

The Christ-Mass

from Christ Church Cathedral in St. Louis, Missouri

We Gather:

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.

[refrain] 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.
[refrain]

Child for us sinners, poor and in the manger,
we would embrace thee, with love and awe;
who would not love thee, loving us so dearly?
[refrain]

Prayer for Christmas:

O God, you have caused this holy night to shine with the brightness of the true Light:
Grant that we, who have known the mystery of that Light on earth, may also enjoy Christ
perfectly in heaven; where you and the Holy Spirit the Savior lives and reigns, one God,
in glory everlasting. Amen.

A New Testament Lesson:

A reading from the Letter of Titus (3:4-7)

(After the reading this is said)

Reader: The Word of the Lord.

People: Thanks be to God.

A Carol:

Away in a manger, no crib for his bed,
the little Lord Jesus laid down his sweet head.
The stars in the bright sky looked down where he lay,
the little Lord Jesus a sleep in the hay.

The cattle are lowing, the baby awakes,
but little Lord Jesus no crying he makes.
I love thee, Lord Jesus! Look down from the sky,
and stay by my side until morning is nigh.

Be near me, Lord Jesus; I ask thee to stay,
close by me for ever, and love me I pray.
Bless all the dear children in thy tender care,
and fit us for heaven to live with thee there.

A Christmas Story:

*At this point, the gospel is shared in simple, clear language.
You may also choose to tell a story that illustrates similar themes.*

The Prayers:

Leader: On this night before Christmas, let us pray for the whole world,
especially for God's Peace to lead us all.

People: Hear us, O God.

Leader: For all the children of the world that they may live in safety
and have a loving home.

People: Hear us, O God.

Leader: For all our pets, and all animals
that they have food and love each day.

People: Hear us, O God.

Leader: For our Cathedral that we may be reminded of the importance
of Jesus' birth, remembering that Jesus lived simply and loves all.

People: Hear us, O God

Leader: For all of our families, friends, neighbors and even those we don't know
that we may live in peace and safety.

People: Hear us, O God

Leader: For kids and big people who are sick or are hurt,
we pray that they feel better real soon.

People: Hear us, O God

The Peace

A Carol:

The first Nowell the angel did say
was to certain poor shepherds in fields as they lay;
in fields as they lay keeping sheep,
on a cold winter's night that was so deep.

[refrain] Nowell, Nowell, Nowell, Nowell, born is the King of Israel.

Then let us all with one accord
sing praises to our heavenly Lord;
That hath made heaven and earth of naught,
and with his blood our life hath bought.

[refrain]

The Thanksgiving:

Priest: The Lord be with you
People: And also with you
Priest: Lift your hearts
People: We lift them to God
Priest: Let us give thanks to God
People: It is right to give God thanks and Praise!

*The priest continues with the prayer over the gifts.
In the middle of the prayer the priest says:*

Priest: ... we proclaim the mystery of faith.

People: Christ has died!
Christ is risen.
Christ will come again!

At the end of the prayer everyone says together: AMEN!

The Lord's Prayer

And now we receive the bread and wine – the body and blood of Christ.

After Communion:

Silent night, holy night, all is calm, all is bright
round yon virgin mother and child.
Holy infant so tender and mild,
sleep in heavenly peace. Sleep in heavenly peace.

Silent night, holy night, shepherds quake at the sight
glories stream from heaven afar,
heavenly hosts sing alleluia,
Christ the Savior is born! Christ the Savior is Born!

Silent night, holy night, Son of God, love's pure light
radiant beams from thy holy face,
with the dawn of redeeming grace,
Jesus, Lord, at thy birth. Jesus, Lord, at thy birth.

A Blessing and a Dismissal:

At the dismissal the people say: Thanks be to God!

Notes on the Christ-Mass

The Very Reverend Ronald Clingenpeel, Dean of Christ Church Cathedral, shares these suggestions from his own community:

1. Space allowing, consider putting out pillows and small chairs for everyone to sit together near the altar.
2. Tell the Christmas Story (which is the Gospel) in very plain terms. At Christ Church, they sometimes make up a story to go along with the Christmas scene. Last year, Ron brought a pomegranate and told the story of a young child who had no great gift to give, but gave everything – in this case, the fruit. He then explained what that might mean for their community.
3. The community either writes a Eucharistic Prayer for the Christ-Mass, or they use Prayer A from the Book of Common Prayer. Everyone stands around the altar. Last year, about 50 gathered in that intimate setting.

If you have additional questions or comments about this liturgy, contact Dean Clingenpeel at rclingenpeel@christchurchcathedral.us.