

## **Christmas Day December 25, 2015 using Christmas II readings**

**Collect:** O God, you make us glad by the yearly festival of the birth of your only Son Jesus Christ: Grant that we, who joyfully receive him as our Redeemer, may with sure confidence behold him when he comes to be our Judge; who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and for ever. **Amen**

### **Old Testament: Isaiah 62:6-12 read from the Modern English Version Bible**

I have set watchmen on your walls, O Jerusalem, who shall never hold their peace day nor night. You who remind the Lord, do not keep silent; give Him no rest until He establishes and makes Jerusalem a glory in the earth.

The Lord has sworn by His right hand and by His strong arm: Surely I will no longer give your grain as food for your enemies; and the sons of the foreigners shall not drink your wine for which you have labored. But those who have gathered it shall eat it and praise the Lord; and those who have brought it shall drink it in the courts of My sanctuary.

Go through, go through the gates. Prepare the way of the people; build up, build up the highway. Remove the stones; lift up a standard over the peoples.

The Lord has proclaimed to the ends of the earth: Say to the daughter of Zion, "See, your salvation comes; see, His reward is with Him, and His recompense before Him." They shall call them The Holy People, the Redeemed of the Lord; and you shall be called Sought Out, a City Not Forsaken.

### **The Word of the Lord**

### **Psalm: 97 read from The Episcopal Church Book of Common Prayer**

1 The Lord is King; let the earth rejoice; \* let the multitude of the isles be glad.

2 Clouds and darkness are round about him, \* righteousness and justice are the foundations

of his throne.

3 A fire goes before him \* and burns up his enemies on every side.

4 His lightnings light up the world; \* the earth sees it and is afraid.

5 The mountains melt like wax at the presence of the Lord, \* at the presence of the Lord of the whole earth.

6 The heavens declare his righteousness, \* and all the peoples see his glory.

7 Confounded be all who worship carved images and delight in false gods! \* Bow down before him, all you gods.

8 Zion hears and is glad, and the cities of Judah rejoice, \* because of your judgments, O Lord.

9 For you are the Lord, most high over all the earth; \* you are exalted far above all gods.

10 The Lord loves those who hate evil; \* he preserves the lives of his saints and delivers them from the hand of the wicked.

11 Light has sprung up for the righteous, \* and joyful gladness for those who are truehearted.

12 Rejoice in the Lord, you righteous, \* and give thanks to his holy Name.

### **The Epistle: Titus 3:4-7 read from the Names of God bible**

However, when God our Savior made his kindness and love for humanity appear, he saved us, but not because of anything we had done to gain his approval. Instead, because of his mercy he saved us through the washing in which the Holy Spirit gives us new birth and renewal. God poured a generous amount of the Spirit on us through Yeshua (**yah-shua**) Christ our Savior. As a result, God in his kindness has given us his approval and we have become heirs who have the confidence that we have everlasting life.

### **The Word of the Lord**

### **The Gospel: Luke 2:1 - 20, read from New American Standard Bible**

Now in those days a decree went out from Caesar Augustus, that a census be taken of all the inhabited earth. This was the first census taken while Quirinius was governor of Syria. And everyone was on his way to register for the census, each to his own city. Joseph also went up from Galilee, from the city of Nazareth, to Judea, to the city of David which is called

Bethlehem, because he was of the house and family of David, in order to register along with Mary, who was engaged to him, and was with child. While they were there, the days were completed for her to give birth. And she gave birth to her firstborn son; and she wrapped Him in cloths, and laid Him in a [d]manger, because there was no room for them in the inn.

In the same region there were some shepherds staying out in the fields and keeping watch over their flock by night. And an angel of the Lord suddenly stood before them, and the glory of the Lord shone around them; and they were terribly frightened. But the angel said to them, “Do not be afraid; for behold, I bring you good news of great joy which will be for all the people; for today in the city of David there has been born for you a Savior, who is Christ the Lord. This will be a sign for you: you will find a baby wrapped in cloths and lying in a manger.” And suddenly there appeared with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host praising God and saying,

“Glory to God in the highest, And on earth peace among men with whom He is pleased.”

When the angels had gone away from them into heaven, the shepherds began saying to one another, “Let us go straight to Bethlehem then, and see this thing that has happened which the Lord has made known to us.” So they came in a hurry and found their way to Mary and Joseph, and the baby as He lay in the manger. When they had seen this, they made known the statement which had been told them about this Child. And all who heard it wondered at the things which were told them by the shepherds. But Mary treasured all these things, pondering them in her heart. The shepherds went back, glorifying and praising God for all that they had heard and seen, just as had been told them.

### **The Gospel of the Lord**

#### **Closing Prayer for Christmas Day:**

On this Christmas Day let us think of this, there is no evidence of any kind regarding the date of Jesus' birth. His nativity began to be celebrated on December 25th in Rome during the early part of the fourth century as a Christian counterpart to the pagan festival, popular among the worshipers of Mithras, called Sol Invictis, the Unconquerable Sun. At the very moment

when the days are the shortest and darkness seems to have conquered light, the sun passes its lowest point. Days grow longer, and although the cold will increase for some time, the ultimate conquest of winter is sure. This astronomical process is a parable of the career of the Incarnate One. At the moment when history is blackest, and in the least expected and obvious place, the Son of God is born..."

**Let us pray:** Almighty God, you have given your only-begotten Son to take our nature upon him, and to be born [this day] of a pure virgin: Grant that we, who have been born again and made your children by adoption and grace, may daily be renewed by your Holy Spirit; through our Lord Jesus Christ, to whom with you and the same Spirit be honor and glory, now and for ever. **Amen.**

**And:**

God grant you the light of Christmas,  
which is faith;  
the warmth of Christmas,  
which is purity;  
the righteousness of Christmas,  
which is justice;  
the belief in Christmas,  
which is truth;  
the all of Christmas,  
which is Christ?.

**Amen**