Your birth, O Christ our God, has shed upon the world the light of knowledge; for through it, those who worshipped the stars have learned from a star to worship you, the Sun of Justice, and to know you, the Dawn from on High. Glory to you, O Lord!

Cantor: Glory.... (and all repeat the troparion: “Your birth, O Christ our God...”)

Cantor: Now and ever... (and all repeat the troparion: “Your birth, O Christ our God...”)

Sessional Hymn I - Tone 1 podoben: Hrob tvoj

For our sake, O long-suffering Savior, You were placed in the animal's manger, and You willingly lived as an Infant.
The shepherds and angels exulted You, saying: Glory and praise to Christ our God who is born on earth and deifies the human race.

Cantor

Glory to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit now and ever and ever. Amen.

All repeat the sessional hymn: “For our sake, O long-suffering Savior...”

Sessional Hymn II - Tone 3 podoben: Krasot'i

O Theotokos, you carried in your womb, in the flesh, the One who is eternal, incomprehensible, and substantial with the unseen Father, the One and indivisible divinity of the Trinity. Ever praised One, He shines forth...
your grace into the world. Therefore, we unceasingly cry out to you: Rejoice, O pure Virgin Mother.

Cantor

Glory to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit now and ever and ever. Amen.

All repeat the sessional hymn: “O Theotokos, you carried in your womb...”

Polyeleos, p. 16.

Exaltation

We extol You, O life-giving Christ! For our sake You are now born in the flesh from the unbetrothed, all-pure Virgin Mary.

Cantor

Shout joyfully to the Lord, all the earth, sing praise to his name; give to Him glorious praise.

The exaltation is repeated after each verse:

We extol you, O life-giving Christ...
The Lord has sent deliverance to his people.

The Lord said to my Lord, You are my Son; this day I have begotten You.

Before the day-star, like the dew, I have begotten you. The Lord has sworn, and He will not repent.

Glory to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit now and ever and ever. Amen.

After the last repetition of the Exaltation:

Three times

Alleluia, alleluia, alleluia, glory to you. O God.

The Alleluia is followed by the Bulgarian verse ("Bolharski pripiv"): 
O come, O come! Let us sing with the angelic choirs: Glory to God in the highest who is now born in a cave.

Come, O believers, let us see where Christ is born. Furthermore, with the Magi, the kings from the East, let us follow wherever the star goes. The angels are praising Him there unceasingly; the shepherds are singing a worthy song which says: Glory to God in the highest; glory to Him who is born of the
All repeat the sessional hymn: “Come, O believers, let us see where Christ is born...”

Festal Gradual Hymn, p. 312.

The service continues on p. 23 with the singing of the prokeimenon.

Prokeimenon - Tone 4 (Psalm 109: 3-4, 1):

Verse: The Lord said to my Lord: Sit at my right hand till I make your enemies your footstool.

“Let everything that lives and that breathes...” is sung in Tone 4, p. 171.

Gospel: Matthew 1: 16-25 (the birth of the Lord)

“Having beheld the resurrection of Christ...” is not sung. The service continues with the chanting of Psalm 50, p. 28.
Stichera after Psalm 50

Cantor
Tone 2 Bolhar

Glo-ry to the Fa- ther, and to the Son, and to the Ho-ly Spi - rit.

All

All cre - a - tion is filled with joy to - day. Christ is born of the Vir - gin.

Cantor
Tone 6 samohlasen


All

All cre - a - tion is filled with joy to - day. Christ is born in Beth - le - hem.

Cantor

Have mer - cy on me, O God, in your kind - ness. In your com - pass - ion, blot out my of - fense.
Glory to God in the highest and peace on earth. To-day Bethlehem receives the One who at all times sits with the Father.

To-day the angels sing the praises of the new-born Infant. Glory to God in the highest, and on earth, peace and good will to all.

The service continues with the litany, “Save your people, O Lord...” on p. 30.

The Canon of the Nativity

Ode 1
Irmos

Christ is born: glorify him. Christ from the heavens: go out to welcome him. Christ on earth: exalt him. All the earth, sing to the Lord, and praise him with joy, O peoples, for he is glorified.
Glo - ry to your ho - ly Na - ti - vi - ty, O Lord!

Although created in the image of God, humankind fell from the divine and higher life, and through transgression became entirely subject to corruption and decay. But now the all-good Creator fashions human nature anew; for this reason, we glorify Him. Refrain

When the Creator saw the one whom He had created with his own hands perishing, He lowered the heavens and came down; He took upon himself human nature from the most holy and pure Virgin, truly becoming flesh; for this reason, we glorify Him. Refrain

Christ our God is the Son and the Brightness of the Father; He is Wisdom, Word, and Power. And unknown to the heavenly hosts and those upon the earth, He became man and has won us back again; for this reason, we glorify Him.

The irmos may be repeated as katavasia, if desired.

Ode 3
Irmos

Let us sing to the Son begotten of the Father without change before all a - ges. Let us cry a - loud to Christ our God, in - car-nate
without seed from the Virgin in these latter days: you have exalted our horn;

Holy are you, O Lord.

Refrain: Glory to your holy nativity, O Lord!

Although Adam was formed from the clay of the earth, he shared in God's life; yet through the tempting of a woman, he sunk and fell into corruption. But now when he sees Christ born of a woman, he cries aloud: For my sake, You have become as I am; glory to You, O Lord! Refrain

You made yourself, O Christ, a creature in the form of clay, and even took on our flesh, thereby making us partakers in your divine nature. You have become a mortal, yet still remain God. You are our strength; glory to You, O Lord!

Glory.... now and ever...

Rejoice, O Bethlehem, for you are the Queen among the princes of Judah; because from you comes forth, in the sight of all, Christ himself, the Shepherd who watches over Israel, and He that is seated upon the Cherubim. He is our strength and reigns over all.

Hypakoe - Tone 8

Calling the Magi by a star, heaven brought forth the first fruits of the Gentiles to You, a Babe lying in a manger;

and they were amazed to see neither scepter nor throne
but only utter poverty. For what is poorer than a cave, and what is humbler than swaddling clothes? Yet in these shone forth the wealth of your divinity: glory to You, O Lord.

Ode 4
Irmos

O Christ, the rod from Jesse’s root and its flow’r, you blossomed from the Virgin; Praise-worthily one, from the overshadowed shady mountain.

You came in the flesh from her who knew not man.

God not made of matter, glory to your pow’r, O Lord.

Refrain: Glory to your holy nativity, O Lord!

In the days of old, Jacob foretold You, O Christ, calling You the Expectation of the nations. You have come forth from the tribe of Judah and have overcome the might of Damascus and the spoils of Samaria, turning their idolatry into faith pleasing to God. Glory to Your power, O Lord!

Refrain
Rising as a Star out of Jacob, O Master, You have brought joy to the Magi who interpreted wisely the words of Balaam, the prophet of old. They were led to You as the first fruits of the Gentiles, and You graciously received them as they brought You pleasing gifts. Glory to your power, O Lord!

Glory.... now and ever...

You have descended, O Christ, into the womb of the Virgin as dew upon the fleece and as drops of rain that shower the earth. Ethiopia, Tarshish, and the Isles of Arabia; the kings of Saba, of the Medes, and those of all the earth, bow down before You, O Savior. Glory to your power, O Lord!

Ode 5

Irmos

In obedience to the decree of Caesar, O Christ, You were registered among his servants; and You have set us free from being enslaved to the enemy and sin. Completely sharing in our poverty, You made our nature godlike by uniting yourself to us and by participating in our nature.

Refrain: Glory to your holy nativity, O Lord!
Glory.... now and ever...

As it was prophesied in times past, behold, the Virgin has conceived in her womb and has given birth to God in the flesh and still remained a virgin. Through her we are reconciled to God; let us sinners sing her praises, for she is truly the Mother of God.

Ode 6
Irmos

\[
\begin{align*}
\text{Taking pity on Jonah, the sea monster that took him kept him} & \text{safe, like an infant from the womb. The Word, which inhabited the} \\
\text{Virgin and took flesh, came forth from her and kept her incorrupt.} & \text{He underwent no change, and kept intact the one who bore him.}
\end{align*}
\]

Refrain: Glory to your holy nativity, O Lord!

Christ our God, begotten from the Father before the morning star, appears in the flesh; He, who directs the armies of heaven, is laid in a manger of dumb beasts. He, who frees the twisted bonds of sin, is wrapped in swaddling clothes.

Glory.... now and ever...

A young child, a Son is born from the race of Adam and is given to the faithful. He is the Father and Prince of the World to come; He is the all-powerful God who rules over all creation; He is called the Angel of great counsel.
Kontakion of the Nativity - Tone 3

Ikos: Bethlehem has opened up Eden for us. Come and let us see the delights that we have found there in secret. Come and let us gather the fruits of Paradise that are within the cave. There, the unwatered Root has manifested itself, and it has sprouted forgiveness. There, the undug Well, of which David yearned to drink, is found. There, the Virgin, who gave birth to the Infant, immediately quenched the thirst of Adam and David. Therefore, let us hasten to the place where the young Infant, the Eternal God, is born.

Ode 7
Irmos

The youths, brought up together in piety, despised the order of the impious king. Undaunted by the threat of fire, they stood
An angel of the Lord appeared to the shepherds keeping night watch over their flocks. The shepherds were frightened as they saw the glory of the Lord around the angel and heard him say: Rejoice, for Christ is born. Blessed are You, O God of our Fathers. *Refrain*

At the word of the angel, the heavenly hosts cried aloud: Glory to God in the highest and on earth, peace and good will to all; Christ has shone forth. Blessed are You, O God of our Fathers.

**Glory... now and ever...**

When the angel had returned to heaven, the shepherds said to one another: Let us go and see this event which the Lord has made known to us. They hastened to Bethlehem and worshiped with Mary the One whom she had borne. They cried out: Blessed are You, O God of our Fathers.

**Ode 8**

**Irmos**

The furnace cooled like dew, miraculously, foretold a great marvel. For it did not burn the youths it received, nor did the fire of divinity burn the Virgin's womb by entering it. Therefore, let us
strike up a hymn and sing: Let all creation bless and exalt the Lord forever.

Refrain: Glory to your holy nativity, O Lord!

The children of David were once led captive from Zion by the daughter of Babylon through the strength of the sword; now, the Magi bringing gifts, are sent by her to beseech the Daughter of David in whom God took flesh. Therefore, let us praise God, saying: Let all creation bless the Lord and exalt Him above all forever. Refrain

As captives, the children of Zion did not play upon their lyres; Christ, shining forth in Bethlehem, quiets all the iniquity of Babylon as well as the music of her harps. Therefore, let us praise God, saying: Let all creation bless the Lord and exalt Him above all forever.

Glory.... now and ever...

Babylon plundered Zion, the Queen, and seized all her riches. But Christ, by a guiding star, attracted to Zion the wealth of Babylon with her kings who studied the stars. Therefore, let us praise God, saying: Let all creation bless the Lord and exalt Him above all forever.

The Canticle of the Theotokos is omitted. Instead, the following magnification is sung:

Ode 9
Magnification

Ex - tol, ex - tol, O my soul, O my soul, Christ the King born in a cave, Christ the King, born in a cave.
I see a strange and marvelous mystery: heaven is a cave; the cherubic throne, a virgin; the manger has become the place in which Christ the incomprehensible God lies down. Let us praise him and extol him.

O my soul, extol our God, born in the flesh from the Virgin.

Observing the unusual path of a mysterious and newly shining star which was brighter than any other heavenly light, the Magi learned that Christ the King was born on earth in Bethlehem for our salvation.

O my soul, extol our God, who is worshiped by the Magi.

The Magi asked of Herod: Where is the newborn King whose star we have seen? We have come to worship Him. The enemy of God was troubled and irrationally schemed how to kill Christ.

O my soul, extol the pure Virgin, who has given birth to Christ the King.

Herod asked the Magi, who had come to Bethlehem to worship Christ with their gifts, when they had first seen the star which directed them. But the Magi returned to their own country by the same star, thereby deceiving Herod, the killer of the Innocents.

The magnification and irmos are repeated as katavasia.
After the ninth ode, Little Litany (p. 36). Then the Hymn of Light (Svitilen) of the Nativity is sung:

Hymn of Light - Tone 3 samopodoben:

Our Savior, the Day-spring from the East, has visited us from on high, and we who were in darkness and in shadow have found the truth;

for the Lord, the Lord is born of a Virgin.

The Praises (Psalms 148-150)

The opening verses of Psalm 148 are sung in Tone 4 (p. 184), followed by the recited verses. The stichera are sung beginning "on 4":

Cantor: Praise him for his powerful deeds, praise his surpassing greatness.

Tone 4 samohlasen

O holy ones, be happy; O heavens, be glad; and all you mountains, sing with joy because Christ our God is born today. Behold,
the Virgin is enthroned like the Cherubim, holding in her arms the incarnate Word of God. The shepherds glory with hymns the new-born Babe; the Magi offer gifts to their Master; and the angels sing praises and say: O incomprehensible Lord, glory to You!

Cantor: O praise him with sound of trumpet praise him with lute and harp.

O Virgin Theotokos, you gave birth to the Savior. You overthrew the ancient curse of Eve. As a mother you were the benevolence of the Father.

You bore in your womb the incarnate Word of God. We cannot understand this mystery, but we glory it with one faith. We also join you in praise to say: O Ineffable Lord, glory to You!
Come, all you peoples, let us praise the Mother of our Savior, for she remained a virgin after childbirth. Rejoice, O holy city of our King and God.

The Savior has chosen to live in you, and in you He has worked out our salvation. With Gabriel, we sing your praises; and with the shepherds we glorify you, saying: O Mother of God, implore Him who became incarnate from you, that He may save our souls.

O praise him with resounding cymbals, praise him with clashing of cymbals. Let everything that lives and that breathes give praise to the Lord.

By the will of the Father, the Word became flesh. The Virgin gave birth to the Incarnate God. The star proclaims and the Magi adore;
the shepherds are amazed and all creation rejoices.

Cantor:

(Tone 6) Glory...

At the time of your coming upon the earth, the first census of the world took place.

At that time You wanted to enroll the names of all who believed in your birth.

Therefore, such a decree was published by Caesar because your timeless and eternal kingdom was renewed by your birth. And now we offer You, O God and Savior of our souls, not gifts of silver and gold, but the wealth of our true faith.
Today Christ is born of the Virgin in Bethlehem. Today the Eternal One has a beginning; today the Word becomes incarnate.

All the heavenly powers rejoice, and all who dwell on earth are happy.

The Magi offer gifts to the Master; the shepherds proclaim the marvel;

and we cry aloud unceasingly: Glory to God in the highest and on earth, peace and good will to all.

The service continues with the Great Doxology (p. 41), which concludes with the Trisagion (p. 44). Then we sing the troparion of the Nativity, once:

Troparion of the Nativity - Tone 4

Your birth, O Christ our God, has shed upon the world the light of knowledge; for through it, those who worshipped the stars have learned from
a star to worship you, the Sun of Justice, and to know you, the Dawn from on High. Glory to you, O Lord!

Christmas Matins concludes with the Litany of Supplication (p. 45), the Prayer over Bowed Heads (p. 47), and the Dismissal (p. 48):

Priest: May Christ our true God, who for our salvation was born in a cave in Bethlehem of Judea, and lay in a manger, have mercy on us and save us...

The end, and glory to God!