

TWELVE DAYS  
*of*  
Christmas





# KEEPING CHRISTMASTIDE



The Twelve Days of Christmas, also called Christmastide, begins on December 25 and ends with Twelfth Night on January 5. This night marks the transition from Christmas to Epiphany on January 6, which commemorates the arrival of the Magi to the Christ child (which perhaps didn't happen until Jesus was a toddler!). So how do we continue to celebrate the good news of God with us once everyone else has already moved on to New Year's?

This guide contains one ornament for each of the twelve days of Christmastide, along with an accompanying explanation, scripture reading, Christmas carol, and prayer. The ornaments are formatted to be printed two-sided with the symbol on one side and corresponding number on the other. It is recommended to print on card stock, hole punch at the top, and string with twine. They can be placed on the Christmas tree each day, on a small Jesse tree, or hung as garland.



## 12 Ways to celebrate the 12 Days

- 1 Keep up those Christmas decorations. In fact, add to them. That is where this guide comes in. Each day, add the appointed ornament to the tree and follow the accompanying prayer guide.
- 2 Bake Christmas cookies. Stars are perfect to represent the star the magi are following during Christmastide.
- 3 Traveling wise men: The magi can make a slow journey from one side of the house to the nativity scene. Each night, they move and the kids get a kick out of finding them in the morning.
- 4 Watch Christmas movies in your Christmas pajamas—guilt free, because it's still Christmas and you're allowed to.
- 5 Leave some gifts under the tree to open during the twelve days.
- 6 Keep saying "Merry Christmas." This may seem silly on the face of it, but the words we speak matter. After all, God *spoke* creation into being. When we greet one another with "Merry Christmas" throughout Christmastide, it helps us live into the reality that church's time looks different than the world's time.



7 Host a Christmas with friends and neighbors *after* Christmas day once the travel and rush has died down.

8 Transform your Advent wreath into a Christmas wreath by replacing the purple and pink with all white, and lighting them each night of Christmas. Or replace it with a single white pillar candle as your “Christ candle.”

9 Take a drive to look at Christmas lights—just make sure to do it before New Year’s, or you’ll miss a lot of them!

10 Play Christmas music throughout the twelve days. If you have the will-power, it is wonderful to stick to Advent music (e.g. "O Come, O Come Emmanuel") until Christmas Eve, and then play the distinctively Christmas songs (e.g. "Joy to the World") through Christmastide.

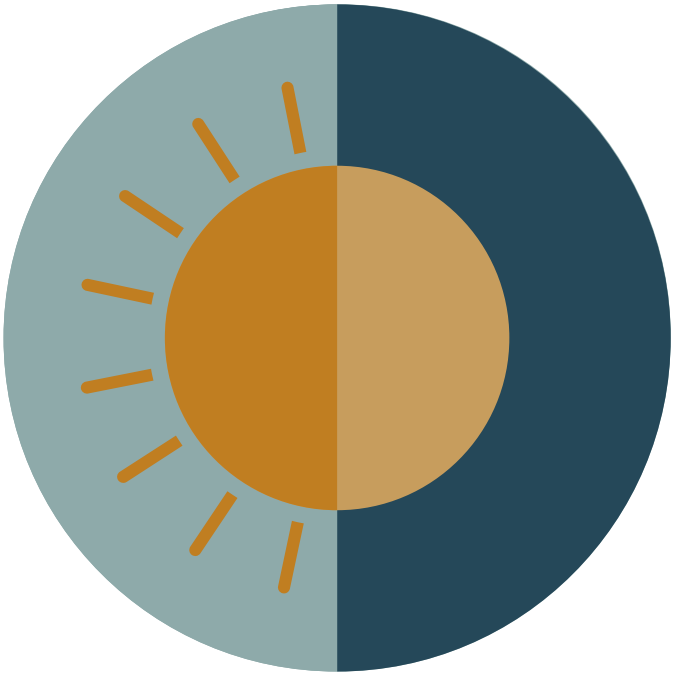
11 Learn about Christmas traditions around the world—for example, Three Kings Day in Latin America and Boxing Day in England.

12 Have a Twelfth Night celebration. On January 5, take down the Christmas tree and have a big bonfire with one last chance to sing Christmas carols. Serve King’s cake to celebrate the arrival of the three kings.

















## One Lord. Jesus Christ

**On Christmas Day**, we give thanks for the single greatest gift of all: Jesus Christ. And we remember, with the author of Ephesians, that there is "one Lord, one faith, one baptism; one God and Father of all."

**Read:** Isaiah 9:6-7

**Sing:** Joy to the World

**Pray:** Dear God, thank you for giving us the gift of your son, our savior, Jesus Christ. As we begin these twelve days of Christmas, help us to celebrate and honor him not only with our lips, but with our lives. *Amen.*



## Two Natures of Jesus

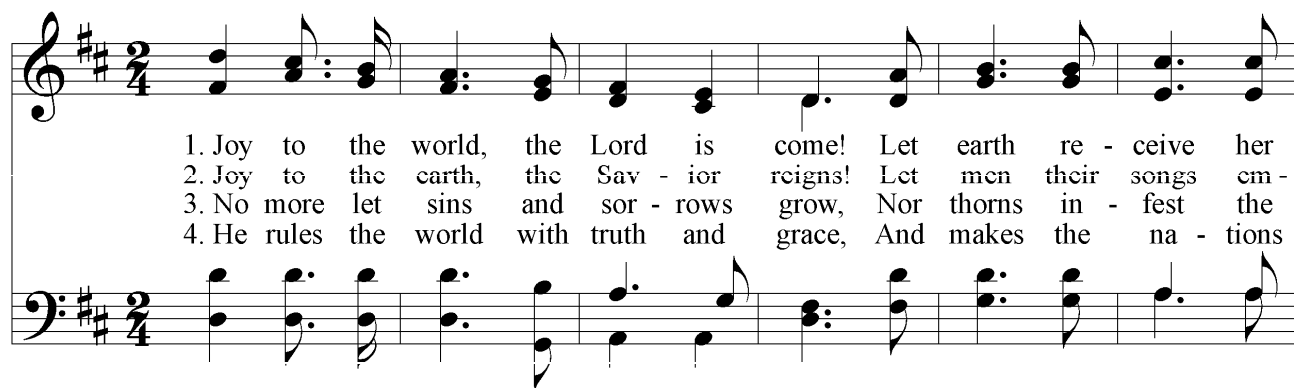
**On the second day of Christmas**, we remember Jesus' two natures: one person, fully God and fully man. He is not half man, half God, or simply God inside a body. Jesus is *Immanuel*, "God with us." The image on this ornament depicts Jesus as a man symbolizing his human nature, with a halo symbolizing his divine nature.

**Read:** Philippians 2:5-8

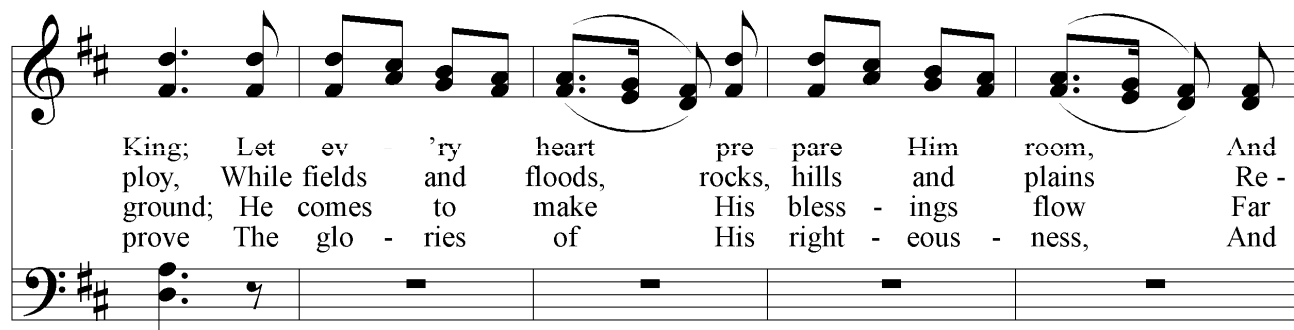
**Sing:** Hark! The Herald Angels Sing or Good King Wenceslas (for the feast of St. Stephen today)

**Pray:** Heavenly Father, we thank you that you are not simply *for* us, but you are also *with* us in your son, *Immanuel*. In his humanity, he empathizes with our suffering, and in his divinity, he redeems our sinfulness. Grant that we may share in the divine life of Jesus who humbled himself to share our humanity. *Amen.*

# Joy To The World



1. Joy to the world, the Lord is come! Let earth re - ceive her  
 2. Joy to the earth, the Sav - ior reigns! Let men their songs em -  
 3. No more let sins and sor - rows grow, Nor thorns in - fest the  
 4. He rules the world with truth and grace, And makes the na - tions



King; Let ev - 'ry heart pre pare Him room, And  
 ploy, While fields and floods, rocks, hills and plains Re -  
 ground; He comes to make His bless - ings flow Far  
 prove The glo - ries of His right - eous - ness, And



heav'n and na - ture sing, And heav'n and na - ture sing,  
 peat the sound - ing joy, Re - peat the sound - ing joy,  
 as the curse is found, Far as the curse is found,  
 won - ders of His love, And won - ders of His love,

(1. And heav'n and na - ture sing, And heav'n



And heav'n, and heav'n, and na - ture sing.  
 Re - peat, re - peat, the sound - ing joy.  
 Far as, far as, the curse is found.  
 And won - ders, won - ders, of His love.

and na - ture sing,)



# Hark The Herald Angels Sing

1. Hark! The her - ald an - gels sing, "Glo - ry to the new-born King!  
 2. Mild, He lays His glo - ry by, Born that man no more may die;  
 3. Hail the heav'n - born Prince of Peace! Hail the Son of Right-eous-ness!

Peace on earth, and mer - cy mild God and sin - ners rec - on - ciled!"  
 Born to raise the sons of earth, Born to give them sec - ond birth.  
 Light and life to all He brings, Ris'n with heal - ing in His wings.

Joy - ful, all ye na - tions rise; Join the tri - umph of the skies;  
 Veiled in flesh the God - head see; Hail th'in - car - nate De - i - ty;  
 Christ, by high - est heav'n a - dored, Christ, the ev - er - last - ing Lord:

With th'an - gel - ic host pro - claim, "Christ is born in Beth - le - hem!"  
 Pleased as man with men to dwell, Je - sus, Our Im - man - u - el!  
 Come, De - sire of na - tions, come, Fix in us Thy hum - ble home;

With th'an - gel - ic host pro - claim, "Christ is born in Beth - le - hem!"  
 Pleased as man with men to dwell, Je - sus, Our Im - man - u - el!  
 Come, De - sire of na - tions, come, Fix in us Thy hum - ble home.

# 3 Three Gifts of the Magi

**On the third day of Christmas,** we remember the three gifts of the Magi: gold, frankincense and myrrh. While our nativity sets and Christmas pageants would lead us to believe there were indisputably three Magi, the Gospels never actually specify this, only that there were three gifts. Gold, a precious metal, represents Jesus' kingship. Frankincense, an incense, represents his priestly office. And myrrh, an embalming (burial) oil, symbolizes his death. Although Scripture does not list the number or names of the magi, tradition has given them the names of Caspar, Melchior and Balthasar (who traditionally has darker skin).

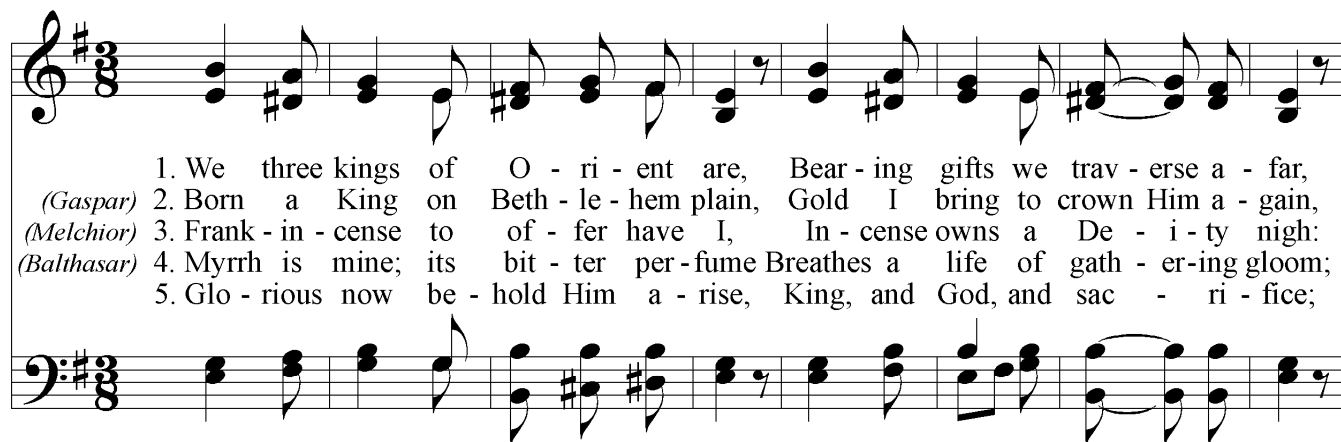


**Read:** Matthew 2:1-11

**Sing:** We Three Kings

**Pray:** O God, by the leading of a star you made yourself known to the Magi. Lead us now, so that we may faithfully serve you this Christmastide. Grant that we, like the Magi, may offer you our gifts, talents, and all that we are now and always.  
*Amen.*

# We Three Kings Of Orient Are

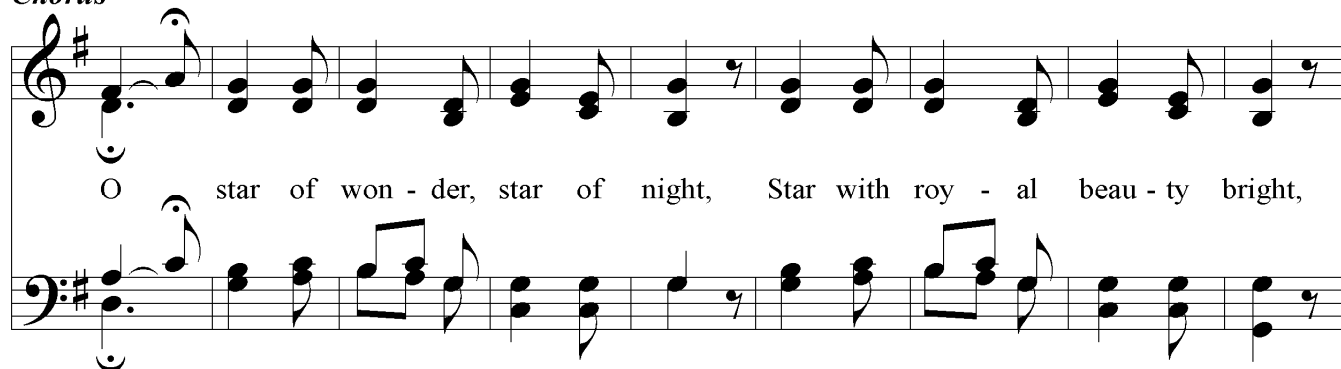


1. We three kings of O - ri - ent are, Bear - ing gifts we trav - erse a - far,  
*(Gaspar)* 2. Born a King on Beth - le - hem plain, Gold I bring to crown Him a - gain,  
*(Melchior)* 3. Frank - in - cense to of - fer have I, In - cense owns a De - i - ty nigh:  
*(Balthasar)* 4. Myrrh is mine; its bit - ter per - fume Breathes a life of gath - er - ing gloom;  
 5. Glo - rious now be - hold Him a - rise, King, and God, and sac - ri - fice;

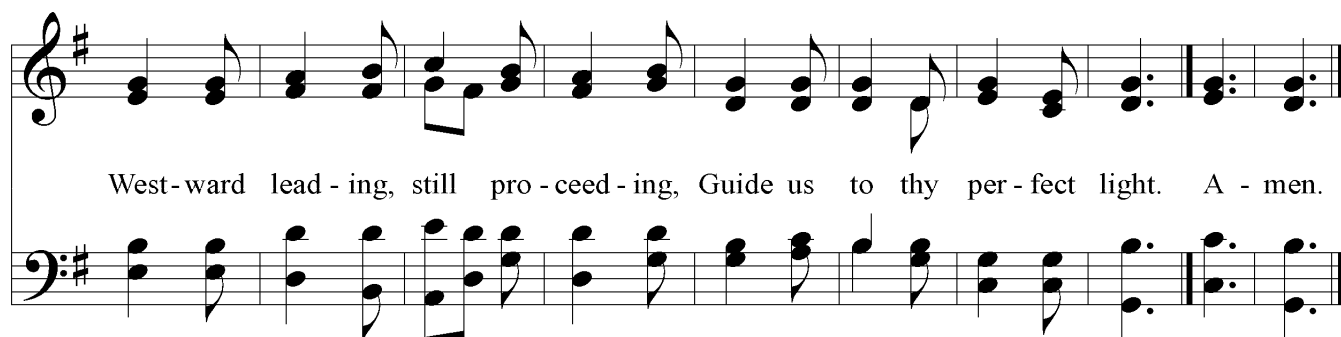


Field and foun - tain, Moor and moun - tain, Fol - low - ing yon - der star.  
 King for - ev - er, Ceas - ing nev - er O - ver us all to reign.  
 Prayer and prais - ing All men rais - ing, Wor - ship Him, God on high.  
 Sor - row - ing, sigh - ing, Bleed - ing, dy - ing, Sealed in the stone - cold tomb.  
 Heav - en sings Al - le - lu - ia: Al - le - lu - ia the earth re - plies.

## Chorus



O star of won - der, star of night, Star with roy - al beau - ty bright,



West - ward lead - ing, still pro - ceed - ing, Guide us to thy per - fect light. A - men.



## Four Gospels

**On the fourth day of Christmas**, we look at the four Gospel writers: Matthew, Mark, Luke and John. Each Gospel has its own symbol in the Christian tradition taken from the four living beings found in Revelation 4 and Ezekiel 1. Matthew is symbolized by a winged man, because his Gospel begins with Jesus' genealogy, highlighting that he is both human and divine. Mark's gospel is symbolized by a winged lion, an emblem of royalty. Luke is symbolized by a winged ox, an animal used for sacrifices, as his gospel begins with Zechariah in the Temple. Finally, John's Gospel is symbolized by an eagle, an animal that soars in the sky, as John's gospel is set apart by its high and lofty theological language.



Read: Matthew 1:18-24

Sing: O Little Town of Bethlehem

Pray: Almighty God, you have poured upon us the light of your incarnate Word, Jesus. Grant that his light, burning in our hearts, may shine forth in our lives this Christmas and always. Amen. (Adapted from the BCP)

# O Little Town Of Bethlehem



1. O lit - tle town of Beth - le - hem, How still we see thee lie!  
 2. For Christ is born of Mar - y, And gath - ered all a - bove,  
 3. How si - lent - ly, how si - lent - ly The won - drous gift is giv'n!  
 4. O ho - ly Child of Beth - le - hem! De - scend to us, we pray;

A - bove thy deep and dream - less sleep The si - lent stars go by.  
 While mor - tals sleep, the an - gels keep Their watch of won - d'ring love.  
 So God im - parts to hu - man hearts The bless - ings of His heav'n.  
 Cast out our sin, and en - ter in; Be born in us to - day.

Yet in thy dark streets shin - eth The ev - er - last - ing Light;  
 O morn - ing stars, to - geth - er, Pro - claim the ho - ly birth!  
 No ear may hear His com - ing, But in this world of sin,  
 We hear the heav'n - ly an - gels The great glad tid - ings tell;

The hopes and fears of all the years Are met in Thee to - night.  
 And prais - es sing to God the King, And peace to men on earth.  
 Where meek souls will re - ceive Him still The dear Christ en - ters in.  
 O come to us, a - bide with us, Our Lord Em - ma - nu - el. A - men.



## Five Books of the Pentateuch

**On the fifth day of Christmas**, we remember the first five books of the Bible, called the *Pentateuch*: Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, Deuteronomy. The word *Pentateuch* comes from two Greek words: penta meaning "five" and teuchos meaning "tool" or "book." Judaism refers to these books as the Torah, meaning "law."

**Read:** Deuteronomy 6:1-9

**Sing:** The First Noel

**Pray:** Heavenly Father, we thank you for giving Israel the Law and for giving us the fulfillment of the law in your Son. Help us to know and love your word, and above all, to love your Word made flesh, Jesus Christ. *Amen.*



## Six Days of Creation

**On the sixth day of Christmas**, we remember the six days of creation. On the first day, God created light and dark. On the second day, God made the sea and sky. On the third day, he created the dry ground and plants. The sun, moon, and stars were made on the fourth day. On the fifth day, God created the birds of the air and animals of the sea. On the sixth day, God created animals of the land and human beings.

**Read:** Genesis 1

**Sing:** Silent Night

**Pray:** Creator God, on this sixth day of Christmas, we marvel at all that you have made. We bless you for our creation, preservation, and all the blessings of this life; but above all for your immeasurable love in the redemption of the world by our Lord Jesus Christ; for the means of grace, and for the hope of glory. *Amen.*  
(Adapted from the BCP)

# The First Noel



1. The first No - el, the an - gel did say, Was to cer - tain poor  
 2. They look - ed up and saw a star Shin - ing in the  
 3. And by the light of that same star The wise Men  
 4. This star drew nigh to the north - west, O'er Beth - le -



shep - herds in fields as they lay; In fields where they lay keep - ing  
 east, be - yond them far, And to the earth it gave  
 came from coun - try far; To seek for a King was their  
 hem it took its rest, And there it did both stop



their sheep, On a cold win - ter's night that was so deep.  
 great light, And so it con - tin - ued both day and night.  
 in - tent, And to fol - low the star wher - ev - er it went.  
 and stay, Right o - ver the place where Je - sus lay.

## Chorus



No - el, No - el, No - el, No - el, Born is the King of Is - ra - el.

# Silent Night, Holy Night

1. Si - lent night, ho - ly night, All is calm, all is bright  
2. Si - lent night, ho - ly night, Shep - herds quake at the sight.  
3. Si - lent night, ho - ly night, Son of God, love's pure light  
4. Si - lent night, ho - ly night, All is calm, all is bright

Round yon vir - gin moth - er and child. Ho - ly Inf - ant, so ten - der and mild,  
Glo - ries stream from heav - en a - far, Heav'n - ly hosts sing al - le - lu - ia;  
Ra - diant beams from Thy ho - ly face, With the dawn of re - deem - ing grace,  
Round yon vir - gin moth - er and child. Ho - ly Inf - ant, so ten - der and mild,

Sleep in heav - en - ly peace, Sleep in heav - en - ly peace.  
Christ the Sav - ior is born! Christ the Sav - ior is born!  
Je - sus, Lord, at Thy birth, Je - sus, Lord, at Thy birth.  
Sleep in heav - en - ly peace, Sleep in heav - en - ly peace.





## Seven Gifts of the Holy Spirit

On the seventh day of Christmas, we remember the seven gifts of the Holy Spirit. First appearing in the book of Isaiah, foretelling the coming of the Messiah, these gifts are: wisdom, understanding, counsel (advice), fortitude (bravery), knowledge, piety (holiness), fear of the Lord.

**Read:** Isaiah 11:1-2

**Sing:** O Holy Night

**Pray:** Giver of all good gifts, there is nothing greater we could receive this Christmas than the gift of your Spirit. Increase in us all wisdom, understanding, counsel, fortitude, knowledge, piety, and fear of the Lord, we pray. *Amen.*



## Eight Beatitudes


On the eighth day of Christmas, we remember the eight beatitudes given by Jesus in his Sermon on the Mount. Beatitude simply means "blessed," and Jesus' description of the blessed is about as topsy-turvy as the King of kings being born in a barn. The symbol for today is of Jesus' hand making a gesture of blessing as he is often depicted in sacred art.

**Read:** Matthew 5:3-10

**Sing:** Away in a Manger

**Pray:** O Lord Jesus Christ, you became poor for our sake, that we might be made rich through your poverty. We remember before you all poor and neglected persons whom it would be easy for us to forget: the homeless and the destitute, the old and the sick, and all who have none to care for them. Help us to heal those who are broken in body or spirit, and to turn their sorrow into joy. We ask this in your holy name. *Amen.* (Adapted from the BCP)

# O Holy Night!



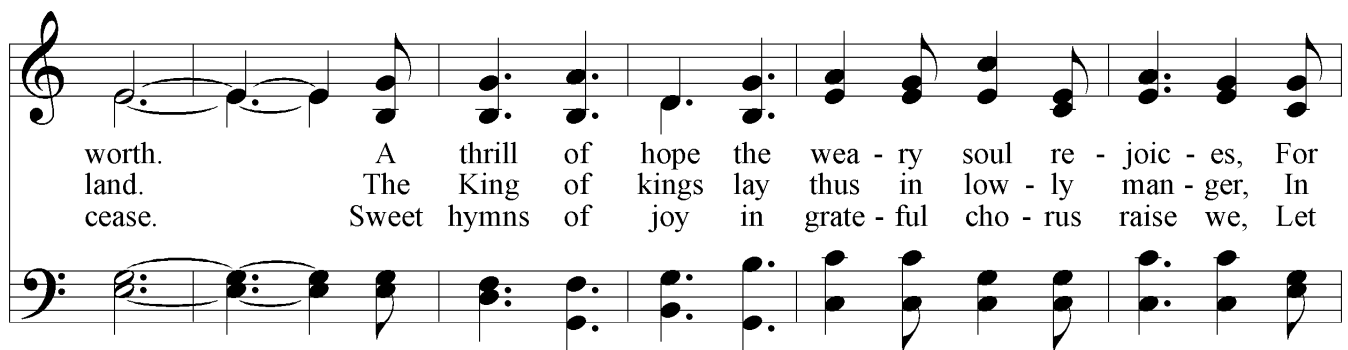
1. O ho - ly night! the stars are bright - ly shin - ing, It is the  
2. Led by the light of faith se - rene - ly beam - ing, With glow - ing  
3. Tru - ly He taught us to love one an - oth - er; His law is



night of the dear Sav - ior's birth; Long lay the world in  
hearts by His cra - dle we stand; So led by light of a  
love and His gos - pel is peace; Chains shall He break, for the

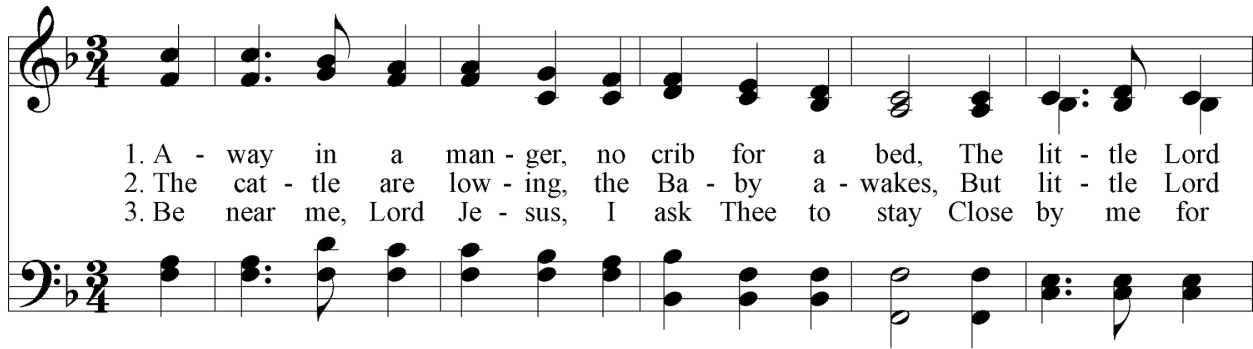


sin and er - ror pin - ing, Till He ap - peared and the soul felt its  
star sweet - ly gleam - ing, Here came the wise men from O - ri - ent  
slave is our broth - er, And in His name all op - pres - sion shall



worth. A thrill of hope the wea - ry soul re - joic - es, For  
land. The King of kings lay thus in low - ly man - ger, In  
cease. Sweet hymns of joy in grate - ful cho - rus raise we, Let

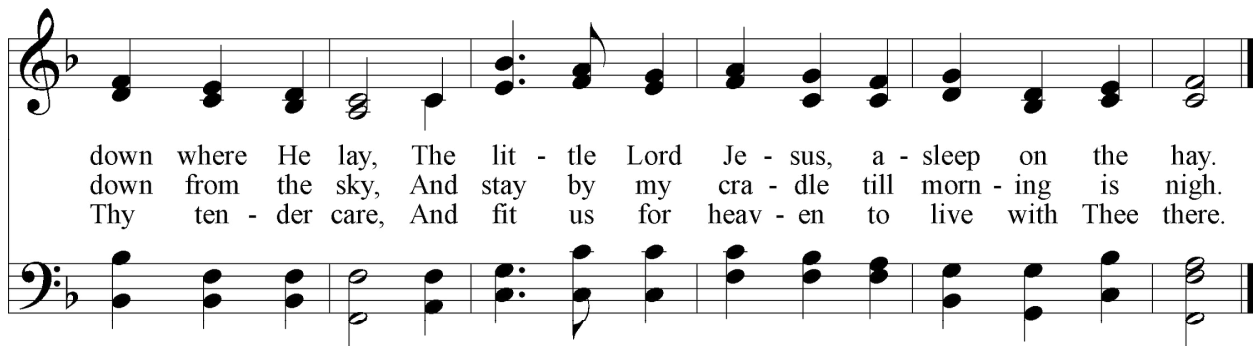
# Away In A Manger



1. A - way in a man - ger, no crib for a bed, The lit - tle Lord  
2. The cat - tle are low - ing, the Ba - by a - wakes, But lit - tle Lord  
3. Be near me, Lord Je - sus, I ask Thee to stay Close by me for



Je - sus laid down His sweet head; The stars in the sky looked  
Je - sus, no cry - ing He makes; I love Thee, Lord Je - sus! look  
ev - er, and love me, I pray; Bless all the dear chil - dren in



down where He lay, The lit - tle Lord Je - sus, a - sleep on the hay.  
down from the sky, And stay by my cra - dle till morn - ing is nigh.  
Thy ten - der care, And fit us for heav - en to live with Thee there.



## Nine Fruits of the Spirit

**On the ninth day of Christmas,** we remember the nine fruits of the spirit: love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control.

**Read:** Galatians 5:22-23

**Sing:** Joy to the World

**Pray:** Heavenly Father, on this ninth day of Christmas, send your Spirit to dwell in us richly that we may bear good fruit for all the world to see and give you praise. *Amen.*



## Ten Commandments

**On the tenth day of Christmas,** we remember the Ten Commandments that God gave to Israel: "1. You will have no

other Gods before me. 2. Do not make idols. 3. Do not take the name of the Lord your God in vain. 4. Remember the Sabbath and keep it holy. 6. Honor your father and mother. 6. Do not murder. 7. Do not commit adultery. 8. Do not steal. 9. Do not bear false witness against your neighbor. 10. Do not covet." The tablets pictured on this ornament contain the beginning of each commandment written in Hebrew characters, the original language of the Old Testament.

**Read:** Exodus 20:1-17

**Sing:** Go Tell It on a Mountain

**Pray:** God of our forefathers, you gave Israel these commandments not to hold them in bondage, but to free them to love and serve you. We can do no good apart from you. Give us your grace to keep your commandments so that we may honor you with our whole lives, through Jesus Christ our Lord. *Amen.*

# Joy To The World

1. Joy to the world, the Lord is come! Let earth re - ceive her  
 2. Joy to the earth, the Sav - ior reigns! Let men their songs em -  
 3. No more let sins and sor - rows grow, Nor thorns in - fest the  
 4. He rules the world with truth and grace, And makes the na - tions

King; Let ev - 'ry heart pre pare Him room, And  
 ploy, While fields and floods, rocks, hills and plains Re -  
 ground; He comes to make His bless - ings flow Far  
 prove The glo - ries of His right - eous - ness, And

heav'n and na - ture sing, And heav'n and na - ture sing,  
 peat the sound - ing joy, Re - peat the sound - ing joy,  
 as the curse is found, Far as the curse is found,  
 won - ders of His love, And won - ders of His love,

(1. And heav'n and na - ture sing, And heav'n

And heav'n, and heav'n, and na - ture sing.  
 Re - peat, re - peat, the sound - ing joy.  
 Far as, far as, the curse is found.  
 And won - ders, won - ders, of His love.

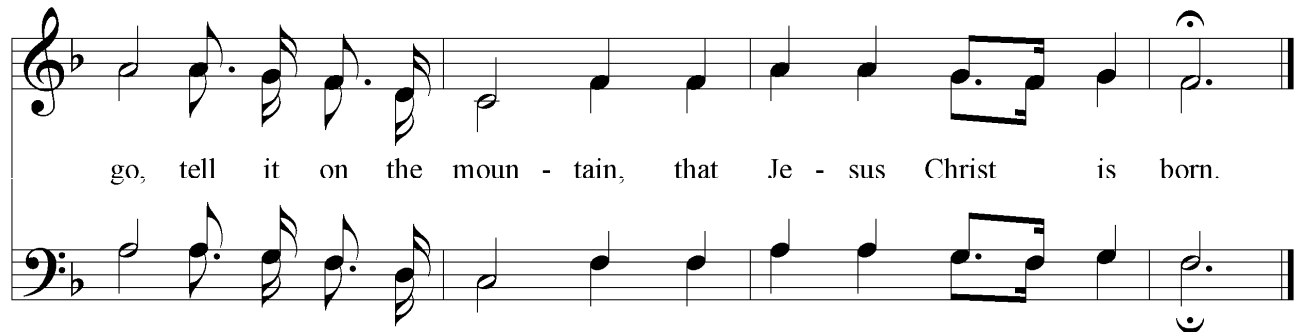
and na - ture sing,)

# Go Tell It On The Mountain

*Chorus*



Go, tell it on the moun - tain, o - ver the hills and ev - 'ry - where;



go, tell it on the moun - tain, that Je - sus Christ is born.



1. The shep - herds all were watch - ing o'er si - lent flocks by night,  
2. The shep - herds feared and trem - bled when, lo! a - bove the earth  
3. Down in a low - ly man - ger the hum - ble Christ was born,



be - hold, thru - out the hea - vens there shone a ho - ly light.  
rang out the an - gel cho - rus that hailed our Sav - ior's birth.  
and God sent us sal - va - tion that bles - sed Christ - mas morn.



# Eleven Faithful Apostles

**On the eleventh day of Christmas,** we remember the eleven faithful apostles of Jesus: Simon Peter, Andrew, James, John,

Philip, Bartholomew, Matthew, Thomas, James, Simon, and Judas son of James. Judas Iscariot, who betrays Jesus, is replaced by Matthias in Acts 1. The symbol on this ornament depicts DaVinci's painting of the Last Supper where Jesus gathers his disciples in the upper room and reveals that one of them will betray him. The prayer below is an ancient statement of faith known as the Apostles Creed. It was written by the early church--reportedly, one article by each faithful apostle--and is widely used by many Christian denominations today. The word "catholic" used to describe the Church means "universal."

**Read:** Luke 6:12-16

**Sing:** O Come, All Ye Faithful

**Pray:** 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,

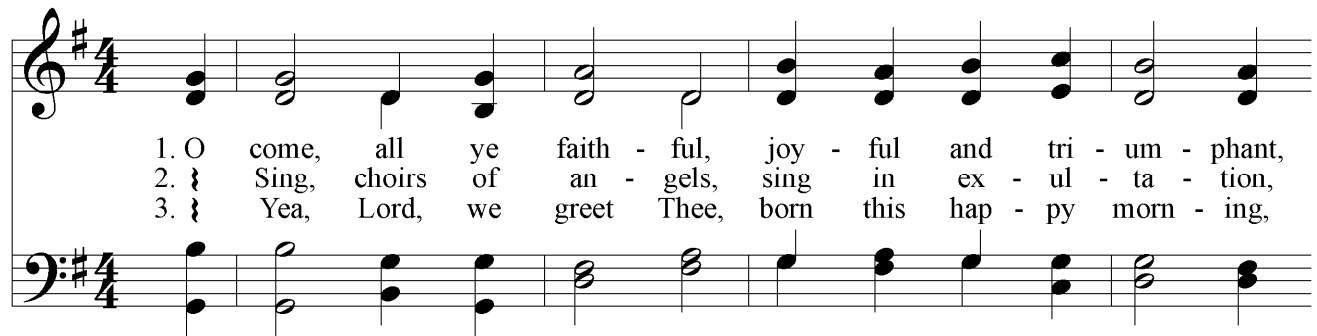
the communion of the saints,

the forgiveness of sins,

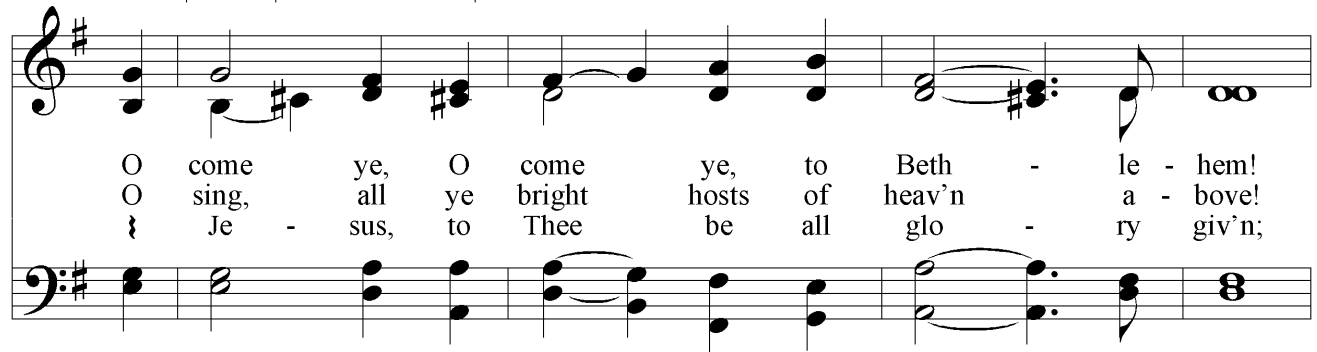
the resurrection of the body,

and the life everlasting. *Amen.*

# O Come, All Ye Faithful



1. O come, all ye faith - ful, joy - ful and tri - um - phant,  
 2. Sing, choirs of an - gels, sing in ex - ul - ta - tion,  
 3. Yea, Lord, we greet Thee, born this hap - py morn - ing,

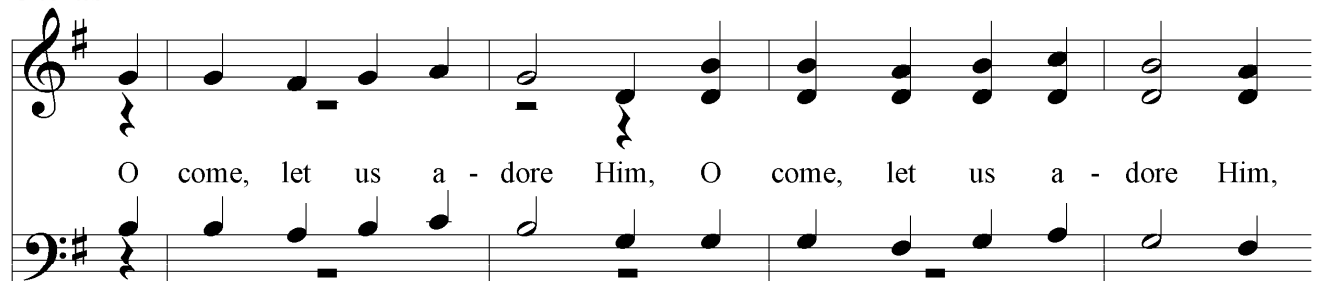


O come ye, O come ye, to Beth - le - hem!  
 O sing, all ye bright hosts of heav'n a - bove!  
 Je - sus, to Thee be all glo - ry giv'n;

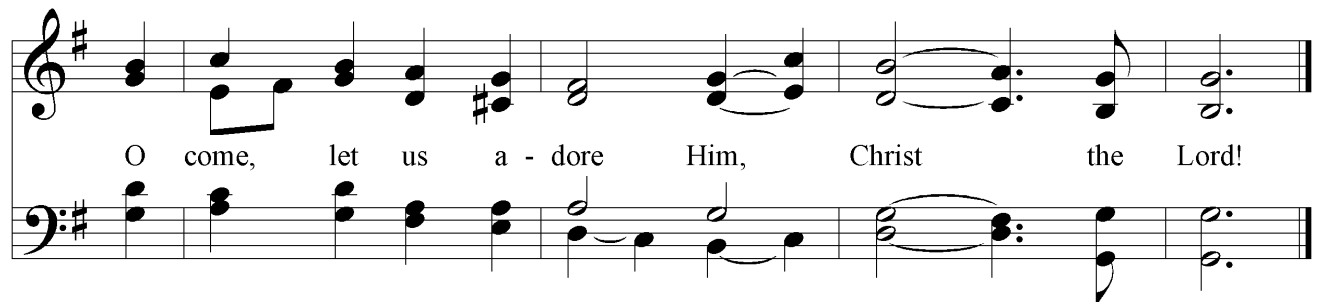


Come and be - hold Him, born the King of an - gels!  
 Glo - ry of to God, all glo - ry in the high - est!  
 Word of the Fa - ther, now in flesh ap - pear - ing!

## Chorus



O come, let us a - dore Him, O come, let us a - dore Him,



O come, let us a - dore Him, Christ the Lord!





## Twelve Tribes of Israel

**On the twelfth day of Christmas,** we remember the twelve tribes of Israel, God's chosen people: Reuben, Simeon, Levi, Judah, Issachar, Zebulun, Dan, Naphtali, Gad, Asher, Benjamin, and Joseph (split between his two sons, Ephraim and Manasseh). These twelve tribes come from the twelve sons of Jacob, who received the name of Israel after he wrestled with an angel of the Lord. The symbol on the twelfth's day ornament is the star of David, representing all of Israel.

**Read:** Genesis 49:1-28

**Sing:** O Come, O Come, Emmanuel (Though more of an Advent hymn, it speaks to Jesus as the fulfillment of the Old Testament's promises of redemption for Israel.)

**Pray:** Almighty God, we thank you for the election of the twelve tribes of Israel to be a kingdom of priests among the nations. You gave them your Law and Prophets, you dwelt with them in your Temple, and, in the fullness of time, you chose one among them, the Virgin Mary, to be the mother of your Son. As we come to the end of Christmastide, grant that Christ might make his dwelling within us as well.

# O Come, O Come, Emmanuel

1. O come, O come, Em - man - u - el, and ran - som cap - tive  
 2. O come, O come, thou Lord of might, who to thy tribes, on  
 3. O come, thou rod of Jes - se, free thine own from Sa - tan's  
 4. O come, thou Day - spring from on high, and cheer us by thy  
 5. O come, thou Key of Da - vid, come and o - pen wide our

Is - ra - el, that mourns in lone - ly ex - ile here,  
 Si - nai's height, in an - cient times didst give the law  
 • tyr - an - ny; from depths of hell thy peo - ple save,  
 draw - ing nigh; dis - perse the gloom - y clouds of night,  
 heav'n - ly home; make safe the way that leads on high,

Refrain  
 un - til the Son of God ap - pear.  
 in cloud and maj - es - ty and awe.  
 • and give them vic - t'ry o'er the grave. Re - joice! Re - joice!  
 and death's dark shad - ows put to flight.  
 and close the path to mis - er - y.

Em - man - u - el shall come to thee, O Is - ra - el.