



Hallelujah! Praise the LORD ¹ from the heavens;
praise God ¹ in the heights.

²Praise the LORD, ¹ all you angels;
sing praise, all you ¹ hosts of heaven.

³Praise the LORD, ¹ sun and moon;
sing praise, all you ¹ shining stars.

⁴Praise the LORD, heav- ¹ en of heavens,
and you waters a- ¹ bove the heavens.

⁵Let them praise the name ¹ of the LORD,
who commanded, and they ¹ were created,

⁶who made them stand fast forev- ¹ er and ever,
giving them a law that shall not ¹ pass away. **R**

⁷Praise the LORD ¹ from the earth,
you sea monsters ¹ and all deeps;

⁸fire and hail, ¹ snow and fog,
tempestuous wind, do- ¹ ing God's will;

⁹mountains ¹ and all hills,
fruit trees ¹ and all cedars;

¹⁰wild beasts ¹ and all cattle,
creeping things and ¹ flying birds;

¹¹sovereigns of the earth ¹ and all peoples,
princes and all rulers ¹ of the world;

¹²young ¹ men and maidens,
old and ¹ young together. **R**

¹³Let them praise the name ¹ of the LORD,
whose name only is exalted, whose splendor is over ¹ earth and heaven.

¹⁴The LORD has raised up strength for the people
and praise for all ¹ faithful servants,
the children of Israel, a people who are near the LORD.
¹ Hallelujah! **R**

Through Jesus' suffering and death, the trail to eternal salvation has been blazed for us. We do not fear death, because he has conquered the power of death. Thus Christ, our merciful and faithful high priest, has the final say over the destiny of our lives.

It was fitting that God, for whom and through whom all things exist, in bringing many children to glory, should make the pioneer of their salvation perfect through sufferings. ¹¹For the one who sanctifies and those who are sanctified all have one Father. For this reason Jesus is not ashamed to call them brothers and sisters, ¹²saying,

"I will proclaim your name to my
brothers and sisters,
in the midst of the congregation
I will praise you."

¹³And again,

"I will put my trust in him."

And again,

"Here am I and the children whom
God has given me."

¹⁴Since, therefore, the children share flesh and blood, he himself likewise shared the same things, so that through death he might destroy the one who has the power of death, that is, the devil, ¹⁵and free those who all their lives were held in slavery by the fear of death. ¹⁶For it is clear that he did not come to help angels, but the descendants of Abraham. ¹⁷Therefore he had to become like his brothers and sisters in every respect, so that he might be a merciful and faithful high priest in the service of God, to make a sacrifice of atonement for the sins of the people. ¹⁸Because he himself was tested by what he suffered, he is able to help those who are being tested.

Gospel

Matthew 2:13-23

In a dream, Joseph is warned to flee to Egypt to protect the infant Jesus from the jealousy of Herod.

Now after [the wise men] had left, an angel of the Lord appeared to Joseph in a dream and said, "Get up, take the child and his mother, and flee to Egypt, and remain there until I tell you; for Herod is about to search for the child, to destroy him." ¹⁴Then Joseph got up, took the child and his mother by night, and went to Egypt, ¹⁵and remained there until the death of Herod. This was to fulfill what had been spoken by the Lord through the prophet, "Out of Egypt I have called my son."

¹⁶When Herod saw that he had been tricked by the wise men, he was infuriated, and he sent and killed all the children in and around Bethlehem who were two years old or under, according to the time that he had learned from the wise men. ¹⁷Then was fulfilled what had been spoken through the prophet Jeremiah:

¹⁸"A voice was heard in Ramah,
wailing and loud lamentation,
Rachel weeping for her children;
she refused to be consoled,
because they are no more."

¹⁹When Herod died, an angel of the Lord suddenly appeared in a dream to Joseph in Egypt and said, ²⁰"Get up, take the child and his mother, and go to the land of Israel, for those who were seeking the child's life are dead." ²¹Then Joseph got up, took the child and his mother, and went to the land of Israel. ²²But when he heard that Archelaus was ruling over Judea in place of his father Herod, he was afraid to go there. And after being warned in a dream, he went away to the district of Galilee. ²³There he made his home in a town called Nazareth, so that what had been spoken through the prophets might be fulfilled, "He will be called a Nazorean."

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

With wonder and thanksgiving for Christ's coming into the world, we pray for the church, the life of the earth, and the whole human family.

A brief silence.

Merciful God, broaden the church's hospitality and welcome. Open our hearts to any in need of refuge and help, especially those who are persecuted. Prosper the work of Lutheran Immigration and Refugee Service. God of grace,
hear our prayer.

Life-giving God, restore the health of the soil, the seas, and the air. Increase the joy and praise of all living things. In the coming year strengthen local, national, and international efforts to prevent further harm to the environment. God of grace,
hear our prayer.

Liberating God, deliver your people from cruel oppression. Increase justice in every nation and keep the dream of freedom alive. In this new year bring the blessing of peace and put an end to violent conflict throughout the world (*regions in turmoil and conflict may be named*). God of grace,
hear our prayer.

Preparing for Next Week

Monday (commemoration of Johann Konrad Wilhelm Loehe, renewer of the church, died 1872) Psalm 72. **Tuesday** Genesis 28:10-22. **Wednesday** Exodus 3:1-5. **Thursday** Hebrews 11:32—12:2. **Friday** (Epiphany of Our Lord) Matthew 2:1-12. **Saturday** 1 Kings 10:1-13. **Baptism of Our Lord** Isaiah 42:1-9; Psalm 29; Acts 10:34-43; Matthew 3:13-17.

CELEBRATE January 1, 2023

Volume 54, Number 1

CELEBRATE (ISSN 1083-3242, USPS 763-460) is published quarterly by Augsburg Fortress, 411 Washington Avenue North, Third Floor, Minneapolis, MN, 55401. Periodicals postage paid in St. Paul, MN and additional mailing offices. Postmaster: Send address changes to Celebrate, Augsburg Fortress Publishers, P.O. Box 1553, Minneapolis, MN 55440-8730. Printed in U.S.A. Price per weekly part \$5.79 per 100 copies; price in Canada subject to exchange rates. Minimum order 50 copies of each issue; all orders must be in multiples of 50. Copyright © 2022 Augsburg Fortress. All rights reserved. May not be reproduced. Revised Common Lectionary © 1992 Consultation on Common Texts. Readings from New Revised Standard Version Bible with Apocrypha © 1989 Division of Christian Education of the National Council of Churches of Christ in the U.S.A. Prayer of the day, psalm, and readings during the week from *Evangelical Lutheran Worship* © 2006, admin. Augsburg Fortress. Refrain music by Michael Krentz. Refrain accompaniment is in *Psalter for Worship, Year A* (Augsburg Fortress, 2007). Please visit our website at augsburgfortress.org. Lectionary year A. CELEBRATE is protected through trademark registration in the U.S.A. and Canada.



Celebrate

First Sunday of Christmas
January 1, 2023

As we celebrate the Twelve Days of Christmas, our gospel today confronts us with the death of innocent children at the hands of Herod. The birth of Christ does not remove the power of evil from our world, but its light gives us hope as we walk with all the "holy innocents" of past generations and today who have suffered unjustly. In our gathering around word and meal, God continues to redeem us, lift us up, and carry us as in days of old.

Prayer of the Day

O Lord God, you know that we cannot place our trust in our own powers. As you protected the infant Jesus, so defend us and all the needy from harm and adversity, 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

Isaiah 63:7-9

God does not delegate divine intervention to a messenger or an angel. God's own presence brings salvation. The prophet and all who read these words join in celebrating God's gracious deeds. God trusts that God's people will not act falsely.

I will recount the gracious deeds of the
LORD,
the praiseworthy acts of the LORD,
because of all that the LORD has done
for us,
and the great favor to the house of
Israel
that he has shown them according to
his mercy,
according to the abundance of his
steadfast love.

⁸For he said, "Surely they are my
people,
children who will not deal falsely";
and he became their savior
⁹in all their distress.
It was no messenger or angel
but his presence that saved them;
in his love and in his pity he redeemed
them;
he lifted them up and carried them
all the days of old.