

Zoom Meeting ID: 326 920 7504

Call-in option: 1) Dial 646-568-7788 or 929-205-6099, 2) Enter 326 920 7504 # and 3) Press # for a participant's ID



Hymn

Cradle Hymn

Composer: Kim Andre Arnesen

The Invitatory and Psalter

Officiant Show us your mercy, O Lord:

Celebrants **And grant your salvation.**

Officiant Come and save us, O Lord God of hosts.

Celebrants **Come and save us, O Lord God of hosts.**

Officiant Show the light of your countenance, and we shall be saved:

Celebrants **O Lord God of hosts.**

All **Glory to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit:**

Come and save us, O Lord God of hosts.

Officiant The mercy of the Lord is everlasting: Come let us adore him.

Venite Psalm 95:1-7

All **Come, let us sing to the Lord; ***

let us shout for joy to the Rock of our salvation.

Let us come before his presence with thanksgiving *

and raise a loud shout to him with psalms.

For the Lord is a great God, *

and a great King above all gods.

In his hand are the caverns of the earth, *

and the heights of the hills are his also.

The sea is his, for he made it, *

and his hands have molded the dry land.

Come, let us bow down, and bend the knee, *

and kneel before the Lord our Maker.

For he is our God, and we are the people of his pasture and the sheep of his hand. *

Oh, that today you would hearken to his voice!

Officiant The mercy of the Lord is everlasting: Come let us adore him.

The Lesson

Reader A Lesson from *Matthew 1:18-25*

Now the birth of Jesus the Messiah took place in this way. When his mother Mary had been engaged to Joseph, but before they lived together, she was found to be with child from the Holy Spirit. Her husband Joseph, being a righteous man and unwilling to expose her to public disgrace, planned to dismiss her quietly. But just when he had resolved to do this, an angel of the Lord appeared to him in a dream and said, "Joseph, son of David, do not be afraid to take Mary as your wife, for the child conceived in her is from the Holy Spirit. She will bear a son, and you are to name him Jesus, for he will save his people from their sins." All this took place to fulfill what had been spoken by the Lord through the prophet:

"Look, the virgin shall conceive and bear a son,
and they shall name him Emmanuel,"

which means, "God is with us." When Joseph awoke from sleep, he did as the angel of the Lord commanded him; he took her as his wife, but had no marital relations with her until she had borne a son; and he named him Jesus.

Reader Hear what the Spirit is saying to the Church.

Celebrants **Thanks be to God.**

Psalm 80:1-7, 16-18 *Qui regis Israel*

All

**1 Hear, O Shepherd of Israel, leading Joseph like a flock; *
shine forth, you that are enthroned upon the cherubim.**
**2 In the presence of Ephraim, Benjamin, and Manasseh, *
stir up your strength and come to help us.**
**3 Restore us, O God of hosts; *
show the light of your countenance, and we shall be saved.**
**4 O Lord God of hosts, *
how long will you be angered
despite the prayers of your people?**
**5 You have fed them with the bread of tears; *
you have given them bowls of tears to drink.**
**6 You have made us the derision of our neighbors, *
and our enemies laugh us to scorn.**
**7 Restore us, O God of hosts; *
show the light of your countenance, and we shall be saved.**
**16 Let your hand be upon the man of your right hand, *
the son of man you have made so strong for yourself.**
**17 And so will we never turn away from you; *
give us life, that we may call upon your Name.**
**18 Restore us, O Lord God of hosts; *
show the light of your countenance, and we shall be saved.**
**Glory to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit: *
as it was in the beginning, is now, and will be for ever. Amen.**

Hymn #66

Come, thou long expected Jesus

Words: Charles Wesley
Music: *Stuttgart*

Reflection

Paul Yoon

We all have experiences of being in crisis and we wish situations like that wouldn't happen. We don't need to look further for an example. Our global world of which we are a part is still struggling through the pandemic crisis, impacting all of us personally. Thankfully, it is getting better with the vaccines available yet this doesn't undo all the suffering that this pandemic has caused. No crisis each person experiences is small or any lesser. Every single crisis is heavy, difficult, and

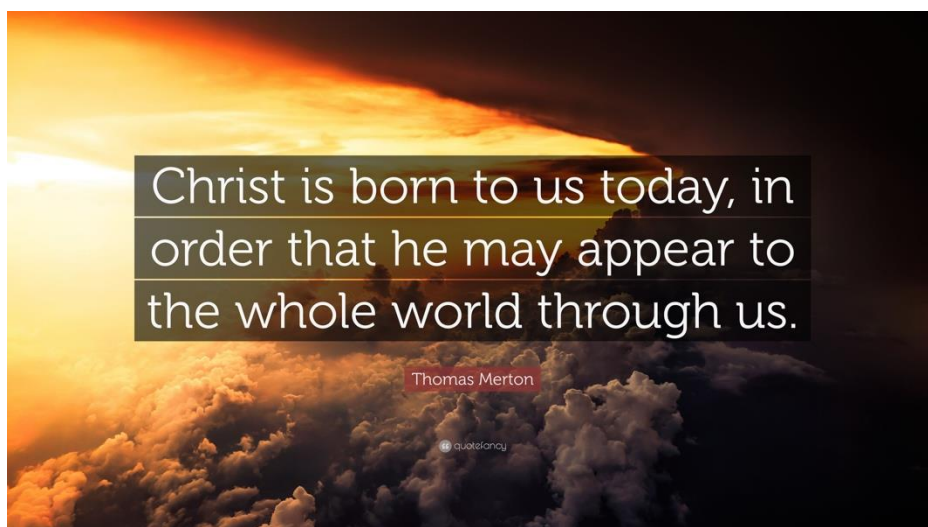
challenging in its own context, which is why no one can say others' suffering is less than their own. What makes one's critical moment better is compassion. We are willing to join where they are with our actions and prayers. This compassion can be the sole reason for building and maintaining a community of love in the name of Christ. It's to lessen one another's suffering by being together.

In the gospel lesson this morning, both Joseph and Mary are in crisis. Their crisis starts with Mary's unexpected pregnancy. Mary shouldn't have been pregnant before she marries Joseph according to their cultural norm. Something goes clearly wrong. For Joseph, the fact that Mary is suddenly pregnant and he's not the biological father is a crisis. It's a type of crisis that can damage his reputation in his community. He might have felt betrayed, and we can imagine him being resentful of Mary. Yet he doesn't play a victim role. Instead, he does his best not to harm Mary's future. He's aptly described as "being a righteous man". For Mary, on the other hand, Joseph's resolve to not expose her to public disgrace may have helped her only a little bit. She would still be pregnant regardless of what he does. In the time of Mary, social prejudice against women who become pregnant before marriage would be worse than in our time.

Contrasted to a commercialized image of the nativity scene in which everything seems calm and peaceful, the coming of Jesus of Nazareth narrated in the gospel story this morning is first and foremost perceived as the crisis of Joseph and Mary, not as Christ. This child the Crisis shakes the world of Joseph and Mary upside down. Because of this Christly crisis, their lives will never be the same. Mary is about to become a single parent, and Joseph is looking for a new wife. Whether we like it or not, all sorts of crises somehow affect us. Some may impact us more than others. Just when Joseph decides to pull himself out of this crisis by cutting his ties with Mary, God intervenes and stops his plan from annulling his engagement with Mary. What we see in parallel between Joseph and Mary is then their response of fiat ("let it be done" in Latin) to God's mission of the incarnation which first comes as a crisis that shatters their plans.

What kind of crisis has impacted you? What crisis have you recently gone through? While I want to acknowledge with compassion how hard that crisis has been for you, I would like to empower you not to lose heart. God is present even when we don't feel God's presence, and our desire, longing, and anticipation for that very presence keep us going in difficult times. In the crisis each one of us is personally going through, I would like us to ardently yearn for the coming of Christ and to experience the presence of Emmanuel, God with us. Amid the crisis, Christ comes as Emmanuel. This experience of God with us is the very source of our strength and resilience to go through our crisis. Rather than asking to remove or change a challenging situation, we learn to rely more on God's presence in that crisis and trust in God's faithfulness that keeps us carrying on and moving forward. Whenever we discover God's very presence in ourselves as well as in the midst of our crisis, Christ is born to us. In the eyes of God, we are found and born to Christ.

As a faith community of love in Christ, it is our Christian duty to be present and to be representatives of Christ to those in crisis. St. Teresa of Avila summarizes this Christian obligation, "Christ has no body now but yours. No hands, no feet on earth but yours." While we personally contemplate the presence of God with us, Emmanuel, we as God's beloved community materialize and incarnate Emmanuel so that we can shift from crisis to Christ.



The Apostles' Creed

All I believe in God, the Father almighty, creator of heaven and earth;

I believe in Jesus Christ, his only Son, our Lord.
He was conceived by the power of the Holy Spirit
and born of the Virgin Mary.
He suffered under Pontius Pilate,
was crucified, died, and was buried.
He descended to the dead.
On the third day he rose again.
He ascended into heaven,
and is seated at the right hand of the Father.
He will come again to judge the living and the dead.

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

The Prayers

Officiant The Lord be with you.
Celebrants **And also with you.**
Officiant Let us pray, singing

**Our Father, who art in heaven,
hallowed be thy Name,
thy kingdom come, thy will be done,
on earth as it is in heaven.
Give us this day our daily bread.
And forgive us our trespasses,
as we forgive those who trespass against us.
And lead us not into temptation,
but deliver us from evil.
For thine is the kingdom,
and the power, and the glory,
for ever and ever. Amen.**

The Supplication *Pray responsively.*

V. For the hungry and the overfed
R. **May we have enough.**

V. For the mourners and the mockers
R. **May we laugh together.**

V. For the victims and the oppressors
R. **May we share power wisely.**

V. For the peacemakers and the warmongers
R. **May clear truth and stern love lead us to harmony.**

V. For the silenced and the propagandists
R. **May we speak our own words in truth.**

V. For the unemployed and the overworked
R. **May our impression on the earth be kindly and creative.**

V. For the troubled and the sleek

- R. **May we live together as wounded healers.**
- V. For the homeless and the cosseted
- R. **May our homes be simple, warm and welcoming.**
- V. For the vibrant and the dying
- R. **May we all die to live.**

The Collect for Fourth Sunday of Advent

All **Purify our conscience, Almighty God, by your daily visitation, that your Son Jesus Christ, at his coming, may find in us a mansion prepared for himself; who lives and reigns with you, in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God, now and for ever. Amen.**

For Peace Among the Nations

Celebrant Almighty God our heavenly Father, guide the nations of the world into the way of justice and truth, and establish among them that peace which is the fruit of righteousness, that they may become the kingdom of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. **Amen.**

For the Church

Celebrant Gracious Father, we pray for thy holy Catholic Church. Fill it with all truth, in all truth with all peace. Where it is corrupt, purify it; where it is in error, direct it; where in any thing it is amiss, reform it. Where it is right, strengthen it; where it is in want, provide for it; where it is divided, reunite it; for the sake of Jesus Christ thy Son our Savior. **Amen.**

For Church Musicians and Artists

Celebrant O God, whom saints and angels delight to worship in heaven: Be ever present with your servants who seek through art and music to perfect the praises offered by your people on earth; and grant to them even now glimpses of your beauty, and make them worthy at length to behold it unveiled for evermore; through Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

For Social Justice

Celebrant Grant, O God, that your holy and life-giving Spirit may so move every human heart [and especially the hearts of the people of this land], that barriers which divide us may crumble, suspicions disappear, and hatreds cease; that our divisions being healed, we may live in justice and peace; through Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

For the Unemployed

All Heavenly Father, we remember before you those who suffer want and anxiety from lack of work. Guide the people of this land so to use our public and private wealth that all may find suitable and fulfilling employment, and receive just payment for their labor; through Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

For Prisons and Correctional Institutions

Celebrant Lord Jesus, for our sake you were condemned as a criminal: Visit our jails and prisons with your pity and judgment. Remember all prisoners, and bring the guilty to repentance and amendment of life according to your will, and give them hope for their future. When any are held unjustly, bring them release; forgive us, and teach us to improve our justice. Remember those who work in these institutions; keep them humane and compassionate; and save them from becoming brutal or callous. And since what we do for those in prison, O Lord, we do for you, constrain us to improve their lot. All this we ask for your mercy's sake. **Amen.**

For Those who live alone

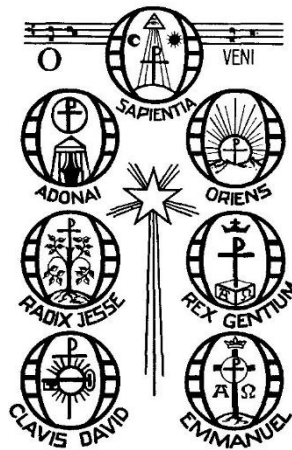
Celebrant Almighty God, whose Son had nowhere to lay his head: Grant that those who live alone may not be lonely in their solitude, but that, following in his steps, they may find fulfillment in loving you and their neighbors; through Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

A General Thanksgiving

All God of power,
may the boldness of your Spirit transform us,
may the gentleness of your Spirit lead us,
may the gifts of your Spirit
be our goal and our strength now and always.
Praise and glory to you creator Spirit of God;
you make our bread Christ's body
to heal and reconcile
and to make us the body of Christ.
You make our wine Christ's living sacrificial blood
to redeem the world.
You are truth.
You come like the wind of heaven, unseen, unbidden.
Like the dawn, you illuminate the world around us;
you grant us a new beginning every day.
You warm and comfort us.
You give us courage and strength beyond our everyday resources.
Be with us Holy Spirit in all we say or think,
in all we do this and every day.
Father, may we who have received this sacrament
live in the unity of your Holy Spirit,
that we may show forth your gifts to all the world.
We ask this in the name of Jesus Christ.

Officiant Let us bless the Lord. Alleluia, alleluia!
Celebrants Thanks be to God. Alleluia, alleluia!

Officiant May Almighty God, by whose providence our Savior Christ came among us in great humility,
sanctify us with the light of his blessing and set us free from all sin. **Amen.**
May he whose second Coming in power and great glory we await,
make us steadfast in faith, joyful in hope, and constant in love. **Amen.**
May all of us, who rejoice in the first Advent of our Redeemer,
at his second Advent be rewarded with unending life. **Amen.**



Saint Agnes Church
65 Union Ave, Little Falls, NJ 07424
Serving people of Little Falls and surrounding communities since 1896,
Saint Agnes Church is a part of the Episcopal/Anglican branch
of the Jesus Movement in the Diocese of Newark, striving to be a contemplative community.