



ABOUT THE PROPER

An Explanation of the Variable Parts of the Divine Service



Second Sunday after Christmas

January 5, 2025



The Gift of God

God Gives Satisfaction to Those Who Patiently Wait

It is always hard to wait, but particularly if what you are waiting for is extremely important. If you must wait an hour for the waiter to bring your food, it is not a huge deal. But if you need to wait a week for an electrician to restore power to your home, that is more painful. Waiting is harder when we badly need what we're waiting for. After the fall into sin, people of faith waited for God to provide the gift they needed most—a Savior. Century after century passed. “Where is he?” they wondered. People were powerless to save themselves from sin and death and hell. So, there was nothing to do but patiently wait. At the perfect time in history, the first Christmas occurred. The faithful rejoiced! This week, we see that God works on the timetable he knows to be best for us. We also see that those who wait for God to act are never disappointed. For God gives satisfaction to those who patiently wait.

First Reading³ Genesis 17:1-7

The LORD, the God of free and faithful grace, appears to Abram at the age of ninety-nine to again confirm his gracious covenant and promise. This time, the Lord changes his name to Abraham saying, “I have made you a father of many nations.”

Second Reading³ Galatians 4:4-7

Thousands of years had passed, generations had come and gone, since the promise made by God in the Garden. But all those years were not wasted, but preparatory. Finally, when everything had been perfectly prepared, God kept the Garden Promise and sent his Son, born of woman. The promise kept has transformed us from slaves to sons and heirs. The surety of his promises kept provides the certainty of our coming inheritance.

Gospel³ Luke 1:67-79

Zechariah had learned to trust God's promises. After months of silence, he bursts forth to sing of God's promises kept. Blessed be the God of Israel who has come to redeem his people. The struggle with sin of spiritual Israel was over. Salvation has come just as the LORD, the God of free and faithful grace, had sworn by his own name. With the joy of salvation and the confidence of promises fulfilled, we fearlessly serve the LORD in righteousness.

Psalm of the Day⁴ Psalm 135 A “Sing Praise to God”

The Church sings Psalm 135 to distinguish between false gods and the only true God. The opening is like Psalm 134, and verses 15-18 are like parts of Psalm 113 and Isaiah 40-46. Martin Luther said, “Psalm 135 is a psalm of thanks, calling on priests to preach, praise God for the wonders he did for the people in Egypt and Canaan, and give thanks. People are not to forget the true God, seeking idols or other gods, which happens when they do not occupy themselves with preaching and the praise of God.”

Gospel Acclamation Psalm 98:3

“All the ends of the earth have seen the salvation of our God.” God has revealed his salvation through the righteous acts performed on behalf of his people. We know God is righteous, loving, and faithful to his people because of what he has done for us and what he has told us in his Word. This testament to his covenant commitment is proclaimed to the nations.

Prayer of the Day

Almighty God, you have filled us with the new light of the Word who became flesh and lived among us. Let the light of our faith shine in all we do; through your Son, Jesus Christ our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. Amen.

Hymn of the Day

 383 “The Only Son from Heaven” (Elizabeth Cruciger, 1500-35 v1-3; LBW, 1978 v4)

When the time had come, God sent his Son from heaven in human form. The virgin born Christ is our Morning Star, the anointed King, who has come to conquer death, bring life, and open heaven for sinners. Thus we adore our holy, blessed Trinity.

Church Year Season ¹

 Christmas

The Christmas season celebrates the Incarnation of the Son of God. The eternal Word became flesh that he might be the Christ, anointed to redeem God’s people. God had to become man to live under the law and die in our place. Christ’s birth, then, is inextricably connected to his death: Good Friday necessitated Christmas. So great is the love of God that even though our sin required such a sacrifice, the Light of the world still descended into our darkness.

Colors & Symbolism

 White

White is the color of our Triune God and heaven. It also symbolizes joy, celebration, gladness, light, purity and innocence. We receive these blessings through faith because Christ, our righteousness Savior, has forgiven all our sins.

Minor Festivals ¹

 Circumcision and Name of Jesus (January 1)

The child whose birth we celebrated last week came to fulfill the law. “When the time had fully come, God sent his Son, born of a woman, born under law, to redeem those under law, that we might receive the full rights of sons” (Galatians 4:4, 5). Jesus needed to fulfill the law to establish the gospel. This fulfillment was to be perfect. Therefore, meticulous attention to the Lord’s command is revealed with the words, “On the eighth day, when it was time to circumcise him, he was named Jesus, the name the angel had given him before he had been conceived.”

Traditions & Customs

 Christmas

In addition to lighting the Christ candle at the center of the Advent wreath, decorating the church and house (including the Christmas tree), setting up the Nativity scene, engaging in charitable acts, and giving and exchanging presents. many families follow the tradition of gathering around on Christmas Eve or Day and reading the nativity story from Luke 2. Although many consider Christmas Day as the end of the Christmas season, this is not the case. Traditionally, celebrations and festivities began on Christmas Day (or Christmas Eve night) and continued throughout the Christmas season. The Christmas carol, *The Twelve Days of Christmas* points to this. It was the practice to give/receive a gift on each of the twelve days; although some only celebrated during the ‘Christmas Octave,’ which was the eight days from Christmas Day through New Year’s Day.

Nain Paraments

 Christmas

Superfrontal: “Immanuel” is Hebrew for “God with us.” This name for Jesus Christ was revealed to God’s people through Isaiah in a prophecy of the Savior’s birth (7:14). The angel Gabriel announced to Joseph in a dream that the child in the Virgin Mary’s womb would be that promised Immanuel – God who had come to be with us (Matthew 1:23) in order to save us. Sometimes the name is spelled *Emmanuel*, which is the Latin alphabet transliteration of the Hebrew pronunciation of the same name.

The vines next to Immanuel represent the spiritual life that Jesus, the vine brings to God’s children, the branches (John 15:5).

Lectern antependium: *The Greek Cross*: distinguished by four arms of equal length.

Pulpit antependium: *The Celtic Cross*: similar to the Latin cross (†), but with a circle surrounding the center, which symbolizes the eternal nature of Christ and the gift of eternal life to all who believe in him.

¹ Courtesy of “Planning Christian Worship: Year A”. Jonathan E. Schroeder, Author.

² Courtesy of “Planning Christian Worship: Year B”. Daniel M. Deutschlander, Author.

³ Courtesy of “Planning Christian Worship: Year C”. Joel J. Gawrisch, Author.

⁴ From *Christian Worship: Psalter* © 2021 Northwestern Publishing House. Reprinted by permission.

· Clipart courtesy of “Ecclesiastical Art by Ed Riojas”