



CHRISTMAS JOY SPECIAL OFFERINGS

Worship Resources 2016

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“They shall name him ‘Emmanuel,’ which means, ‘God is with us.’” –Matthew 1:23

First Reading: Isaiah 7:10-16

Psalter: Psalm 80:1-7, 17-19

Second Reading: Romans 1:1-7

Gospel Reading: Matthew 1:18-25

Call to Worship *(Based on Psalm 80)*

Great Shepherd, you lead us as your flock:

Let your face shine on us; come and save us!

You are enthroned among angelic beings:

Let your face shine on us; come and save us!

Stir up your might, O Mighty One:

Let your face shine on us; come and save us!

Restore us, O God, that we may bring restoration to others:

Let your face shine on us; come and save us!

Giver of life, help us to bring your life and light to those who need it most:

Let your face shine on us; come and save us!

Beloved in Christ, let us worship God.

Opening Prayer *(Based on Isaiah 7)*

Almighty God, nothing is too difficult for you. Amid our suffering and our fears, again and again you remind us that, in Christ, you are Emmanuel: God with us. Be present with us now as we offer our worship to you, as the Scriptures are read and proclaimed, [as we feast with Christ, our Emmanuel, around the Table,] and

as we present offerings to you that will be used to strengthen our sisters and brothers, to remind them of your presence, extended through us as the Body of Christ. We offer our prayer to you in the name of Jesus Christ, God with us, and through the power of your ever-present Spirit. **Amen.**

Call to Confession *(Based on Romans 1)*

In the Gospel, God promises to pour out grace and peace on all those who belong to Jesus Christ: to all who turn to Christ in repentance and faith. Let us now, therefore, humbly confess our sins before God and one another.

Confession of Sin *(Based on Psalm 80)*

Holy God, you are our Shepherd, yet we have strayed from the security of your fold to follow our own desires. You desire that the light of your face would shine on us, yet we prefer to hide ourselves in shadows. Because of our wandering, we have exchanged the rich feast of love, grace, and acceptance you offer us for the bread and drink of tears. You have called us to share your light with others; we have brought dishonor to you and scorn upon ourselves. Restore us, O God, for we turn to you. We are your people, your flock, your vine. Give us life, for we call upon your name, through Christ our Lord, the One who is at your right hand. Amen.

Declaration of Forgiveness *(Based on Romans 1 and Matthew 1)*

Friends, hear the Good News! Jesus Christ, whose coming was promised long ago by the prophets, has been declared to be the Son of God by rising from the dead. He has the power to save us from our sins and to send us out in his name to share grace and peace with all people. Therefore, I declare to you in the name of Jesus Christ: we are forgiven.

Thanks be to God!

Call to Offering

Jesus is Emmanuel: "God with us." Jesus is present with us in Word and sacrament, and also in and through one another as the body of Christ. As Christ's body, we are called to share our gifts, ourselves, and Christ's presence, with those in need.

Prayer of Dedication

O God, the Shepherd of your people, bless the gifts we now offer to you. May they provide relief for those who find themselves in extreme distress, and may they also enable the church to raise up a new generation of leaders. In this act of

worship, we offer not only these gifts, but also ourselves, our souls and bodies, as living sacrifices to you. Use us, we pray, to share your presence among all who are in need. In the name of Jesus Christ, our Emmanuel, who is at your right hand, we pray. **Amen.**

Invitation to the Lord's Table

People of God: as we come to the Table of the Lord, let us remember that it is the Lord who comes to us. During this season of Advent, we reflect on Christ's first coming as we prepare for the Lord's second Advent, when Christ will come with glory and will reign forever and ever. Advent reminds us also that Christ comes to us here, at the Table, when bread and wine are shared in Jesus' name. Christ feeds us with his body and blood so that we might become the body of Christ, a manifestation of God with us, to a hurting world. Therefore, hear the words of Jesus to all who trust in him, "All is prepared: come and share this meal."

Prayer after Communion

Almighty God, in this sacrament you have assured us of Christ's presence and reminded us that we are Christ's body. As you are with us in Christ, may the spiritual food we have just received nourish and sustain us as we offer the presence of Christ to those who need it the most. As you have caused your face to shine on us, may we share your light with those who still walk in the shadow of death. Through Jesus Christ our Lord, Amen.

Charge and Blessing

Go in the name of the One who was declared to be the Son of God by rising from the dead. Go in the name Jesus, declared by the prophet to be God with us, and by the angel to be the One who would save us from our sins. And go in the knowledge that the grace and peace of God the Father, of our Lord Jesus Christ, and of the Spirit of holiness will rest upon you and remain with you always. **Amen.**

*Note: An alternative hymn that may be used in worship is *A Savior Born, A Gift of Joy* and is included below.*

A Hymn for the Christmas Joy Offering

A Savior Born, a Gift of Joy
 O WALY WALY LM (“Though I May Speak”)

The musical score is written in treble clef, key of D major (one sharp), and 3/4 time. It consists of four staves of music. Above the notes are guitar chords: D7, G, C, G, Em, Am7, D, D7, G, D7, Em, C, D, D7, G. The lyrics are arranged in five verses, with some lines indented to align with the notes.

1. A Sav - ior born— a gift of
 2. A life for all— our hope re -
 3. An an - swered call, a pas - tor's
 4. A stu - dent's hope, a goal and
 5. O God of love, your joy up -

joy! A man - ger bed, a star of
 stored! God's Word of love, a heal - ing
 love, a work - er's toil, a church well -
 plan, a dream de - ferred, a fam - ily's
 lifts— the poor now laugh and know their

light, a moth - er's laugh, a ti - ny
 touch, a cross and grave, the Ris - en
 blessed! A cry for help— eyes turned a -
 need, God's jus - tice lived, a lov - ing
 worth. May we your church give Christ - mas

boy, a fath - er's prayer— such gifts that night!
 Lord— God's end - less joy, now shared with us.
 bove— a gift of joy: a need ad - dressed!
 hand— a gift of joy: “You can suc - ceed!”
 gifts that bring your joy to all the earth.

Tune: English folk melody.

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Hymn Note for “A Savior Born, A Gift of Joy” This hymn celebrates that God’s gift of Jesus Christ to the world is a gift of joy—a joy that we as a church are called to share with those who are in need. The third and fourth verses refer to the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.)’s Christmas Joy Offering. Half of the receipts of this offering go to Presbyterian-related racial ethnic schools and the other half provides assistance for current and retired church workers and their families who are in need. As we celebrate God’s gift of joy to the world, we dedicate our gifts to those who have served God faithfully—and to those who are seeking to study and prepare for lives of faithful service. So God’s joy spreads out into the world. Churches of other denominations that are not receiving the Christmas Joy Offering may still wish to use verses one, two and five as a hymn of dedication of their special Christmas gifts.