

The Season of Christmas

*Scripture Selections from the Evangelical Heritage Version[®]
following the Lutheran Service Book 3-Year Lectionary, Year A*

Revised March 2, 2017

The Nativity of Our Lord (Christmas Eve)

Lutheran Service Book 3-Year Lectionary, Year A
Evangelical Heritage Version®

Old Testament / First Reading

Isaiah 7:10-14

¹⁰The LORD spoke to Ahaz again. He said, ¹¹“Ask for a sign from the LORD your God. Ask for it either in the depths below or in the heights above.”

¹²But Ahaz said, “I will not ask, neither will I test the LORD.”

¹³So Isaiah said: “Listen now, you house of David. Is it not enough for you to try the patience of men? Will you try the patience of my God also? ¹⁴Therefore the Lord himself will give you all a sign. Look! The virgin will conceive and give birth to a son and call his name Immanuel.

Epistle / Second Reading

1 John 4:7-16

⁷Dear friends, let us love one another, because love comes from God. Everyone who loves has been born of God and knows God. ⁸The one who does not love has not known God, because God is love. ⁹This is how God’s love for us was revealed: God has sent his only-begotten Son into the world so that we may live through him. ¹⁰This is love: not that we have loved God, but that he loved us and sent his Son to be the atoning sacrifice for our sins. ¹¹Dear friends, if God loved us so much, we also should love one another.

¹²No one has ever seen God. If we love one another, God remains in us and his love has been brought to its goal in us. ¹³This is how we know that we remain in him and he in us: He has given us of his Spirit. ¹⁴We have seen and testify that the Father has sent his Son to be the Savior of the world. ¹⁵If anyone confesses that Jesus is the Son of God, God remains in him and he in God. ¹⁶We also have come to know and trust the love that God has for us.

God is love. Whoever remains in love remains in God and God in him.

Holy Gospel

Matthew 1:18-25

¹⁸This is how the birth of Jesus Christ took place. His mother, Mary, was pledged in marriage to Joseph. Before they came together, she was found to be with child by the Holy Spirit. ¹⁹Joseph, her husband, was a righteous man and did not want to disgrace her. So he decided to divorce her privately. ²⁰But as he was considering these things, an angel of the Lord suddenly appeared to him in a dream and said, “Joseph, son of David, do not be afraid to take Mary home as your wife, because the child conceived in her is from the Holy Spirit. ²¹She will give birth to a son, and you are to give him the name Jesus, because he will save his people from their sins.”

²²All this happened to fulfill what was spoken by the Lord through the prophet: ²³“Look, the virgin will be with child and will give birth to a son. And they will name him Immanuel,” which means, “God with us.”

²⁴When Joseph woke up from his sleep, he did as the angel of the Lord had commanded him. He took Mary home as his wife, ²⁵but he was not intimate with her until she gave birth to her firstborn son. And he named him Jesus.

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The Nativity of Our Lord (Christmas Midnight)

*Lutheran Service Book 3-Year Lectionary, Year A
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Old Testament / First Reading

Isaiah 9:2-7

²The people walking in darkness have seen a great light.
On those living in the land of the shadow of death, the light has dawned.
³You have multiplied the nation. You have increased its joy.
They rejoice before you like the joy at harvest,
like the celebration when people divide the plunder.
⁴For you have broken the yoke that burdened him,
the bar on his shoulder, and the rod of his oppressor,
as you did in the day of Midian.
⁵For every boot that marched in battle
and the garments rolled in blood will be burned, fuel for the fire.
⁶For to us a child is born.
To us a son is given.
The authority to rule will rest on his shoulders.
His name will be called:
Wonderful Counselor,
Mighty God,
Everlasting Father,
Prince of Peace.
⁷There will be no limit to his authority
and no end to his peace.
He will rule on David's throne
and over his kingdom to establish it and to uphold it with justice
and with righteousness from now on and forever.
The zeal of the LORD of Armies will accomplish this.

Epistle / Second Reading

Titus 2:11-14

¹¹For the grace of God has appeared, bringing salvation to all people. ¹²It trains us to reject ungodliness and worldly lusts and to live self-controlled, upright, and godly lives in this present age, ¹³while we wait for the blessed hope, that is, the glorious appearance of our great God and Savior, Jesus Christ. ¹⁴He gave himself for us, to redeem us from all lawlessness and to purify for himself a people who are his own chosen people, eager to do good works.

Holy Gospel

Luke 2:1-14 (15-20)

In those days a decree went out from Caesar Augustus that all the world should be registered. ²This was the first census taken while Quirinius was governing Syria. ³And everyone went to register, each to his own town. ⁴And Joseph also went up from Galilee, out of the town of Nazareth, into Judea, to the town of David, which is called Bethlehem, because he was from the house and family line of David. ⁵He went to be registered with Mary, his wife, who was pledged to him in marriage and was expecting a child.

⁶And so it was that while they were there, the time came for her to give birth. ⁷And she gave birth to her firstborn son, wrapped him in swaddling cloths, and laid him in a manger, because there was no room for them in the inn.

⁸There were in the same country shepherds staying out in the fields, keeping watch over their flock at night. ⁹An angel of the Lord appeared to them, and the glory of the Lord shone around them, and they were terrified! ¹⁰But the angel said to them, “Do not be afraid. For behold, I bring you good news of great joy, which will be for all people: ¹¹Today in the town of David, a Savior was born for you. He is Christ the Lord. ¹²And this will be a sign for you: You will find a baby wrapped in swaddling cloths and lying in a manger.” ¹³Suddenly, there was with the angel a multitude from the heavenly army, praising God and saying, ¹⁴“Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good will toward mankind.”

¹⁵When the angels went away from them into heaven, the shepherds said to one another, “Now let’s go to Bethlehem and see this thing that has happened, which the Lord has made known to us.” ¹⁶So they hurried off and found Mary and Joseph, and the baby, who was lying in the manger. ¹⁷When they had seen him, they told others the message they had been told about this child. ¹⁸And all who heard it were amazed by what the shepherds said to them. ¹⁹But Mary treasured up all these things, pondering them in her heart. ²⁰And the shepherds returned, glorifying and praising God for all the things that they had heard and seen, which were just as they had been told.

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The Nativity of Our Lord (Christmas Dawn)

Lutheran Service Book 3-Year Lectionary, Year A
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Old Testament / First Reading

Isaiah 62:10-12

¹⁰Go through, go through the gates.

Prepare a way for the people.

Build up, build up the highway.

Clear it of stones.

Raise a banner for the peoples.

¹¹Listen, the LORD makes a proclamation to the end of the earth:

Tell the daughter of Zion:

“Look, your Savior is coming.

Look, his reward is with him

and his recompense is in front of him.”

¹²Then they will be called holy people,

the redeemed of the LORD.

Then you will be called Sought After,

A City Not Abandoned.

Epistle / Second Reading

Titus 3:4-7

⁴But when the kindness and love of God our Savior toward mankind appeared, ⁵he saved us—not by righteous works that we did ourselves, but because of his mercy. He saved us through the washing of rebirth and the renewal by the Holy Spirit, ⁶whom he poured out on us abundantly through Jesus Christ our Savior, ⁷so that, having been justified by his grace, we might become heirs in keeping with the hope of eternal life.

Holy Gospel

Luke 2:(1-14) 15-20

In those days a decree went out from Caesar Augustus that all the world should be registered. ²This was the first census taken while Quirinius was governing Syria. ³And everyone went to register, each to his own town. ⁴And Joseph also went up from Galilee, out of the town of Nazareth, into Judea, to the town of David, which is called Bethlehem, because he was from the house and family line of David. ⁵He went to be registered with Mary, his wife, who was pledged to him in marriage and was expecting a child.

⁶And so it was that while they were there, the time came for her to give birth. ⁷And she gave birth to her firstborn son, wrapped him in swaddling cloths, and laid him in a manger, because there was no room for them in the inn.

⁸There were in the same country shepherds staying out in the fields, keeping watch over their flock at night. ⁹An angel of the Lord appeared to them, and the glory of the Lord shone around them, and they were terrified! ¹⁰But the angel said to them, “Do not be afraid. For behold, I bring you good news of great joy, which will be for all people: ¹¹Today in the town of David, a Savior was born for you. He is Christ the Lord. ¹²And this will be a sign for you: You will find a baby wrapped in swaddling cloths and lying in a manger.” ¹³Suddenly, there was with the angel a multitude from the heavenly army, praising God and saying, ¹⁴“Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good will toward mankind.”

¹⁵When the angels went away from them into heaven, the shepherds said to one another, “Now let’s go to Bethlehem and see this thing that has happened, which the Lord has made known to us.” ¹⁶So they hurried off and found Mary and Joseph, and the baby, who was lying in the manger. ¹⁷When they had seen him, they told others the message they had been told about this child. ¹⁸And all who heard it were amazed by what the shepherds said to them. ¹⁹But Mary treasured up all these things, pondering them in her heart. ²⁰And the shepherds returned, glorifying and praising God for all the things that they had heard and seen, which were just as they had been told.

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The Nativity of Our Lord (Christmas Day)

Lutheran Service Book 3-Year Lectionary, Year A
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Old Testament / First Reading

Isaiah 52:7-10

⁷How beautiful upon the mountains are the feet of a herald,
who announces peace and preaches good news.
He announces salvation and says to Zion, “Your God is king!”

⁸The voice of your watchmen—they lift up their voices.
Together they shout for joy,
because with both eyes they will see it
when the LORD returns to Zion.

⁹Break out, shout for joy together, you ruins of Jerusalem,
because the LORD is comforting his people.
He is redeeming Jerusalem.

¹⁰The LORD lays bare his holy arm before the eyes of all the nations,
and all the ends of the earth will see the salvation from our God.

Epistle / Second Reading

Hebrews 1:1-6 (7-12)

In the past, God spoke to our forefathers by the prophets at many times and in many ways. ²In these last days, he has spoken to us by his Son, whom he appointed heir of all things, and through whom he made the universe. ³The Son is the radiance of God’s glory and the exact imprint of the divine nature. He sustains all things by his powerful word. After he had provided purification for sins, he took his seat at the right hand of the Majesty on high.

⁴The Son became as much superior to the angels as the name he has inherited is more excellent than theirs. ⁵For to which of the angels did God ever say:

You are my Son. Today I have begotten you?

And again:

I will be his Father, and he will be my Son.

⁶And again, when he brought his firstborn into the world, he said:

Let all God’s angels worship him.

⁷About the angels he says:

He makes his messengers winds and his ministers flaming fire.

⁸But about the Son he says:

God, your throne is forever and ever,
and the scepter of righteousness is the scepter of your kingdom.

⁹You have loved righteousness and hated wickedness.

Therefore God, your God, has anointed you with the oil of joy beyond your companions.

¹⁰And he says:

In the beginning, Lord, you laid the foundation of the earth,
and the heavens are the works of your hands.

¹¹They will perish, but you remain.

They will all become old like a garment.

¹²You will roll them up like a robe,
and they will be changed like a garment.

But you are the same,
and your years will never end.

Holy Gospel

John 1:1-14 (15-18)

In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. ²He was with God in the beginning. ³Through him everything was made, and without him not one thing was made that has been made. ⁴In him was life, and the life was the light of mankind. ⁵The light is shining in the darkness, and the darkness has not overcome it.

⁶There was a man, sent from God, whose name was John. ⁷He came as an eyewitness to testify about the light so that everyone would believe through him. ⁸He was not the light, but he came to testify about the light.

⁹The real light that shines on everyone was coming into the world. ¹⁰He was in the world, and the world was made through him, yet the world did not recognize him. ¹¹He came to what was his own, yet his own people did not accept him. ¹²But to all who did receive him, to those who believe in his name, he gave the right to become children of God. ¹³They were born, not of blood, or of the desire of the flesh, or of a husband's will, but born of God.

¹⁴The Word became flesh and dwelled among us. We have seen his glory, the glory he has as the only-begotten from the Father, full of grace and truth.

¹⁵John testified about him. He cried out, "This was the one I spoke about when I said, 'The one coming after me outranks me because he existed before me.'" ¹⁶For out of his fullness we have all received grace upon grace. ¹⁷For the law was given through Moses; grace and truth came through Jesus Christ. ¹⁸No one has ever seen God. The only-begotten Son, who is close to the Father's side, has made him known.

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The First Sunday after Christmas

Lutheran Service Book 3-Year Lectionary, Year A
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Old Testament / First Reading

Isaiah 63:7-14

⁷I will tell about the LORD's mercies,
about the praises of the LORD,
about all that the LORD has done for us,
about his great goodness to the house of Israel,
which he did for them according to his abundant compassion,
and according to his great mercy.

⁸He said, "Surely they are my people,
sons who will not deal falsely,"
so he became their Savior.

⁹In all their anguish he had anguish,
and the Angel of his Presence saved them.
In his love and in his pity he himself redeemed them,
and he took them up and carried them all the days of old.

¹⁰But they rebelled and grieved his Holy Spirit,
so he turned against them and became an enemy.
He himself fought against them.

¹¹Yet he remembered the days of old,
the days of Moses and his people.
Where is the one who brought them up from the sea
with the shepherds of his flock?

Where is the one who set his Holy Spirit in their midst,
¹²who sent his majestic arm to the right hand of Moses,
who divided waters before them,
to make an everlasting name for himself,

¹³who let them walk through the depths?
Like a horse in the wilderness they did not stumble.

¹⁴Like cattle that descend into a valley,
they were given rest by the LORD's Spirit.
This is how you led your people
to make a majestic name for yourself.

Epistle / Second Reading

Galatians 4:4-7

⁴But when the set time had fully come, God sent his Son to be born of a woman, so that he would be born under the law, ⁵in order to redeem those under the law, so that we would be adopted as sons. ⁶And because you are sons, God sent the Spirit of his Son into our hearts to shout, “*Abba*, Father!” ⁷So you are no longer a slave, but a son. And if you are a son, then you are also an heir of God through Christ.

Holy Gospel

Matthew 2:13-23

¹³After 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.”

¹⁴Joseph got up, took the child and his mother during the night, and left for Egypt. ¹⁵He 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.”

¹⁶When 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. ¹⁷Then 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.

¹⁹After Herod died, an angel of the Lord suddenly appeared in a dream to Joseph in Egypt. The angel said, ²⁰“Get up, take the child and his mother, and go to the land of Israel, for those who were trying to kill the child are dead.”

²¹Joseph got up, took the child and his mother, and went to the land of Israel. ²²But when he heard that Archelaus, Herod’s son, had succeeded his father as ruler in Judea, he was afraid to go there. Since he had been warned in a dream, he went to the region of Galilee. ²³When he arrived there, he settled in a city called Nazareth. So what was spoken through the prophets was fulfilled: “He will be called a Nazarene.”

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The Second Sunday after Christmas

Lutheran Service Book 3-Year Lectionary, Year A
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Old Testament / First Reading

1 Kings 3:4-15

⁴So the king went to Gibeon to sacrifice there because it was the most important high place. Solomon offered one thousand whole burnt offerings on that altar.

⁵The LORD appeared to Solomon in Gibeon in a dream at night.

God said, “Ask for whatever I may give to you.”

⁶Solomon said, “You have shown great mercy and faithfulness¹ to your servant, my father David, just as he walked before you in truth, righteousness, and uprightness of heart toward you. You have shown this great mercy and faithfulness to him and have given him a son who is sitting on his throne as it is today. ⁷Now, O LORD my God, you have made your servant king in the place of my father David, but I am a little child. I do not know how to go out or come in. ⁸And your servant is among your people, which you have chosen, a great people which cannot be counted or numbered because they are so many. ⁹Now give to your servant a listening heart to judge your people, to discern between good and evil, for who is able to judge this great people of yours?”

¹⁰What Solomon asked for was good in the eyes of the LORD.

¹¹God said to him, “Because you have asked for this, and you have not asked for a long life, nor have you asked for riches, nor have you asked for the life of your enemies, but you have asked for discernment to reach just verdicts, ¹²therefore listen: I will act according your words. Yes, I will give you a wise and discerning heart, so that there will never have been anyone like you before, nor will anyone like you rise up after you.

¹³In addition, I will give you what you have not asked for: both riches and glory so that there will not be a man like you among the kings all your days. ¹⁴If you walk in my ways to keep my statutes and commands just as your father David did, then I will make your life long.”

¹⁵Then Solomon awoke and realized it was a dream! So Solomon went to Jerusalem and he stood before the Ark of the Covenant of the Lord. He offered whole burnt offerings and fellowship offerings, and he made a feast for all his servants.

Epistle / Second Reading

Ephesians 1:3-14

³Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us in Christ with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places.

⁴He did this when he chose us in Christ before the foundation of the world, so that we would be holy and blameless in his sight. In love ⁵he predestined us to be adopted as his sons through Jesus Christ. He did this in accordance with the good purpose of his will, ⁶and for the praise of his glorious grace, which he has graciously given us in the one he loves.

¹⁶ Literally *have done chesed*. The Hebrew word *chesed* has connotations of both mercy and faithfulness, so the translation here includes both concepts.

⁷In him we also have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins, in keeping with the riches of his grace, ⁸which he lavished on us in all wisdom and insight. ⁹He made known to us the mystery of his will in keeping with his good purpose, which he planned in Christ. ¹⁰This was to be carried out when the time had fully come, in order to bring all things together in Christ, things in heaven and things on earth.

¹¹In him we have also obtained an inheritance, because we were predestined according to the plan of him who works out everything in keeping with the purpose of his will. ¹²He did this so that his glory would be praised as a result of us, who were the first to hope in Christ.

¹³In him, when you heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation, and in him, when you also believed, you were sealed with the promised Holy Spirit. ¹⁴He is the down payment of our inheritance until the redemption of God's own possession, so that his glory would be praised.

Holy Gospel

Luke 2:40-52

⁴⁰The child grew and became strong. He was filled with wisdom, and God's favor was on him.

⁴¹Every year his parents traveled to Jerusalem for the Passover Festival. ⁴²When he was twelve years old, they went up according to the custom of the Festival. ⁴³When the days had ended, as they were returning, the boy Jesus stayed behind in Jerusalem. His parents did not know it. ⁴⁴Since they thought he was in their group, they went a day's journey. Then they began to look for him among their relatives and friends. ⁴⁵When they did not find him, they returned to Jerusalem, searching for him.

⁴⁶After three days they found him in the temple courts, sitting among the teachers, listening to them and asking them questions. ⁴⁷And all who heard him were amazed at his understanding and his answers. ⁴⁸When his parents saw him, they were astonished. His mother said to him, "Son, why have you treated us this way? See, your father and I have been anxiously looking for you."

⁴⁹He said to them, "Why were you looking for me? Did you not know that I must be taking care of my Father's business?" ⁵⁰They did not understand what he was telling them.

⁵¹He went down with them and came to Nazareth. He was always obedient to them. And his mother treasured up all these things in her heart. ⁵²Jesus grew in wisdom and stature, and in favor with God and with people.

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