

*Vespers for the Nativity
of Our Lord, God, and Savior
Jesus Christ*

when December 24 falls on a Saturday or Sunday



**Metropolitan Cantor Institute
Archeparchy of Pittsburgh**

November 2018

In the Byzantine Rite, **December 24** is a day of strict fasting in preparation for the feast of the Nativity (birth) of our Lord, God, and Savior Jesus Christ. During the day, the Royal Hours are celebrated, and in the afternoon or early evening, the day's fast is broken at a special service of Vespers together with the Divine Liturgy of Saint Basil the Great.

However, when December 24 falls on a Saturday or Sunday, the day of strict fasting (and the Royal Hours) are transferred to the preceding Friday, and the Divine Liturgy is celebrated on the morning of December 24. In the evening, Vespers is celebrated by itself, without the Divine Liturgy, since it is a general rule in our tradition that the Divine Liturgy is only celebrated once per day in each church.

This booklet provides the complete service of Vespers for use in those years when December 24 falls on Saturday or Sunday. Where official texts have been promulgated for the Byzantine Catholic Church, these have been used. Psalm texts are taken from the Grail Psalter (1963), adapted by the Inter-Eparchial Liturgical Commission as necessary to conform to the Septuagint.

Wherever lines of text are given, with the second set of lines indented, they are intended to be sung to the usual psalm tone, given at the beginning of the service.


The image on the cover is from the Ruthenian *Časoslov* (Rome, 1950).

We hope that this booklet will provide edification and help to God's faithful as they begin the celebration of the birth of our Lord, God, and Savior, Jesus Christ.

Vespers for the Nativity of Our Lord, God, and Savior, Jesus Christ

The celebrant, vested in bright epitrachilion, stands before the closed holy doors. The deacon remains in the sanctuary. The faithful STAND.

Celebrant: Blessed is our God, always, now and ever and forever.

Response: 
A - men.

Glory to you, our God,
glory *to* you.

Heavenly King, Comforter, Spirit of Truth,
everywhere present and filling all things,
Treasury of Blessings and Giver of Life,
come and dwell within us,
cleanse us of all stain,
and save our souls, O *gracious* One.

Holy God, Holy and Mighty, Holy and Immortal,
have mercy *on* us. (*3 times*)

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

Most Holy Trinity, have mercy on us;
Lord, cleanse us of our sins;
Master, forgive our transgressions;
Holy One, come to us and heal our infirmities for *your* name's sake.

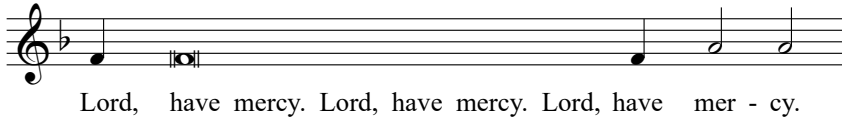
Lord, have mercy. Lord, have mercy.
Lord, *have* mercy.

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

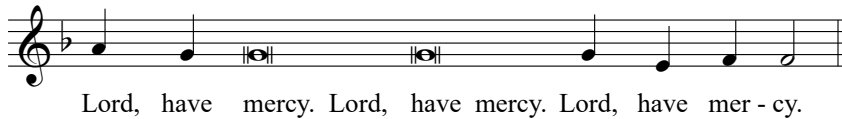
Our Father, who art in heaven, hallowed be thy name.
Thy kingdom come, thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven.
Give us this day our daily bread,
and forgive us our trespasses
as we forgive those who trespass against us,
and lead us not into temptation,
but deliver us *from* evil.

Celebrant: For thine is the kingdom and the power and the glory, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, now and ever and forever.

Response:



(sung twice)



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

Call to Worship

Come, let us worship our King and God. *(bow)*

Come, let us worship Christ, our King and God. *(bow)*

Come, let us worship and bow before the only Lord Jesus Christ,
the King and *our* God. *(bow)*

*The celebrant quietly recites the Prayers of Light of Vespers before the holy doors,
while the faithful sing Psalm 103. The deacon returns to the altar.*

Psalm 103

Bless the Lord, O my soul! Lord my God, how great you are,
clothed in maj-es - ty and glo - - - ry, wrapped in light as in a robe.
You stretch out the heav-ens like a tent. A-bove the rains you build your
dwell - ing. You make the clouds your char - - i - ot, you walk on
the wings of the wind; you make your an - gels spir - - - its
and your min - is - ters a flam - ing fire. You found-ed the earth
on its base, to stand firm from age to age. You make the grass grow for
the cat - - - tle and the plants to serve man's needs, that he may
bring forth bread from the earth and wine to cheer man's heart;

oil, to make his face shine and bread to strength-en
 man's heart. I will sing to the Lord all my life, make mu-sic
 to my God while I live. You made the moon to mark the months;
 the sun knows the time for its set-ting. How man-y are your
 works, O Lord! In wis-dom you have made them all. Glo-ry to
 the Fa-ther, and to the Son, and to the Ho-ly Spir-it,
 now and ev-er and for-ev-er. A-men.


Three times, with a bow each time:

Al-le-lu-ia! Al-le-lu-ia! Al-le-lu-ia! Glo-ry to you, O God!

The faithful may SIT as the Litany of Peace begins:

Litany of Peace

Deacon: In peace, let us pray to the Lord.

Response: 
1. Lord, have mer - cy.

Deacon: For peace from on high and for the salvation of our souls, let us pray to the Lord.

Response: 
2. Lord, have mer - cy.

Deacon: For peace in the whole world, for the stability of the holy Churches of God, and for the union of all, let us pray to the Lord.

Response: Lord, have mercy. (1)

Deacon: For this holy church and for all who enter it with faith, reverence, and fear of God, let us pray to the Lord.

Response: Lord, have mercy. (2)

Deacon: For our holy father, (*Name*), pope of Rome, let us pray to the Lord.

Response: Lord, have mercy. (1)

Deacon: For our most reverend metropolitan, (*Name*), for our God-loving bishop, (*Name*), for the venerable presbyterate, the diaconate in Christ, and all the clergy and people, let us pray to the Lord.

Response: Lord, have mercy. (2)

Deacon: For our government and for all in the service of our country, let us pray to the Lord.

Lord, have mercy. (1)

Response:

For this city, [*or*: For this holy monastery], for every city, community, and for the faithful living in them, let us pray to the Lord.

Deacon:

Response: Lord, have mercy. (2)

Deacon: For favorable weather, for an abundance of the fruits of the earth, and for peaceful times, let us pray to the Lord.

Response: Lord, have mercy. (1)

Deacon: For those who travel by sea, air, and land, for the sick, the suffering, the captive and for their salvation, let us pray to the Lord.

Response: Lord, have mercy. (2)

Deacon: That we be delivered from all affliction, wrath, and need, let us pray to the Lord.

Response: Lord, have mercy. (1)

Deacon: Protect us, save us, have mercy on us, and preserve us, O God, by your grace.

Response: Lord, have mercy. (2)

Deacon: Commemorating our most holy, most pure, most blessed and glorious Lady, the Theotokos and ever-Virgin Mary with all the saints, let us commit ourselves and one another and our whole life to Christ our God.

Response: A musical staff with a treble clef and a key signature of one flat (B-flat). The melody consists of four notes: a quarter note G4, a quarter note A4, a quarter note B4, and a half note C5.

To you, O Lord.

Celebrant: Evening, morning, and at noon we praise you, we bless you, we thank you, and we pray to you, Master of All and loving Lord. Let our prayer rise like incense before you and do not let our hearts be turned to evil words or thoughts, but deliver us from all that might ensnare our souls. For to you Lord, O Lord, our eyes are turned and in you we hope; let us not be put to shame, O our God.

For to you, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, is due all glory, honor, and worship now and ever and forever.

Response: A musical staff with a treble clef and a key signature of one flat (B-flat). The melody consists of three notes: a quarter note G4, a half note A4, and a half note B4.

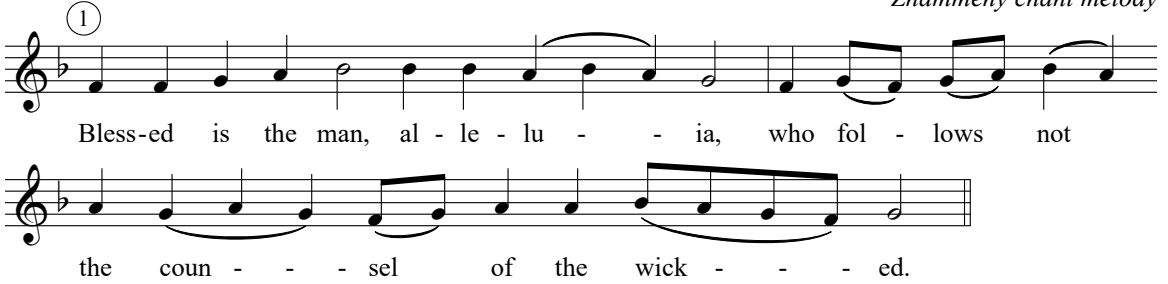
A - men.

The First Kathisma of the Psalter

The cantor chants the first verse of Psalm 1:

Znammeny chant melody

①



Bless-ed is the man, al - le - lu - - ia, who fol - lows not
the coun - - - sel of the wick - - - ed.

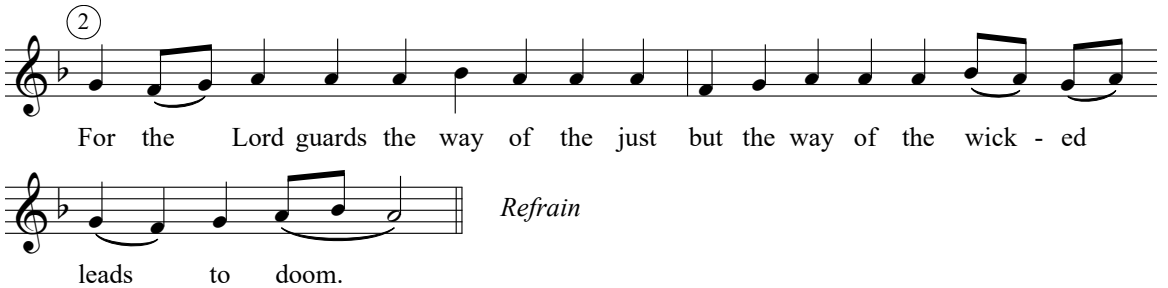
and the people together with the cantor sing the refrain.



Al - le - lu - ia, al - le - lu - ia, al - le - lu - - - ia.

This refrain is sung after each of the following verses:

②



For the Lord guards the way of the just but the way of the wick - ed
leads to doom.

Refrain

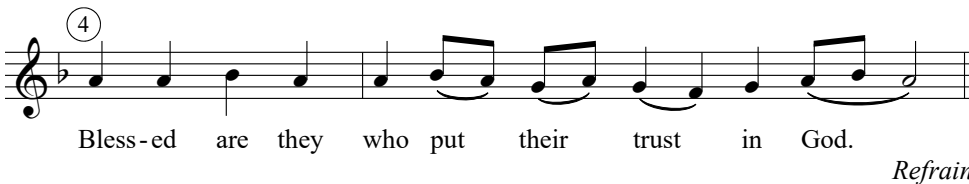
③



Serve the Lord with awe and trem-bling, pay him your hom - age.

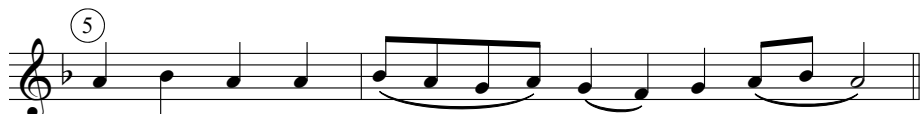
Refrain


④




Bless-ed are they who put their trust in God.

Refrain

5

 A - rise, O Lord! Save me, my God. *Refrain*

6

 O Lord of sal - va - tion, bless your peo - ple! *Refrain*

7

 Glo - ry to the Fa - ther and to the Son and to the Ho - ly Spir - it. *Refrain*

8

 Now and ev - er and for - ev - er. A - men. *Refrain*

The cantor and people sing, twice, with a bow each time:


 Al - leluia, alleluia, allelu-ia! Glo - ry to you, O God!

and a third time, with a bow:


 Al - leluia, alleluia, al-le - lu - ia! Glo - ry to you, O God!

Then the following Small Litany may be intoned:


Deacon: Again and again, in peace let us pray to the Lord.

Response: 
 Lord, have mer - cy.

Deacon: Protect us, save us, have mercy on us, and preserve us, O God, by your grace.

Response: 
Lord, have mer - cy.

Deacon: Commemorating our most holy, most pure, most blessed and glorious Lady, the Theotokos and Ever-Virgin Mary with all the saints, let us commit ourselves and one another and our whole life to Christ our God.

Response: 
To you, O Lord.

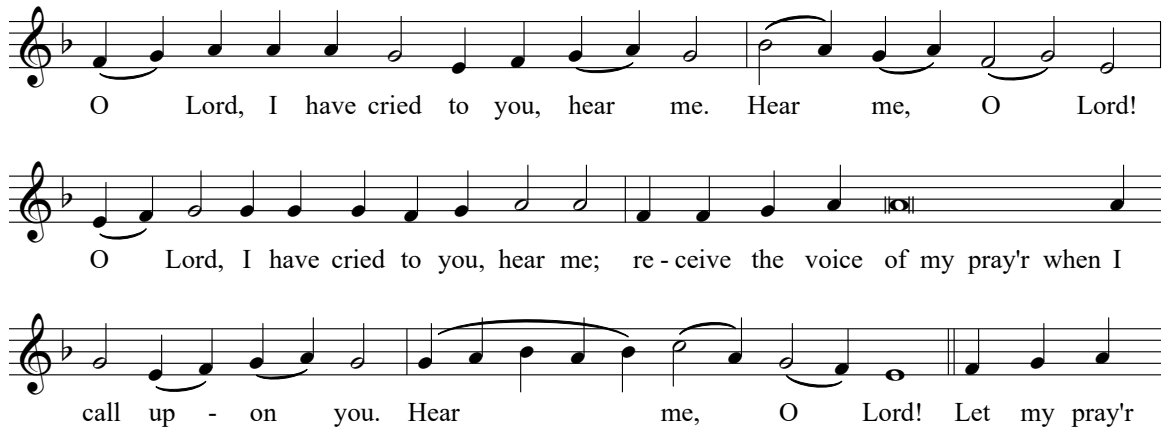
Celebrant: For yours is the might; and yours are the kingdom and the power and the glory, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, now and ever and forever.

Response: 
A - men.

The Lamplighting Psalms

*The faithful **STAND** for the great incensation of the church. They may **SIT** when the great incensation is complete.*

Psalm 140 - Tone 2 samohlasen



O Lord, I have cried to you, hear me. Hear me, O Lord!

O Lord, I have cried to you, hear me; re-ceive the voice of my pray'r when I

call up - on you. Hear me, O Lord! Let my pray'r

as-cend to you like in - cense and the lift - ing up of my hands
like an eve - ning sac - ri - fice. Hear me, O Lord!

O Lord, set a guard before my mouth
and set a seal on the door of *my* lips.

Let not my heart be inclined to evil,
nor make excuse for the sins I *commit*.

Let me never share in sinners' feasting.
If a just man strikes or reproves me *it is* kindness

but let the oil of the wicked not anoint my head.
Let my prayer be ever against *their* malice.

The princes were thrown down by the side of the rock;
then they understood that my words *were* kind.

As a millstone is shattered to pieces on the ground,
so their bones were strewn at the mouth of *the* grave.

To you, Lord God, my eyes are turned;
in you I take refuge; spare *my* soul!

From the trap they have laid for me keep me safe;
keep me from the snares of those who *do* evil.

Let the wicked fall into the traps they have set
while I pursue my way *un*harméd.

Psalm 141

With all my voice I cry to the Lord,
with all my voice I entreat *the* Lord.

I pour out my trouble before him;
I tell him all my distress while my spirit faints *within* me.

But you, O Lord, know my path.

On the way where I shall walk they have hidden a snare to *entrap* me.

Look on my right and see:

there is no one who takes *my* part.

I have no means of escape,

not one who cares for *my* soul.

I cry to you, O Lord.

I have said: "You are my refuge, all I have in the land of *the* living."

Listen, then, to my cry

for I am in the depths of *distress*.

Rescue me from those who pursue me

for they are stronger *than* I.

Bring my soul out of this prison

and then I shall praise *your* name.

Around me the just will assemble

because of your goodness *to* me.

Cantor: (Tone 2) Out of the depths I cry to you, O Lord; **Psalm 129**
(on 8) Lord, hear my voice!

Stichera of the Nativity of the Lord - Tone 2 samohlasen

8 7
Come, let us re-joyce in the Lord; let us pro-claim the pres-ent mys-te-ry
by which the partition has been broken and the flam-ing sword with-held. Now the
Cher-ubim shall let us all come to the Tree of Life. As for me, I

6 5

Be-cause the Lord Je - sus was born of the ho - ly Vir - gin, all cre - a - tion is
 en-light - ened. Be-hold! The shep-herds keep watch and the ma-gi are a - dor - ing;
 the an - gels are sing - ing hymns of praise and Her - od is trem - bling;
 for the Sav - ior of our souls has re - vealed him - self in the flesh.

Cantor: My soul is waiting for the Lord, I count on his word.
 (on 5) My soul is longing for the Lord more than watchman for daybreak.
 All repeat "Because the Lord Jesus was born of the holy Virgin..."

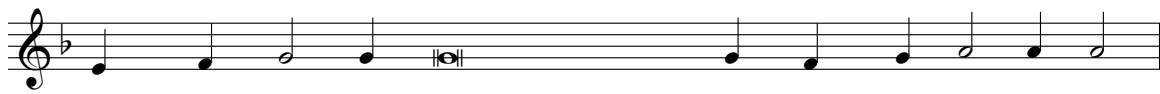
Cantor: Let the watchman count on daybreak and Israel on the Lord.
 (on 4)

4 3

O Christ our God, your king - dom is e - ter - nal, and your reign is from
 gen - eration to gen - er - a - tion. You be - came in - carnate of the Ho - ly Spir - it
 and be - came man from the ev - er - vir - gin Mar - y. Your com - ing,
 O Christ, has shed a great light up - on us. You are the Light of Light



and the ra-diance of the Fa - ther. You have il-lum-ined the whole cre - a - tion.



There - fore, ev - 'ry - thing that breathes sings a hymn of praise to you.



You are the im - age of the Fa - ther's glo - ry. You are



the e - ternal God, existing be-fore all a - ges, who shone forth from the Vir - gin.



O Lord our God, have mer - cy on us.

Cantor: Because with the Lord there is mercy and fullness of redemption,
(on 3) Israel indeed he will redeem from all its iniquity.

All repeat: "O Christ our God, your kingdom is eternal..."

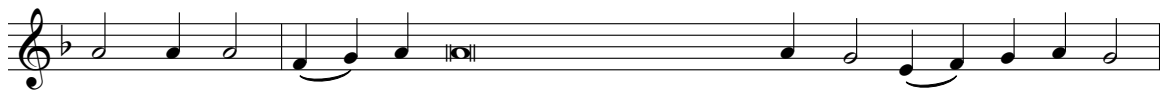
Cantor: Praise the Lord, all you nations, acclaim him all you peoples! **Psalm 116**
(on 2)



O Christ, what shall we of-fer you for your com-ing on earth in our human-



i - ty for our sake? Ev - 'ry crea - ture that has its being from you gives



thanks to you: the an - gels offer hymns of praise, the heav - ens give a star;

the Ma - gi pre - sent their gifts and the shep - herds, their won - der; the earth
 pro - vides a cave and the des - ert a man - ger. As for us, we offer a
 Vir - gin Moth - er. O God who are from all eter - ni - ty, have
 mer - cy on us.

Cantor: Strong is the love of the Lord for us;
 (on 1) he is faithful forever. *All repeat: "O Christ, what shall we offer you...?"*

The faithful STAND.

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

Doxastikon of the Nativity - Tone 2 samohlasen

When Au - gus - tus became su - preme rul - er of the world, the man - y king - doms
 a - mong the peo - ple came to an end. Like - wise, when you be - came incarnate
 of the Im - mac - u - late One, the wor - ship of man - y gods had to cease.
 The cit - ies came under a uni - ver - sal pow - er, and the Gen - tiles believed in one

su-preme Di - vin - i - ty. Na - tions were re - gistered in the name of Cae - sar

Au - gus - tus, and we, the faith - ful, were registered in your divine name,

O In - car - nate One. O Lord, great is your mer - cy; glo - ry to you!

The Festal Entrance

At the Glory... of the Lamp-lighting stichera, the celebrant vests in the phelonion. The deacon opens the holy doors, takes the censer and the holy Gospel book, and they make the entrance through the northern door to stand before the holy doors. The following dialogue is recited quietly:

Deacon: Let us pray to the Lord.

Celebrant: Good and loving King, who have blessed all things, we fervently implore you with contrite heart and humble spirit to bless our comings and goings. For your coming and going, and your dwelling among us are blessed, O Christ our true God, always, now and ever and forever. Amen.

Deacon: Reverend Father, bless the holy entrance.

Celebrant: Blessed is the entrance into your holy of holies, always, now and ever and forever.

At the conclusion of the stichera, the deacon intones:

Deacon: Wisdom! Be attentive!

The clergy and servers enter the sanctuary as “O Joyful Light” is sung. The sanctuary and the faithful are incensed.

The Hymn of the Evening



O Joy - ful Light of the ho - ly glo - ry of the Fa - ther Im - mor - tal,
the hea - ven - ly, ho - ly, bles - sed One, O Je - sus Christ: Now that we have
reached the set - ting of the sun, and see the eve - ning light, we sing to God,
Fa - ther, Son, and Ho - ly Spir - it. It is fit - ting at all times to raise
a song of praise in meas - ured mel - o - dy to you, O Son of God, the
Giv - er of Life. There - fore, the u - ni - verse sings your glo - ry.

The Old Testament Readings

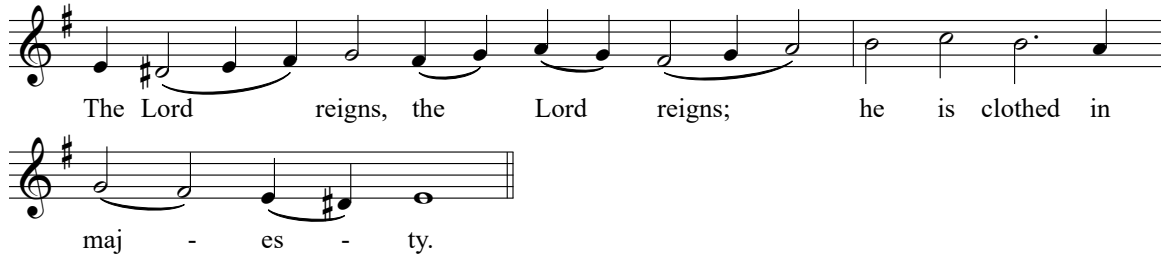
Deacon: Let us be attentive!

Celebrant: Peace be to all!

Deacon: Wisdom! Be attentive!

The faithful sing the prokeimenon of the day of the week. The deacon chants the verse(s).

Saturday evening - Tone 6 samopodoben (Psalm 92: 1, 2, 5):



The Lord reigns, the Lord reigns; he is clothed in
maj - es - ty.

Verse: Robed is the Lord and girt about with strength.

Verse: The world he made firm, not to be moved.

Verse: Holiness is fitting to your house, O Lord, until the end of time.

Sunday evening - Tone 8 (Psalm 133:1; 2):



Come, bless the Lord, all you who serve the Lord; come, bless the Lord,
all you who serve the Lord.

Verse: Who stand in the house of the Lord, in the courts of the house of our God.

*The faithful **SIT** for the Old Testament and Epistle readings.*

For each Old Testament reading:

Deacon: Wisdom!

Reader: A reading from (name of book).

Deacon: Let us be attentive!

and the reader begins. After each reading or group of readings:

Celebrant: Peace be to you, reader(s).

Reading 1

Genesis 1:1-13 – the creation of the world

Numbers 24: 2-3, 5-9, 17-18 – Balaam's prophecy of a king for Israel

***Micah 4: 6-7, 5: 2-4** – prophecy of a king from Bethlehem

(One reading may be chosen. Preferred readings are marked with an asterisk.)

Then the faithful sing the following responsorial troparion:

Tone 6

You were born in a cave, hidden from the eyes of all; but the heav-ens
re - vealed you to all by means of a star, O Sav - ior. It brought the Ma - gi
to you; they wor-shipped you in the fer - vor of their faith. Have
mer - cy u - pon all of us.

The reader chants the following verses (from Psalm 86), and after each, the faithful sing the second half of the troparion as a response: "It brought the Magi to you..."

- Verse:** On the holy mountain is his city, cherished by the Lord. The Lord prefers the gates of Zion to all Jacob's dwellings.
- Verse:** Of you are told glorious things, O City of God. Babylon and Egypt I will count among those who know me.
- Verse:** Zion shall be called Mother, for all shall be her children. It is he, the Lord Most High, who gives each his place.
- Verse:** Glory to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit, now and ever and forever. Amen.

Then the faithful sing the entire troparion once more.

Reading 2

***Isaiah 11:1-10** – prophecy of a virtuous king from Jesse

Baruch 3: 35 through 4: 4 – no one can compare with God

Daniel 2:31-36, 44-45 – prophecy of a kingdom that shall not end

(One reading may be chosen. Preferred readings are marked with an asterisk.)

Then the faithful sing the following responsorial troparion:

Tone 6

You have shone forth from the Virgin, O Christ, Sun of Jus - tice. A star
found you, whom nothing could contain, mani - fest - ed in the cave.
Refrain
It led the Ma - gi to a - dore you. With them we wor - ship you,
O Giv - er of Life; glo - ry to you!

The reader chants the following verses (from Psalm 92), and after each, the faithful sing the second half of the troparion as a response: “It led the Magi to adore you...”

Verse: The Lord reigns, he is clothed in majesty; robed is the Lord and girt about with strength.

Verse: The world he made firm, not to be moved; your throne has stood from of old. You are, O Lord, from all eternity.

Verse: The rivers have lifted up, O Lord, the rivers have lifted up their voice; the rivers will lift up their waves.

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

Then the faithful sing the entire troparion once more.

Reading 3 **Isaiah 9: 6-7** – prophecy of a king from David
***Isaiah 7:10-16; 8: 1-4, 9-10** – the prophecy of Emmanuel

(For the sake of brevity, the first of these readings may be omitted. The second reading is always included.)

Then the following Small Litany may be intoned: (music on pp. 9-10)

Deacon: Again and again, in peace let us pray to the Lord.

Response: Lord, have mercy.

Deacon: Protect us, save us, have mercy on us, and preserve us, O God, by your grace.

Response: Lord, have mercy.

Deacon: Commemorating our most holy, most pure, most blessed and glorious Lady, the Theotokos and Ever-Virgin Mary with all the saints, let us commit ourselves and one another and our whole life to Christ our God.

Response: To you, O Lord.

Celebrant: For you are holy, our God, and we we give glory to you, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, now and ever

Response: Amen.

The Epistle and Gospel Readings

Deacon: Let us be attentive!

Celebrant: Peace be to all.

Deacon: Wisdom! Be attentive!

Prokeimenon of the Vigil of the Nativity - Tone 1 (Psalm 2: 7-8)

The Lord said to me: You are my Son;
It is I that have be - got - ten you this day.

Verse: Ask and I shall bequeath you the nations, put the ends of the earth in your possession.

Deacon: Wisdom!

Lector: A reading from the Letter of Saint Paul the Apostle to the Galatians.

Deacon: Let us be attentive!

And the lector reads Galatians 3:15-22 (Epistle book, page 93).

Celebrant: Peace to you, reader.

Deacon: Wisdom! Be attentive!

*The faithful **STAND** as the Alleluia is sung.*

Alleluia of the Vigil of the Nativity - Tone 5 (Psalm 109: 1-3)

Al - - - le - lu - ia! Al - le - lu - ia! Al - le - lu - ia!

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

Verse: The Lord will yield from Zion your scepter of power:
rule in the midst of all your foes.

Verse: From the womb, before the morning star, I have begotten you.
The Lord has sworn and he will not repent.

Then the holy Gospel is read as at the Divine Liturgy. The Gospel appointed for the day is Matthew 13:31-36, describing the reign of God, which is also the Gospel for Wednesday in the sixth week after Pentecost.

The faithful **SIT**. A homily may be given at this time.

Litany of Fervent Supplication


Deacon: Let us all say with our whole soul and with our whole mind, let us say:

Response: 
1. Lord, have mer - cy.

Deacon: O Lord almighty, God of our fathers, we pray you, hear and have mercy.

Response: 
2. Lord, have mer - cy.

Deacon: Have mercy on us, O God, according to your great mercy, we pray you, hear and have mercy.

Response: 
3. Lord, have mer - cy, Lord, have mer - cy, Lord, have mer - cy.

Deacon: Again we pray for our holy father, (*Name*), Pope of Rome, and for our most reverend Metropolitan (*Name*), for our God-loving Bishop (*Name*), for those who serve and have served in this holy church, for our spiritual fathers, and for all our brothers and sisters in Christ.

Response: 
4. Lord, have mer - cy, Lord, have mer - cy, Lord, have mer - cy.

Deacon: Again we pray for our government and for all in the service of our country.

Response: Lord, have mercy. (*three times, using response 4.*)


Deacon: Again we pray for the people here present who await your great and abundant mercy, for those who show us mercy, and for all Christians of the true faith.

Response: Lord, have mercy. (*three times, using response 3.*)

Celebrant: For you are a merciful and loving God, and we give glory to you, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, now and ever and forever.

Response: 
A - men.


Hymn of Glorification




Make us wor - thy, O Lord, to be kept sin - less this eve - ning.




Bless-ed are you, O Lord, the God of our fa - thers, and praise-wor - thy



and glorious is your name for ev - er. A - men. May your mer - cy, O Lord,
reverence



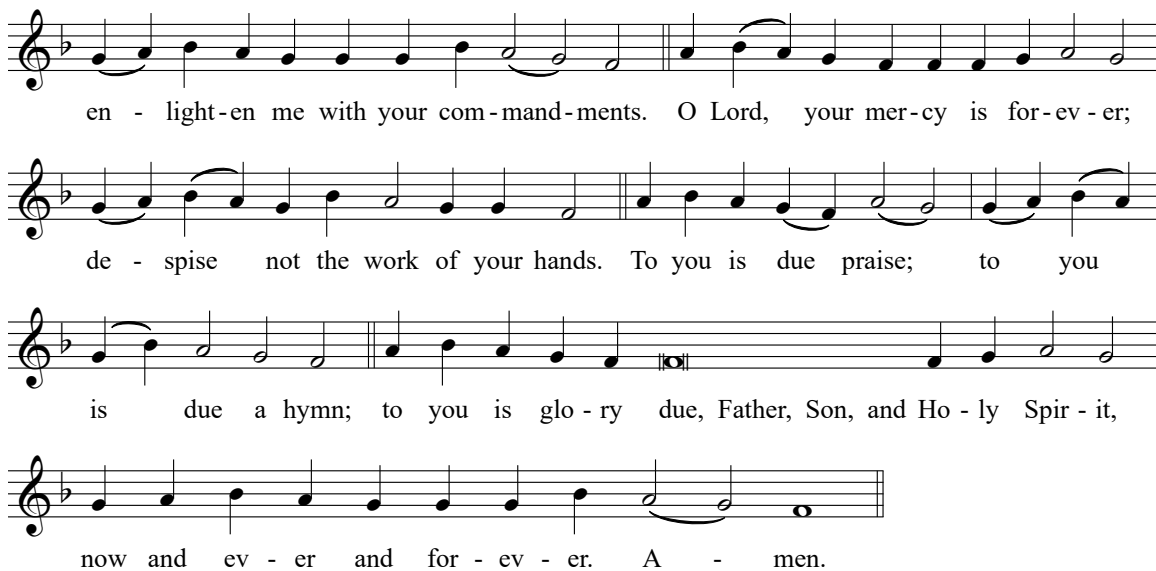
be up - on us who have placed our hope in you. Bless-ed are you O
reverence



Lord; teach me your com - mand - ments. Bless-ed are you, O Mas - ter;
reverence



make me un - der - stand your com - mand - ments. Bless-ed are you, O Ho - ly One;



en - light-en me with your com-mand-ments. O Lord, your mer-cy is for-ev - er;
 de - spise not the work of your hands. To you is due praise; to you
 is due a hymn; to you is glo - ry due, Father, Son, and Ho - ly Spir - it,
 now and ev - er and for - ev - er. A - men.

Litany of Supplication

Deacon: Let us complete our evening prayer to the Lord.

Response: 


1. Lord, have mer - cy.

Deacon: Protect us, save us, have mercy on us, and preserve us, O God, by your grace.

Response: 

2. Lord, have mer - cy.

Deacon: That this whole evening be perfect, holy, peaceful, and without sin, let us beseech the Lord.

Response: 

3. Grant this, O Lord.

Deacon: For an angel of peace, a faithful guide and guardian of our souls and bodies, let us beseech the Lord.

Response: 
4. Grant this, O Lord.

Deacon: For the pardon and remission of our sins and offenses, let us beseech the Lord.

Response: Grant this, O Lord. (3)

Deacon: For what is good and beneficial to our souls and for peace in the world, let us beseech the Lord.

Response: Grant this, O Lord (4)

Deacon: That we may spend the rest of our life in peace and repentance, let us beseech the Lord.

Response: Grant this, O Lord. (3)

Deacon: For a Christian, painless, unashamed, peaceful end of our life, and for a good account before the fearsome judgment seat of Christ, let us beseech the Lord.

Response: Grant this, O Lord. (4)

Deacon: Commemorating our most holy, most pure, most blessed and glorious Lady, the Theotokos and ever-Virgin Mary with all the Saints, let us commit ourselves and one another, and our whole life to Christ our God.

Response: 
To you, O Lord.

The faithful STAND.

Celebrant: Great and most high God, you alone possess immortality and dwell in unapproachable light. You made all creation with wisdom, dividing light from darkness, establishing the sun to rule the day and the moon and stars to rule the night. You have allowed us sinners to approach your presence with thanksgiving in this present hour and to offer you evening praise. O loving Lord, make our

prayer ascend to you like incense and accept it as a sweet fragrance. Grant that we may spend the present evening and the coming night in peace; clothe us with the armor of light; deliver us from the fears of the night and from everything that lurks about in darkness. Grant that the sleep you have given us to refresh our fatigue may be free from all illusions of the devil. Yes, O Master of All, Giver of good things, let us feel contrition as we lie on our beds remembering your name throughout the night. Enlightened by meditation on your commands, may we rise with gladdened soul to give glory to your goodness, offering to your compassion prayers and supplications for our sins and those of all your people. Visit us with mercy through the intercession of the holy Theotokos.

For you are a good and loving God, and we give glory to you, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, now and ever and forever.

Response: 
A - men.

Celebrant: Peace be to all!

Response: 
And to your spir - - - it.

Deacon: Bow your heads to the Lord!

Response: 
To you, O Lord.

Celebrant: Lord our God, you bowed the heavens and came down for the salvation of the human race. Look upon your servants and upon your inheritance, for they have bowed their heads and bent their necks to you, the awesome judge who love us all. They do not expect human help, but await your mercy and long for your salvation. Protect them at all times, this evening and tonight, from every enemy, from all the devil's assaults, from vain thoughts and evil imaginings.

May the might of your kingdom be blessed and glorified, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, now and ever and forever.

Response: 
A - men.

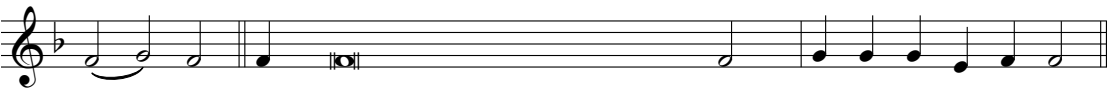
Dismissal

Deacon: Wisdom!

Response: 
Give the bles - sing.

Celebrant: Blessed is Christ our God, the One-Who-Is, always, now and ever and forever.

Response:


A - men. O God, uphold the holy and true faith, for - ev - er and ev - er.

Celebrant: Most holy Theotokos, save us!

Response: More honorable than the cherubim,
and beyond compare more glorious than the seraphim,
who, a virgin, gave birth to God the Word,
you, truly the Theotokos, we *magnify*.

Celebrant: Glory to you, O Christ God, our hope; glory to you!

Response: Glory to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit,
now and ever and forever. *Amen*.

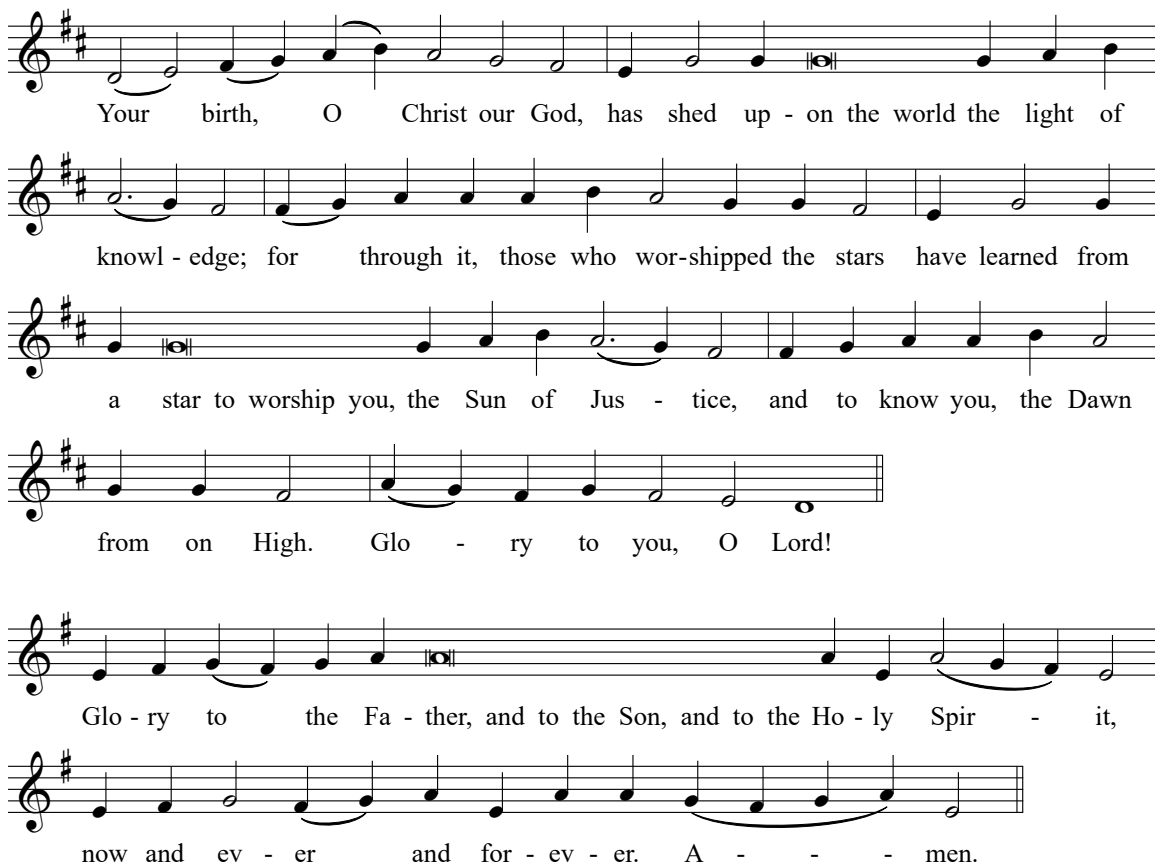
Lord, have mercy. Lord, have mercy. Lord, have mercy.
[Most Reverend (Arch)bishop,] give *the* blessing.

Celebrant: May Christ our true God, who for our salvation was born in cave in Bethlehem of Judea and lay in a manger, have mercy on us and save us through the prayers of his most pure Mother and through the prayers of all the saints; for Christ is good and loves us all.

Response: 
A - - - - - men.

Then the lights in the church are dimmed, and a lighted candle is placed on a stand in the middle of the church. Standing beside it, the cantor sings the troparion and kontakion of the feast:

Troparion of the Nativity - Tone 4



Your birth, O Christ our God, has shed up - on the world the light of
knowl - edge; for through it, those who wor-shipped the stars have learned from
a star to worship you, the Sun of Jus - tice, and to know you, the Dawn
from on High. Glo - ry to you, O Lord!
Glo - ry to the Fa - ther, and to the Son, and to the Ho - ly Spir - it,
now and ev - er and for - ev - er. A - - - men.

Kontakion of the Nativity - Tone 3

To - day the Vir - gin gives birth to the Tran - scen - dent One; and the earth
of - fers a cave to the Un - ap - proach - a - ble. The an - gels sing his glory
with the shep - herds; the wise men jour - ney with the star.
The e - ter - nal God is born for us as an in - fant child.

Christ is born!

Glorify Him!

Troparion of the Nativity - Tone 4

Roždestvó Tvojé, Christé Bóže naš,
vozsijá mírovi svít rázuma:
v nem bo zv' izdám služáščii
zvizdóju učachusja,
Tebí kláňatisja Sólncu právdy,
i Tebé víd' iti s vysoty Vostóka:
Hóspodi, sláva Tebí.

Christós raždájetsja!

Slávite Jeho!



Prayers of Light

To be said quietly by the celebrant during the chanting of the Lamp-lighting Psalms.

1. Lord, compassionate and merciful, long-suffering and rich in mercy, give ear to my prayer and attend to the sound of my plea. Show us a sign of your favor; guide us in your way so that we may walk in your truth. Gladden our hearts that we may fear your holy name, for you are great and do marvelous deeds. You alone are God, and among the gods there is none like you, O Lord. Powerful in mercy and gracious in strength, you help, comfort, and save all those who hope in your holy name. For to you, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, is due all glory, honor, and worship, now and ever and forever. Amen.

2. Lord, do not rebuke us in your anger, nor punish us in your wrath. Deal with us according to your kindness, O Physician and Healer of our souls. Guide us to the harbor of your will; enlighten the eyes of our minds that we may know your truth. Grant that we may spend what remains of this day and the rest of our life peacefully and sinlessly through the intercession of the holy Theotokos and of all the saints. For yours is the might; and yours are the kingdom and the power and the glory, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, now and ever and forever. Amen.

3. Lord our God, remember us your sinful and useless servants as we call upon your holy and sublime name, and do not put us to shame for hoping in your mercy. Grant us instead, O Lord, all our petitions which lead to salvation, and make us worthy to love and to fear you with all our hearts and to do your will in everything. For you are a good and loving God, and we give glory to you, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, now and ever and forever. Amen.

4. You are praised by the holy powers with hymns that are never silent and in doxologies that never cease. Fill our mouth with your praise that we may ascribe majesty to your holy name. Through the intercession of the holy Theotokos and of all the saints, give us a share and an inheritance with those who fear you in truth and who keep your commandments. For to you, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, is due all glory, honor, and worship, now and ever and forever. Amen.

5. Blessed are you, Lord God almighty. You know the human mind, you know our needs long before we ask or recognize them. Therefore, O loving King, good in every way, allow us in your great mercy to call upon your holy name with a clear conscience, and lead us not into temptation but deliver us from the evil one, and in your providence, arrange everything for our good. For to you, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, is due all glory, honor and worship, now and ever and forever. Amen.

6. Lord, O Lord, you hold all things in your spotless hand; you are long-suffering toward all of us, and you repent over our evil deeds. Remember your mercy and your compassion. Visit us in your goodness and for the rest of this day enable us to flee from the many wiles of the evil one, and keep our life secure by the grace of your all-holy Spirit. Through the mercy and the loving-kindness of your only-begotten Son with whom you are blessed, together with your all-holy, good, and life-creating Spirit, now and ever and forever. Amen.

7. Great and wonderful God, you govern all things with indescribable goodness and rich providence. You have granted us the good things of this earth, and through the good things already bestowed on us, have given us a pledge of the promised kingdom. You have kept us away from every evil during the part of this day which has passed, even until the present moment; now allow us to complete the rest of the day without blame in the presence of your holy glory singing hymns to you, O God, who alone are good and love us all. For you are our God, and we give glory to you, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, now and ever and forever. Amen.