



CHRIST + THE SAVIOR IS BORN

Thursday, December 28, 2025

The Martyrdom of Bethlehem's Baby Boys

Service Theme

The Father Protects His Child

Amid hell's rage over Christ's birth, God used Joseph to protect His Son. Despite the earthly terror Satan prompted Herod to cause, the LORD turned the slaughter of Bethlehem's innocent baby boys into a blessing. How so? By graciously granting every believing child's soul everlasting life with Him in heaven for Jesus' sake. Yes, God the Father knows how to protect His child – both His Son Jesus and all of us, who are God's children through faith in Jesus.

334 I Stand beside Your Manger Here

CW 334



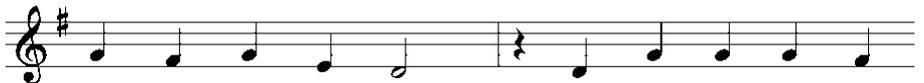
1 I stand be - side your man - ger here, O Je - sus,
 2 Be - fore I ev - er came to be, or knew of
 3 Death held me in the deep - est night till you, my
 4 One thing I hope; my Sav - ior, hear; be - stow on



life from heav - en. The gifts I bring as I draw near
 you, my Sav - ior, you'd cho - sen me, been born for me,
 sun - shine beam - ing, brought joy and bliss and life and light,
 me this bless - ing, that I may ev - er hold you near,



are what to me you've giv - en: my spir - it,
 that I might have your fa - vor. Be - fore you
 in love my soul re - deem - ing. O Sun, your
 you as my own pos - sess - ing. So let my



cour - age, mind, and heart— take all I am, take
 formed me by your hand in grace you had al -
 rays so warm and fair have made my dark - ness
 heart your man - ger be; come, ho - ly Child, lie



ev - 'ry part; in mer - cy let it please you.
 read - y planned how I would learn to love you.
 dis - ap - pear— faith's pre - cious light is shin - ing.
 down in me with all your joy - ful trea - sures.

Text: Paul Gerhardt, 1607–1676, abr.; tr. Michael D. Schultz, b. 1963.

Tune: Geistliche Lieder auff's new gebessert, Wittenberg, 1535, ed. Joseph Klug

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The Service

Setting One (page 154)

In the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit.

Amen.

Confession

CW 155

Blessed are they whose transgressions are forgiven, whose sins are covered.

Blessed are they whose sin the Lord does not count against them.

Let us confess our sins to the Lord.

Almighty and merciful Father,

we have strayed from your ways like lost sheep.

We have followed what we have devised and desired in our hearts.

We have offended you and sinned against your holy law.

We have done those things that we should not have done,

and we have not done those things that we should have done.

Have mercy on us, Lord!

Spare us, forgive us, and restore us,

according to your promises in Christ Jesus.

Silence for meditation and reflection

God, our merciful Father, has forgiven all our sins. He sent his Son, Jesus Christ, to be our Redeemer and Savior. Jesus paid the penalty for our guilt by his death on the cross and freed us from death by his resurrection from the grave. We have peace with God now and forever.

Amen.

Lord, Have Mercy



In peace let us pray to the Lord. **Lord, have mer - cy.**



For the peace from above and for our salvation, let us pray to the Lord.



Lord, have mer - cy.



For the peace of the whole world, for the well-being of the Church of God,



and for the unity of all, let us pray to the Lord.



Lord, have mer - cy.



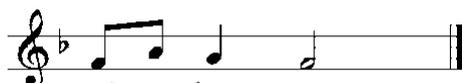
For this holy house and for all who offer here their worship and praise, let us



pray to the Lord. **Lord, have mer - cy.**



Help, save, comfort, and defend us, gra - cious Lord.



A - men.

Glory Be to God on High

CW 157



Glory be to God on high, and on earth peace, good will toward men.



We praise you, we bless you, we wor - ship you, we glorify you,



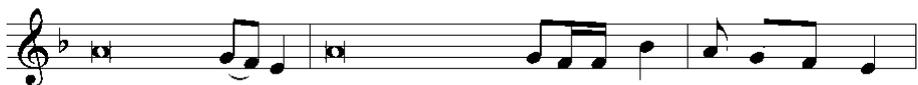
we give thanks to you, for your great glory, O Lord God, heav'n-ly King,



God the Fa-ther Al - mighty. O Lord, the only-begotten Son, Je - sus Christ;



O Lord God, Lamb of God, Son of the Father, you take away the sin of the world;



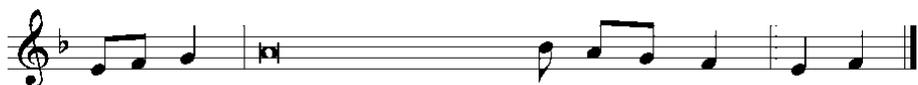
have mercy on us. You take away the sin of the world; re - ceive our prayer.



You sit at the right hand of God the Father; have mercy on us.



For you on - ly are holy; you on - ly are the Lord. You only, O Christ, with the



Ho - ly Spirit, are most high in the glory of God the Father. A - men.

The Word

The Lord be with you.

And also with you.

Prayer of the Day

Let us pray.

We remember today, O Lord, the slaughter of the holy innocents of Bethlehem by order of King Herod. Receive into the arms of your mercy all who lay down their lives for your sake, and prepare us by your grace to be ready at all times to live and die for you; for you live and reign with the Father and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.

Amen.

First Reading

Jeremiah 31:15–17

Jeremiah not only prophesies the great tragedy of Bethlehem's baby martyrs, but also the gracious comfort the LORD would bring afterwards.

¹⁵This is what the LORD says.

A voice is heard in Ramah,
weeping and great mourning.
Rachel is weeping for her children.
She refuses to be comforted for her children,
because they are no more.

¹⁶This is what the LORD says.

Stop your crying.
Do not shed tears,
because your work will be rewarded, declares the
LORD.

They will return from the land of the enemy.

¹⁷There is hope for your future, declares the LORD.
Your children will return to their own borders.

The Word of the Lord.

Thanks be to God.

2A You Are My Son

Psalm 2A

Refrain



You are my Son; this day have I be-got-ten you.

Tone



Why do the / nations rage?

Why do the peoples / plot in vain?

The kings of the earth take their stand and the rulers
assemble a- / gainst the LORD

and against his A- / noointed One. *Refrain*

He who sits in / heaven laughs;
the Lord / scoffs at them.

Then he addresses them in his anger and frightens them
with his fury, / saying,

“I have set my King on Zion, my / holy hill.” *Refrain*

I will declare the / LORD’s decree:

He said to me, “You are my Son; today I have be- / gotten
you.”

**Glory be to the Father and / to the Son
and to the / Holy Spirit,**

as it was in the be- / ginning,

is now, and will be forever. / Amen. *Refrain*

Text: translation. Tune: Thomas Pavlechko

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Music: © 2004, 2012 Thomas Pavlechko, admin. Augsburg Fortress. Used by permission: OneLicense no. 719723

Second Reading

1 Peter 4:12–19

Entrust yourself to God's care when suffering evil for Jesus' sake. He will keep His promise to deliver and bless you.

¹²Dear friends, do not be surprised by the fiery trial that is happening among you to test you, as if something strange were happening to you. ¹³Instead rejoice whenever you are sharing in the sufferings of Christ, so that you may rejoice and be glad when his glory is revealed.

¹⁴If you are insulted in connection with the name of Christ, you are blessed, because the Spirit of glory and of God rests on you. ¹⁵Make sure that none of you suffers as a murderer, a thief, a criminal, or as a meddler. ¹⁶But if you suffer for being a Christian, do not be ashamed, but praise God in connection with this name. ¹⁷For the time has come for judgment to begin with the household of God. Now if it begins with us, what will be the end for those who disobey the gospel of God? ¹⁸And if it is hard for the righteous to be saved, where will the ungodly sinner end up? ¹⁹So let those who suffer according to the will of God entrust their souls to their faithful Creator while doing what is good.

The Word of the Lord.

Thanks be to God.

Gospel Acclamation

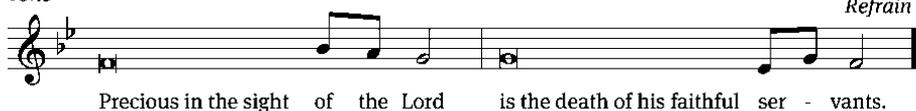
Psalm 116:15



Refrain



Tone



God protects His Son from Satan's raging so He could win our salvation.

¹³After the Wise Men were gone, an angel of the Lord suddenly appeared to Joseph in a dream. He said, “Get up, take the child and his mother, and flee to Egypt. Stay there until I tell you, because Herod will search for the child in order to kill him.”

¹⁴Joseph got up, took the child and his mother during the night, and left for Egypt. ¹⁵He stayed there until the death of Herod. This happened to fulfill what was spoken by the Lord through the prophet: “Out of Egypt I called my son.”

¹⁶When Herod realized that he had been outwitted by the Wise Men, he was furious. He issued orders to kill all the boys in Bethlehem and in all the surrounding countryside, from two years old and under. This was in keeping with the exact time he had learned from the Wise Men. ¹⁷Then what was spoken through Jeremiah the prophet was fulfilled:

¹⁸A voice was heard in Ramah,
weeping and great mourning,
Rachel weeping for her children,
and she refused to be comforted,
because they are no more.

¹⁹After Herod died, an angel of the Lord suddenly appeared in a dream to Joseph in Egypt. The angel said, ²⁰“Get up, take the child and his mother, and go to the land of Israel, for those who were trying to kill the child are dead.”

²¹Joseph got up, took the child and his mother, and went to the land of Israel. ²²But when he heard that Archelaus, Herod's son, had succeeded his father as ruler in Judea, he was afraid to go there. Since he had been warned in a dream, he went to the region of Galilee. ²³When he arrived there, he settled in a city called Nazareth. So what was spoken through the prophets was fulfilled: “He will be called a Nazarene.”

The Gospel of the Lord.

Praise be to you, O Christ!

978 All Hail! You Infant Martyr Flowers

CW 978



1 All hail! You in - fant mar - tyr flow'rs, cut off in
 2 With ter - ror does the ty - rant hear that God's own
 3 King Her - od ra - ges at the Word: "Go, sol - dier,
 4 Oh, what is gained from this of - fense? What prof - it



life's first dawn - ing hours; like rose - buds, snapped in
 Son to us draws near. On Da - vid's throne he
 with your ruth - less sword, to him, who stands where
 comes from vi - o - lence? The Sav - ior - King sur -



dread - ful strife, when Her - od sought our Sav - ior's life.
 comes to dwell and reign as King of Is - ra - el.
 we have stood, and stain the In - fant - crib with blood!"
 vived the day, as Christ was safe - ly whisked a - way!

- 5 A voice is heard in bitter pain
 as Rachel mourns the infants slain,
 refusing comfort—sacred lore—
 because her children are no more!
- 6 Of you, O little lambs, we sing,
 first victims slain for Christ our King:
 beneath the heav'nly altar's ray
 with martyr-palms and crowns you play!
- 7 To you, the virgin-born, we raise
 thanksgiving and eternal praise,
 whom with the Father we adore
 and Holy Spirit evermore.

Text: Aurelius C. Prudentius, 348–after 405; tr. Peter M. Prange, b. 1972

Tune: Rheinfeilsisch Deutsches Catholisches Gesangbuch, Augsburg, 1666

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Tune: Public domain

Sermon

Matthew 2:13–23

Theme: God the Father protects His Child

- 1) From hell's raging.
- 2) From the world's dangers.

Apostles' Creed

**I believe in God, the Father Almighty,
maker of heaven and earth.**

**I believe in Jesus Christ, his only Son, our Lord,
who was conceived by the Holy Spirit,
born of the Virgin Mary,
suffered under Pontius Pilate,
was crucified, died, and was buried.**

He descended into hell.

The third day he rose again from the dead.

He ascended into heaven

**and is seated at the right hand of God the Father
Almighty.**

**From there he will come to judge the living and the
dead.**

**I believe in the Holy Spirit,
the holy Christian Church,
the communion of saints,
the forgiveness of sins,
the resurrection of the body,
and the life everlasting. Amen.**

Prayer of the Church

Almighty God and Father, we thank you for all your mercies, especially for the gift of your Son, through whom you have revealed your gracious will. We praise you for the Holy Spirit and his working through the means of grace.

Plant your Word in our hearts, and cause it to produce fruit in our lives.

Strengthen and defend your Church, that by your Word and sacraments faith may grow and love toward all may increase.

Support all who spread the light of your truth throughout the world.

Keep our children in the grace of their baptisms. Enable their parents to train them in lives of faith.

Raise up Christians to serve you in the ministry of the Word and in all godly walks of life.

Preserve our nation in justice and honor. Guide and bless all who make, administer, and judge our laws.

Give them wisdom that they may promote justice and hinder evil.

Let your blessing rest on planting and harvest, commerce and industry, medicine and science, the arts and culture. Protect all who travel, and care for those whose work is difficult or dangerous.

Be with all who devote themselves to any useful task.

Comfort all who are in sorrow or need, sickness or adversity, [*especially . . .*]. Remember those who suffer persecution for the faith. Have mercy on those for whom death draws near.

Grant them your love, and take them into your tender care.

Hear us, Lord, as we pray in silence.

Silent prayer

We remember with thanksgiving those who have loved and served you, who now rest from their labors. Console those who are mourning or living with sadness.

Keep us in the true faith, and bring us at last to the joys of heaven.

Grant us these things, Father, for the sake of Jesus, who died and rose again.

Amen.

Offertory Prayer

344 What Child Is This

CW 344



1 What child is this who, laid to rest, on Mar - y's lap is
 2 Why lies he in such mean es - tate where ox - en now are
 3 So bring him in - cense, gold, and myrrh; come, peas - ant, king, to



sleep - ing, whom an - gels greet with an - thems sweet while
 feed - ing? Good Chris - tian, fear; for sin - ners here the
 own him. The King of kings sal - va - tion brings; let



shep - herds watch are keep - ing? This, this is
 si - lent Word is plead - ing. Nails, spear shall
 lov - ing hearts en - throne him. Raise, raise the



Christ the King, whom shep - herds guard and an - gels sing;
 pierce him through, the cross be borne for me, for you;
 song on high, the vir - gin sings her lul - la - by;



haste, haste to bring him laud, the babe, the son of Mar - y!
 hail, hail the Word made flesh, the babe, the son of Mar - y!
 joy, joy, for Christ is born, the babe, the son of Mar - y!

Text: William C. Dix, 1837-1898, alt. Tune: English, 16th cent. Text and tune: Public domain

Almighty God, we thank you for teaching us the things you want us to believe and do. Help us by your Holy Spirit to keep your Word in pure hearts that we may be strengthened in faith, guided in holiness, and comforted in life and in death, through Jesus Christ our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.

Amen.

Lord's Prayer

**Our Father in heaven,
hallowed be your name,
your kingdom come,
your will be done
on earth as in heaven.
Give us today our daily bread.
Forgive us our sins,
as we forgive those
who sin against us.
Lead us not into temptation,
but deliver us from evil.
For the kingdom, the power,
and the glory are yours
now and forever. Amen.**

Blessing

The Lord bless you and keep you.
The Lord make his face shine on you and be gracious to you.
The Lord look on you with favor and T give you peace.
Amen.

301 Savior of the Nations, Come

CW 301



1 Sav - ior of the na - tions, come; Vir - gin's
2 Not by hu - man flesh and blood, by the
3 Won - drous birth! O won - drous Child of the
4 From the Fa - ther's throne he came and as -
5 Praise to God the Fa - ther sing, praise to



Son, make here your home. Mar - vel now, O
Spir - it of our God was the Word of
vir - gin un - de - filed, though by all the
cend - ed to the same, cap - tive lead - ing
God the Son, our King, praise to God the



heav'n and earth, that the Lord chose such a birth.
God made flesh, wom - an's off - spring, pure and fresh.
world dis - owned, yet to be in heav'n en - throned!
death and hell. High the song of tri - umph swell!
Spir - it be ev - er and e - ter - nal - ly.

Text: Ambrose of Milan, 340–397, abr.; German version, Martin Luther, 1483–1546, abr.; tr. William M. Reynolds, 1812–1876, alt.
Tune: Geystliche gesangk Buchleyn, Wittenberg, 1524, ed. Johann Walter. Text and tune: Public domain

Acknowledgments

Setting One from Christian Worship

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Announcements

Church Cleaners

January 4 - Simon / January 11 - Matthew

DIVINE WORD'S TWO-WEEK CALENDAR

- Su (28) 10:30 am Worship**
11:30 am Coffee hour
- Th (1) 10:30 am Longfields Manor Devotion
- Su (4) 9:00 am Sunday School / Bible Study**
10:30 am Worship with Communion
11:45 am First Fellowship
3:00 pm Worship in Poltimore
4:00 pm Bible Class (Poltimore)
- We (7) 10:30 am Communicating Christ
5:30 pm Youth Confirmation (W)
7:00 pm Communicating Christ
- Fr (9) 10:30 am Friday Fellowship
- Su (11) 9:00 am Sunday School / Bible Study**
10:30 am Worship
11:45 am Coffee Hour



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