



THE CHURCH  
OF ST. MICHAEL & ST. GEORGE

# The Order for Morning Prayer

## The Nativity of Our Lord Jesus Christ

December 25, 2020

### Opening Sentences

*Officiant* 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.  
*Luke 2:10-11*

### Confession of Sin

*¶ The Officiant says*

**D**EARLY BELOVED, we have come together in the presence of Almighty God our heavenly Father, to render thanks for the great benefits that we have received at his hands, to set forth his most worthy praise, to hear his holy Word, and to ask, for ourselves and on behalf of others, those things that are necessary for our life and our salvation. And so that we may prepare ourselves in heart and mind to worship him, let us kneel in silence, and with penitent and obedient hearts confess our sins, that we may obtain forgiveness by his infinite goodness and mercy.

*¶ Officiant and People, all kneeling*

Almighty and most merciful Father,  
we have erred and strayed from thy ways like lost sheep,  
we have followed too much the devices and desires of our own hearts,  
we have offended against thy holy laws,  
we have left undone those things which we ought to have done,  
and we have done those things which we ought not to have done;  
And there is no health in us.  
But thou, O Lord, have mercy upon us,  
spare thou those who confess their faults,  
restore thou those who are penitent,  
according to thy promises declared unto mankind in Christ Jesus our Lord;  
and grant, O most merciful Father, for his sake,  
that we may hereafter live a godly, righteous, and sober life,  
to the glory of thy holy Name. Amen.

‡ *The Officiant alone stands and says*

The Almighty and merciful Lord grant you absolution ✠ and remission of all your sins, true repentance, amendment of life, and the grace and consolation of his Holy Spirit.

‡ *People Amen.*

‡ *All stand*

## The Invitatory and Psalter

*Officiant* O Lord, open thou our lips.

*People* And our mouth shall show forth thy praise.

*All* Glory to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit:  
as it was in the beginning, is now, and will be for ever. Amen.

‡ *All say the Invitatory Canticle together, as follows*

### Invitatory Canticle

*Venite, exultemus*

PSALM 95:1-7, 96:9, 13

O come, let us sing unto the Lord; \*  
let us heartily rejoice in the strength of our salvation.  
Let us come before his presence with thanksgiving, \*  
and show ourselves glad in him with psalms.

For the Lord is a great God, \*  
and a great King above all gods.  
In his hand are all the corners of the earth, \*  
and the strength of the hills is his also.  
The sea is his and he made it, \*  
and his hands prepared the dry land.  
O come, let us worship and fall down \*  
and kneel before the Lord our Maker.  
For he is the Lord our God, \*  
and we are the people of his pasture  
and the sheep of his hand.

O worship the Lord in the beauty of holiness; \*  
let the whole earth stand in awe of him.  
For he cometh, for he cometh to judge the earth, \*  
and with righteousness to judge the world  
and the peoples with his truth.

Glory to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit:  
as it was in the beginning, is now, and will be for ever. Amen.

‡ *All are then seated for the Psalm appointed for the day*

My song shall be alway of the loving-kindness of the Lord; \*  
with my mouth will I ever be showing thy truth from one generation to another.

For I have said, Mercy shall be set up for ever; \*  
thy truth shalt thou stablish in the heavens.

I have made a covenant with my chosen; \*  
I have sworn unto David my servant:

Thy seed will I stablish for ever, \*  
and set up thy throne from one generation to another.

Thou spakest sometime in visions unto thy saints, and saidst, \*  
I have laid help upon one that is mighty, I have exalted one chosen out of the people.

I have found David my servant; \*  
with my holy oil have I anointed him.

My hand shall hold him fast, \*  
and my arm shall strengthen him.

The enemy shall not be able to do him violence; \*  
the son of wickedness shall not hurt him.

I will smite down his foes before his face, \*  
and plague them that hate him.

My truth also and my mercy shall be with him; \*  
and in my Name shall his horn be exalted.

I will set his dominion also in the sea, \*  
and his right hand in the floods.

He shall call me, Thou art my Father, \*  
my God, and my strong salvation.

*¶ At the conclusion of the Psalmody the Gloria Patri is said by all*

Glorify to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit:  
as it was in the beginning, is now, and will be for ever. Amen.

# The Lessons

## The First Lesson

ISAIAH 52:7-10

**H**OW BEAUTIFUL UPON THE MOUNTAINS are the feet of him who brings good tidings, who publishes peace, who brings good tidings of good, who publishes salvation, who says to Zion, “Your God reigns.” Hark, your watchmen lift up their voice, together they sing for joy; for eye to eye they see the return of the Lord to Zion. Break forth together into singing, you waste places of Jerusalem; for the Lord has comforted his people, he has redeemed Jerusalem. The Lord has bared his holy arm before the eyes of all the nations; and all the ends of the earth shall see the salvation of our God.

*¶ Following the Lesson, all stand for the Canticle*

## Canticle      *Te Deum laudamus*

We praise thee, O God;  
we acknowledge thee to be the Lord.  
All the earth doth worship thee, the Father everlasting.  
To thee all Angels cry aloud,  
the Heavens and all the Powers therein.  
To thee Cherubim and Seraphim continually do cry:  
Holy, holy, holy, Lord God of Sabaoth;  
Heaven and earth are full of the majesty of thy glory.  
The glorious company of the apostles praise thee.  
The goodly fellowship of the prophets praise thee.  
The noble army of martyrs praise thee.  
The holy Church throughout all the world doth acknowledge thee,  
the Father, of an infinite majesty, thine adorable, true, and only Son,  
also the Holy Ghost the Comforter.  
Thou art the King of glory, O Christ.  
Thou art the everlasting Son of the Father.  
When thou tookest upon thee to deliver man,  
thou didst humble thyself to be born of a Virgin.  
When thou hadst overcome the sharpness of death,  
thou didst open the kingdom of heaven to all believers.  
Thou sittest at the right hand of God, in the glory of the Father.  
We believe that thou shalt come to be our judge.  
We therefore pray thee, help thy servants,  
whom thou hast redeemed with thy precious blood.  
Make them to be numbered with thy saints,  
in glory everlasting.

¶ *All are seated*

## The Second Lesson

JOHN 1:1-14

**I**N THE BEGINNING WAS THE WORD, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was in the beginning with God; all things were made through him, and without him was not anything made that was made. In him was life, and the life was the light of men. The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness has not overcome it. There was a man sent from God, whose name was John. He came for testimony, to bear witness to the light, that all might believe through him. He was not the light, but came to bear witness to the light. The true light that enlightens every man was coming into the world. He was in the world, and the world was made through him, yet the world knew him not. He came to his own home, and his own people received him not. But to all who received him, who believed in his name, he gave power to become children of God; who were born, not of blood nor of the will of the flesh nor of the will of man, but of God. And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, full of grace and truth; we have beheld his glory, glory as of the only Son from the Father.

¶ *Following the Lesson, all stand for the Canticle*

Canticle *Benedictus Dominus Deus*

LUKE 1:68-79

Blessed be the Lord God of Israel, \*  
for he hath visited and redeemed his people;  
And hath raised up a mighty salvation for us \*  
in the house of his servant David,  
As he spake by the mouth of his holy prophets, \*  
which have been since the world began:  
That we should be saved from our enemies, \*  
and from the hand of all that hate us;  
To perform the mercy promised to our forefathers, \*  
and to remember his holy covenant;  
To perform the oath which he swore to our forefather Abraham, \*  
that he would give us,  
That we being delivered out of the hand of our enemies \*  
might serve him without fear,  
In holiness and righteousness before him, \*  
all the days of our life.

And thou, child, shalt be called the prophet of the Highest, \*  
for thou shalt go before the face of the Lord  
to prepare his ways;  
To give knowledge of salvation unto his people \*  
for the remission of their sins,  
Through the tender mercy of our God, \*  
whereby the dayspring from on high hath visited us;

To give light to them that sit in darkness  
and in the shadow of death, \*  
and to guide our feet into the way of peace.

Glory to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit:  
as it was in the beginning, is now, and will be for ever. Amen.

¶ *All remain standing for the Apostles' Creed*

## The Apostles' Creed

¶ *Said by the Officiant and People together, all standing*

I believe in God, the Father almighty,  
maker of heaven and earth;  
And in Jesus Christ his only Son our Lord;  
who was conceived by the Holy Ghost,  
born of the Virgin Mary,  
suffered under Pontius Pilate,  
was crucified, dead, and buried.  
He descended into hell.  
The third day he rose again from the dead.  
He ascended into heaven,  
and sitteth on the right hand of God the Father almighty.  
From thence he shall come to judge the quick and the dead.  
I believe in the Holy Ghost,  
the holy catholic Church,  
the communion of saints,  
the forgiveness of sins,  
the resurrection of the body, ✚  
and the life everlasting. Amen.

## The Prayers

¶ *The Officiant and People say the following*

*Officiant* The Lord be with you.

*People* And with thy spirit.

*Officiant* Let us pray.

*¶ Then the short form of the Lord's Prayer is said by all, kneeling*

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.  
Amen.

*¶ Then follow these Suffrages, said by the Officiant and People*

*Officiant* O Lord, show thy mercy upon us.  
*People* And grant us thy salvation.

*Officiant* Endue thy ministers with righteousness.  
*People* And make thy chosen people joyful.

*Officiant* Give peace, O Lord, in all the world;  
*People* For only in thee can we live in safety.

*Officiant* Lord, keep this nation under thy care;  
*People* And guide us in the way of justice and truth.

*Officiant* Let thy way be known upon earth;  
*People* Thy saving health among all nations.

*Officiant* Let not the needy, O Lord, be forgotten;  
*People* Nor the hope of the poor be taken away.

*Officiant* Create in us clean hearts, O God;  
*People* And sustain us with thy Holy Spirit.

## The Collects

**A**Lmighty God, who hast given us thy only-begotten Son to take our nature upon him and as at this time to be born of a pure virgin: Grant that we, being regenerate and made thy children by adoption and grace, may daily be renewed by thy Holy Spirit; through the same our Lord Jesus Christ, who liveth and reigneth with thee and the same Spirit ever, one God, world without end. *¶ People Amen.*

**O** LORD, OUR HEAVENLY FATHER, almighty and everlasting God, who hast safely brought us to the beginning of this day: Defend us in the same with thy mighty power; and grant that this day we fall into no sin, neither run into any kind of danger; but that we, being ordered by thy governance, may do always what is righteous in thy sight; through Jesus Christ our Lord. ¶ *People Amen.*

**O** GOD, WHO HAST MADE of one blood all the peoples of the earth, and didst send thy blessed Son to preach peace to those who are far off and to those who are near: Grant that people everywhere may seek after thee and find thee; bring the nations into thy fold; pour out thy Spirit upon all flesh; and hasten the coming of thy kingdom; through the same thy Son Jesus Christ our Lord. ¶ *People Amen.*

## The General Thanksgiving

¶ *Said by the Officiant and People together*

**A**LMIGHTY GOD, Father of all mercies, we thine unworthy servants do give thee most humble and hearty thanks for all thy goodness and loving-kindness to us and to all men.

We bless thee for our creation, preservation, and all the blessings of this life; but above all for thine inestimable love in the redemption of the world by our Lord Jesus Christ, for the means of grace, and for the hope of glory.

And, we beseech thee, give us that due sense of all thy mercies, that our hearts may be unfeignedly thankful; and that we show forth thy praise, not only with our lips, but in our lives, by giving up our selves to thy service, and by walking before thee in holiness and righteousness all our days; through Jesus Christ our Lord, to whom, with thee and the Holy Ghost, be all honor and glory, world without end. Amen.

## A Prayer of St. Chrysostom

¶ *Said by the Officiant*

**A**LMIGHTY GOD, who hast given us grace at this time with one accord to make our common supplication unto thee, and hast promised through thy well-beloved Son that when two or three are gathered together in his Name thou wilt be in the midst of them: Fulfill now, O Lord, the desires and petitions of thy servants as may be best for us; granting us in this world knowledge of thy truth, and in the world to come life everlasting. ¶ *People Amen.*

¶ *All stand*

## Benedicamus Domino

*Officiant* Let us bless the Lord.

*People* Thanks be to God.

## The Grace

¶ *Officiant*

The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God,  
and the fellowship of the Holy Ghost, be with us all evermore. ¶ *People Amen.*

# Hymn

1 O come, all ye faith - ful, joy - ful and tri - um - phant, O  
2 God from God, Light from Light e - ter - nal,  
3 Sing, choirs of an - gels, sing in ex - ul - ta - tion,  
4 Yea, Lord, we greet thee, born this hap - py morn - ing;

1 come ye, O come ye to Beth - le - hem;  
2 lo! he ab - hors not the Vir - gin's womb;  
3 sing, all ye ci - ti - zens of heaven a - bove;  
4 Jes - us, to thee be glo - ry given;

1 come, and be - hold him, born the King of an - gels;  
2 on - ly - be - got - ten Son of the Fa - ther;  
3 glo - ry to God, glo - ry in the high - est;  
4 Word of the Fa - ther, now in flesh ap - pear - ing;

*Refrain*

O come, let us a - dore him, O come, let us a -

dore him, O come, let us a - dore him, Christ the Lord.

*Words: John Francis Wade (1711-1786)*  
*Music: ADESTE FIDELES; attr. John Francis Wade*

## Sermon

The Rev. Peter James Speropolus

## Carol

The holly and the ivy  
 When they are both full grown;  
 Of all the trees that are in the wood  
 The holly bears the crown.

O the rising of the sun  
 And the running of the deer,  
 The playing of the merry organ,  
 Sweet singing in the choir.

The holly bears a blossom  
 As white as any flower;  
 And Mary bore sweet Jesus Christ  
 To be our sweet Saviour.

The holly bears a berry  
 As red as any blood;  
 And Mary bore sweet Jesus Christ  
 To do poor sinners good.

The holly bears a prickle  
 As sharp as any thorn;  
 And Mary bore sweet Jesus Christ  
 On Christmas Day in the morn.

The holly bears a bark  
 As bitter as any gall;  
 And Mary bore sweet Jesus Christ  
 For to redeem us all.

*Words: Traditional English*  
*Music: Traditional English Carol; arr. Robert Lehman (2020)*

## Closing Prayers

*Officiant* The Lord be with you.

*People* And with thy spirit.

*Officiant* Let us pray.

¶ *All kneel*

¶ *Then Prayers and Intercessions are offered*

**M**OST MERCIFUL GOD, for whose chosen handmaid and her Holy Babe there was no room at the inn at Bethlehem: Help us all by thy Spirit to make room for the Christ in our common days, that his peace and joy may fill our hearts, and his love flow through our lives to the blessing of others; for His name's sake. ¶ *People Amen*

**A**Lmighty GOD, who hast so loved the world as to give thine only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life: Vouchsafe unto us, we humbly pray thee, the precious gift of faith, whereby we may know that the Son of God is come; and, being rooted and grounded in the mystery of the Word made flesh, may have power to overcome the world, and gain the blessed immortality of heaven; through the merits of the same incarnate Christ. ¶ *People Amen*

**G**OD OF ALL GRACE, who didst in the fullness of time send Jesus Christ thy Son to be born of a woman, that he might redeem the children born of this world and make them children of God: Accept our endless praise for this thy mercy; and grant that the Spirit of thy Son may so dwell in our hearts that we may evermore serve and worship thee with the freedom of thy children; through the same Jesus Christ our Lord.

¶ *People Amen.*

**O** GOD OUR FATHER, who by the glorious birth of thy Son didst enlighten the darkness of the world: We pray that the light of His presence may shine more and more in the lives of His people; that being filled with his spirit of goodwill, the nations may inherit that gift of peace which He came to bring. We ask this in the Name of Jesus Christ, our Lord. ¶ *People Amen.*

## The Christmas Blessing

**M**AY HE WHO BY HIS INCARNATION gathered into one things earthly and heavenly, fill you with the sweetness of inward grace and goodwill; And the blessing ✠ of God Almighty, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost, be amongst you and abide with you for ever. ¶ *People Amen.*

## *Liturgical Music*

The great master musician-theologian Johann Sebastian Bach (1685-1750) created several settings of the tune *In dulci jubilo* (*Good Christian men rejoice!*) – two of which serve as bookends to today’s liturgy. The setting that begins the liturgy is a simple, yet charming trio. The liturgy closes with a canonic setting from the composer’s *Orgelbüchlein*.

Perhaps the most popular Christmas hymn in our tradition, *O come, all ye faithful*, lacks regular scansion (metrical rhythm) and any semblance of a rhyming scheme. Nevertheless, it is the quintessential Christmas processional hymn, penned by an English music copyist specializing in plainchant.

Today’s choral offering is a setting of the English carol *The holly and the ivy*. The lilting melody and fanciful accompaniment evoke images of creation acknowledging the Savior’s birth and woodland creatures hastening to the manger on Christmas Day.







## THE CHURCH OF ST. MICHAEL & ST. GEORGE

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