

For to us a child is born,
to us a son is given;
and the government shall be upon his shoulder,
and His name shall be called

Wonderful Counselor,
Mighty God,
EVERLASTING FATHER
Prince of Peace.

December 17

O Come, O Come Emmanuel (O Antiphons)

O come, O come, Emmanuel, and ransom captive Israel
That mourns in lonely exile here until the Son of God appear.
Rejoice! Rejoice, Emmanuel shall come to thee, O Israel!

The hymn *O Come, O Come, Emmanuel* is a Latin piece from the 12th century, translated by John Mason Neale in 1851. Each verse focuses on a different name for Christ. He is Wisdom, the Rod of Jesse, Dayspring, the Key of David, Lord of Might, the Desire of Nations. The verses are based on liturgical texts, or *antiphons*, which date back possibly to the sixth century, and which were said or sung in worship services from December 16 through December 23. Each text greets the Messiah and ends with a petition of hope. For example:

“O Emmanuel, our King and Lawgiver, the Expected of the nations and the Savior of them all, O come and save us, O Lord our God.”

O Come, O Come, Emmanuel is a meditative hymn that encourages us to dwell on this: Emmanuel *has* come to us. We have been ransomed; we are redeemed.

Isaiah 59:20 (ESV)

“And a Redeemer will come to Zion,
to those in Jacob who turn from transgression,” declares the LORD.

December 18

O Come, O Come, Emmanuel

Latin, c. 12th century; trans. John Mason Neale, 1851

O come, O come, Emmanuel, and ransom captive Israel
That mourns in lonely exile here until the Son of God appear.
Rejoice! Rejoice, Emmanuel shall come to thee, O Israel!

O Come, Thou Wisdom from on high, who orderest all things mightily,
To us the path of knowledge show and teach us in her ways to go.
Rejoice! Rejoice, Emmanuel shall come to thee, O Israel!

O come, O come, great Lord of might, who to Thy tribes on Sinai's height
in ancient times didst give the law, in cloud and majesty and awe.
Rejoice! Rejoice, Emmanuel shall come to thee, O Israel!

O come, Thou Rod of Jesse, free Thine own from Satan's tyranny;
From depths of hell Thy people save and give them vict'ry o'er the grave.
Rejoice! Rejoice, Emmanuel shall come to thee, O Israel!

O come, Thou Key of David, come and open wide our Heavenly home;
make straight the way that leads on high, and close the path to misery.
Rejoice! Rejoice, Emmanuel shall come to thee, O Israel!

O come, Thou Dayspring, come and cheer our spirits by Thine advent here.
Disperse the gloomy clouds of night, and death's dark shadows put to flight.
Rejoice! Rejoice, Emmanuel shall come to thee, O Israel!

O come, Desire of nations, bind all people's in one heart and mind;
Bid envy, strife, and quarrel cease; and be Thyself our King of Peace.
Rejoice! Rejoice, Emmanuel shall come to thee, O Israel!

December 19

Listed below are the names of Christ (in Latin and English) from the O Antiphons (and O Come, O Come, *Emmanuel*). Each is paired with a passage from Isaiah. These scriptures give us a picture of the long-awaited Messiah. The verses declare who He is and what He has done, is doing, and will do. God dwells with us; His Kingdom is at hand. Rejoice!

O Sapientia (Wisdom) Isaiah 11:1–2 (ESV)

¹ There shall come forth a shoot from the stump of Jesse,
and a branch from his roots shall bear fruit.

² And the Spirit of the LORD shall rest upon him,
the Spirit of wisdom and understanding,
the Spirit of counsel and might,
the Spirit of knowledge and the fear of the LORD.

O Adonai (Lord) Isaiah 11:4–5; Isaiah 33:22 (ESV)

⁴ but with righteousness He shall judge the poor,
and decide with equity for the meek of the earth;
and He shall strike the earth with the rod of His mouth,
and with the breath of His lips He shall kill the wicked.

⁵ Righteousness shall be the belt of His waist,
and faithfulness the belt of His loins.

²² For the LORD is our judge; the LORD is our lawgiver;
the LORD is our king; He will save us.

O Radix Jesse (Root of Jesse) Isaiah 11:10 (ESV)

¹⁰ In that day the root of Jesse, who shall stand as a signal for the peoples—of him shall the nations inquire, and his resting place shall be glorious.

O Clavis David (Key of David) Isaiah 22:22 (ESV)

²² And I will place on his shoulder the key of the house of David. He shall open, and none shall shut; and he shall shut, and none shall open.

O Oriens (Rising Sun) Isaiah 60:1-3 (ESV)

¹ Arise, shine, for your light has come,
and the glory of the LORD has risen upon you.

² For behold, darkness shall cover the earth,
and thick darkness the peoples;
but the LORD will arise upon you,
and his glory will be seen upon you.

³ And nations shall come to your light,
and kings to the brightness of your rising.

O Rex Gentium (King of the Nations) Isaiah 2:4 (ESV)

⁴ He shall judge between the nations,
and shall decide disputes for many peoples;
and they shall beat their swords into plowshares,
and their spears into pruning hooks;
nation shall not lift up sword against nation,
neither shall they learn war anymore.

O Emmanuel (God with us) Isaiah 7:14 (ESV)

¹⁴ Therefore the Lord Himself will give you a sign. Behold, the virgin shall conceive and bear a son, and shall call his name Immanuel.

December 20

Come, Thou Long Expected Jesus

Charles Wesley, 1745; Mark E. Hunt, 1978

Come, Thou Long Expected Jesus, born to set Thy people free.
From our fears and sins release us; let us find our rest in Thee.
Israel's strength and consolation, Hope of all the earth Thou art:
Dear desire of every nation, Joy of ev'ry longing heart!

Joy to those who long to see Thee, Dayspring from on high appear.
Come, Thou promised Rod of Jesse, of Thy birth we long to hear.
O'er the hills the angels singing, news, glad tidings of a birth:
Go to Him your praises ringing—Christ the Lord has come to earth!

Come to earth to taste our sadness, He whose glories knew no end.
By His life He brings us gladness, our Redeemer, Shepherd, friend.
Leaving riches without number, born within a cattle stall:
This the everlasting wonder, Christ was born the Lord of all.

Born Thy people to deliver, born a child and yet a King;
Born to reign in us forever, now Thy gracious kingdom bring.
By Thine own eternal Spirit rule in all our hearts alone;
By Thine all-sufficient merit raise us to Thy glorious throne.

December 21

Matthew 1:18-25 (ESV)

¹⁸ Now the birth of Jesus Christ took place in this way. When His mother Mary had been betrothed to Joseph, before they came together she was found to be with child from the Holy Spirit. ¹⁹ And her husband Joseph, being a just man and unwilling to put her to shame, resolved to divorce her quietly. ²⁰ But as he considered these things, behold, an angel of the Lord appeared to him in a dream, saying, “Joseph, son of David, do not fear to take Mary as your wife, for that which is conceived in her is from the Holy Spirit. ²¹ She will bear a son, and you shall call His name Jesus, for He will save His people from their sins.” ²² All this took place to fulfill what the Lord had spoken by the prophet:

²³ “Behold, the virgin shall conceive and bear a son,
and they shall call His name Immanuel”

(which means, God with us). ²⁴ When Joseph woke from sleep, he did as the angel of the Lord commanded him: he took his wife, ²⁵ but knew her not until she had given birth to a son. And he called His name Jesus.

Notes: _____

December 22

O Come, All Ye Faithful

Adeste Fideles by John Wade, 1743; transl. Frederick Oakeley, 1841

O come, all ye faithful, joyful and triumphant;
O come, ye, o come ye to Bethlehem.
Come and behold Him, born the King of angels--
O come, let us adore Him, o come let us adore Him,
O come, let us adore Him, Christ the Lord!

God of God, Light of Light;
Lo, He abhors not the Virgin's womb.
Very God, begotten not created;
O come, let us adore Him, o come let us adore Him,
O come, let us adore Him, Christ the Lord!

Sing, choirs of angels, sing in exultation,
Sing all ye citizens of Heaven above,
Glory to God, Glory in the highest!
O come, let us adore Him, o come let us adore Him,
O come, let us adore Him, Christ the Lord!

Yea, Lord, we greet Thee, born this happy morning!
Jesus, to Thee be all glory giv'n.
Word of the Father, now in flesh appearing,
O come, let us adore Him, o come let us adore Him,
O come, let us adore Him, Christ the Lord!

For to us a child is born,
to us a son is given;
and the government shall be upon his shoulder,
and his name shall be called

Wonderful Counselor,
Mighty God,
Everlasting Father,
PRINCE OF PEACE.

December 24

Luke 2:1-20 (King James Version)

And it came to pass in those days, that there went out a decree from Caesar Augustus that all the world should be taxed. And this taxing was first made when Quirinius was governor of Syria. And all went to be taxed, everyone into his own city. And Joseph also went up from Galilee, out of the city of Nazareth, into Judea, unto the city of David, which is called Bethlehem, because he was of the house and lineage of David, to be taxed with Mary, his espoused wife, being great with child.

And so it was that, while they were there, the days were accomplished that she should be delivered. And she brought forth her firstborn son, and wrapped Him in swaddling clothes, and laid Him in a manger, because there was no room for them in the inn.

And there were in the same country shepherds abiding in the field, keeping watch over their flock by night. And, lo, the angel of the Lord came upon them, and the glory of the Lord shone round about them: and they were sore afraid. And the angel said unto them, "Fear not: for, behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy, which shall be to all people. For unto you is born this day in the city of David a Savior, which is Christ the Lord. And this shall be a sign unto you; Ye shall find the babe wrapped in swaddling clothes, lying in a manger."

And suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host, praising God and saying, "Glory to God in the highest, and on earth, peace, good will toward men."

And it came to pass, as the angels were gone away from them into heaven, the shepherds said one to another, "Let us now go even unto Bethlehem, and see this thing which is come to pass, which the Lord hath made known unto us." And they came with haste and found Mary, and Joseph, and the babe lying in a manger. And when they had seen it, they made known abroad the saying which was told them concerning this child. And all they that heard it wondered at those things which were told them by the shepherds.

But Mary kept all these things, and pondered them in her heart.

And the shepherds returned, glorifying and praising God for all the things that they had heard and seen, as it was told unto them.

Notes: _____

Merry Christmas!

O God, who makes us glad with the yearly remembrance
of the birth of Thine only Son Jesus Christ:

Grant that as we joyfully receive Him for our Redeemer,
so we may with sure confidence behold Him when He shall come to be our Judge,
who lives and reigns with Thee and the Holy Ghost,
one God, world without end. Amen.

- *The Book of Common Worship*, 1946

Angels from the Realms of Glory

James Montgomery, 1816

Angels from the realms of glory, wing your flight o'er all the earth;
Ye who sang creation's story, now proclaim Messiah's birth:
Come and worship, come and worship, worship Christ the newborn King!

Shepherds in the field abiding, watching o'er your flocks by night:
God with man is now residing, yonder shines the infant light:
Come and worship, come and worship, worship Christ the newborn King!

Sages, leave your contemplations, brighter visions beam afar;
Seek the great Desire of Nations, ye have seen His natal star:
Come and worship, come and worship, worship Christ the newborn King!

Saints before the altar bending, watching long in hope and fear;
Suddenly the Lord, descending in this temple shall appear:
Come and worship, come and worship, worship Christ the newborn King!

All creation, join in praising God the Father, Spirit, Son;
evermore your voices raising to th' eternal Three in One:
Come and worship, come and worship, worship Christ the newborn King!

In the church calendar, twelve days are set aside for feasting, celebrating, and rejoicing in the birth of Christ. Advent is a time to prepare for His coming; Christmastide is a time to savor this reality: God dwells with us. We are no longer in darkness; our long-awaited Light has come.

On Epiphany, we celebrate the arrival of the Wise Men, the first gentiles to worship Christ, the Light for all the nations.

January 6, 2019: Epiphany

O God, who by the shining of a star guided the Wise Men to behold Thy Son our Lord: Show us Thy heavenly light, and give us grace to follow until we find Him, and, finding Him, rejoice.

And grant that as they presented gold, frankincense, and myrrh, we now may bring Him the offering of a loving heart, an adoring spirit, and an obedient will, for His honor, and for Thy glory, O God Most High. Amen.

- *The Book of Common Worship, 1946*