

The GREAT “O” ANTIPHONS

Invocation and Confession

WISDOM

HYMN “O Come, O Come, Emmanuel” *LSB 357, v. 2*

(congregation sings:)

**O come, Thou Wisdom from on high, who ord’rest all things mightily;
To us the path of knowledge show, and teach us in her ways to go.
Rejoice! Rejoice! Emmanuel shall come to thee, O Israel!**

READING *(Lay Assistant 1) Isaiah: 11:2-3*

²And the Spirit of the LORD shall rest upon him,
the Spirit of wisdom and understanding,
the Spirit of counsel and might,
the Spirit of knowledge and the fear of the LORD.
³And his delight shall be in the fear of the LORD.
He shall not judge by what his eyes see,
or decide disputes by what his ears hear,

ANTIPHON *(congregation reads:)*

**O Wisdom, proceeding from the mouth of the Most High,
Pervading and permeating all creation,
Mightily ordering all things:
Come and teach us the way of prudence.**

MEDITATION

In a nation where justice is only about who has the money to prove what to whom, wisdom is a difficult concept. What is wisdom? In this society wisdom may be getting the best attorney or knowing when to jump bail and run. But with the Lord, Wisdom is knowing what is right regardless of the circumstances. Wisdom is ordering all things the way they should be. Wisdom is the hope we have for the world where all people are honored and loved.

PRAYER

Leaders in our community
President: Barach
Bishops: David and Gerald

MIGHT

HYMN “O Come, O Come, Emmanuel” *LSB 357, v. 3*

**O come, O come, Thou Lord of might, who to Thy tribes on Sinai’s height
In ancient times didst give the Law in cloud and majesty and awe.
Rejoice! Rejoice! Emmanuel shall come to thee, O Israel!**

READING (*Lay Assistant 2*) *Isaiah 11:4-5*

⁴ . . . but with righteousness he shall judge the poor,
and decide with equity for the meek of the earth;
and he shall strike the earth with the rod of his mouth,
and with the breath of his lips he shall kill the wicked.
⁵ Righteousness shall be the belt of his waist,
and faithfulness the belt of his loins.

ANTIPHON **O Adonai and ruler of the house of Israel,
Who appeared to Moses in the burning bush
And gave him the Law on Sinai:
Come with an outstretched arm and redeem us.**

MEDITATION

The one who gave the Law to Moses fulfilled the Law on the cross. Now we wait for his return. He comes with outstretched arms and so we do not fear his coming but rejoice in his coming. The image of the prodigal son running across the fields towards a welcoming father pervades our minds and we pray fervently for our Lord to come quickly for us.

PRAYER

Those who are oppressed and discouraged in the world

ROD OF JESSE

HYMN “O Come, O Come, Emmanuel” *LSB 357, v. 4*

**O come, O come, Thou Branch of Jesse’s tree, free them from Satan’s tyranny
That trust Thy mighty pow’r to save, and give them vict’ry o’er the grave.
Rejoice! Rejoice! Emmanuel shall come to thee, O Israel!**

READING (*Lay Assistant 1*) *Isaiah 11:10*

¹⁰In that day the root of Jesse, who shall stand as a signal for the peoples—of him shall the nations inquire, and his resting place shall be glorious.

ANTIPHON **O Root of Jesse, standing as an ensign before the peoples,
Before whom all kings are mute,
To whom the nations will do homage:
Come quickly to deliver us.**

MEDITATION

When faced with illness and hardship and injustice, it is so hard to believe that it will be okay. We say the words but we are frightened. Faith is not easy when things are difficult, when death and destruction dance just outside the door. But the Root of Jesse stands behind us and while Satan can taunt us all he likes, he must run at the sight of the Christ. He can do none other. Many a night I have given Scot Golz a heart attack as he locks up and finds me wandering this building in the dark and people say to me, isn’t it spooky being in that big church all alone in the dark? And I say, as a matter of fact, I never feel safer than when I am in the house of the one who frees me from Satan’s tyranny. I am untouchable because of my protector.

PRAYER

**For the ill
For the homebound**

KEY OF DAVID

HYMN “O Come, O Come, Emmanuel” *LSB 357, v. 5*

**O come, Thou Key of David, come, and open wide our heav’nly home;
Make safe the way that leads on high, and close the path to misery.
Rejoice! Rejoice! Emmanuel shall come to thee, O Israel!**

READING (*Lay Assistant 2*) *Isaiah 22:22*

²²And I will place on his shoulder the key of the house of David. He shall open, and none shall shut; and he shall shut, and none shall open.

ANTIPHON **O Key of David and scepter of the house of Israel,
You open and no one can close, you close and no one can open:
Come and rescue the prisoners
Who are in darkness and the shadow of death.**

MEDITATION

We like to make sin an emotional issue but it is not. If we could divorce the idea of emotion from sin, we would understand it better. For instance, Adolph Hitler was a baptized and confirmed Christian who never formally removed himself from the fellowship of the Church. Yet we are horrified that Hitler might be in heaven. Why are we so horrified? Because we deem his sin worse than ours, that’s why. His brutal extermination of a race of people is somehow worse than our hatred for our neighbor. I don’t know if Adolph Hitler went to Heaven or Hell, but I do know that his sin was no worse than mine. Sin is not an emotional issue but a legal issue. Jesus paid the price for all sin. By faith, I apprehend the Key of David that unlocks Heaven and gladly walk through the pearly gates. At his baptism, Hitler had that same faith. I don’t know if he killed he faith or not.

PRAYER Birthdays – Jesus gave us true birth into the Faith and keeps us in the Faith.

DAYSPRING

HYMN “O Come, O Come, Emmanuel” *LSB 357, v. 6*

**O come, Thou Dayspring from on high, and cheer us by Thy drawing nigh;
Disperse the gloomy clouds of night, and death’s dark shadows put to flight.
Rejoice! Rejoice! Emmanuel shall come to thee, O Israel!**

READING (*Lay Assistant 1*) *Isaiah 9:1-2*

¹ But there will be no gloom for her who was in anguish. In the former time he brought into contempt the land of Zebulun and the land of Naphtali, but in the latter time he has made glorious the way of the sea, the land beyond the Jordan, Galilee of the nations.

² The people who walked in darkness
have seen a great light;
those who dwelt in a land of deep darkness,
on them has light shined.

ANTIPHON **O Dayspring, splendor of light everlasting:
Come and enlighten those who sit in darkness
And in the shadow of death.**

MEDITATION

Here is the point of the Church. We shed light on those who dwell in darkness. Whatever we do around here whether it is softball practice in Founders Hall or giving the sacrament at the altar, we do it to try to shed light on the darkness so that no one will ever think he has to dwell there. That is the only hard and fast guiding principle in this place: can it shed light in the darkness, can it help someone grow in his or her relationship with Christ can it offer love and support to a person who is adrift in a sea of despair?

PRAYER

The Lost, the Church, AIM, Urban Missions

DESIRE OF NATIONS

HYMN “O Come, O Come, Emmanuel” *LSB 357, v. 7*

**O come, Desire of nations, bind in one the hearts of all mankind;
Bid Thou our sad divisions cease, and be Thyself our King of Peace.
Rejoice! Rejoice! Emmanuel shall come to thee, O Israel!**

READING (*Lay Assistant 2*) *Isaiah 9:5-6*

⁶For to us a child is born,
to us a son is given;
and the government shall be upon his shoulder,
and his name shall be called
Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God,
Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace.

ANTIPHON **O King of nations, the ruler they long for,
The cornerstone uniting all people:
Come and save us all, whom You formed out of clay.**

MEDITATION

We elect one president to defend us from the angry hordes and scream at another to end the conflict. We want lower taxes and more services. We want change but nothing that changes anything I like. We are so much like Israel crying for a king. We need only one king and that is the King of nations. It is the child born of Mary who will bid our sad divisions cease. He is the only one who can bring peace and peace we will not have until he returns.

PRAYER

Nation and Servicemen

EMMANUEL

HYMN “O Come, O Come, Emmanuel” *LSB 357, v. 1*

**O come, O come, Emmanuel, and ransom captive Israel,
That mourns in lonely exile here until the Son of God appear.
Rejoice! Rejoice! Emmanuel shall come to thee, O Israel!**

READING (*Lay Assistant 1*) *Isaiah 7:14*

¹⁴Therefore the Lord himself will give you a sign. Behold, the virgin shall conceive and bear a son, and shall call his name Immanuel.

ANTIPHON **O Emmanuel, our king and our Lord,
The anointed for the nations and their Savior:
Come and save us, O Lord our God.**

MEDITATION

He is Emmanuel, God with us. He is not a god who sits at a distance and watches us. He is our God who dwells in us. We are his temple. He enters us through His Word and gives us his true body and blood to eat and to drink. He is neither a spectator nor a director of our lives but rather a full participant as he travels with us through this valley until we emerge on the other side healed and whole and reunited with those we love, having come out of our lonely exile.

PRAYER

Resurrection of the Dead
Return of Christ

The *Great O Antiphons* are seven brief prayers that were traditionally chanted on successive evenings starting on December 17. The precise origin of these texts is unknown. However, by the 8th and 9th centuries, the church in Rome and monastic communities throughout western Europe were using them in worship services during Advent. These ancient supplications beautifully express the Christian church's profound yearning for her long expected Savior. They continue to be part of the seasonal devotions of many churches today. The *Great O Antiphons* form the basis of the popular Advent hymn, *O Come, O Come, Emmanuel*.

The *Great O Antiphons* are rich in meaning and nuance. Each antiphon begins with the acclamation "O," addresses Christ by one of His messianic titles from the Old Testament, and ends with a heartfelt plea for His coming. The sequence of the antiphons is theologically precise, progressing from before the creation of the universe, through the messianic prophecies of Israel, and culminating with the Incarnation and birth of Christ in Bethlehem. Each Antiphon is named in Latin for Old Testament name of Christ. Read in reverse, from his coming to his prophesy, taking the first letter of each Latin word, the words *ero cras* is formed, which means, "Tomorrow I shall be." Christians have long been fascinated by this coincidence because Christmas Eve falls on the day after the singing of the final antiphon.