

Readings, prayers, sending Christmas 2020

Readers: Sallie, Charles, Diana

Prayers: John K

Reading Titus 3.4-7

When the goodness and loving kindness of God our Savior appeared, he saved us, not because of any works of righteousness that we had done, but according to his mercy, through the water of rebirth and renewal by the Holy Spirit. This Spirit he poured out on us richly through Jesus Christ our Savior, so that, having been justified by his grace, we might become heirs according to the hope of eternal life.

(After reading) Hear what the Spirit is saying to the people.

Thanks be to God

Reading "The Mood of Christmas"

Howard Thurman, 1973

"I will light Candles this Christmas;
Candles of joy despite all sadness,
Candles of hope where despair keeps watch,
Candles of courage for fears ever present,
Candles of peace for tempest-tossed days,
Candles of grace to ease heavy burdens,
Candles of love to inspire all my living,
Candles that will burn all the year long."

(After reading) Hear what the Spirit is saying to the people.

Thanks be to God

Reading a poem from "Cloth for the Cradle"

(Wild Goose Worship Group)

This, tonight
is the meeting place
of heaven and earth.
For this, tonight,
is the stable
in which God keeps appointment
to meet all people.
Not many high are here,
not many holy,
not many innocent children,
not many worldly wise,
not all familiar faces,
not all frequent visitors.

But if tonight
only strangers met,
that would be enough.

For Bethlehem was not the hub of the universe,
Nor was the stable a platform for famous people.
In an out-of-the-way place
which people never thought to visit –
there God kept and keeps the promise;
there God's Son comes to us.

(After reading) Hear what the Spirit is saying God's people.

Thanks be to God

Gospel Luke 2.1-7

The Good News of Jesus the Christ, according to Luke

Glory to you, O Christ

In those days a decree went out from Emperor Augustus that all the world should be registered. This was the first registration and was taken while Quirinius was governor of Syria. All went to their own towns to be registered. Joseph also went from the town of Nazareth in Galilee to Judea, to the city of David called Bethlehem, because he was descended from the house and family of David. He went to be registered with Mary, to whom he was engaged and who was expecting a child. While they were there, the time came for her to deliver her child. And she gave birth to her firstborn son and wrapped him in bands of cloth, and laid him in a manger, because there was no place for them in the inn.

The Good News of the Christ.

Praise to you, O Christ

Prayer Litany for Christmas Eve

In joy and thanksgiving at Christ's birth,
Let us sing to the Lord a new song,
On earth peace, good will among people.

We pray for all faithful people,

For all seekers,
For all messengers of good news,
For those in need of solace.

God of good news and healing, ***hear our prayer.***

For the nations and their rulers,
For corporations and their executives,
For anyone with power over the lives of others,

God of good news and healing, ***hear our prayer.***

For those who defend the helpless,
For those who strive for justice,
For those who work to find a way to peace,
For the world, and all who live in it,

God of good news and healing, ***hear our prayer.***

For anyone suffering, sick, alone, afraid, or in any kind of trouble.
We pray especially for ... *name those you want to remember today*

God of good news and healing, ***hear our prayer.*** .

For this gathered community, for friends, neighbors, and family, near and far.
We pray especially for ... *[name those you want to remember today]*.

God of good news and healing, ***hear our prayer.***

For those who have died.
We pray especially for ... *name those you want to remember today*

God of good news and healing, ***hear our prayer.***

We offer thanksgiving for Mary's firstborn Son—
good news of great joy.

God of good news and healing, ***hear our prayer.***

You, O God, are life forever and ever.
Before the eyes of all the nations you sent your Son,
the exact imprint of love itself, to be for us the Way of Life.
With the shepherds in the fields,
let us go now to Bethlehem,

there to find Christ in our hearts, and in the world. **Amen.**

~ written by Margaret D. McGee for the Christmas Eve service at St. Paul's Episcopal Church in Port Townsend, Washington. Posted on **In the Courtyard**.

The Peace

On this night, in the City of David, is born a Savior who is Christ the Lord.

Peace on Earth and good will to all.

The peace of God be always with you.

And also with you.

Dismissal

A boy has been born for us;

A child has been given to us.

And his name shall be called

Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God,

Eternal Father, the Prince of Peace.

Once we were no people;

Now we are God's people.

Once we walked in darkness;

Now we have seen a great light.

Thanks be to God. Amen.