

December 25th. Nativity. Readings at Vespers.

(1)

Deacon: Wisdom.

Reader: The Reading is from Genesis. (1:1-13)

Deacon: Let us attend.

Reader:

In the beginning God made the heaven and the earth. Now the earth was invisible and unformed, and darkness was upon the deep and a spirit of God was being carried on the water. And God said: Let there be light, and there was light. And God saw the light, that it was good; and God made a separation between the light and the darkness. And God called the light Day, and the darkness he called Night; and there was evening and there was morning, one day. And God said: Let there be a dome in the midst of the water and let there be a separation between the water and the water; and it was so. And God made the dome; and God made a separation between the water which was below the dome, and the water which was above the dome. And God called the dome Heaven; and God saw that it was good, and there was evening and there was morning, a second day. And God said: Let the water below heaven be gathered together into one gathering, and let dry land appear; and it was so. And the water below heaven was gathered together into their gatherings, and the dry land appeared. And God called the dry land Earth, and the accumulations of the waters he called Seas. And God saw that it was good. And God said: Let the earth sprout herb of grass, sowing seed according to its kind and according to its likeness, and fruiting tree making fruit, whose seed is in it according to its kind upon the earth; and it was so. And the earth brought forth herb of grass, sowing seed according to its kind and according to its likeness, and fruiting tree making fruit, whose seed was in it according to its kind upon the earth, and God saw that it was good. And there was evening and there was morning, a third day.

(2)

Deacon: Wisdom.

Reader: The Reading is from Numbers. (24:2-3, 5-9, 17-18)

Deacon: Let us attend.

Reader:

The Spirit of God came upon Balaam, and he took up his discourse, and said, 'How fair are your houses, O Jacob, and your tents, O Israel! Like shady groves, like gardens beside a river, and like tents that the Lord has planted, and like cedar trees beside the waters. A man will come forth from his seed and will be Lord over many nations, and his kingdom will be exalted and increased. God led him out of Egypt; he has as it were the glory of the unicorn. He will eat up the nations of his adversaries, and suck the marrow of their fat bones, and pierce the foe through with his arrows. He lay down, he rested like a lion, and like a young lion; who will rouse him? Blessed are those who bless you, and cursed are those who curse you.' A star will come forth out of Jacob, and a man will rise out of Israel, and will crush the princes of Moab, and plunder all the sons of Seth. And Edom will be an inheritance, and Esau his foe will be an heir, while Israel did valiantly.

(3)

Deacon: Wisdom.

Reader: The Reading is from the Prophecy of Micheas. (4:6-7 & 5:1-3)

Deacon: Let us attend.

Reader:

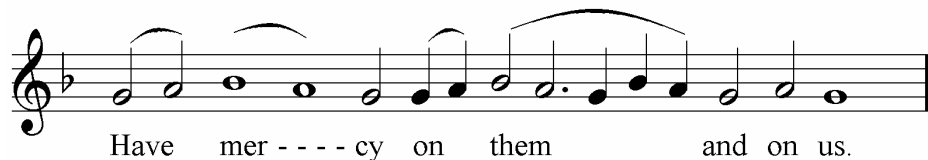
In those days, says the Lord, I will gather her that is bruised, and her that has been driven out I will receive, and those whom I have driven out; and her that has been bruised I will make into a remnant; and her that has been cast out into a strong nation; and the Lord will reign over them in Mount Zion from now and for evermore. And you Bethlehem, house of Ephratha, are not least among the thousands of Judah; for from you there shall come forth for me the one who is to be ruler in Israel, and his goings out are from the beginning, from eternity. Because of this he will give them until the moment that she who bears child shall bring to birth; and the remainder of his brethren will return to the children of Israel. And he will stand and will see, and shepherd his flock in the strength of the Lord, and they will abide in the glory of the name of the Lord his God; for now they will be magnified even to the ends of the earth.

Reader:

You were born secretly in the cave, but heaven proclaimed you to all, using the star as its mouth, O Saviour.

It brought to you Magi, who worshipped you in faith.

Choir:



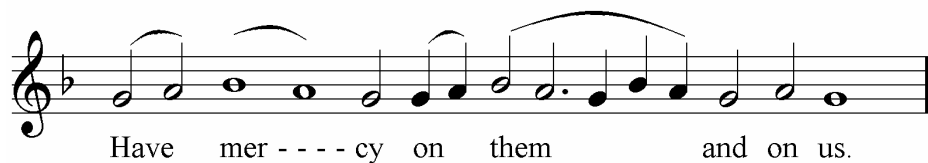
Have mer - - - - cy on them and on us.

Reader:

His foundations are in the holy mountains; the Lord loves the gates of Zion more than all the tents of Jacob. Glorious things have been spoken of you, O City of God; I will mention Rahab and Babylon to those who know me.

It brought to you Magi, who worshipped you in faith.

Choir:



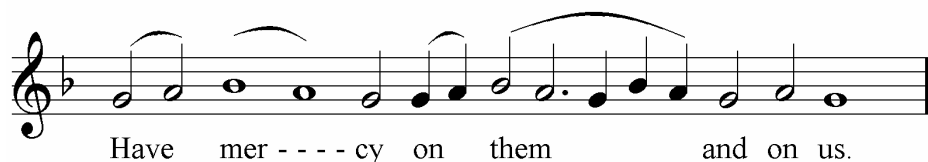
Have mer - - - - cy on them and on us.

Reader:

Behold also Philistines and Tyre and the people of Ethiopia: these were born there. A man will say: "Mother Zion"; and "a man was born in her;" and "the Most High himself has founded her."

It brought to you Magi, who worshipped you in faith.

Choir:



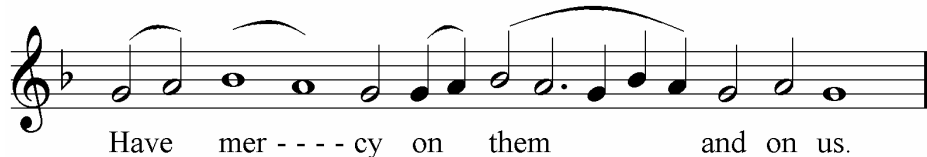
Have mer - - - - cy on them and on us.

Reader:

The Lord will declare this in the record of the peoples, and of these princes who were born in her. How happy are all whose home is in you.

It brought to you Magi, who worshipped you in faith.

Choir:



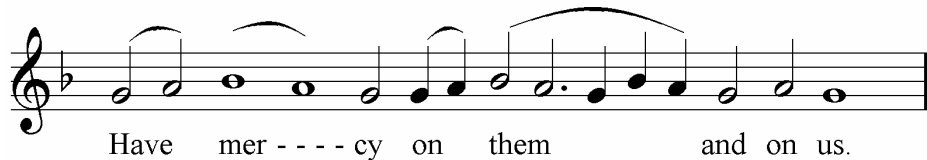
Reader:

Glory to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit;
Both now and for ever, and to the ages of ages. Amen.

You were born secretly in the cave, but heaven proclaimed you to all, using the star as its mouth, O Saviour.

It brought to you Magi, who worshipped you in faith.

Choir:



Deacon: Wisdom.

Reader: The Reading is from the Prophecy of Esaias. (11:1-10)

Deacon: Let us attend.

Reader:

Thus says the Lord: There shall come forth a rod from the root of Jesse, and a flower shall grow out of the root. And the Spirit of the Lord God shall rest upon him, the spirit of wisdom and understanding, the spirit of counsel and strength, the spirit of knowledge and piety. The spirit of the fear of God will fill him. He will not judge by glory nor reprove by hearsay; but he will give

judgement for the lowly with justice, and reprove with equity the glorious ones of the earth; and he will strike the earth with the word of his mouth, and with the breath of his lips he will destroy the wicked. And he will have his loins girded with justice, and his sides clothed with truth. Then the wolf will feed with the lamb, and the leopard will lie down with the kid, and the calf and the bull and the lion will feed together, and a little child will lead them. The ox and the bear will feed together; their young will be together; and the lion will eat straw like the ox. An infant child will put its hand over the hole of asps, and the weaned child its hand on the nest of the offspring of asps. They will not hurt or be able to destroy anyone on my holy mountain; for the whole earth will be full of the knowledge of the Lord as much water covers the seas. In that day there will be the root of Jesse, and he that will arise to rule nations; in him the nations will hope, and his rest will be honoured.

Deacon: Wisdom.

Reader: The Reading is from the Prophecy of Jeremias. (*Baruch 3:36-38 & 4:1-4*)

Deacon: Let us attend.

Reader:

This is our God, and there shall be none other reckoned in comparison with him. He has found out all the way of knowledge, and given it to Jacob his servant and to Israel his beloved. After this he appeared on earth and lived among men. This is the book of the commandments of God, and the law which exists for ever; all those who keep it fast will have life; but those who abandon it will die. Turn back, O Jacob, and lay hold of it. Walk in the presence of its light to be illumined. Do not give your glory to another, and what is profitable to you to a foreign nation. Blessed are we, O Israel, for the things that please God are made known to us.

Deacon: Wisdom.

Reader: The Reading is from the Prophecy of Daniel. (*2:31-36, 44-45*)

Deacon: Let us attend.

Reader:

Daniel said to Nabuchodonosor, 'You saw, O king, and behold, one image. This image, large and of excellent appearance, stood before your face, and the

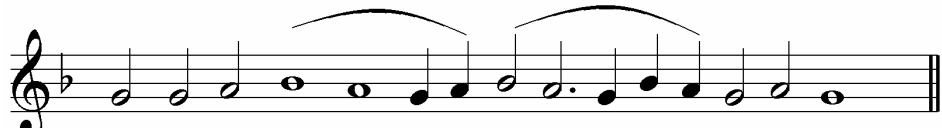
sight of it was fearsome. The head of this image was of pure gold; its hands, breast and arms of silver; its belly and thighs of bronze; its legs of iron; its feet partly of iron and partly of clay. As you looked, a stone was cut out without hands from a mountain, and it struck the image on its feet of iron and clay, and broke them in pieces; then the iron, the clay, the bronze, the silver, and the gold, all together were broken in pieces, and became like the chaff of the summer threshing floors; and the wind carried them away, so that not a trace of them could be found. But the stone that struck the image became a great mountain and filled the whole earth. This was the dream; now we will tell the king its interpretation. The God of heaven will set up a kingdom that shall never be destroyed, nor shall this kingdom be left to another people. It shall crush all these kingdoms and bring them to an end, and it shall stand forever; just as you saw that a stone was cut out without hands from the mountain, and that it crushed the iron, the bronze, the clay, the silver, and the gold. The great God has informed the king what shall be hereafter. The dream is certain, and its interpretation trustworthy.'

Reader:

You have shone forth from a Virgin, O Christ, spiritual Sun of righteousness; and a star showed you, whom nothing can contain, contained in a cave.

You led Magi to worship you in faith; with them we magnify you.

Choir:



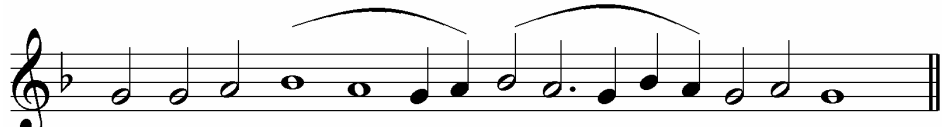
Giv - er of life, glo - - - - - ry to you.

Reader, Verse 1:

The Lord is king, he has robed himself with majesty; the Lord has robed and girded himself with power; he has established the world, which will not be shaken. Your throne is prepared from of old; you are from eternity.

You led Magi to worship you in faith; with them we magnify you.

Choir:



Giv - er of life, glo - - - - - ry to you.

Reader, Verse 2:

The rivers have raised, O Lord, the rivers have raised their voices; the rivers have lifted up their waves at the voices of many waters.

You led Magi to worship you in faith; with them we magnify you.

Choir:



Reader, Verse 3:

The billows of the sea are wonderful; the Lord is wonderful on high. Your testimonies are very sure; holiness befits your house, O Lord, to length of days.

You led Magi to worship you in faith; with them we magnify you.

Choir:



Reader:

Glory to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit;
Both now and for ever, and to the ages of ages. Amen.

You have shone forth from a Virgin, O Christ, spiritual Sun of righteousness;
and a star showed you, whom nothing can contain, contained in a cave.

You led Magi to worship you in faith; with them we magnify you.

Choir:



Deacon: Wisdom.

Reader: The Reading is from the Prophecy of Esaías. (9:6-7)

Deacon: Let us attend.

Reader:

A child has been born for us, and a son has been given to us; whose government is upon his shoulder, and his name will be called ‘Angel of Great Counsel, Wonderful Counsellor, Mighty God, Powerful One, Prince of Peace, Father of the age to come.’ For I will bring peace upon princes, and health to him. Great is his government, and of his peace there is no bound, on the throne of David, and on his kingdom, to establish it, and to uphold it with judgement and with justice from now and for ever. The zeal of the Lord of hosts will do this.

Deacon: Wisdom.

Reader: The Reading is from the Prophecy of Esaías. (7:10-16 & 8:1-4, 8-10)

Deacon: Let us attend.

Reader:

Again the Lord spoke to Ahaz, saying, ‘Ask for yourself a sign of the Lord your God; in the depth or in the height.’ But Ahaz said, ‘I will not ask, and I will not put the Lord to the test.’ And Esaías said, ‘Hear then, O house of David! Is it a little thing for you to contend with men, and how do you contend with the Lord? Therefore the Lord himself will give you a sign. Behold, the virgin shall conceive in her womb and bear a son, and they shall call his name Emmanuel. He shall eat butter and honey before he knows how to prefer evil or choose good. For before the child knows good or evil, he refuses the evil to choose the good. Then the Lord said to me, ‘Take for yourself a large new volume and write upon it with a man’s pen, concerning making a rapid plunder of spoils; for it is at hand. And get me witnesses, reliable men, Urias the priest, and Zacharias the son of Barachias. And I went in to the prophetess, and she conceived and bore a son. Then the Lord said to me, ‘Call his name “Despoil quickly, plunder rapidly;” for before the child knows how to cry “Father” or “Mother,” he will take the power of Damascus and the spoil of Samaria before the king of the Assyrians.’ God is with us! Understand you nations and submit yourselves; give ear, even to the ends of the earth, he has conquered; for if again you rise up in might, again you shall be overthrown. And if any take

counsel together, them shall the Lord destroy; and the word which you shall speak shall not abide in you, for God is with us.

Little Litany. Trisagion.

Prokeimenon, Tone 1:

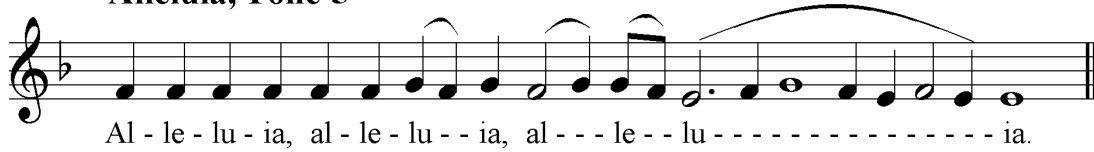
The Lord said to me, 'You are my Son, to - day I have
be - - got - - - - - ten you.'

Verse: Ask of me, and I shall give you nations as your inheritance, and the ends of the earth as your possession.

The Reading is from the Epistle of the Paul to the Hebrews.

In many and various ways God spoke of old to our fathers by the prophets; but in these last days he has spoken to us by a Son, whom he appointed the heir of all things, through whom also he created the ages. He is the radiance of his glory and the very imprint of his substance, upholding the universe by the word of his power. When he had made purification for our sins, he sat down at the right hand of the throne of Majesty on high, having become as much superior to angels as the name he has obtained is more excellent than theirs. For to which of the angels did God ever say, 'You are my Son, today I have begotten you'? And again, 'I will be to him a father, and he shall be to me a son'? And again, when he brings the first-born into the world, he says, 'Let all the angels of God worship him.' And of the angels he says, 'Who makes his angels spirits and his ministers flames of fire.' But to the Son he says, 'Your throne, O God, is to age on age, the sceptre of justice is the sceptre of your kingdom. You have loved justice and hated iniquity; therefore God, your God, has anointed you with the oil of gladness beyond your comrades.' And again, 'You, Lord, founded the earth in the beginning, and the heavens are the work of your hands; they will perish, but you remain; they will all grow old like a garment, and like a mantle you will roll them up, and they will be changed. But you are the same, and your years will never end.

Alleluia, Tone 5



Verse 1: The Lord said to my Lord: "Sit at my right hand, until I make your enemies a footstool for your feet."

Verse 2: The Lord will send you a rod of power out of Zion.

Verse 3: From the womb before dawn I have begotten you.

Communion Chant: Praise the Lord from heaven, ...