

December 25 – Christmas Day

Word of God

Isaiah 52:7–10: How beautiful upon the mountains are the feet of him who brings good news, who publishes peace, who brings good news of happiness, who publishes salvation, who says to Zion, “Your God reigns.” The voice of your watchmen—they lift up their voice; together they sing for joy; for eye to eye they see the return of the Lord to Zion. Break forth together into singing, you waste places of Jerusalem, for the Lord has comforted His people; He has redeemed Jerusalem. The Lord has bared His holy arm before the eyes of all the nations, and all the ends of the earth shall see the salvation of our God.

Psalm 98: Oh sing to the Lord a new song, for He has done marvelous things! His right hand and His holy arm have worked salvation for Him. The Lord has made known His salvation; He has revealed His righteousness in the sight of the nations. He has remembered His steadfast love and faithfulness to the house of Israel. All the ends of the earth have seen the salvation of our God. Make a joyful noise to the Lord, all the earth; break forth into joyous song and sing praises! Sing praises to the Lord with the lyre, with the lyre and the sound of melody! With trumpets and the sound of the horn make a joyful noise before the King, the Lord! Let the sea roar, and all that fills it; the world and those who dwell in it! Let the rivers clap their hands; let the hills sing for joy together before the Lord, for He comes to judge the earth. He will judge the world with righteousness, and the peoples with equity.

Hebrews 1:1–6: Long ago, at many times and in many ways, God spoke to our fathers by the prophets, but in these last days He has spoken to us by His Son, whom He appointed the heir of all things, through whom also He created the world. He is the radiance of the glory of God and the exact imprint of His nature, and He upholds the universe by the word of His power. After making purification for sins, He sat down at the right hand of the Majesty on high, having become as much superior to angels as the name He has inherited is more excellent than theirs. For to which of the angels did God ever say, “You are My Son, today I have begotten You”? Or again, “I will be to Him a Father, and He shall be to Me a Son”? And again,

when He brings the firstborn into the world, He says, “Let all God’s angels worship Him.”

John 1:1-14: In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was in the beginning with God. All things were made through Him, and without Him was not anything made that was made. In Him was life, and the life was the light of men. The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness has not overcome it. There was a man sent from God, whose name was John. He came as a witness, to bear witness about the light, that all might believe through him. He was not the light, but came to bear witness about the light. The true light, which gives light to everyone, was coming into the world. He was in the world, and the world was made through Him, yet the world did not know Him. He came to His own, and His own people did not receive Him. But to all who did receive Him, who believed in His name, He gave the right to become children of God, who were born, not of blood nor of the will of the flesh nor of the will of man, but of God. And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, and we have seen His glory, glory as of the only Son from the Father, full of grace and truth.

Reflection in the Field

The mystery of Christmas morning is not found in grandeur, but in grace. The eternal Word, through whom all things were made, takes on flesh—not as a distant King, but as a child who breathes our air, feels our cold, and shares our need. Heaven bends low to earth, and in the quiet of that union, eternity and time meet in a heartbeat. The Word becomes not only visible, but touchable—Emmanuel, God with us.

Those who live and work beside horses understand something of this mystery of embodiment. The horse does not respond to speech alone but to presence—to the calm rhythm of breath, the steady posture of peace. Words unaccompanied by presence mean little; yet quiet presence builds trust, heals fear, and bridges separation. So too, God does not simply speak from afar; He comes near in the flesh, meeting us in the rhythms of life—mud, manger, and mercy.

To stand beside the manger is to recognize the humility of God's love: the Creator who once shaped the dust now rests upon it. The manger becomes a stable not of straw and wood alone, but of reconciliation—where divine strength is veiled in weakness, and eternal light warms the coldest of hearts. In the nearness of this Christ, the Word made flesh, we are reminded that healing is never abstract. It is personal, embodied, and present.

Luther Quote

"It is a most amazing thing that the Son of God should become man, and yet remain what He was—true God. The Word did not change into flesh, but assumed flesh into the unity of His divine person. He who made all things became a part of His creation, that He might redeem it. This is the wondrous exchange: He takes what is ours and gives us what is His, so that through His poverty we might become rich."

— Martin Luther, Sermons on John 1, Luther's Works 22:9–11

Reflection Prompts

How does the Incarnation—God taking on flesh—change the way you see His presence in your daily life?

When have you experienced peace through presence rather than words, whether beside a horse or before God?

In what ways can you embody Christ's love to others this season, becoming a reflection of His nearness and compassion?

How might the humility of the manger reshape your understanding of strength and healing?

Closing Prayer

Eternal Word made flesh, You came into our world not with power, but with presence. You entered our frailty to make us whole and brought divine light into the darkest places of our lives. Help us to rest in Your nearness—to breathe deeply of Your peace, to speak gently, and to live humbly in Your love. As the horse learns by trust and stillness, teach us to walk in step with You, our true Emmanuel.

Amen.

*The Lord bless you and keep you;
The Lord make His face shine upon you and be gracious unto you;
The Lord lift up His countenance upon you and give you peace.
(Numbers 6:24-26)*