

SUGGESTED HYMNS AND READINGS

for half-hour before midnight mass

Reading 1 *Isaiah 7:10-14*
This will be the sign – a maiden is with child

Hymn

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, and order all things mightily;
to us the path of knowledge show, and teach us in her ways to go.

O come, O come, thou Lord of might, who to thy tribes, on Sinai's height
in ancient times, didst give the law in cloud and majesty and awe:

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:

O come, thou key of David, come and open wide our heavenly home;
make safe the way that leads on high, and close the path to misery.

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:

O come desire of nations bind in one the hearts of humankind;
bid every sad division cease, and be thyself our Prince of peace.

Prayer

Gracious God,
your people look forward in hope
to the festival of our Saviour's birth.

Give us the strength to reach that happy day of salvation,
and to celebrate it with hearts full of joy.

We ask this through our lord Jesus Christ, your Son,
who lives and reigns with you in the unity of the Holy Spirit,
God for ever and ever.

Reading 2 *Isaiah 11:1-10*
A shoot shall spring from the stock of Jesse

Hymn

Long ago, prophets knew Christ would come, born a Jew,
come to make all things new; bear his people's burden,
freely love and pardon.

Ring, bells, ring, ring, ring! Sing, choirs, sing, sing, sing!
When he comes, when he comes, who will make him welcome?

God in time, God in man, this is God's timeless plan:
He will come, as a man, born himself of woman,
God divinely human.

Mary hail! Though afraid, she believed, she obeyed.
In her womb, God is laid: till the time expected,
nurtured and protected:

Journey ends! Where afar Bethlehem shines, like a star,
stable door stands ajar. unborn Son of Mary,
Saviour, do not tarry!

Prayer

God of majesty and power,
amid the clamour of our violence your Word of truth resounds;
upon a world made dark by sin the Sun of Justice casts his dawning rays.

Keep your household watchful and aware of the hour in which we live.
Hasten the advent of that day when the sounds of war will be forever stilled,
the darkness of evil scattered, and all your children gathered into one.
We ask this through Christ our Lord. Amen.

Reading 3 *Luke 1:26-38*

The annunciation

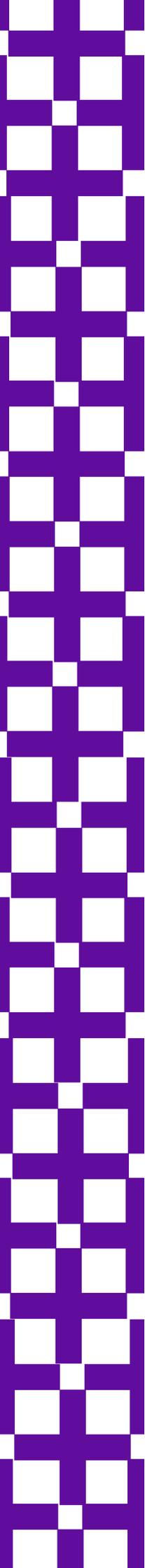
Hymn

The angel Gabriel, from heaven came, his wings as drifted snow, his eyes as flame.
"All hail," said he, "thou lowly maiden, Mary, most highly favoured lady." Gloria!

"For know, a blessed Mother thou shalt be." All generations laud and honour thee.
Thy Son shall be Emmanuel, by seers foretold, most highly favoured lady." Gloria!

Then gentle Mary meekly bowed her head. "To me be, as it pleaseth God," she said.
"my soul shall laud and magnify his holy name!" Most highly favoured lady! Gloria!

Of her, Emmanuel, the Christ, was born in Bethlehem, all on a Christmas morn;
and Christian folk throughout the world will ever say: "Most highly favoured lady!"
Gloria!



Prayer

Here in our midst, O God of mystery,
you disclose the secret hidden for countless ages.
For you we wait; for you we listen.

Upon hearing your voice
may we, like Mary, embrace your will
and become a dwelling fit for your Word.
Grant this through Christ Jesus our Lord. Amen.

Reading 4 *Luke 2:1-14* *The birth of Jesus and visit of the shepherds*

Hymn

Angels we have heard in heaven sweetly singing o'er our plains,
and the mountain tops in answer echoing their joyous strains.

Gloria in excelsis Deo. Gloria in excelsis Deo.

Shepherds, why this exultation? Why your rapturous strain prolong?
Tell us of the gladsome tidings, which inspire your joyous song.

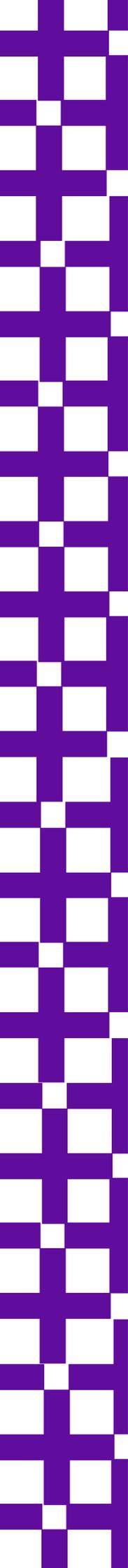
Come to Bethlehem, and see him o'er whose birth the angels sing,
come, adore, devoutly kneeling, Christ the Lord, the new-born king.

See him in a manger lying whom the choir of angels praise!
Mary, Joseph, come to aid us while our hearts in love we raise.

Prayer

Good and gracious God,
on this holy night you gave us your Son,
the Lord of the universe, wrapped in swaddling clothes,
the Saviour of all, lying in a manger.

On this holy night
draw us into the mystery of your love.
Join our voices with the heavenly host,
that we may sing your glory on high.
Give us a place among the shepherds,
that we may find the one for whom we have waited,
Jesus Christ, your Word made flesh,
who lives and reigns with you in the unity of the Holy Spirit,
in the splendour of eternal light,
God for ever and ever.



CHRISTMAS PROCLAMATION FOR MIDNIGHT MASS

This proclamation may be used at the beginning of Midnight Mass. For parishes where there is a Service of Carols or the Office of Readings preceding the Mass, this may be suitable to conclude these Liturgies, leading into Mass.

In Parishes that will not celebrate any other Liturgy before the Mass at Midnight, this may be most appropriately sung to the simple preface tone in the Missal to immediately precede the Entrance Carol.

It is night, but the night that promises the dawn
and the light that drives away all darkness.
This night promises the end of the darkness
of sin and evil and death.

It is the night of peace,
for a child is born to us:
he is the prince of peace,
a child, but our mighty God.
If we let him live among us, we live in peace.

It is the night of joy.
Do away with all sadness,
for God is now with us, among us, in us:
Share your joy, make others happy,
for God's Son brings us life and happiness.

It is the night of giving birth:
Mary gives us Jesus, her Son, God's Son,
and from now on we can all give birth
to love and forgiveness among us.
With Jesus we can open our eyes and ears
to the needs of anyone who suffers.

It is the night of friendship,
for God makes us not only his friends
but his sons and daughters
and brothers and sisters of Jesus.
We belong together,
we are of the same flesh and blood.

Come, let's rejoice together
and walk together in love,
for Christ is born to us.