

Christmas Lessons and Carols

The Festival of Nine Lessons and Carols was first held on Christmas Eve 1918. It was planned by Eric Milner-White, who at the age of thirty-four had just been appointed Dean of King's College after his experience as an army chaplain convinced him that the Church of England needed more imaginative worship.

This year has been unlike any other. The parishes of the Chattahoochee Valley convocation of the Episcopal Church have come together to present our edition of this service using reading, music and photography. We pray that you are blessed by our efforts.

A SERVICE OF NINE LESSONS AND CAROLS (CHRISTMAS)

Prelude Fanfare in B flat

David N. Johnson (1922-1987)

Hymn 78 O little town of Bethlehem

Forest Green

Unison or harmony

1 O lit - tle town of Beth - le - hem, how still we see thee lie!
2 For Christ is born of Ma - ry; and gath - ered all a - bove,
3 How si - lent - ly, how si - lent - ly, the won - drous gift is given!
*4 Where child - ren pure and hap - py pray to the bless - ed Child,
5 O ho - ly Child of Beth - le - hem, de - scend to us, we pray;

1 A - bove thy deep and dream - less sleep the si - lent stars go by;
2 while mor - tals sleep, the an - gels keep their watch of won - dering love.
3 So God im - parts to hu - man hearts the bless - ings of his heaven.
4 where mis - er - y cries out to thee, Son of the mo - ther mild;
5 cast out our sin and en - ter in, be born in us to - day.

1 yet in thy dark streets shin - eth the ev - er - last - ing Light;
2 O morn - ing stars, to - geth - er pro - claim the ho - ly birth!
3 No ear may hear his com - ing, but in this world of sin,
4 where char - i - ty stands watch - ing and faith holds wide the door,
5 We hear the Christ - mas an - gels the great glad tid - ings tell;

1 the hopes and fears of all the years are met in thee to - night.
2 and prais - es sing to God the King, and peace to men on earth.
3 where meek souls will re - ceive him, still the dear Christ en - ters in.
4 the dark night wakes, the glo - ry breaks, and Christ - mas comes once more.
5 O come to us, a - bide with us, our Lord Em - man - u - el!

Then follows this bidding prayer, led by clergy of the Convocation.

Beloved in Christ, this day it is our duty and delight to prepare ourselves to hear again the message of the angels, and to go in heart and mind to Bethlehem, and see this thing which has come to pass, and the Babe, lying in the manger. Therefore let us hear again from Holy Scripture the tale of the loving purposes of God from the first days until the glorious redemption brought us by this holy Child; and let us make our homes glad with our carols of praise. But first, because this of all things would rejoice Jesus' heart, let us pray to him for the needs of the whole world, and for all people; for peace upon the earth he came to save, for love and unity within the one Church he did build; for goodwill among all peoples. And particularly at this time, let us remember the poor, the cold, the hungry, the oppressed; the sick and those who mourn, the lonely and the unloved; the aged and the little children; and all who know not our Lord Jesus, or who love him not, or who by sin have grieved his heart of love. Lastly let us remember all those who rejoice with us, but upon another shore and in a greater light, that multitude who no one can number, whose hope was in the Word made flesh, and with whom, in this Lord Jesus, we for evermore are one. These prayers and praises let us humbly offer up to the throne of heaven, in the words that Christ himself has taught us.

The Lord's Prayer *unison*

The Blessing

May the almighty God bless us with divine grace, may Christ give us the joy of everlasting life, and unto the fellowship of the citizens above, may the Spirit of Love bring us all. Amen.

Carol The Sussex Carol

St. Thomas, Columbus
arr. Peter Crisafulli (b. 1946)
Kellie Henry, *flute*; Rick McKnight, *organ*

First Lesson

The Rev. Darius Sudayi

God tells sinful Adam that he has lost the life of Paradise and that his seed will bruise the serpent's head.

Genesis 3: 8-15, 17-19

They heard the sound of the LORD God walking in the garden at the time of the evening breeze, and the man and his wife hid themselves from the presence of the LORD God among the trees of the garden. But the LORD God called to the man, and said to him, 'Where are you?' He said, 'I heard the sound of you in the garden, and I was afraid, because I was naked; and I hid myself.' He said, 'Who told you that you were naked? Have you eaten from the tree of which I commanded you not to eat?' The man said, 'The woman whom you gave to be with me, she gave me fruit from the tree, and I ate.' Then the LORD God said to the woman, 'What is this that you have done?' The woman said, 'The serpent tricked me, and I ate.' The LORD God said to the serpent, 'Because you have done this, cursed are you among all animals and among all wild creatures; upon your belly you shall go, and dust you shall eat all the days of your life. I will put enmity between you and the woman, and between your offspring and hers; he will strike your head, and you will strike his heel.' And to the man he said, 'Because you have listened to the voice of your wife, and have eaten of the tree about which I commanded you, "You shall not eat of it", cursed is the ground because of you; in toil you shall eat of it all the days of your life; thorns and thistles it shall bring forth for you; and you shall eat the plants of the field. By the sweat of your face you shall eat bread until you return to the ground, for out of it you were taken; you are dust, and to dust you shall return.'

Thanks be to God.

Carol

St. Thomas, Columbus

Adam lay ybounden, bounden in a bond, four thousand winter thought he not too long; and all was for an apple, and apple that he took, as clerkes finden written in their book.

Nay had the apple taken been, the apple taken been, nay had never Our Lady ybenn heaven Queen. Blessed be the time that apple taken was: therefore we moun singen: Deo Gratias.

Music: Martha Jones Burford (b. 1964)

Words: English, 15th cent.

Second Lesson

Trinity, Columbus

God promises to faithful Abraham that in his seed shall all the nations of the earth be blessed.

Genesis 22: 15-18

The angel of the LORD called to Abraham a second time from heaven, and said, 'By myself I have sworn, says the LORD: Because you have done this, and have not withheld your son, your only son, I will indeed bless you, and I will make your offspring as numerous as the stars of heaven and as the sand that is on the seashore. And your offspring shall possess the gate of their enemies, and by your offspring shall all the nations of the earth gain blessing for themselves, because you have obeyed my voice.'

*Thanks be to God.***Carol**

Trinity, Columbus

I saw three ships coming sailing in on Christmas Day in the morning.
And what was in those ships all three on Christmas Day in the morning?
Our Savior Christ and His lady on Christmas Day in the morning.
Pray, wither sailed those ships all three on Christmas Day in the morning.
O, they sailed into Bethlehem on Christmas Day in the morning.
And all the bells on Earth shall ring on Christmas Day in the morning.
And let us all rejoice and sing on Christmas Day in the morning.

Music: Francis Jackson (b. 1917)

Words: English, 17th cent.

Third Lesson

St. Mark's, LaGrange

The prophet foretells the coming of the Savior.

Isaiah 9: 2, 6-7

The people who walked in darkness have seen a great light; those who lived in a land of deep darkness — on them light has shined. For a child has been born for us, a son given to us; authority rests upon his shoulders; and he is named Wonderful Counsellor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace. His authority shall grow continually, and there shall be endless peace for the throne of David and his kingdom. He will establish and uphold it with justice and with righteousness from this time onwards and for evermore. The zeal of the Lord of hosts will do this.

Thanks be to God.

Carol

Cathy Hunt, *soloist*; St. Mark's, LaGrange

What sweeter music can we bring than a carol, for to sing the birth of this our heav'nly King? We see him come, and know him ours, who with his sunshine and his showers turns all the patient ground to flowers.

So we will give him, and bequeath this holly and this ivy wreath, to do him honor who's our king, and Lord of all this revelling. Dark and dull night, fly hence away and give the honor to this day, that sees December turn to May.

The darling of the world is come, and fit it is we find a room to welcome Him, the nobler part of all the house here is the heart. Awake the voice, awake the string! What sweeter music can we bring to sing the birth of this our King.

Music: Ralph Vaughn Williams (1872-1958), arr. Mark Schweizer (1956-2019)

Words: Robert Herrick (1591-1674)

Fourth Lesson

St. Nicholas, Hamilton

The peace that Christ will bring is foreshown.

Isaiah 11: 1-4, 6-9

A shoot shall come out from the stock of Jesse, and a branch shall grow out of his roots. The spirit of the Lord shall rest on him, the spirit of wisdom and understanding, the spirit of counsel and might, the spirit of knowledge and the fear of the Lord. His delight shall be in the fear of the Lord. He shall not judge by what his eyes see, or decide by what his ears hear; but with righteousness he shall judge the poor, and decide with equity for the meek of the earth; he shall strike the earth with the rod of his mouth, and with the breath of his lips he shall kill the wicked. The wolf shall live with the lamb, the leopard shall lie down with the kid, the calf and the lion and the fatling together, and a little child shall lead them. The cow and the bear shall graze, their young shall lie down together; and the lion shall eat straw like the ox. The nursing child shall play over the hole of the asp, and the weaned child shall put its hand on the adder's den. They will not hurt or destroy on all my holy mountain; for the earth will be full of the knowledge of the Lord as the waters cover the sea.

Thanks be to God.

Carol

Marci and Libby Horne, *singers*; St. Nicholas, Hamilton

In the bleak mid-winter, frosty wind made moan, earth stood hard as iron,
Water like a stone; snow had fallen, snow on snow, in the bleak mid-winter, long ago.

Our God, heaven cannot hold him, nor earth sustain: heaven and earth shall flee away when he comes to reign: in the bleak mid-winter a stable place sufficed the Lord God incarnate, Jesus Christ.

Angels and archangels may have gathered there, cherubim and seraphim thronged the air; but his mother only, in her maiden bliss, worshipped the beloved with a kiss.

What can I give him, poor as I am? If I were a shepherd, I would bring a lamb; if I were a wise man, I would do my part; yet what I can I give him, give him my heart.

Music: Gustav Holst (1874-1934)

Words: Christina Rossetti (1830-1894)

Fifth Lesson

Trinity, Columbus

The angel Gabriel salutes the Blessed Virgin Mary.

St. Luke 1: 26-35, 38

In the sixth month the angel Gabriel was sent by God to a town in Galilee called Nazareth, to a virgin engaged to a man whose name was Joseph, of the house of David. The virgin's name was Mary. And he came to her and said, 'Greetings, favored one! The Lord is with you.' But she was much perplexed by his words and pondered what sort of greeting this might be. The angel said to her, 'Do not be afraid, Mary, for you have found favor with God. And now, you will conceive in your womb and bear a son, and you will name him Jesus. He will be great, and will be called the Son of the Most High, and the Lord God will give to him the throne of his ancestor David. He will reign over the house of Jacob for ever, and of his kingdom there will be no end.' Mary said to the angel, 'How can this be, since I am a virgin?' The angel said to her, 'The Holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the Most High will overshadow you; therefore the child to be born will be holy; he will be called Son of God. Then Mary said, 'Here am I, the servant of the Lord; let it be with me according to your word.' Then the angel departed from her.

Thanks be to God.

Carol

Trinity, Columbus

A child is born in Bethlehem, in Bethlehem, in Bethlehem; awaiteth Him all Jerusalem. *Amor, quam dulcis est amor.*

The angels above were singing then, were singing then, were singing then; below were rejoicing the shepherd men. *Amor, amor, quam dulcis est amor.*

Now, let us all with the angels sing, with the angels sing, with the angels sing; Yes, now let our hearts for gladness spring. *Amor, amor, quam dulcis est amor.*

Music: Michael Paget
Words: Dutch carol, 1599

Sixth Lesson

St. Nicholas, Hamilton

St. Luke tells of the birth of Jesus.

St. Luke 2: 1-7

In those days a decree went out from Emperor Augustus that all the world should be registered. This was the first registration and was taken while Quirinius was governor of Syria. All went to their own towns to be registered. Joseph also went from the town of Nazareth in Galilee to Judea, to the city of David called Bethlehem, because he was descended from the house and family of David. He went to be registered with Mary, to whom he was engaged and who was expecting a child. While they were there, the time came for her to deliver her child. And she gave birth to her firstborn son and wrapped him in bands of cloth, and laid him in a manger, because there was no place for them in the inn.

Thanks be to God.

Carol What child is this?

Beth Hagues, *recorder* and Kevin Anderson, *piano*
Music: Greensleeves, English carol

Seventh Lesson

St. Mark's, LaGrange

The shepherds go to the manger.

St. Luke 2: 8-16

In that region there were shepherds living in the fields, keeping watch over their flock by night. Then an angel of the Lord stood before them, and the glory of the Lord shone around them, and they were terrified. But the angel said to them, 'Do not be afraid; for see—I am bringing you good news of great joy for all the people: to you is born this day in the city of David a Savior, who is the Messiah, the Lord. This will be a sign for you: you will find a child wrapped in bands of cloth and lying in a manger.' And suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host, praising God and saying, 'Glory to God in the highest heaven, and on earth peace among those whom he favors!' When the angels had left them and gone into heaven, the shepherds said to one another, 'Let us go now to Bethlehem and see this thing that has taken place, which the Lord has made known to us.' So they went with haste and found Mary and Joseph, and the child lying in the manger.

Carol A Christmas Cradle Song

Yunona Tabala, *soprano*; St. Mark's, LaGrange

Hush thee, my darling, gently sleep. Mother her loving watch will keep, shadows of evening softly creep; sleep, my darling, sleep.

Slow and silent, the weary day folds its garments and steals away. Dreamland voices are calling; sleep, my darling, sleep.

Bells are chiming across the snow, praising His name who, long ago, came to His children here below; sleep, my darling, sleep.

Once in Bethlehem, far away, helpless, a Babe, in a manger lay, Jesu, our Lord most Holy; sleep, my baby, sleep.

Over the steppe and over the town snowflakes are weaving a lily-white gown: Jesu, the spotless, to earth came down; sleep, my baby, sleep.

He who was born that Holy night keep thee forever in His sight, pure as the snow, so deep, so white; sleep, my darling, sleep.

Music: Alexine Prokoff

Words: Ivan Prokoff

Eighth Lesson

St. Thomas, Columbus

The wise men are led by the star to Jesus.

St. Matthew 2: 1-11

In the time of King Herod, after Jesus was born in Bethlehem of Judea, wise men from the East came to Jerusalem, asking, 'Where is the child who has been born king of the Jews? For we observed his star at its rising, and have come to pay him homage.' When King Herod heard this, he was frightened, and all Jerusalem with him; and calling together all the chief priests and scribes of the people, he inquired of them where the Messiah was to be born. They told him, 'In Bethlehem of Judea; for so it has been written by the prophet: "And you, Bethlehem, in the land of Judah, are by no means least among the rulers of Judah; for from you shall come a ruler who is to shepherd my people Israel." ' Then Herod secretly called for the wise men and learned from them the exact time when the star had appeared. Then he sent them to Bethlehem, saying, 'Go and search diligently for the child; and when you have found him, bring me word so that I may also go and pay him homage.' When they had heard the king, they set out; and there, ahead of them, went the star that they had seen at its rising, until it stopped over the place where the child was. When they saw that the star had stopped, they were overwhelmed with joy. On entering the house, they saw the child with

Mary his mother; and they knelt down and paid him homage. Then, opening their treasure-chests, they offered him gifts of gold, frankincense, and myrrh.

Thanks be to God.

Carol

St Thomas, Columbus

Three great Kings I met at early morn, with all their retinue were slowly marching; three great kings I met at early morn, were on their way to meet the newly-born.

And valiant warriors to guard the royal treasure, with gifts of gold brought from far away, their shields all shining in their bright array.

Music: arr. Mark Schweizer (1956 -2019)

Words: French carol

In dulci jubilo

Music: arr. Peter Crisafulli (b. 1946)

Kellie Henry, *flute*; Rick McKnight, *organ*

Ninth Lesson

The Rt. Rev. Robert Wright, Bishop of the Episcopal Diocese of Atlanta

St John unfolds the great mystery of the Incarnation.

St. 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.

Thanks be to God.

Carol Our Brother is born

Trinity, Columbus

Now every child that dwells on earth, stand up, stand up and sing:
the passing night has given birth unto the children's King.

Sing sweet as the flute, sing clear as the horn, sing joy of the children,
come Christmas the morn: little Christ Jesus our brother is born.

Now every star that dwells in sky, look down with shining eyes:
the night has dropped in passing by a star from Paradise...

Now every Beast that crops in field, breathe sweetly and:
the night has brought the richest yield that ever the harvest bore...

Now every Bird that flies in air, sing, raven, lark and dove:
the night has brooded on her lair and fledged the Bird of love...

Now all the Angels of the Lord, rise up on Christmas Even: the passing night will hear the Word that is the voice of Heaven...

Music: Harry Farjeon (1878-1948)
Words: Eleanor Farjeon (1881-1965)

The Christmas Blessing

May Almighty God, who sent his Son to take our nature upon him, bless you in this holy season, scatter the darkness of sin, and brighten your heart with the light of his holiness.

May God, who sent his angels to proclaim the glad news of the Savior's birth, fill you with joy, and make you heralds of the Gospel.

And the blessing of God Almighty, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit, is with us now and always. Amen. Merry Christmas. *Amen*

Hymn 83 O Come All Ye Faithful

Adeste fidelis

1 O come, all ye faith - ful, joy - ful and tri - um - phant, O
2 God from God, Light from Light e - ter - nal,
3 Sing, choirs of an - gels, sing in ex - ul - ta - tion,

1 come ye, O come ye to Beth - le - hem;
2 lo! he ab - hors not the Vir - gin's womb;
3 sing, all ye ci - ti - zens of heaven a - bove;

1 come, and be - hold him, born the King of an - gels;
2 on - ly - be - got - ten Son of the Fa - ther;
3 glo - ry to God, glo - ry in the high - est;

Refrain
O come, let us a - dore him, O come, let us a -
dore him, O come, let us a - dore him, Christ the Lord.

6 Yea, Lord, we greet thee,
born this happy morning;
Jesus, to thee be glory given;
Word of the Father,
now in flesh appearing;

Refrain

Words: John Francis Wade (1711-1786); tr. Frederick Oakeley (1802-1880) and others
Music: *Adeste fideles*, present form of melody att. John Francis Wade (1711-1786); harm. *The English Hymnal*, 1906

St. Mary Magdalene: The Rev. Darius Sudayi

St. Mark's, LaGrange: The Rev Allen Pruitt, Rector
Mr. Paul Culp, Organist-Choirmaster

St. Nicholas, Hamilton: The Rev. Roxane Gwyn, Rector
Mr. Kevin Anderson, Organist-Choirmaster

Trinity, Columbus: The Rev. Timothy Graham, Rector
Mr. Joseph Golden, Organist-Choirmaster
Dr. Aesook Moon, Associate Organist-Choirmaster

St. Thomas, Columbus: The Very Rev. Grace Burton-Edwards, Rector and Dean
The Rev. Edward Lowe, Associate Rector
Mr. Rick McKnight, Organist-Choirmaster
Ms. Holle Tubbs, Director of Youth, Young Adults, and Media

St. John's, West Point: Mr. Kelly Meacham, Vestry Member