

## Gathering Prayer

Eternal God,  
as Mary waited for the birth of your Son,  
so we wait for his coming in glory;  
bring us through the birth pangs of this  
present age  
to see, with her, our great salvation  
in Jesus Christ our Lord.

## The Old/Original Testament: Isaiah 7:10-16

Again the LORD spoke to Ahaz, saying, "Ask a sign of the LORD your God; let it be deep as Sheol or high as heaven." But Ahaz said, "I will not ask, and I will not put the LORD to the test." Then Isaiah said, "Hear then, O house of David! Is it too little for you to weary mortals that you weary my God also? Therefore the Lord himself will give you a sign. Look, the young woman is with child and shall bear a son and shall name him Immanuel. He shall eat curds and honey by the time he knows how to refuse the evil and choose the good. For before the child knows how to refuse the evil and choose the good, the land before whose two kings you are in dread will be deserted.

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

Hear, O Shepherd of Israel, ♦  
you that led Joseph like a flock;  
**Shine forth, you that are enthroned  
upon the cherubim, ♦  
before Ephraim, Benjamin and  
Manasseh.**

Stir up your mighty strength ♦  
and come to our salvation.

**Turn us again, O God; ♦  
show the light of your countenance,  
and we shall be saved.**

O Lord God of hosts, ♦

how long will you be angry at your  
people's prayer?

**You feed them with the bread of  
tears; ♦**

**you give them abundance of tears to  
drink.**

You have made us the derision of our  
neighbours, ♦

and our enemies laugh us to scorn.

**Let those who burnt it with fire, who  
cut it down, ♦**

**perish at the rebuke of your  
countenance.**

Let your hand be upon the man at your  
right hand, ♦

he son of man you made so strong for  
yourself

**And so will we not go back from you;  
♦**

**give us life, and we shall call upon  
your name.**

## New Testament: Romans 1:1-7

Paul, a servant of Christ Jesus, called to be an apostle, set apart for the gospel of God, which he promised beforehand through his prophets in the holy scriptures, the gospel concerning his Son, who was descended from David according to the flesh and was declared to be Son of God with power according to the spirit of holiness by resurrection from the dead, Jesus Christ our Lord, through whom we have received grace and apostleship to bring about the obedience of faith among all the gentiles for the sake of his name, including you who are called to belong to Jesus Christ, To all God's beloved in Rome, who are called to be saints: Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.

## ***The Holy Gospel:*** ***Matthew 1:18-25***

Now the birth of Jesus the Messiah took place in this way. When his mother Mary had been engaged to Joseph, but before they lived together, she was found to be pregnant from the Holy Spirit. Her husband Joseph, being a righteous man and unwilling to expose her to public disgrace, planned to divorce her quietly. But just when he had resolved to do this, an angel of the Lord appeared to him in a dream and said, "Joseph, son of David, do not be afraid to take Mary as your wife, for the child conceived in her is from the Holy Spirit. She will bear a son, and you are to name him Jesus, for he will save his people from their sins." All this took place to fulfil what had been spoken by the Lord through the prophet: "Look, the virgin shall become pregnant and give birth to a son, and they shall name him Emmanuel," which means, "God is with us." When Joseph awoke from sleep, he did as the angel of the Lord commanded him; he took her as his wife, but had no marital relations with her until she had borne a son; and he named him Jesus.

## ***Postcommunion Prayer***

Heavenly Father,  
who chose the Blessed Virgin Mary  
to be the mother of the promised saviour:  
fill us your servants with your grace,  
that in all things we may embrace your holy  
will  
and with her rejoice in your salvation;  
through Jesus Christ our Lord.

## ***Advanced Service dates***

21/12 6 pm, Christmas Carols, Ovington  
21/12 4 pm. Christmas Carols, Ashill  
24/12 6 pm First Mass of Christmas,  
Ovington  
24/12 11.30 pm, Midnight Mass, Saham  
Toney  
25/12 9.30 am Holy Communion for  
Christmas Day, Ashill  
28/12 10.30 am Group Service for the  
Feast of St John the Evangelist, Ovington  
(no service in Ashill or Saham Toney)  
04/01/26 9.30 am Epiphany Holy  
Communion, Merton

## ***Events.***

Scripture: New Revised Standard Version Bible, copyright © 1989 by the  
Division of Christian Education of the National Council of the Churches of  
Christ in the USA. Psalm, Collect and Postcommunion: © Archbishops'  
Council (200/2004) All used by permission. All rights reserved.