

The Season of Christmas

*Scripture Selections from the Evangelical Heritage Version®
following the Evangelical Lutheran Hymnary Historic Lectionary*

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Christmas Vigil

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Old Testament

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 responded, “I will not ask. I will not test the LORD.”

¹³So Isaiah said:

Listen now, you house of David. Is it not enough for you to test the patience of men? Will you test the patience of my God as well? ¹⁴Therefore the Lord himself will give a sign for all of you. Look! The virgin will conceive and give birth to a son and name him Immanuel.

Epistle

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.

Gospel

Luke 2:1-14

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.”

Christmas Day: 1st

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Old Testament

Isaiah 9:2-7

²The people walking in darkness have seen a great light.

For 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 time,
like the celebration when people divide the plunder.

⁴For you have shattered the yoke that burdened them.

You have broken the bar on their shoulders and the rod of their oppressor,
as you did in the day of Midian.

⁵Every boot that marched in battle
and the garments rolled in blood will be burned.

They will be 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.

He will be named:

Wonderful Counselor,

Mighty God,

Everlasting Father,

Prince of Peace.

⁷There will be no limit to his authority
and no end to the peace he brings.

He will rule on David's throne and over his kingdom,
to establish it and to uphold it with justice and righteousness
from now on, into eternity.

The zeal of the LORD of Armies will accomplish this.

Epistle

Hebrews 1:1-12

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.

Gospel

John 1:1-14

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.

Christmas Day: 2nd

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Old Testament

Micah 5:2-4

²But you, Bethlehem Ephrathah,
though you are small among the clans of Judah,
from you, will go out the one who will be the ruler for me in Israel.
His goings forth are from the beginning, from the days of eternity.
³Therefore the LORD will give them up,
until the time when the woman who is in labor bears a child.
Then the remaining survivors from his brothers will return to the people of Israel.
⁴He will stand and shepherd with the strength of the LORD,
in the majesty of the name of the LORD his God.
They will dwell securely, for at that time he will be great to the ends of the earth.

Epistle

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.

Gospel

Luke 2:15-20

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 First Sunday after Christmas

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Old Testament

Isaiah 11:1-5

A shoot will spring up from the stump of Jesse,
and a Branch from his roots will bear fruit.

²The Spirit of the LORD will rest on him:
the Spirit of wisdom and understanding,
the Spirit of counsel and might,
the Spirit of knowledge and the fear of the LORD.

³He will be delighted with the fear of the LORD.
He will not judge by what he sees with his eyes,
nor will he render decisions based on what he hears with his ears,
⁴but with righteousness he will judge the poor,
and he will render fair decisions in favor of the oppressed on the earth.
He will strike the earth with the rod of his mouth,
and with the breath from his lips he will put the wicked to death.

⁵Righteousness will be the belt around his waist,
and faithfulness the belt around his hips.

Epistle

Galatians 4:1-7

What I am saying is this: As long as the heir is a young child, he is no different from a slave. Although he is owner of everything, ²he is still under guardians and managers until the day set by his father. ³So also, when we were younger children, we were enslaved under the basic principles of the world. 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.

Gospel

Luke 2:33-40

³³Joseph and the child’s mother were amazed at the things that were spoken about him. ³⁴Then Simeon blessed them and said to Mary his mother, “Listen carefully, this child is appointed for the falling and rising of many in Israel and for a sign that is spoken against, ³⁵so that the thoughts of many hearts may be revealed. And a sword will pierce your own soul too.”

³⁶Anna, a prophetess, was there. She was a daughter of Phanuel, of the tribe of Asher. She was very old. She had lived with her husband for seven years after her marriage, ³⁷and then she was a

widow of eighty-four years. She did not leave the temple complex, since she was worshipping with fasting and prayers night and day. ³⁸Standing nearby at that very hour, she gave thanks to the Lord. She kept speaking about the child to all who were waiting for the redemption of Jerusalem.

³⁹When they had accomplished everything according to the law of the Lord, they returned to Galilee, to their own town, Nazareth. ⁴⁰The child grew and became strong. He was filled with wisdom, and God's favor was on him.

New Year's Eve

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Old Testament

Isaiah 63:7-18

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 performed for them according to his abundant compassion,
and according to his great mercy.

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

⁹In all their anguish he felt 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.

¹⁵Gaze down from the heavens and see,
from your holy and beautiful dwelling place.

Where is your zeal and your might?
The feelings of your heart and your compassion
are withheld from me.

¹⁶But you are our Father,
though Abraham does not know us,
though Israel does not acknowledge us.
You, the LORD, are our Father.

Our Redeemer from everlasting is your name.

¹⁷Why do you cause us to wander from your ways, LORD?
Why do you harden our heart so that we do not fear you?
Return for the sake of your servants,
the tribes that are your heritage.

¹⁸For a short time your holy people possessed the land.
Now our adversaries have trampled your sanctuary.

Epistle

1 Peter 1:22–25

²²Since you have purified your souls by obeying the truth, resulting in sincere brotherly love, love one another constantly from a pure heart. ²³For you have been born again, not from perishable seed but from imperishable, through the living and enduring word of God. ²⁴For:

All flesh is like grass,
and all its glory is like a flower of the field.

The grass withers,
and the flower falls,

²⁵but the word of the Lord endures forever.

And this is the word that was preached to you.

Gospel

Luke 13:6-9

⁶He told them this parable: “A man had a fig tree planted in his vineyard. He came looking for fruit on it, but he did not find any. ⁷So he said to the gardener, ‘Look, for three years now I have come looking for fruit on this fig tree, and I have found none. Cut it down. Why even let it use up the soil?’ ⁸But the gardener replied to him, ‘Sir, leave it alone this year also, until I dig around it and put fertilizer on it. ⁹If it produces fruit next year, fine. But if not, then cut it down.’”

The Name of Jesus

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Old Testament

Isaiah 55:1-13

Hey, all of you who are thirsty, come to the water,
even if you have no money!

Come, buy and eat!

Come, buy wine and milk without money and without cost.

²Why do you spend money on something that is not bread?

Why do you waste your labor on something that does not satisfy?

Listen carefully to me, and eat what is good.

Satisfy your appetite with rich food.

³Turn your ear toward me, and come to me.

Listen, so that you may continue to live.

Yes, I will make an everlasting covenant with you,
the faithful mercies promised to David.

⁴Look, I appointed him as a witness for peoples,
a leader and commander of peoples.

⁵Look, you will call out to a nation you do not know,
and a nation that does not know you will run to you,
on account of the LORD your God,
because of the Holy One of Israel,
for he has glorified you.

⁶Seek the LORD while he may be found!

Call on him while he is near!

⁷Let the wicked man abandon his way.

Let an evil man abandon his thoughts.

Let him turn to the LORD,
and he will show him mercy.

Let him turn to our God,
because he will abundantly pardon.

⁸Certainly my plans are not your plans,
and your ways are not my ways, declares the LORD.

⁹Just as the heavens are higher than the earth,
so my ways are higher than your ways,
and my plans are higher than your plans.

¹⁰Just as the rain and the snow come down from the sky
and do not return there

unless they first water the earth, make it give birth, and cause it to sprout,

so that it gives seed to the sower and bread to the eater,
¹¹in the same way my word that goes out from my mouth
will not return to me empty.

Rather, it will accomplish whatever I please,
and it will succeed in the purpose for which I sent it.

¹²Yes, you will go out with joy,
and in peace you will be carried along.

The mountains and the hills will break out in shouts of joy before you,
and all the trees of the field will clap their hands.

¹³Instead of thorns, a fir tree will grow up.
Instead of briars, a myrtle tree will grow up.

This will make a name for the LORD.

It will serve as an everlasting sign that will not be cut off.

Epistle

Galatians 3:23-29

²³But before this faith came, we were held in custody under the law, imprisoned until the coming faith was revealed. ²⁴So the law was our chaperone until Christ, so that we might be justified by faith.

²⁵But now that this faith has come, we are no longer under a chaperone.

²⁶In fact, you are all sons of God through faith in Christ Jesus. ²⁷Indeed, as many of you as were baptized into Christ have clothed yourselves with Christ. ²⁸There is not Jew or Greek, slave or free, male or female, for you are all one and the same in Christ Jesus. ²⁹And if you belong to Christ, then you are Abraham's descendants and heirs according to the promise.

Gospel

Luke 2:21

²¹After eight days passed, when the child was circumcised, he was named Jesus, the name given by the angel before he was conceived in the womb.

The Second Sunday after Christmas

*Evangelical Lutheran Hymnary Historic Lectionary
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Old Testament

Isaiah 42:1-9

Here is my servant, whom I uphold,
my chosen one in whom I delight.
I am placing my Spirit on him.
He will announce a just verdict for the nations.
²He will not cry out.
He will not raise his voice.
He will not make his voice heard in the street.
³A bent reed he will not break,
and a dimly burning wick he will not snuff out.
He will faithfully bring forth a just verdict.
⁴He will not burn out, and he will not be broken
until he establishes justice on the earth.
The coastlands will wait for his law.
⁵This is what the true God says,
the LORD who creates the heavens and stretches them out,
who spreads out the earth
and everything that it produces,
who gives breath to the people on it
and life to those who walk on it.
⁶I am the LORD.
I have called you in righteousness.
I will hold on to your hand,
and I will guard you.
I will appoint you to be a covenant for the people,
to be a light for the nations,
⁷to open the eyes of the blind,
to bring the prisoners out from the dungeon,
and to bring those who sit in darkness out of prison.
⁸I am the LORD; that is my name.
I will not give my glory to another,
nor my praise to idols.
⁹Look, the former things have taken place,
and I am declaring new things.
I am making them known to you before they spring forth.

Epistle

1 Peter 4:12-19

¹²Dear friends, do not be surprised by the fiery trial that is happening among you to test you, as if something strange were happening to you. ¹³Instead rejoice whenever you are sharing in the sufferings of Christ, so that you may rejoice and be glad when his glory is revealed.

¹⁴If you are insulted in connection with the name of Christ, you are blessed, because the Spirit of glory and of God rests on you. ¹⁵Make sure that none of you suffers as a murderer, a thief, a criminal, or as a meddler. ¹⁶But if you suffer for being a Christian, do not be ashamed, but praise God in connection with this name. ¹⁷For the time has come for judgment to begin with the household of God. Now if it begins with us, what will be the end for those who disobey the gospel of God? ¹⁸And if it is hard for the righteous to be saved, where will the ungodly sinner end up? ¹⁹So let those who suffer according to the will of God entrust their souls to their faithful Creator while doing what is good.

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:

¹⁸A 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.”