

Jesus was rejected by most people (v. 11), but to those who believed in him, in who he was, he gave the opportunity to be adopted by God, as his children (v. 12) – and so to become one with him. Believers are reborn into God’s family through the Holy Spirit (“of God”, v. 13). The Word, Christ, became human (“flesh”, v. 14) and “lived among us”. The author is witness to God’s manifest power (“glory”) as seen in Jesus, that he is the only, unique, highly valued, son of the Father, that he possesses God’s attributes of free giving to humankind (“grace”) and ultimate truth.

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~ Notices ~

**Ukraine Appeal** [clareanglicans.ie](http://clareanglicans.ie) or: [www.christianaid.ie](http://www.christianaid.ie)

**Living the Questions Course** – restarts in the New Year

**Book Club** 1<sup>st</sup> Monday of every month – ask Sue for details

**Vestry membership** - For those not yet on the general vestry list, please complete a form at the back of church if you would like to be part of the church’s Easter Vestry.

**Meditation At St Columba’s** – Every Thursday at 7.30pm Starting late January

**Lectio Divina** – please let me know if you would be interested in forming a group who would meet to read and reflect upon scripture together.

**Christmas Services**

Christmas Eve	4.00pm Christingle – Kilfenora Cathedral
	8.00pm Eucharist – Kilnasoolagh Church
Christmas Day	9.30am Spanish Point
	11.30am St Columba’s, Ennis

**Website:** [clareanglicans.ie](http://clareanglicans.ie)

**YouTube:** [www.youtube.com/c/clareanglicans](http://www.youtube.com/c/clareanglicans)

**Facebook:** [www.facebook.com/clare.anglicans](http://www.facebook.com/clare.anglicans)

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**Mission Sunday**

Donations for Protestant Aid and St Vincent de Paul to:  
Limerick & Killaloe Diocesan Council for Mission  
Bank of Ireland, University Branch, Castletroy, Limerick  
IBAN: IE44BOFI90459591214337 BIC: BOFIE2D

**Advent Candle Prayer**

Blessed are you Sovereign Lord,  
King of Peace:  
to you be praise and glory for ever!  
The new light of your incarnate word,  
gives gladness in our sorrow,  
and a presence in our isolation.  
Fill our lives with your light,  
until they overflow with gladness and praise.

**Amen**



*May you have a very happy,  
holy and blessed Christmas!*



**Christmas Eucharist  
2022 (Year A)**

**Readings and Hymns**

**Collect**

**(Christmas Eve)** Eternal God, in the stillness of this night you sent your almighty Word to pierce the world’s darkness with the light of salvation: give to the earth the peace that we long for and fill our hearts with the joy of heaven through our Saviour, Jesus Christ. **Amen**

**(Christmas Day)** Lord Jesus Christ, your birth at Bethlehem draws us to kneel in wonder at heaven touching earth: accept our heartfelt praise as we worship you, our Saviour and our eternal God. **Amen**

**Hymns – Christmas Eve**

- 1) 177, Once in Royal David’s City
- 2) 158, God rest ye merry, gentlemen
- 3) 174, O Little Town of Bethlehem
- 4) 182, Silent night, Holy Night
- 5) 160, Hark the Herald Angels sing
- 6) 155, Ding dong! merrily on high.

**Hymns – Christmas Day**

- 1) 177, Once in Royal David’s City
- 2) 160, Hark the Herald Angels sing
- 3) 174, O Little Town of Bethlehem
- 4) 149, Away in a Manger
- 5) 158, God rest ye merry, gentlemen
- 6) 172\*, O Come all ye faithful (vv.1,2,6,7a)

**Isaiah 52:7-10**

How beautiful upon the mountains are the feet of the messenger who announces peace, who brings good news, who announces salvation, who says to Zion, "Your God reigns." Listen! Your sentinels lift up their voices, together they sing for joy; for in plain sight they see the return of the LORD to Zion. Break forth together into singing, you ruins 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.

**Psalms 98**

Sing to the Lord a new song,\*  
for he has done marvellous things.  
His own right hand and his holy arm\*  
have won for him the victory.  
The Lord has made known his salvation;\*  
his deliverance has he openly shown  
in the sight of the nations.  
He has remembered his mercy and faithfulness  
towards the house of Israel,\*  
and all the ends of the earth  
have seen the salvation of our God.  
Sound praises to the Lord, all the earth;\*  
break into singing and make music.  
Make music to the Lord with the lyre,\*  
with the lyre and the voice of melody.  
With trumpets and the sound of the horn\*  
sound praises before the Lord, the King.  
Let the sea thunder and all that fills it,\*  
the world and all that dwell upon it.  
Let the rivers clap their hands\*  
let the hills ring out together before the Lord,  
for he comes to judge the earth.  
In righteousness shall he judge the world\*  
and the peoples with equity.

**Hebrews 1:1-4, (5-12)** Long ago God spoke to our ancestors in many and various ways by the prophets, but in these last days he has spoken to us by a Son, whom he appointed heir of all things, through whom he also created the worlds. He is the reflection of God's glory and the exact imprint of God's very being, and he sustains all things by his powerful word. When he had made 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 his Father, and he will be my Son"? And again, when he brings the firstborn into the world, he says, "Let all God's angels worship him." Of the angels he says, "He makes his angels winds, and his servants flames of fire." But of the Son he says, "Your throne, O God, is forever and ever, and the righteous sceptre is the sceptre of your kingdom. You have loved righteousness and hated wickedness; therefore God, your God, has anointed you with the oil of gladness beyond your companions." And, "In the beginning, Lord, you founded the earth, and the heavens are the work of your hands; they will perish, but you remain; they will all wear out like clothing; like a cloak you will roll them up, and like clothing they will be changed. But you are the same, and your years will never end."

**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 came into being through him, and without him not one thing came into being. What has come into being in him was life, and the life was the light of all people. The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness did not overcome it. There was a man sent from God, whose name was John. He came as a witness to testify to the light, so that all might believe through him. He himself was not the light, but he came to testify to the light. The true light, which enlightens everyone, was coming into the world. He was in the world, and the world came into being through him; yet the world did not know him. He came to what was his own, and his own people did not accept him. But to all who received him, who believed in his name, he gave power to become children of God, who were born, not of blood or of the will of the flesh or of the will of man, but of God. And the Word became flesh and lived among us, and we have seen his glory, the glory as of a father's only son, full of grace and truth.

**Post Communion Prayer** God our Father, whose Word has come among us in the Holy Child of Bethlehem: May the light of faith illumine our hearts and shine in our words and deeds; through him who is Christ the Lord. **Amen**

#### Commentary

**Isaiah 52:7-10** 51:17 says: "... Rouse yourself! Stand up O Jerusalem, you have drunk at the hand of the Lord the cup of his wrath." The people are still in exile; they yearn to return to Jerusalem. They believe that God is so angry with them, for infidelity, that he has deserted them. But God says (v. 6): "my people shall know my name; therefore in that day they shall know that it is I who speak; here am I". Release seems to be close. And now the prophet sounds an exciting note. Echoing 40:9, where God commands the prophet to announce "good tidings" to the people, v. 7 tells us what he announces: peace, salvation and God's kingship. (The reference to "feet" may be a reminder of 2 Samuel 18:19-33: there a messenger runs to tell David "good tidings" – that his troops have secured a victory.) The "sentinels" (v. 8) on the

city wall, normally occupied in watching for approaching enemies, now sing for joy because they see God returning to his people. God has comforted his people; his supposed wrath is over; he has reinstated Israel in his affections ("redeemed Jerusalem", v. 9). God has shown his might, his power ("his holy arm", v. 10) to all peoples (not only to Israel). His saving acts will be known by the whole world. In the following verses there is a picture of an army of his people, moving peacefully and serenely, with God as their protector.

**Psalms 98** Worshippers are invited to sing "a new song" marking new evidence of God's rule. With truth ("right hand") and power, he has won the "victory", i.e. salvation, saving acts – for his people Israel. (Note the emphasis on "victory": the word occurs three times in vv. 1-3.) He has triumphed over all who seek to overthrow his kingdom. All peoples can see that Israel is right in trusting him ("vindication", v. 2). Then v. 3: as he did when the Israelites groaned under oppression in Egypt (Exodus 2:24), he now remembers his covenant with Abraham, Isaac and Jacob – to lead them and protect them. All peoples will see his saving acts. (These verses are in the past tense, but a scholar points out that the reference is to a future event.) Vv. 4-8 call on all creation ("earth", "sea", "floods" and "hills") to acknowledge and be joyful in God's rule. Per v. 7b, people of all lands are invited to join in. God's coming to "judge the world" (v. 9) will be a truly marvellous event. He will judge us, but his judgement will be perfectly fair and equitable, for he is righteous.

**Hebrews 1:1-4,(5-12)** Our passage is the prologue of this anonymous epistle. The book stresses the importance of salvation through Christ – perhaps to Jewish Christians who were tempted to return to Judaism, or to Jews who were interested in becoming Christian. One point these verses make is that Christ is the perfect priest: he is mediator between the Father and humans, and purifies us of our sins. In vv. 1-2, the author contrasts the old and new ways of God: that of "long ago" and that "in these last days". God spoke then to the ancestors of Israel, our spiritual ancestors; in this era he speaks to us; then he spoke through "prophets" (v. 1, including Moses); now he speaks through "a Son" (v. 2). The Son's role is much more significant than that of "prophets": he is "heir" of God, and shared in (and mediated) creation of the "worlds" (in Jewish cosmology, the earth and the heavens.) These are the "last days" because God's reign, his kingdom, has already begun. Jesus ("He", v. 3) shows us something of God's greatness, and is an exact image, icon, of God. Christ continues to sustain all that is created. Jesus purified us through his death; then he was exalted in returning to the Father. Since before time and now he is "much superior to angels" (v. 4). (Jews held that Mosaic law was spoken by angels.) In Judaism, he is Wisdom; to us, he is Son (v. 5). (To Semites, receiving a new name indicated some change in a person: he is now both pre-existent and exalted.) The gist of vv. 5-12 is: while angels were held in high esteem at the time, Jesus is much greater than they.

**John 1:1-14** The intent of this gospel is "that you may come to believe that Jesus is the Messiah [the Christ], the Son of God, and that through believing you may have life in his name" (20:31). John begins from God's creative act: "In the beginning, when God created the heavens and the earth ..." (Genesis 1:1), the Word, he who became a human (v. 14a), already existed. He was "with God" (v. 1) and (with the Father and the Holy Spirit); he was God. He was the agent through whom "all things came into being" (v. 3). Through him, life (physical and spiritual) began: life given by God, "the light of all people" (v. 4). It shines in a world of unbelief and opposition to God's ways, and wins out (v. 5). John the Baptist came to "testify" (v. 7) to goodness, to point to Jesus (v. 8), the embodiment of perfect goodness, who was to come (v. 9).