path of obedience

to die on the cross.

God raised him to the highest place above

and gave him the name above every name:

Jesus Christ is Lord.

So all beings in heaven and earth will fall at his feet,

and proclaim to the glory of God:

Jesus Christ is Lord.

Today [*This night/day*] Christ is born:

Alleluia.

Today [*This night/day*] the Saviour comes:

Alleluia.

Today [*This night/day*] the angels sing on earth:

Alleluia. Glory to God in the highest.

3

Glory to Christ, Son of Mary;

born a child,

you are one with us.

Glory to God in the highest.

Glory to Christ, Son of David;

born to rule,

you reign in our hearts.

Glory to God in the highest.

Glory to Christ, Son of man;

born to save,

you are the light of the world.

Glory to God in the highest.

4

Blessed are you, God our Father,

through your Son the Christ.

His name is Jesus.

God is with us. Praise the Lord.

Jesus came and shared our life.

God is with us. Praise the Lord.

Jesus' touch made people whole.

God is with us. Praise the Lord.

Jesus raised the dead to life.

God is with us. Praise the Lord.

Jesus died to set us free.

God is with us. Praise the Lord.

Jesus rose to life again.

God is with us. Praise the Lord.

Jesus is our King on high.

God is with us. Praise the Lord.

Before a Bible Reading

God's word is a lantern to our feet

and a light to our path.

Intercession

The Intercessions [here](#) may be used.

H3 and H5 are particularly appropriate.

H6

A prayer for the Children's Society (for use at a Christingle Service)

Loving Lord,

we thank you for the Children's Society as it reaches out

to young people experiencing pain and injustice.

Guide and strengthen its work alongside children and young people

who are homeless and on the streets,

in prison or facing problems in the community.

Grant us the wisdom to listen to the voices of the young

and to recognize their gifts and insights.

Help us to work with them to create a fair and just society

where all may know the fullness of your love,

through Jesus Christ our Lord.

Amen.

Affirmation of Faith

Let us declare our faith in God:

We believe in God the Father,

from whom every family

in heaven and on earth is named.

**We believe in God the Son,
who lives in our hearts through faith,
and fills us with his love.**

**We believe in God the Holy Spirit,
who strengthens us
with power from on high.**

**We believe in one God;
Father, Son and Holy Spirit.**

Amen.

Blessings and Endings

P5

The Lord bless *you* and watch over *you*,

the Lord make his face shine upon *you*

and be gracious to *you*,

the Lord look kindly on *you*

and give *you* peace;

and the blessing ...

P6

May God the Father keep you in all your days.

May God the Son shield you in all your ways.

May God the Spirit bring you healing and peace.

May God the Holy Trinity drive all darkness from you

and pour upon you blessing and light.

Amen.

P7

Father of all,

you have given us your Son to be the Saviour of the world.

Welcome us your children into your kingdom

to enjoy your presence for ever.

Amen.

P8

God sent his angels from glory to bring to shepherds

the good news of Jesus' birth.

Amen. We thank you, Lord.

You have heard his story,

the story of God's own Son.

Amen. We thank you, Lord.

May he fill you with joy

to bring this good news to others today.

Amen. We thank you, Lord.

For other blessings, see [here](#).

Additional Prayers

for use at Christmastide

Blessing of the Crib

A form for the dedication of the crib at the Eucharist is given [here](#).

On other occasions one of the following may be used

1

A hallowed day has dawned upon us.

Come and worship the Lord:

for a great light has shone on the earth.

Hear the words of the book of Wisdom:

When peaceful silence lay over all and night was in the midst of her
swift course, from your royal throne, O God, down from the heavens,
leapt your almighty Word.

Hear the words of Saint John:

God's love for us was revealed when God sent his only Son into the
world so that we could have life through him.

Thanks be to God.

Let us pray

that God our Father will bless this crib,

and that all who worship his Son,

born of the Virgin Mary,

may come to share his life in glory.

God our Father,

on this night [*day*]

your Son Jesus Christ was born of the Virgin Mary

for us and for our salvation:

bless this crib,

which we have prepared to celebrate that holy birth;

may all who see it be strengthened in faith

and receive the fullness of life he came to bring,

who is alive and reigns for ever.

Amen.

2

In the faith of Christ,

and in your name, O God most holy,

we hallow this crib of Christmas,

to set before the eyes of your children

the great love and humility

of Jesus Christ your only Son;

who for us, and for our salvation,

came down as at this time from heaven,

and was incarnate by the Holy Spirit

of the Virgin Mary his mother,

and was made man;

to whom with you and the same Spirit

be all honour, majesty, glory and worship,

now and to the ages of ages.

Amen.

May the grace of Christ our Saviour be with us all.

Amen.

Prayers at the Crib

1

To you, O Christ, Word of the Father,

we offer our lowly prayers and humble thanks;

for love of our human race

you most wonderfully chose to be born of Mary,

and to take our nature as nevermore to lay it by;

so that we might be born again by your Spirit

and restored in the image of God;

to whom, one blessed Trinity,

be given all honour, might, majesty and power,

now and for ever.

Amen.

2

O God the Son, highest and holiest,

who humbled yourself to share our birth and our death:

bring us with the shepherds and the wise men

to kneel before your holy cradle,

that we may come to sing with your angels

your glorious praises in heaven;

where with the Father and the Holy Spirit you live and reign,

God, world without end.

Amen.

3

We pray you, Lord, to purify our hearts,
that they may be worthy to become your dwelling place.

Let us never fail to find room for you,
but come and abide in us,
that we also may abide in you,
for as at this time you were born into the world for us,
and live and reign, King of kings and Lord of lords,
now and for ever.

Amen.

4

Lord, by the song of the angels
you disclosed your birth to your own people,
and by the leading of a star
you revealed your glory to strangers.

Teach us to know you now,
and to make you known to all.

Amen.

5

The kings, Lord,
brought myrrh, frankincense and gold.
Lord, we have nothing of our own to bring;
we bring you what you have given:

our lives for your life.

Amen.

Resource Material

for the Beginning of a New Year

For resources for the Naming and Circumcision of Jesus, see Common Worship: Festivals.

Invitation to Confession

A1

As we come to the Lord at [*near*] the start of this New Year,

let us seek his grace to number our days,

that we may apply our hearts to wisdom

as we confess our sins in penitence and faith.

Kyrie Confession

B1

Lord Jesus, you are mighty God and Prince of Peace:

Lord, have mercy.

Lord, have mercy.

Lord Jesus, you are Son of God and Son of Mary:

Christ, have mercy.

Christ, have mercy.

Lord Jesus, you are Word made flesh

and splendour of the Father:

Lord, have mercy.

Lord, have mercy.

Collects

F1

God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ,

whose years never fail

and whose mercies are new each returning day:

let the radiance of your Spirit renew our lives,

warming our hearts and giving light to our minds;

that we may pass the coming year

in joyful obedience and firm faith;

through him who is the beginning and the end,

your Son, Christ our Lord,

who is alive and reigns with you,

in the unity of the Holy Spirit,

one God, now and for ever.

Amen.

F2

O God, by whose command

the order of time runs its course:

forgive our impatience, perfect our faith

and, while we wait for the fulfilment of your promises,

grant us to have a good hope because of your word;

through Jesus Christ our Lord.

Amen.

F3

Eternal Lord God,

we give you thanks for bringing us through the changes of time

to the beginning of another year.

Forgive us the wrong we have done in the year that is past,

and help us to spend the rest of our days

to your honour and glory;

through Jesus Christ our Lord.

Amen.

Gospel Acclamation

G1

Alleluia, alleluia.

I am the Alpha and Omega, the first and the last,

the beginning and the end.

Alleluia.

Intercession

H1

We pray for God's faithfulness to be known in our world.

In a world of change and hope,

of fear and adventure,

faithful God

glorify your name.

In human rebellion and obedience,

in our seeking and our finding,

faithful God

glorify your name.

In the common life of our society,

in prosperity and need,

faithful God

glorify your name.

As your Church proclaims your goodness

in words and action,

faithful God

glorify your name.

Among our friends

and in our homes,

faithful God

glorify your name.

In our times of joy,

in our days of sorrow,

faithful God

glorify your name.

In our strengths and triumphs,
in our weakness and at our death,
faithful God

glorify your name.

In your saints in glory
and on the day of Christ's coming,

faithful God

glorify your name.

The Renewal of the Covenant

God made a covenant with the people of Israel, calling them to be a holy nation, chosen to bear witness to his steadfast love by finding delight in the law.

The covenant was renewed in Jesus Christ our Lord, in his life, work, death and resurrection. In him all people may be set free from sin and its power, and united in love and obedience.

In this covenant God promises us new life in Christ. For our part we promise to live no longer for ourselves but for God.

We meet, therefore, as generations have met before us, to renew the covenant which bound them and binds us to God.

Let us then seek forgiveness for the sin by which we have denied God's claim upon us.

Let us pray.

God of mercy, hear us as we confess our sins.

For the sin that has made us slow to learn from Christ,

reluctant to follow him

and afraid to bear the cross:

Lord, have mercy.

Lord, forgive.

For the sin that has caused the poverty of our worship,

the formality and selfishness of our prayers,

our neglect of fellowship and the means of grace,

and our hesitating witness for Christ:

Lord, have mercy.

Lord, forgive.

For the sin that has led us to misuse your gifts,

evade our responsibilities

and fail to be good stewards of your creation:

Lord, have mercy.

Lord, forgive.

For the sin that has made us unwilling to overcome evil with good,

tolerant of injustice,

quick to condemn

and selfish in sharing your love with others:

Lord, have mercy.

Lord, forgive.

Silence is kept.

Have mercy on me, O God, in your great goodness;

according to the abundance of your compassion

blot out my offences.

Wash me thoroughly from my wickedness

and cleanse me from my sin.

Make in me a clean heart, O God,

and renew a right spirit within me.

Give me again the joy of your salvation

and sustain me with your gracious spirit.

Psalm 51.1, 2, 11, 13

The presiding minister says

If we confess our sins,

God is faithful and just,

and will forgive our sins

and cleanse us from all unrighteousness.

May the God of all healing and forgiveness

draw *us* to himself,

and cleanse *us* from all our sins

that *we* may behold the glory of his Son,

the Word made flesh,

Jesus Christ our Lord.

Amen.

The people remain standing and the presiding minister says

Beloved in Christ,

let us again claim for ourselves

this covenant which God has made with his people,

and take upon us the yoke of Christ.

This means that we are content

that he appoint us our place and work,

and that he himself be our reward.

Christ has many services to be done:

some are easy, others are difficult;

some bring honour, others bring reproach;

some are suitable to our natural inclinations and material interests,

others are contrary to both;

in some we may please Christ and please ourselves;

in others we cannot please Christ except by denying ourselves.

Yet the power to do all these things is given to us in Christ,

who strengthens us.

Therefore let us make this covenant of God our own.

Let us give ourselves to him,

trusting in his promises and relying on his grace.

Either

Lord God, holy Father,

since you have called us through Christ

to share in this gracious covenant,

we take upon ourselves with joy the yoke of obedience

and, for love of you,

engage ourselves to seek and do your perfect will.

We are no longer our own but yours.

I am no longer my own but yours.

Put me to what you will,

rank me with whom you will;

put me to doing,

put me to suffering;

let me be employed for you

or laid aside for you,

exalted for you

or brought low for you;

let me be full,

let me be empty,

let me have all things,

let me have nothing;

I freely and wholeheartedly yield all things

to your pleasure and disposal.

And now, glorious and blessed God,

Father, Son and Holy Spirit,

you are mine and I am yours.

So be it.

And the covenant now made on earth,

let it be ratified in heaven. Amen.

Silence is kept.

Or

Eternal God,

in your faithful and enduring love

you call us to share in your gracious covenant in Jesus Christ.

In obedience we hear and accept your commands;

in love we seek to do your perfect will;

with joy we offer ourselves anew to you.

We are no longer our own but yours.

I am no longer my own but yours.

Your will, not mine, be done in all things,

wherever you may place me,

in all that I do and in all that I may endure;

when there is work for me and when there is none;

when I am troubled and when I am at peace.

Your will be done

when I am valued and when I am disregarded;

when I find fulfilment and when it is lacking;

when I have all things and when I have nothing.

I willingly offer all that I have and am

to serve you, as and where you choose.

Glorious and blessed God,

Father, Son and Holy Spirit,

you are mine and I am yours.

May it be so for ever.

Let this covenant now made on earth

be fulfilled in heaven. Amen.

Silence is kept.

The presiding minister says

As we have entered this covenant not for ourselves alone,

but as God's servants and witnesses,

let us pray for the Church and for the world.

Loving God, hear us as we pray for your holy catholic Church:

make us all one, that the world may believe.

Inspire and lead all who govern and hold authority in the
nations of the world:

establish justice and peace among all people.

Have compassion on all who suffer from any sickness,
grief or trouble:

deliver them from their distress.

We praise you for all your saints who have entered
your eternal glory:

bring us all to share in your heavenly kingdom.

Silence is kept.

Lord our God,

you have helped us by your grace

to make these prayers,

and you have promised through Christ our Lord

that when two or three agree in his name

you will grant what they ask.

Answer now your servants' prayers

according to their needs;

in this world grant that we may truly know you,

and in the world to come

graciously give us eternal life;

through Jesus Christ our Lord.

Amen.

Introduction to the Peace

J1

Blessed are the peacemakers:

they shall be called children of God.

We meet in the name of Christ and share his peace.

Prayer at the Preparation of the Table

K1

Blessed be God,

by whose grace creation is renewed,

by whose love heaven is opened,

by whose mercy we offer our sacrifice of praise.

Blessed be God for ever.

Preface

L1

And now we give you thanks

because you have redeemed our time

and have given us this year of grace to proclaim your favour

and celebrate your steadfast love.

Blessings and Ending

P1

The Lord bless you and watch over you,

the Lord make his face shine upon you

and be gracious to you,

the Lord look kindly on you

and give you peace;

and the blessing ...

P2

May God the Father keep you in all your days.

May God the Son shield you in all your ways.

May God the Spirit bring you healing and peace.

May God the Holy Trinity drive all darkness from you

and pour upon you blessing and light.

Amen.

P3

Jesus, Lord of time,

hold us in your eternity.

Jesus, image of God,

travel with us the life of faith.

Jesus, friend of sinners,

heal the brokenness of our world.

Jesus, Lord of tomorrow,

draw us into your future. Amen.

P4 *To be said facing the open doors*

To a troubled world,

peace from Christ.

To a searching world,

love from Christ.

To a waiting world,

hope from Christ.

Acclamation

R1

A thousand years in God's sight are like a single day.

Like an evening that has already gone.

Christ is the first and the last,

the beginning and the end.

Jesus stands at the door and knocks.

Lord Jesus, enter our homes and our lives.

You hold the key to God's way of justice.

Open to us your kingdom of peace.

Short Passages of Scripture

S1

You crown the year with your goodness.

Psalm 65.11

S2

The Lord knows the way that I take;

when he has tested me, I shall come out like gold.

Job 23.10

S3

Seek first the kingdom of God and his righteousness,

and all these things shall be yours as well.

Matthew 6.33

S4

Do not worry about tomorrow,

for tomorrow will bring worries of its own.

Today's trouble is enough for today.

Matthew 6.34

S5

I am the Alpha and the Omega,

the first and the last, the beginning and the end.

Revelation 22.13

S6

The Spirit of the Lord is upon me,

because he has anointed me to bring good news to the poor.

He has sent me to proclaim release to the captives

and recovery of sight to the blind,

to let the oppressed go free,

to proclaim the year of the Lord's favour.

Luke 4.18,19

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