

## THE NATIVITY OF OUR LORD—CHRISTMAS EVE

In Time, As Promised

December 24, 2021

### AS WE GATHER

Throughout history, our gracious God has made outlandish promises. His spokesmen, the writers of biblical books, said that a descendant of David would come to sit on an eternal royal throne. More than that, His titles would include some reserved for God in heaven. He was and is a Wonderful Counselor, revealing God's love in His own life and death; the Mighty God, though hidden within fragile flesh and blood; the Everlasting Father, though trapped in time and space; and the Prince of Peace, ruling not by enforcement of divine law but by forgiving all who call to Him for grace and mercy. Today, we celebrate His birth among us in time, as promised long ago and in our hearts each day



### + PREPARATION +

#### 379 O COME, ALL YE FAITHFUL *sts. 1, ref, 2-4*

- 1 O come, all ye faithful,  
Joyful and triumphant!  
O come ye, O come ye to Bethlehem;  
Come and behold Him  
Born the king of angels: Refrain
  
- ref O come, let us adore Him,  
O come, let us adore Him,  
O come, let us adore Him,  
Christ the Lord!
  
- 2 Highest, most holy,  
Light of Light eternal,  
Born of a virgin, a mortal He comes;  
Son of the Father  
Now in flesh appearing! Refrain
  
- 3 Sing, choirs of angels,  
Sing in exultation,  
Sing, all ye citizens of heaven above!  
Glory to God  
In the highest: Refrain
  
- 4 Yea, Lord, we greet Thee,  
Born this happy morning;  
Jesus, to Thee be glory giv'n!

Word of the Father

Now in flesh appearing! Refrain

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### INVOCATION

P In the name of the Father and of the T Son and of the Holy Spirit.

C **Amen.**

### CONFESSION AND ABSOLUTION *1 John 4:9, 12b*

P Brothers and sisters, although “God abides in us and His love is perfected in us,” we sin every day and need the assurance of His forgiveness. Let us go to God, seeking His power to amend our sinful lives.

Lord Jesus, the love of God made manifest among us,

C **we have not loved You with our whole heart, nor have we loved our neighbors as ourselves. Without Your help we cannot change. Forgive us, renew us, and lead us, so that we may delight in Your will and walk in Your ways to the glory of Your holy name. Amen.**

P Almighty God in His mercy has given His Son to die for you and for His sake forgives you all your sins. C **Amen.**

+ **WORD** +

### 377 ON CHRISTMAS NIGHT ALL CHRISTIANS SING

1 On Christmas night all Christians sing  
To hear the news the angels bring,  
On Christmas night all Christians sing  
To hear the news the angels bring,  
News of great joy, news of great mirth,  
News of our merciful King’s birth.

2 Then why should men on earth be so sad,  
Since our Redeemer made us glad,  
Then why should men on earth be so sad,  
Since our Redeemer made us glad,  
When from our sin He set us free,  
All for to gain our liberty?

3 When sin departs before His grace,  
Then life and health come in its place,  
When sin departs before His grace,  
Then life and health come in its place;  
Angels and men with joy may sing,  
All for to see the newborn King.

- 4 All out of darkness we have light,  
Which made the angels sing this night,  
All out of darkness we have light,  
Which made the angels sing this night:  
“Glory to God and peace to men  
Now and forevermore. Amen.”

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### **PRAYER OF THE DAY**

P Let us pray.

O God, You make us glad with the yearly remembrance of the birth of Your only-begotten Son, Jesus Christ.

C **Grant that as we joyfully receive Him as our Redeemer, we may with sure confidence behold Him when He comes to be our Judge;**

P through the same Jesus Christ, our Lord, who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.

C **Amen.**

### **364 AWAY IN A MANGER**

- 1 Away in a manger, no crib for a bed,  
The little Lord Jesus laid down His sweet head.  
The stars in the sky looked down where He lay,  
The little Lord Jesus asleep on the hay.
- 2 The cattle are lowing, the baby awakes,  
But little Lord Jesus, no crying He makes.  
I love Thee, Lord Jesus! Look down from the sky,  
And stay by my cradle till morning is nigh.
- 3 Be near me, Lord Jesus; I ask Thee to stay  
Close by me forever and love me, I pray.  
Bless all the dear children in Thy tender care,  
And take us to heaven to live with Thee there.

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## **+ LESSONS AND CAROLS +**

**LESSON** *Isaiah 11:1, 4a; Numbers 24:15b, 17a; Isaiah 7:14; Micah 5:2*

P Our gracious God did not become one of us unexpectantly; rather, through the ages, He promised to enter human history to save us. Let us hear some of the prophecies and respond in song.

L Isaiah wrote about a descendant of Jesse, David’s father:

“There shall come forth a shoot from the stump of Jesse, and a branch from his roots shall bear fruit. With righteousness He shall judge the poor, and decide with equity for the meek of the earth.”

**359 LO, HOW A ROSE E’ER BLOOMING** *st. 1*

1 Lo, how a rose e’er blooming  
From tender stem hath sprung!  
Of Jesse’s lineage coming  
As prophets long have sung,  
It came, a flow’ret bright,  
Amid the cold of winter,  
When half-spent was the night.

Text: Public domain

L In Numbers, chapter 24, we read that the Savior would be royal.

“The oracle of Balaam the son of Beor, . . . I see Him, but not now; I behold Him, but not near: a star shall come out of Jacob, and a scepter shall rise out of Israel.”

**357 O COME, O COME, EMMANUEL** *sts. 1, ref*

1 O come, O come, Emmanuel,  
And ransom captive Israel,  
That mourns in lonely exile here  
Until the Son of God appear. Refrain

ref Rejoice! Rejoice! Emmanuel  
Shall come to thee, O Israel!

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L Isaiah even wrote about our Lord’s virgin birth.

“The Lord Himself will give you a sign. Behold, the virgin shall conceive and bear a son, and shall call His name Immanuel.”

**332 SAVIOR OF THE NATIONS, COME** *st. 1*

1 Savior of the nations, come,  
Virgin’s Son, make here Your home!  
Marvel now, O heav’n and earth,  
That the Lord chose such a birth.

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**PART 1, LESSON 4**

L Micah foretold where Jesus would be born.

“But you, O Bethlehem Ephrathah, who are too little to be among the clans of Judah, from you shall come forth for Me one who is to be ruler in Israel, whose origin is from of old, from ancient days.”

**361 O LITTLE TOWN OF BETHLEHEM** *st. 1*

1 O little town of Bethlehem,  
How still we see thee lie!  
Above thy deep and dreamless sleep  
The silent stars go by;  
Yet in thy dark streets shineth  
The everlasting light.  
The hopes and fears of all the years  
Are met in thee tonight.

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P It is not enough to look back at the historical fact of Jesus' birth; today we celebrate the love God showers on us daily, which we share, and about which we sing in later stanzas of these same hymns.

**GRADUAL** *Isaiah 9:6; Psalm 98:1a*

P To us a child is born,  
C **to us a son is given;**

P and the government shall be upon His shoulder.

C **And His name shall be called Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace.**

P Sing to the Lord a new song,  
C **for He has done marvelous things!**

**LESSON** *1 John 4:7–9, 10–12, 15–16; Titus 2:11–14*

L In his First Epistle, John writes,

“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.”

**359 LO, HOW A ROSE E’ER BLOOMING** *st. 2*

2 Isaiah ’twas foretold it,  
The rose I have in mind;  
With Mary we behold it,  
The virgin mother kind.  
To show God’s love aright,  
She bore to us a Savior,  
When half-spent was the night.

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L John continues,

“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.”

**357 O COME, O COME, EMMANUEL** *sts. ref, 7*

ref Rejoice! Rejoice! Emmanuel  
Shall come to thee, O Israel!

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

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L And John concludes,

“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.”

**332 SAVIOR OF THE NATIONS, COME** *st. 7*

7 From the manger newborn light  
Shines in glory through the night.  
Darkness there no more resides;  
In this light faith now abides.

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**PART 2, LESSON 4**

L Paul writes to Titus and us:

“For the grace of God has appeared, bringing salvation for all people, training us to renounce ungodliness and worldly passions, and to live self-controlled, upright, and godly lives in the present age, waiting for our blessed hope, the appearing of the glory of our great God and Savior Jesus Christ, who gave Himself for us to redeem us from all lawlessness and to purify for Himself a people for His own possession who are zealous for good works.”

**361 O LITTLE TOWN OF BETHLEHEM** *sts. 3-4*

3 How silently, how silently  
The wondrous gift is giv'n!  
So God imparts to human hearts  
The blessings of His heav'n.  
No ear may hear His coming;  
But in this world of sin,  
Where meek souls will receive Him, still  
The dear Christ enters in.

4 O holy Child of Bethlehem,  
Descend to us, we pray;  
Cast out our sin, and enter in,  
Be born in us today.  
We hear the Christmas angels  
The great glad tidings tell;  
O come to us, abide with us,  
Our Lord Immanuel!

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## SERMON

Titus 2:11-14  
Christmas Eve  
December 24, 2021

For the grace of God has appeared, bringing salvation for all people, [12] training us to renounce ungodliness and worldly passions, and to live self-controlled, upright, and godly lives in the present age, [13] waiting for our blessed hope, the appearing of the glory of our great God and Savior Jesus Christ, [14] who gave himself for us to redeem us from all lawlessness and to purify for himself a people for his own possession who are zealous for good works.

### “Grace of God has Appeared”

The grace of God has produced for us the forgiveness of all our sins, eternal life and salvation. Wonderful gifts that has saved our lives. Wonderful gifts to have on Christmas Eve and everyday.

And so we have gathered this evening to praise and give thanks to God that His grace has appeared physically among us. It is not just an emotion or the nature of God to be gracious. He put flesh and blood to His desire to show us His grace. He sent His Son Jesus the Christ to personally appear among us, the people of the world. He physically gave of Himself to bring us the forgiveness of sin, life and salvation. He personally got involved with us in order to do something great. He personally appeared to us while we were in the midst of a spiritual disaster, our sin. He didn't just send aid. He delivered it in person. So, great is His love for us. So great is His grace for us.

And now tonight we give Him praise and thanks that not only did He bring us salvation but that He now teaches us to renounce ungodliness and world passions, sin. He has taught us to live self-controlled, upright and godly lives in this world at this time. He Word still has meaning and purpose. Through it He brings forgiveness of sin and the strength and wisdom to live a God pleasing life. To make them zealous to do good works.

He personally works in our hearts keeping us in the one true faith till He comes again in all glory and power to judge the living and the dead. He does this personally so that He could have for Himself a nation, a following of believers, a possession secured in His hands when He returns. He alone can only create a people that He calls His own. And it was for this reason He came in

flesh and blood to buy us back, redeeming us from the wages of sin so that we may live with Him and the Father forever.

Our Father in heaven didn't send us a gift card that we might use to buy our salvation. He sent us His Son who in flesh and blood bought our salvation and gave it to us as a gift from the Father in heaven. This was the grace of God that appeared among us. And to this, we give thanks and praise now and forever.

+AMEN+

Titus 3:4-7  
Christmas Day  
December 25, 2021

But when the goodness and loving kindness of God our Savior appeared, [5] he saved us, not because of works done by us in righteousness, but according to his own mercy, by the washing of regeneration and renewal of the Holy Spirit, [6] whom he poured out on us richly through Jesus Christ our Savior, [7] so that being justified by his grace we might become heirs according to the hope of eternal life.

“The Goodness and Loving Kindness of God our Savior Appeared”

What happened when Jesus came to earth in flesh and blood? He saved us. He alone saved us. There was nothing that we could contribute to our own salvation. We could not die a death that could pay for our sins. We could not live a perfect life and thus be righteous in His sight by our doing. It was Jesus the Christ and Him alone.

This is the goodness and kindness of God. He did this out of love for us all. He did it in such a way that we did not have to suffer the punishment of sin. He did it in such a way that He gently brought us to faith. He made us Children of God. He did it through the washing of regeneration. This washing, this baptism shows forth the loving kindness of God. What a more gentle way than washing is there to cleanse away the dirt and stink of the day. What a gentle way to wash away our sins than through Baptism. How gentle the water is poured unto an infant. This demonstrates the goodness and kindness of God. He gently makes us His child through such a peaceful and wonderful action.

And how gentle and kind our Savior is when He renews the Holy Spirit within us when He says to us, “Your sins are forgiven.” A Word is spoken and we are renewed to live in His grace and mercy forever.

And to place deeply into our hearts that our salvation is an act of His goodness and loving kindness, He wrote us into His will. He made us the heir to inherit eternal life which He has secured for us. And when Christ died, it became ours. We did not petition it. We did not achieve it. We were born again into it. He declared us to receive this gift upon the death and resurrection of Jesus the Christ.

This Christmas Day when we remember the birth of our Lord and Savior, Jesus the Christ, we remember that His appearing shows forth to us the goodness and loving kindness of our Father in heaven. And to Him be all glory and honor now and forever.

+AMEN+

### **CREED**

**C I believe in one God,  
the Father Almighty,  
maker of heaven and earth  
and of all things visible and invisible.**

**And in one Lord Jesus Christ,  
the only-begotten Son of God,  
begotten of His Father before all worlds,  
God of God, Light of Light,  
very God of very God,  
begotten, not made,  
being of one substance with the Father,  
by whom all things were made;  
who for us men and for our salvation came down from heaven  
and was incarnate by the Holy Spirit of the virgin Mary  
and was made man;  
and was crucified also for us under Pontius Pilate.  
He suffered and was buried.  
And the third day He rose again according to the Scriptures  
and ascended into heaven  
and sits at the right hand of the Father.  
And He will come again with glory to judge both the living and the dead,  
whose kingdom will have no end.**

**And I believe in the Holy Spirit,  
the Lord and giver of life,  
who proceeds from the Father and the Son,  
who with the Father and the Son together is worshiped and glorified,  
who spoke by the prophets.  
And I believe in one holy Christian and apostolic Church,  
I acknowledge one Baptism for the remission of sins,  
and I look for the resurrection of the dead  
and the life T of the world to come. Amen.**

### **PRAYER OF THE CHURCH**

**P** God entered human history in the person of Jesus, who experienced all our joys and sorrows. He has promised that our heavenly Father will hear whatever we ask in His name. Let us bring our requests to Him in confident faith.

Wonderful Counselor, we pray that You will give empathy, wisdom, and compassion to all who seek to meet the needs of the people around them, providing food, clothing, and shelter, tending to the sick and injured, and responding to human crises and natural disasters. Remember, we pray, those with special needs and those known only to You. As You give us opportunity, grant that we may be part of Your answers to their petitions.

Mighty God, whose Word created all things in heaven and on earth, when storms rage, fires spread, or the earth trembles, give courage and skill to those who would provide rescue, relief, and shelter. Bless those who till the soil and raise crops and all who manage and distribute the world's bounty, that the hungry be fed, the poor clothed, and the displaced given shelter.

Gracious God, receive our plea;

**C hear the prayers to You we bring, Father, Spirit, newborn King.**

**P** Everlasting Father, shower Your grace on all families, enabling parents and children to grow in faith and love. In neighborhoods, communities, and cities where there is discord, open doors of peace; where there is discrimination, provide justice; where there is loneliness, provide companionship. Bless individuals and organizations to use the talents and resources You provide to restore dignity, health, and peace to everyone in their care.

Gracious God, receive our plea;

**C hear the prayers to You we bring, Father, Spirit, newborn King.**

**P** Prince of Peace, use the earthly powers that be to put into positions of authority those who will work for justice within their nations and cooperation across their borders. Give protection and courage to police and first responders in their communities and to armed forces deployed. Where wars threaten, move leaders to seek calm; where long-term animosity gives rise to fear and hatred, open avenues of communication and understanding. Grant that Your Church stand as a beacon in this troubled world to proclaim the Gospel and exhibit loving forgiveness in Your name. Grant that many find the peace they seek in You, our gracious Savior.

Gracious God, receive our plea;

**C hear the prayers to You we bring, Father, Spirit, newborn King.**

**P** Into Your hands, heavenly Father, we commend ourselves and all for whom we pray, trusting in Your mercy for the sake of Him whose birth we celebrate this day, Your Son, Jesus Christ, our Lord.

**C Amen.**

### **OFFERING HYMN LSB 370 WHAT CHILD IS THIS**

**1** What child is this, who, laid to rest,  
On Mary's lap is sleeping?  
Whom angels greet with anthems sweet

While shepherds watch are keeping?  
This, this is Christ the king,  
Whom shepherds guard and angels sing;  
Haste, haste to bring Him laud,  
The babe, the son of Mary!

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

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

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## LORD'S PRAYER

**C Our Father who art in heaven,  
hallowed be Thy name,  
Thy kingdom come,  
Thy will be done on earth  
as it is in heaven;  
give us this day our daily bread;  
and forgive us our trespasses  
as we forgive those  
who trespass against us;  
and lead us not into temptation,  
but deliver us from evil.  
For Thine is the kingdom  
and the power and the glory  
forever and ever. Amen.**

## HYMNS

### 368 ANGELS WE HAVE HEARD ON HIGH

1 Angels we have heard on high,  
Sweetly singing o'er the plains,

And the mountains in reply,  
Echoing their joyous strains. Refrain

ref Gloria in excelsis Deo.  
Gloria in excelsis Deo.

2 Shepherds, why this jubilee?  
Why your joyous strains prolong?  
What the gladsome tidings be  
Which inspire your heav'nly song? Refrain

3 Come to Bethlehem and see  
Him whose birth the angels sing;  
Come, adore on bended knee  
Christ the Lord, the newborn King. Refrain

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### **386 NOW SING WE, NOW REJOICE**

1 Now sing we, now rejoice,  
Now raise to heav'n our voice;  
He from whom joy streameth  
Poor in a manger lies;  
Not so brightly beameth  
The sun in yonder skies.  
Thou my Savior art!  
Thou my Savior art!

2 Come from on high to me;  
I cannot rise to Thee.  
Cheer my wearied spirit,  
O pure and holy Child;  
Through Thy grace and merit,  
Blest Jesus, Lord most mild,  
Draw me unto Thee!  
Draw me unto Thee!

3 Now through His Son doth shine  
The Father's grace divine.  
Death was reigning o'er us  
Through sin and vanity  
Till He opened for us  
A bright eternity.  
May we praise Him there!  
May we praise Him there!

4 Oh, where shall joy be found?  
Where but on heav'nly ground?

Where the angels singing  
With all His saints unite,  
Sweetest praises bringing  
In heav'nly joy and light.  
Oh, that we were there!  
Oh, that we were there!

Text: Public domain

### **393 INFANT HOLY, INFANT LOWLY**

1 Infant holy,  
Infant lowly,  
For His bed a cattle stall;  
Oxen lowing,  
Little knowing  
Christ the child is Lord of all.  
Swiftly winging,  
Angels singing,  
Bells are ringing,  
Tidings bringing:  
Christ the child is Lord of all!  
Christ the child is Lord of all!

2 Flocks were sleeping,  
Shepherds keeping  
Vigil till the morning new  
Saw the glory,  
Heard the story,  
Tidings of a Gospel true.  
Thus rejoicing,  
Free from sorrow,  
Praises voicing,  
Greet the morrow:  
Christ the child was born for you!  
Christ the child was born for you!

Text: Public domain

### **365 AWAY IN A MANGER**

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

2 The cattle are lowing, the baby awakes,  
But little Lord Jesus, no crying He makes.  
I love Thee, Lord Jesus! Look down from the sky,  
And stay by my cradle till morning is nigh.

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

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**366 IT CAME UPON THE MIDNIGHT CLEAR** *sts. 1, 4*

1 It came upon the midnight clear,  
That glorious song of old,  
From angels bending near the earth  
To touch their harps of gold:  
“Peace on the earth, goodwill to all,  
From heav’n’s all-gracious king.”  
The world in solemn stillness lay  
To hear the angels sing.

4 For lo, the days have come to pass  
By prophets seen of old,  
When down into the circling years  
Came Christ as was foretold.  
His word of peace shall to the earth  
God’s ancient promise bring,  
And all who take this gift will hear  
The song the angels sing.

Text: Public domain

**HOLY GOSPEL** *Luke 2:8–17 (KJV)*

P The Holy Gospel according to St. Luke, the second chapter.

C **Glory to You, O Lord.**

There were in the same country shepherds abiding in the field, keeping watch over their flock by night. And, lo, the angel of the Lord came upon them, and the glory of the Lord shone round about them: and they were sore afraid. And the angel said unto them, Fear not: for, behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy, which shall be to all people. For unto you is born this day in the city of David a Savior, which is Christ the Lord. And this shall be a sign unto you; Ye shall find the babe wrapped in swaddling clothes, lying in a manger. And suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host praising God, and saying, Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good will toward men. And it came to pass, as the angels were gone away from them into heaven, the shepherds said one to another, Let us now go even unto Bethlehem, and see this thing which is come to pass, which the Lord hath made known unto us. And they came with haste, and found Mary, and Joseph, and the babe lying in a manger. And when they had seen it, they made known abroad the saying which was told them concerning this child.

P This is the Gospel of the Lord.

C **Praise to You, O Christ.**

**363 SILENT NIGHT, HOLY NIGHT** *sts. 1-3*

- 1 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.
- 2 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!
- 3 Silent night, holy night!  
Son of God, love's pure light  
Radiant beams from Thy holy face  
With the dawn of redeeming grace,  
Jesus, Lord, at Thy birth,  
Jesus, Lord, at Thy birth.

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**COLLECT**

P Let us pray.

O God, You make this most holy night to shine with the brightness of the true Light.

C **Grant that as we have known the mysteries of that Light on earth we may also come to the fullness of His joys in heaven;**

P through the same Jesus Christ, Your Son, our Lord, who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.

C **Amen.**

**BENEDICTION**

P The Lord bless you and keep you.  
The Lord make His face shine on you and be gracious to you.  
The Lord look upon you with favor and T give you peace.

C **Amen.**

**365 AWAY IN A MANGER**

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

2 The cattle are lowing, the baby awakes,  
But little Lord Jesus, no crying He makes.  
I love Thee, Lord Jesus! Look down from the sky,  
And stay by my cradle till morning is nigh.

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

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