



# Celebrate

Second Sunday of Christmas  
January 5, 2025

*Within the gospel reading's profound words lies the simple message that God is revealed in a human person. Though we may try to understand how the Word existed with God from the beginning of time, the wonder we celebrate at Christmas is that the Word continues to dwell among us. Christ comes among us in the gathered assembly, the scriptures, the waters of new birth, and the bread and the wine. Through these ordinary gifts we receive the fullness of God's grace and truth.*

## Prayer of the Day

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Almighty God, you have filled all the earth with the light of your incarnate Word. By your grace empower us to reflect your light in all that we do, through Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. **Amen.**

## First Reading

Jeremiah 31:7-14

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*God promises to bring Israel back to its land from the most remote parts of exile. In Zion Israel will rejoice over God's gifts of food and livestock. Young women will express their joy in dancing; God will give gladness instead of sorrow.*

Thus says the LORD:

Sing aloud with gladness for Jacob,  
and raise shouts for the chief of the  
nations;

proclaim, give praise, and say,  
"Save, O LORD, your people,  
the remnant of Israel."

<sup>8</sup>See, I am going to bring them from  
the land of the north,  
and gather them from the farthest  
parts of the earth,  
among them the blind and the lame,  
those with child and those in labor,  
together;  
a great company, they shall return  
here.

<sup>9</sup>With weeping they shall come,  
and with consolations I will lead them  
back,

I will let them walk by brooks of water,  
in a straight path in which they shall  
not stumble;

for I have become a father to Israel,  
and Ephraim is my firstborn.

<sup>10</sup>Hear the word of the LORD, O nations,  
and declare it in the coastlands far  
away;

say, "He who scattered Israel will gather  
him,  
and will keep him as a shepherd a  
flock."

<sup>11</sup>For the LORD has ransomed Jacob,  
and has redeemed him from hands  
too strong for him.

<sup>12</sup>They shall come and sing aloud on the  
height of Zion,  
and they shall be radiant over the  
goodness of the LORD,  
over the grain, the wine, and the oil,  
and over the young of the flock and  
the herd;

their life shall become like a watered  
garden,  
and they shall never languish again.

<sup>13</sup>Then shall the young women rejoice in  
the dance,  
and the young men and the old shall  
be merry.

I will turn their mourning into joy,  
I will comfort them, and give them  
gladness for sorrow.

<sup>14</sup>I will give the priests their fill of fatness,  
and my people shall be satisfied with  
my bounty,

says the LORD.



## or Sirach 24:1-12 [not printed]

*The figure of Wisdom played a major role in early discussions of Christology. Wisdom is the divine word, coming from the mouth of God, and ruling over all of creation. Wisdom, created at the beginning of time, made her dwelling place in Jerusalem among God's people.*

## Second Reading

## Ephesians 1:3-14

*In Jesus, all of God's plans and purposes have been made known as heaven and earth are united in Christ. Through Jesus, we have been chosen as God's children and have been promised eternal salvation.*

Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us in Christ with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places, <sup>4</sup>just as he chose us in Christ before the foundation of the world to be holy and blameless before him in love. <sup>5</sup>He destined us for adoption as his children through Jesus Christ, according to the good pleasure of his will, <sup>6</sup>to the praise of his glorious grace that he freely bestowed on us in the Beloved. <sup>7</sup>In him we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of our trespasses, according to the riches of his grace <sup>8</sup>that he lavished on us. With all wisdom and insight <sup>9</sup>he has made known to us the mystery of his will, according to his good pleasure that

he set forth in Christ, <sup>10</sup>as a plan for the fullness of time, to gather up all things in him, things in heaven and things on earth. <sup>11</sup>In Christ we have also obtained an inheritance, having been destined according to the purpose of him who accomplishes all things according to his counsel and will, <sup>12</sup>so that we, who were the first to set our hope on Christ, might live for the praise of his glory. <sup>13</sup>In him you also, when you had heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation, and had believed in him, were marked with the seal of the promised Holy Spirit; <sup>14</sup>this is the pledge of our inheritance toward redemption as God's own people, to the praise of his glory.

## Gospel

## John 1:[1-9] 10-18

*John begins his gospel with this prologue: a hymn to the Word through whom all things were created. This Word became flesh and brought grace and truth to the world.*

[In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. <sup>2</sup>He was in the beginning with God. <sup>3</sup>All things came into being through him, and without him not one thing came into being. What has come into being <sup>4</sup>in him was life, and the life was the light of all people. <sup>5</sup>The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness did not overcome it.

<sup>6</sup>There was a man sent from God, whose name was John. <sup>7</sup>He came as a witness to testify to the light, so that all might believe through him. <sup>8</sup>He himself was not the light, but he came to testify to the light. <sup>9</sup>The true light, which enlightens everyone, was coming into the world.]

<sup>10</sup>He was in the world, and the world came into being through him; yet the world did not know him. <sup>11</sup>He came to what was his own, and his own people did

not accept him. <sup>12</sup>But to all who received him, who believed in his name, he gave power to become children of God, <sup>13</sup>who were born, not of blood or of the will of the flesh or of the will of man, but of God.

<sup>14</sup>And the Word became flesh and lived among us, and we have seen his glory, the glory as of a father's only son, full of grace and truth. <sup>15</sup>(John testified to him and cried out, "This was he of whom I said, 'He who comes after me ranks ahead of me because he was before me.'") <sup>16</sup>From his fullness we have all received, grace upon grace. <sup>17</sup>The law indeed was given through Moses; grace and truth came through Jesus Christ. <sup>18</sup>No one has ever seen God. It is God the only Son, who is close to the Father's heart, who has made him known.

## Prayers of Intercession

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*The prayers are prepared locally for each occasion. The following examples may be adapted or used as appropriate.*

Filled with good news of great joy, let us offer our prayers for the church, the earth, and all people.

*A brief silence.*

O God, you reveal yourself in this assembly. In water, wine, and bread, show us again and again your grace upon grace, that your church boldly testifies to your love. God of grace,  
**receive our prayer.**

You reveal yourself in creation. In seedlings and planets, microorganisms and galaxies, awaken us to the cry of the earth. As you nourish your people like a watered garden, empower us to nourish our creaturely companions. God of grace,  
**receive our prayer.**

You reveal yourself in every land and in the farthest parts of the earth. Deliver peoples who suffer under oppressive regimes. Thwart the foolish plans of unjust leaders. Give wisdom to our elected officials (*local leaders or governing bodies may be named*). God of grace,  
**receive our prayer.**

You reveal yourself in every human being. Help us recognize your image in our siblings in Christ who are in the strong grip of addiction, depression, anxiety, hopelessness, or other illness (*especially*). Grant us compassion in our care for your people. God of grace,  
**receive our prayer.**

You reveal yourself anew every day. In this new year, renew this congregation and its ministries in our witness to the good news of the incarnation (*specific ministry areas may be named*). Transform the way we have always done things into your new future for us. God of grace,  
**receive our prayer.**

*Here other intercessions may be offered.*

You reveal yourself in the lives of your holy ones. We give you thanks for those who set their hope on you, trusting the inheritance we receive in you. God of grace,  
**receive our prayer.**

We commend these prayers to you, O God, trusting your grace made known to all, through the Word made flesh, Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord.  
**Amen.**

## Preparing for Next Week

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**Monday** (Epiphany of Our Lord) Matthew 2:1-12. **Tuesday** Ephesians 4:17—5:1. **Wednesday** Ephesians 5:15-20. **Thursday** 1 Corinthians 1:18-31. **Friday** Psalm 29. **Saturday** Ecclesiastes 3:1-15. **Baptism of Our Lord** Isaiah 43:1-7; Psalm 29; Acts 8:14-17; Luke 3:15-17, 21-22.

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