

# *The Days of Advent*

THE PROPHECIES  
AND PROMISE  
OF THE  
SAVIOR



*An Advent Calendar  
of the  
Basilica of the National Shrine  
of the  
Immaculate Conception*

**The Fourth Week of Advent**

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Sunday, Fourth Week of Advent  
December 20



*The angel Gabriel was sent from God to a town of Galilee called Nazareth,  
to a virgin betrothed to a man named Joseph, of the house of David,  
and the virgin's name was Mary.*

*And coming to her, he said,*

*“Hail, full of grace! The Lord is with you. ... Do not be afraid, Mary,  
for you have found favor with God.*

*Behold, you will conceive in your womb and bear a son,  
and you shall name him Jesus.*

*He will be great and will be called Son of the Most High,  
and the Lord God will give him the throne of David his father,  
and he will rule over the house of Jacob forever,  
and of his kingdom there will be no end.”*

(Luke 1: 26-28; 31-33, Gospel of the day.)



## O Key of David

O Key of David and Scepter of  
the house of Israel,  
What he does open,  
none shall shut,  
What he does shut,  
none shall open.  
Come and bring forth from their  
prison house the captive that sits  
in darkness and in the shadow of  
death.

O come, O Key of David, come,  
And open wide our heav'nly home;  
Make safe the way that leads on  
high, and close the path to misery.

Rejoice! Rejoice!  
Emmanuel shall come to you,  
O Israel.

In ancient of days, whoever the king gave the key of the kingdom, that person was the most important official.

The antiphon sung on this day is taken from Isaiah 22: 22 and Revelation 1: 18; 3: 7, and 20: 1. God summons his servant and confers authority on him by giving him the Key of the House of David. Christ is the one who possesses the key that unlocks death and “the netherworld.”

Christ comes with authority to open the door to the Kingdom. Jesus is the key to the Kingdom. He cannot be “shut,” cannot be contained.

*Continue on page 10.*

Crossley Hawn and Sara MacKimmie sing the antiphon for each day on Twitter, Facebook and YouTube.



Monday, Fourth Week of Advent  
December 21

## O Radiant Dawn

O Radiant Dawn,  
Splendor of Eternal Light  
and Sun of Justice,

Come, enlighten them that sit  
in darkness and in the shadow  
of death.

O Come, O Dayspring from  
on high, And cheer us by your  
drawing nigh;

Disperse the gloomy clouds of  
night, And death's dark shadow  
put to flight.

Rejoice! Rejoice!  
Emmanuel shall come to you,  
O Israel.



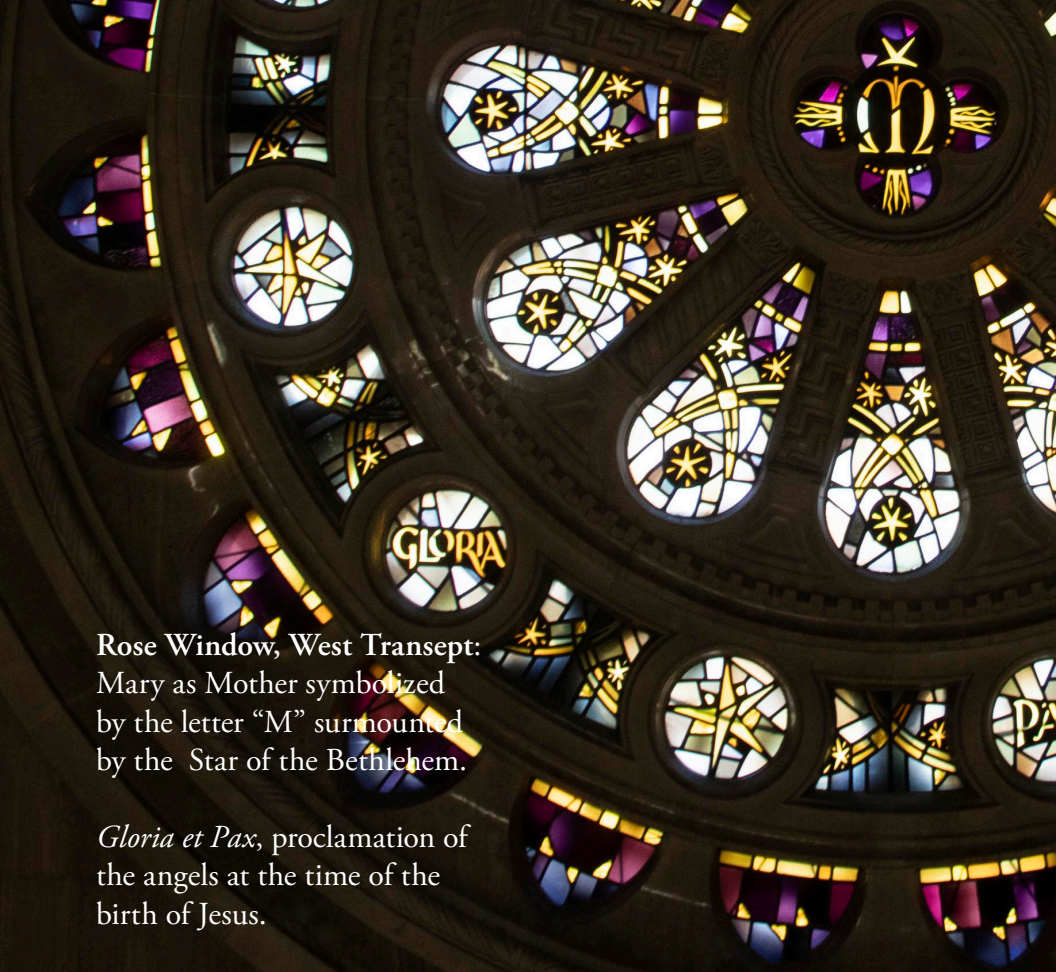
The winter solstice, also known as “midwinter,” occurs between December 20-23, depending on the year. This is the shortest day and thus the longest night of the year.

It is a moment when our longing for the coming of the Lord is profoundly symbolized by a cosmic event. It reminds us that very soon, the Lord, the Eternal Light, will come and free us from the darkness of sin.

*Continue on page 10.*

Mosaic interior of the baldachino, Great Upper Church.





Rose Window, West Transept:  
Mary as Mother symbolized  
by the letter “M” surmounted  
by the Star of the Bethlehem.

*Gloria et Pax*, proclamation of  
the angels at the time of the  
birth of Jesus.

## **The “Star of Bethlehem” December 21**

Tonight, the heavens will host a cosmic phenomenon that has not been seen in almost 800 years. The great conjunction of the planets Jupiter and Saturn will align so closely that they will appear as one, creating a radiant point of light referred to as the “Star of Bethlehem” or the “Christmas Star.” Although this alignment occurs every two decades, this year, their extremely close proximity to each other is rare and brilliant.

About 45 minutes after sunset, the “star” will be visible in the southwestern sky for approximately one hour. It will be at its best on this night but will be visible for the entire fourth week of December.



Tuesday, Fourth Week of Advent  
December 22

## O King of all the Nations

O King of all the nations,  
the Desire of all the nations;  
O Keystone that makes both one,  
Come and deliver those whom  
you did form from the clay of  
the earth.

O come, Desire of nations, bind  
In one the hearts of humankind;  
O bid our sad divisions cease,  
And be for us our King of Peace.

Rejoice! Rejoice!  
Emmanuel shall come to you,  
O Israel.

*Continue on page 10.*



Reredos, Queen of Missions Chapel



Wednesday, Fourth Week of Advent  
December 23



Elizabeth  
Pewabic Ceramic rondel,  
west apse Crypt Church

*Thus says the Lord God: Lo, I am sending my messenger to prepare the way before me* (Malachi 3: 1).

*When the time arrived for Elizabeth to have her child, she gave birth to a son. Her neighbors and relatives heard that the Lord had shown his great mercy toward her, and they rejoiced with her. When they came on the eighth day to circumcise the child, they were going to call him Zechariah after his father, but his mother said in reply, "No. He will be called John" (Luke 1: 57-60).*



*Theotokos, “God Bearer”*  
Pokrov Chapel  
(Byzantine-Ruthenian)

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## O Emmanuel

O Emmanuel,  
our King and Lawgiver,  
the Expected of the Nations  
and their Saviour,  
Come to save us,  
O Lord our God.

O come, O come Emmanuel,  
And ransom captive Israel,  
That mourns in lonely exile  
here, Until the Son of God  
appear.

Rejoice! Rejoice!  
Emmanuel shall come to you  
O Israel.

This is the good news the prophets foretold:  
The Savior will be born of the Virgin Mary.  
*Come, Lord Jesus, Come.*

(Sunday) Behold, the days are coming, says the Lord,  
When I will raise up a righteous shoot to David.  
*Come, Lord, do not delay!*

(Monday) Grant the desire we ask of you today,  
in flame our hearts with the fire of your love.  
*Come, Lord Jesus!*

(Tuesday) O King of all the nations,  
come and set us free.  
*Come now and save us.*

(Wednesday) A little child is born to us,  
and he shall be called the mighty God.  
*Come Lord, bring us your salvation.*

Mindful of all who are suffering and who are in need  
let us pray as Jesus taught us:  
*Our Father ...*

All that God promised to the virgin through the message of the angel  
has been accomplished.  
*The Lord is near;  
Come, let us worship him.*



A large, brightly lit Christmas tree stands in the center of a cathedral nave. The tree is covered in warm white lights and is flanked by two smaller, similarly lit trees. In the background, a large mosaic of Christ with a halo and red robe is visible above an altar. The cathedral's architecture, including columns and a dome, is visible. The floor is polished and reflects the lights.

# BLESSING OF THE CHRISTMAS TREE

CHRISTMAS EVE  
DECEMBER 24

**The Blessing of the Christmas Tree** may be done on or before Christmas Eve, at the beginning of the evening meal or the festive gathering. It is best to begin with the tree dark--not lighted; participants may hold lighted taper candles or the room dimly lit but enough light by which to read.

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

*Amen.*

Blessed be the name of the Lord.

*Now and for ever.*

## **Opening**

The Christmas tree is “ever green.” It reminds us of the eternal life promised by God and given to us through the saving act of Jesus. It stands in our midst bringing beauty and light. May this tree, so beautifully adorned, be a reminder and a symbol of God’s promise of eternal life, unending love, and the gift of “God with us.”

(A Christmas Carol or hymn is sung.)

## **Reading**

A reading from the prophet Isaiah (11: 1-3).

But a shoot shall sprout from the stump of Jesse,  
and from his roots a bud shall blossom.

The spirit of the LORD shall rest upon him:  
a spirit of wisdom and of understanding,  
A spirit of counsel and of strength,  
a spirit of knowledge and of fear of the LORD,  
and his delight shall be the fear of the LORD.

The word of the Lord.

*Thanks be to God.*



## Responsorial Psalm

*Let all the trees of the forest sing for joy,  
for the Lord has come.*

(Psalm 96)

Sing to the LORD a new song;  
sing to the LORD, all the earth.  
Sing to the LORD, bless his name;  
proclaim his salvation day after day.  
Tell his glory among the nations;  
among all peoples, his marvelous deeds.

*Let all the trees of the forest sing for joy,  
for the Lord has come.*

Let the heavens be glad and the earth rejoice;  
let the sea and what fills it resound;  
let the plains be joyful and all that is in them.  
Then let all the trees of the forest rejoice  
before the LORD who comes,  
who comes to govern the earth,  
To govern the world with justice  
and the peoples with faithfulness.

*Let all the trees of the forest sing for joy,  
for the Lord has come.*

## Second Reading

A reading from the Gospel of Luke (2:1-4).

(The Christmas Story)

In those days a decree went out from Caesar Augustus  
that the whole world should be enrolled.

This was the first enrollment.

So all went to be enrolled, each to his own town.

And Joseph too went up from Galilee from the town of Nazareth  
to Judea, to the city of David that is called Bethlehem,  
because he was of the house and family of David,  
to be enrolled with Mary, his betrothed, who was with child.

While they were there,

the time came for her to have her child,

and she gave birth to her firstborn son.

She wrapped him in swaddling clothes and laid him in a manger,  
because there was no room for them in the inn.

Now there were shepherds in that region living in the fields  
and keeping the night watch over their flock.

The angel of the Lord appeared to them  
and the glory of the Lord shone around them,  
and they were struck with great fear.

The angel said to them,

“Do not be afraid;

for behold, I proclaim to you good news of great joy  
that will be for all the people.

For today in the city of David  
a savior has been born for you who is Christ and Lord.

And this will be a sign for you:

you will find an infant wrapped in swaddling clothes  
and lying in a manger.”

And suddenly there was a multitude of the heavenly host  
with the angel,

praising God and saying:

“Glory to God in the highest

and on earth peace to those on whom his favor rests.”

*Praise to you, Lord Jesus Christ.*

## Intercessions

Christ is the tree of life.  
*In the midst of the paradise of delights.*

Christ is the tree.  
*We are the branches.*

In him was life.  
*And the life was the light of all nations.*

Let us pray for God's blessing upon us and  
upon this sign of our faith in the Lord.  
*Lord, give light to our hearts.*

May the joy and peace of Christ dwell in our hearts,  
and may we be its messengers in the world.  
*Lord, hear our prayer.*

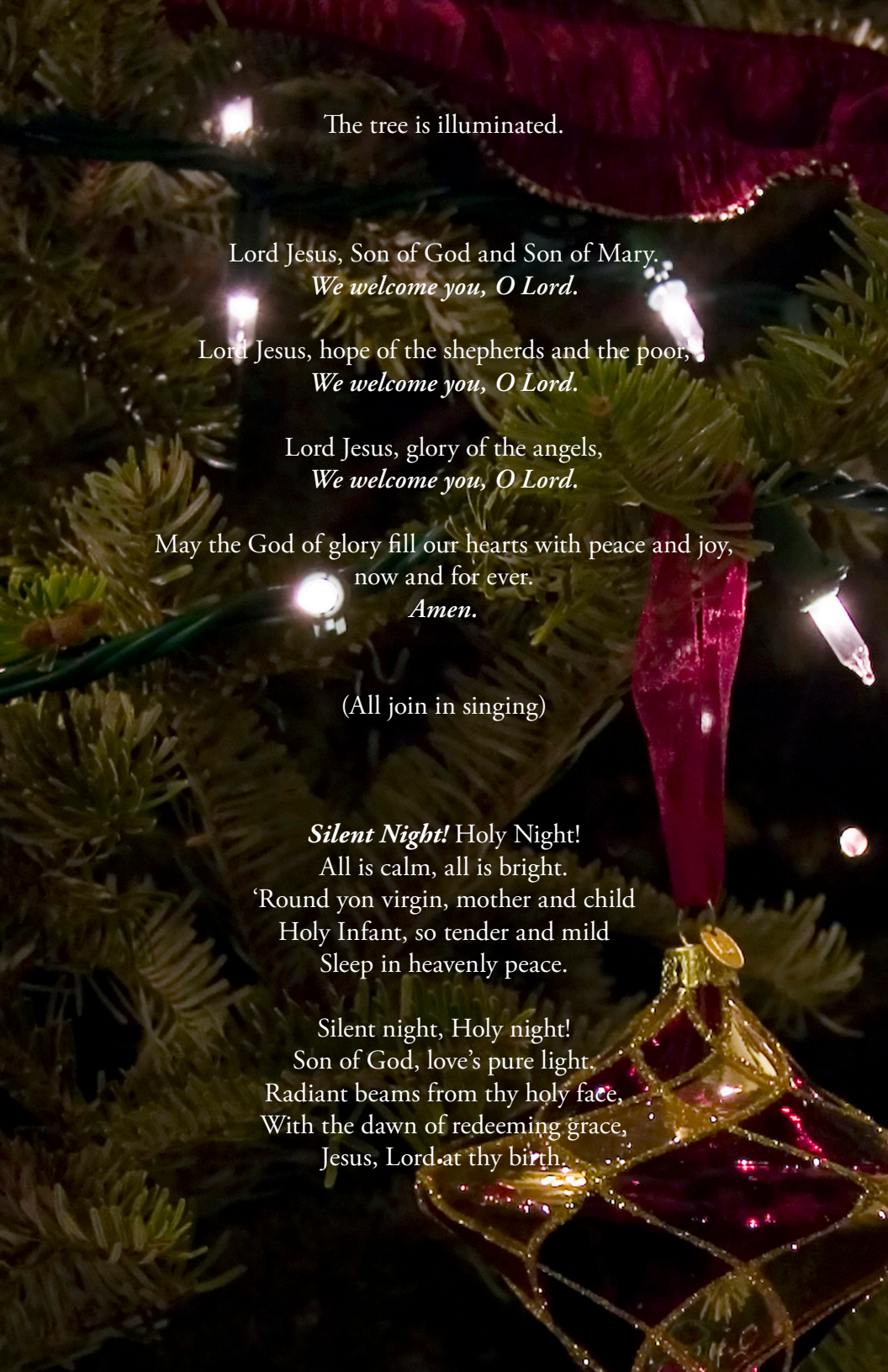
Let us pray now, the prayer that Jesus taught us:  
*Our Father ...*

## Blessing of the Tree

*Lord our God,  
we praise you for the light of creation:  
the sun, the moon, and the stars of the night.  
We praise you for Jesus Christ, your Son:  
He is Emmanuel, God-with-us, the Prince of Peace,  
who fills us with the wonder of your love.*

*Lord God,  
Bless this noble tree which we have adorned in honor  
of the birth of your Son,  
and adorn our hearts with the beauty of your grace  
that being internally enlightened by the splendor  
of this tree, we, like the shepherds and the wisemen,  
may come and adore him who is eternal Light and Beauty,  
Jesus, the Christ, the Word made Flesh.  
Amen.*





The tree is illuminated.

Lord Jesus, Son of God and Son of Mary.  
*We welcome you, O Lord.*

Lord Jesus, hope of the shepherds and the poor,  
*We welcome you, O Lord.*

Lord Jesus, glory of the angels,  
*We welcome you, O Lord.*

May the God of glory fill our hearts with peace and joy,  
now and for ever.  
*Amen.*

(All join in singing)

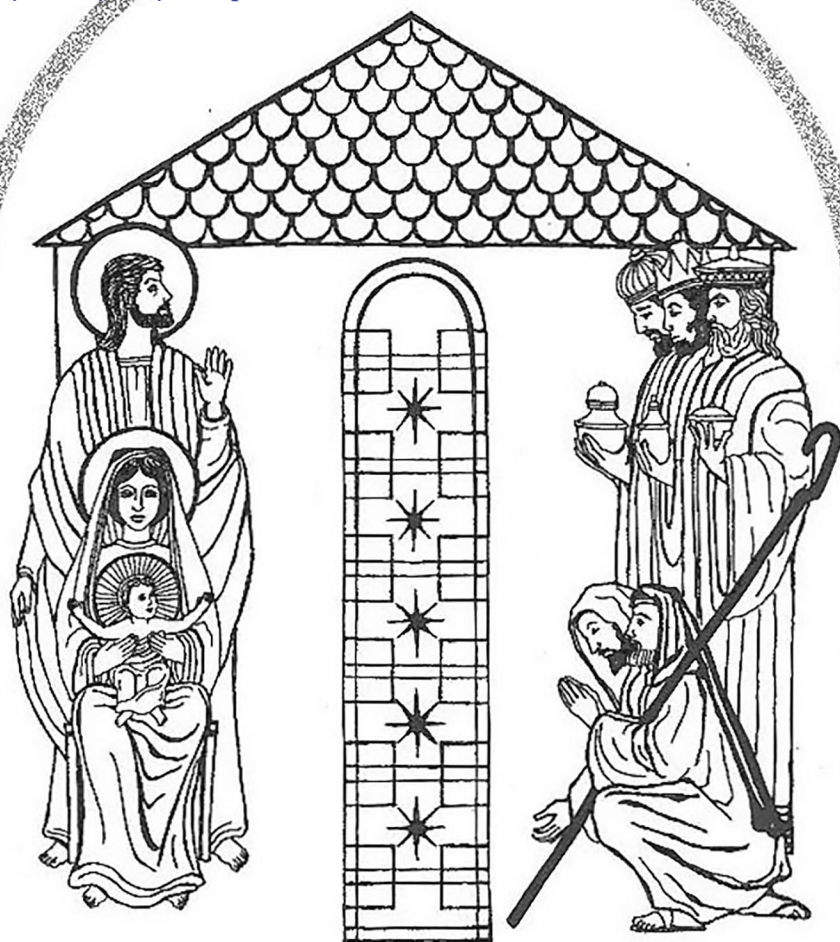
***Silent Night!*** Holy Night!  
All is calm, all is bright.  
'Round yon virgin, mother and child  
Holy Infant, so tender and mild  
Sleep in heavenly peace.

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.





*Nativity*  
Joyful Mystery Chapel



**THE VIRGIN SHALL CONCEIVE AND BEAR A SON**

