



CHRISTMAS EVE 2018

Call to Worship

Isaiah 9: 2, 6-7

PROCESSIONAL HYMN Like a candle: (tune: We three kings of Orient are)

Like a candle in the night –
flick'ring, dancing, far from bright –
shadows leaping, hostile greeting –
Bethlehem's fragile light.

*O light of life and light of love
Let us all your brightness prove.
Each refining, set us shining –
All our darkness now remove.*

Dawn of hope in Galilee,
can your presence set us free?
Teaching, healing, truth revealing,
help us your light to see!

Noonday dark on Calv'ry's hill;
evil forces met to kill –
life relinquished, hope extinguished –
but you are with us still.

Resurrection morning bright;
death is beaten in the fight.
Jesus' glory now our story –
all of us share his light!

Responsive Prayer

For some people, Christmas goes wrong and we pray for them:
for everyone who is lonely or sad today

Give them your love, O God.

For everyone who won't get a present

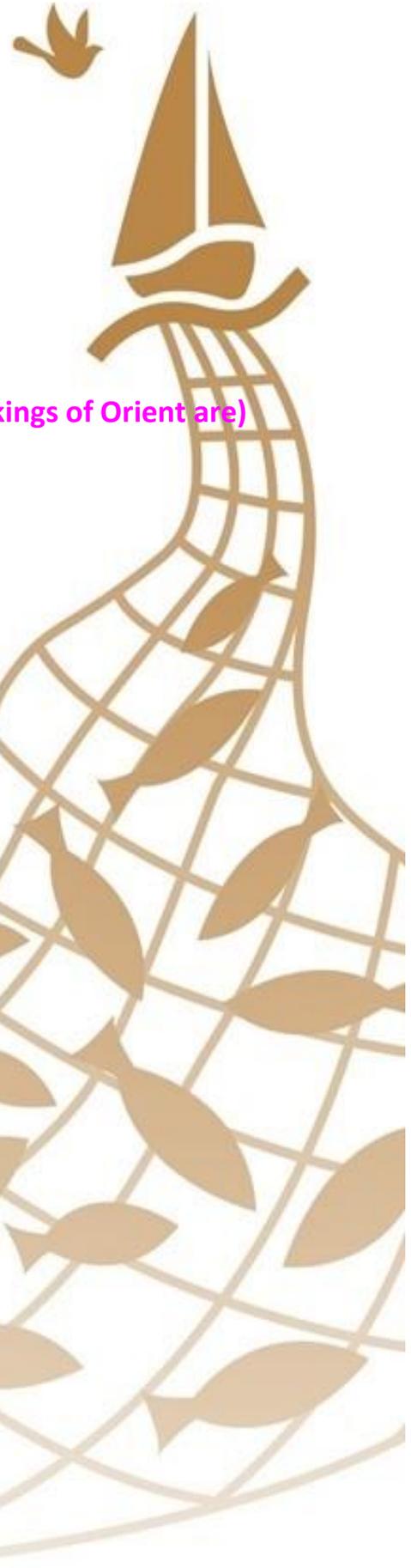
Give them your love, O God.

For everyone who couldn't afford to give presents

Give them your love, O God.

For everyone who has rows instead of laughter

Give them your love, O God.



For everyone who is disappointed or jealous

Give them your love, O God.

For everyone who gets too busy or tired to have fun

Give them your love, O God.

For everyone who doesn't know how to give or how to receive happily

Give them your love, O God.

God's light goes on shining in the darkness

And the darkness has never understood it.

God's light goes on shining in the darkness

And the darkness has never put it out.

Generous God, we do not know why you keep on giving to us;
we do not understand your joy.

But give us such pleasure this Christmas

in giving to other people and receiving from them

that we may begin to understand and become more like you,

through Jesus Christ.

AMEN

LORD'S PRAYER

Nativity 2018



Here stands a stranger, who is she?
We do not know. What do we see,
someone who threatens you and me?
Is she a foe, or friend?

Here stands a person, young or old,
seeking asylum, so we're told.
How does he fit your frame or mould?
Is he your foe or friend?

Here stands a child: assess her need.
What should we offer so we heed
her cry of hunger, so we feed
this child? This foe? This friend?

Here stands a person, this time, you.
The choice is yours. What will you do
to ask this stranger in, or sue
this foe, who could be friend?

Here is a mirror, see your face.
What do you offer; hatred, grace,
now in this very time and place,
to Christ you call your friend.

HYMN 305 In the bleak midwinter

Luke 2: 1-19 The birth of Jesus

HYMN In Bethlehem, with Jesus' birth (tune at #294)

In Bethlehem, with Jesus' birth,
the God of heaven came to earth;
a babe who left us free to choose;
a gift of love we could refuse.
What will we do? What will we say?
Will we welcome our God today?

First unknown strangers saw a star,
and seeking, travelled from afar.
Responding to its sign and call,
they journeyed, searched, then gave their all.
Will we, with them, both kneel and pray?
Will we welcome our God today?

King Herod found this quite absurd
although he had the prophet's word;
defensive, wary, trapped by fear,
he ordered slaughter far and near.
Will we, like him, push you away?
Will we welcome our God today?

This challenge still confronts us all:
this Christmas will we heed your call?
Will we be open to your care,
or fight against the love you share?
God, help us now, that we may say,
'We will welcome our God today!'

REFLECTION – Free to choose



OFFERTORY HYMN We celebrate this special birth (tune at #322)

We celebrate this special birth,
when God in Christ came down to earth,
not as king to flaunt great pow'r,
or make us fear or fret or cow'r;
just to live and learn like us,
to be our friend, without a fuss.
Celebrate Christ's birth!
Celebrate Christ's birth!

We honour here our Saviour's death,
Christ faithful 'til his final breath,
ridicule, and pain and loss,
all suffered for us on the cross;
God becomes our sacrifice,
then, rising, helps us come alive.
Celebrate Christ's death!
Celebrate Christ's death!

We celebrate this freedom feast
through which we're welcomed, loved, released,
gathered, nurtured, amplified,
by Love who for us lived and died;
Christ who came as earthly child,
here sets renewal running wild.
Celebrate Christ's feast!
Celebrate Christ's feast!

Sharing of bread and wine the lit candles are extinguished

After the introductory prayer:

Come freshly to us, Living God:
Bring in your Kingdom of justice and love,
Your Kingdom come;
Forgive us, that we may learn to repent,
Your Kingdom come;
Heal us, that we may be whole in your service,
Your Kingdom come;
Teach us, that we may be surprised into truth,
Your Kingdom come;
For you are the God who longs to set us free
to love and serve you wholeheartedly.
**Your Kingdom come in us, Lord,
and transform the world to your praise and glory. Amen**

Prayer after Communion:

May the love that breathes life into all humanity and all of creation

Be born in us tonight

May the love that brings us healing

Be born in us tonight

May the love that overcomes hatred

Be born in us tonight

May the love that forgives and renews

Be born in us tonight

May the love that brings the blessing of peace

Be born in us tonight

May that Peace now be the gift we share with each other.

In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.

What has come into being in him was life, and the life was the light of all people. The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness did not overcome it.

Candles are lit

And the Word become flesh and lived among us, and we have seen his glory

Christ is born, hallelujah!

HYMN 301 Hark the herald angels sing

The Blessing said together

Let us go in faith to ponder in our hearts the mystery of this moment.

And may life be born within us,

Christ Jesus be seen among us

and joy surround us like the angels' song. Amen

MERRY CHRISTMAS!