

The Season of Christmas

*Scripture Selections from the Evangelical Heritage Version®
following the Lutheran Service Book 1-Year Lectionary*

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The Nativity of Our Lord (Christmas Eve)

Lutheran Service Book 1-Year Lectionary
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 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 / 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.

The Nativity of Our Lord (Christmas Midnight)

*Lutheran Service Book 1-Year Lectionary
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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

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.

The Nativity of Our Lord (Christmas Dawn)

Lutheran Service Book 1-Year Lectionary
Evangelical Heritage Version®

Old Testament / First Reading

Micah 5:2-5a

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.
⁵This one will be their peace.

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.

The Nativity of Our Lord (Christmas Day)

Lutheran Service Book 1-Year Lectionary
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Old Testament

Exodus 40:17–21, 34–38

¹⁷And so in the first month of the second year, on the first day of the month, the Dwelling was raised. ¹⁸Moses raised the Dwelling. He laid out its socket bases, set up its boards, inserted its crossbars, and raised its posts. ¹⁹He spread the tent over the Dwelling and put the cover for the tent above it, just as the LORD had commanded Moses.

²⁰He took the Testimony and put it into the ark. He set the poles in place on the ark and placed the atonement seat on top of the ark. ²¹He brought the ark into the tent. He set up the special veil to screen the Ark of the Testimony, just as the LORD had commanded Moses.

³⁴Then the cloud covered the Tent of Meeting, and the Glory of the LORD filled the tent. ³⁵Moses was not able to enter the Tent of Meeting, because the cloud stayed over it, and the Glory of the LORD filled the tent. ³⁶Throughout all their journeys, whenever the cloud was taken up from over the tent, the people of Israel would move forward. ³⁷But if the cloud was not taken up, then they would not travel until the day when it was taken up. ³⁸For in the sight of the whole house of Israel, the cloud of the LORD was above the tent by day, and there was fire in the cloud by night, throughout all their journeys.

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.

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.

The First Sunday after Christmas

*Lutheran Service Book 1-Year Lectionary
Evangelical Heritage Version®*

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.

or

2 Samuel 7:1-16

It happened that when the king was living in his palace, and when the LORD had given him rest from his enemies all around, ²the king said to Nathan the prophet, “Look, I live in a house of cedar, but the Ark of God sits under tent curtains.”

³Nathan said to the king, “Go and do everything that is in your heart, because the LORD is with you.”

⁴But that night the word of the LORD came to Nathan. He said, ⁵“Go and tell my servant David all these things.”

This is what the LORD says. Are you the one to build a house for me to live in? ⁶I have not lived in a house from the day I brought the people of Israel up from Egypt until today. I have been moving around in the Tent and the Dwelling. ⁷I have traveled everywhere with all the people of Israel. Did I ever speak a word to any of the judges of Israel, whom I commanded to shepherd my people, or ask them, “Why have you not built a house of cedar for me?”

⁸You are also to say the following to my servant David.

This is what the LORD of Armies says. I took you from the pasture, from following sheep, to be ruler over my people, over Israel. ⁹I have been with you wherever you went. I have cut off all your enemies from before you. I will make your reputation great, like that of the great ones on the earth. ¹⁰I will set up a place for my people Israel, and I will plant them there. They will dwell

there, and they will not be disturbed again. Violent men will not afflict them again as they did at the beginning¹¹ and ever since the day I appointed judges over my people Israel. I will give you rest from all your enemies.

The LORD also declares to you that the LORD himself will make a house for you.¹² When your days are complete and you rest with your fathers, I will raise up after you your seed, who will come from your own body. I will establish his kingdom.¹³ He will build a house for my name, and I will establish the throne of his kingdom forever.¹⁴ I will be his father, and he will be my son. When he sins, I will discipline him with a rod used by men and with blows of the sons of men.¹⁵ My faithful mercy will not depart from him as I removed it from Saul, whom I removed to make room for you.¹⁶ Your house will stand firm, and your kingdom will endure forever before you. Your throne will be established forever.

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,² he is still under guardians and managers until the day set by his father.³ So also, when we were younger children, we were enslaved under the basic principles of the world.⁴ But 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,⁵ in order to redeem those under the law, so that we would be adopted as sons.⁶ And because you are sons, God sent the Spirit of his Son into our hearts to shout, “*Abba, Father!*”⁷ So 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

Luke 2:(22-32) 33-40

²²When the time came for their purification according to the law of Moses, they brought him up to Jerusalem to present him to the Lord.²³ (As it is written in the law of the Lord, “Every firstborn male will be called holy to the Lord.”)²⁴ And they came to offer a sacrifice according to what was said in the law of the Lord, “A pair of turtledoves or two young pigeons.”

²⁵Now there was a man in Jerusalem whose name was Simeon. This man was righteous and devout, waiting for the comfort of Israel, and the Holy Spirit was on him.²⁶ It had been revealed to him by the Holy Spirit that he would not see death before he had seen the Lord’s Christ.²⁷ Moved by the Spirit he went into the temple courts. When the parents brought in the child Jesus to do for him what was customary according to the law,²⁸ Simeon took him into his arms and praised God. He said,

²⁹Lord, you now dismiss your servant in peace, according to your word,

³⁰because my eyes have seen your salvation,

³¹which you have prepared before the face of all people,

³²a light for revelation to the Gentiles, and the glory of your people Israel.

³³Joseph and the child’s mother were amazed at the things that were spoken about him.³⁴ Then 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.

The Second Sunday after Christmas

Lutheran Service Book 1-Year Lectionary
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Old Testament

Genesis 46:1-7

Israel traveled with all that he had until he came to Beersheba, where he offered sacrifices to the God of his father Isaac. ²God called to Israel in a vision at night, “Jacob, Jacob!”

Jacob said, “I am here.”

³He said, “I am God, the God of your father. Do not be afraid to go down to Egypt, for there I will make you into a great nation. ⁴I will go down to Egypt with you, and I will certainly bring you back again. And Joseph’s hand will close your eyes.”

⁵Jacob set out from Beersheba, and the sons of Israel transported Jacob their father, their little ones, and their wives in the carts that Pharaoh had sent to transport him. ⁶They took their livestock and their property that they had acquired in the land of Canaan and came into Egypt—Jacob, and all his offspring with him, ⁷his sons and his grandsons, his daughters and his granddaughters. So he brought all his offspring with him into Egypt.

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.

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:

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.”