



A Festival of Nine Lessons & Carols

St. James Episcopal Church
Woodstock, Vermont
4:00 pm
Sunday, December 22, 2024
The Rev. Amy Spagna, Rector
Dr. James E. Lorenz, Organist & Choirmaster

Prelude

Prelude on ‘Greensleeves’

Richard Purvis
(1913-1994)

Good People All, This Christmastime

Richard Lind
(b. 1949)

O Little Town of Bethlehem

Brenda Portman
(b. 1980)

Prelude on ‘Irby’

David Willcocks
(1919-2015)

*Please note: While the hymn numbers are listed for reference, the texts will not always agree with The Hymnal 1982. The lyrics the choir will be singing are as printed in this program. Carols headed in **BOLD** may be joined by the congregation.*

Please stand as you are able.

Opening Hymn 102 Once in Royal David’s City

Irby

SOLO

1. Once in royal David's city
stood a lowly cattle shed,
where a mother laid her baby
in a manger for his bed:
Mary was that mother mild,
Jesus Christ her little child.

CHOIR

2. He came down to earth from heaven,
who is God and Lord of all,
and his shelter was a stable,
and his cradle was a stall;
with the poor, and mean and lowly
lived on earth our Savior holy.



ALL

3. And through all his wondrous childhood
He would honour and obey,
Love and watch the lowly maiden,
In whose gentle arms he lay:
Christian children all must be
Mild, obedient, good as he.

4. For he is our childhood’s pattern;
day by day like us he grew;
he was little, weak and helpless,
tears and smiles like us he knew.
and he feeleth for our sadness,
and he shareth in our gladness

5. And our eyes at last shall see him,
through his own redeeming love;
for that child so dear and gentle
is our Lord in heaven above;
and he leads his children on
to the place where he is gone.

6. Not in that poor lowly stable,
with the oxen standing by,
we shall see him; but in heaven,
Set at God's right hand on high:
Where like stars his children crowned,
All in white shall wait around.

-Words: C. F. Alexander

-Music: H. J. Gauntlett; harmonized by A. H. Mann; descant by D. Willcocks

The Bidding Prayer

offered by the Rector

Beloved in Christ, at this Christmas-tide let it be our care and delight to hear again the message of the angels, and in heart and mind to go even unto Bethlehem and see this thing which is come to pass, and the Babe lying in a manger.

Therefore let us read and mark in Holy Scripture the tale of the loving purposes of God from the first days of our disobedience unto the glorious Redemption brought us by this Holy Child.

But first, let us pray for the needs of the whole world; for peace on earth and goodwill among all his people; for unity and brotherhood within the Church he came to build, and especially in this our diocese.

And because this would rejoice his heart, let us remember, in his name, the poor and helpless, the cold, the hungry, and the oppressed; the sick and them that mourn, the lonely and the unloved, the aged and the little children; all those who know not the Lord Jesus, or who love him not, or who by sin have grieved his heart of love.

Lastly, let us remember before God all those who rejoice with us, but upon another shore, and in a greater light, that multitude which no man can number, whose hope was in the Word made flesh, and with whom the Lord Jesus we are one for evermore.

These prayers and praises let us humbly offer up to the Throne of Heaven, in the words which Christ himself hath taught us:

Our Father, which art in heaven, Hallowed be thy name; Thy kingdom come; Thy will be done; In earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread. And forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive them that trespass against us. And lead us not into temptation; But deliver us from evil: For thine is the kingdom, the power, and the glory, for ever and ever. Amen.

The congregation may be seated.

Invitatory Carol
A Christmas Round / Today the Virgin

John Tavener
(1944-2013)

Today the Virgin bears a child whose birth cannot be borne.

Today the Virgin comes to the cave
To give birth to the Word eternal:
Rejoice, O World! With the Angels and the Shepherds
Give glory to the Child! Alleluia!

Mary, my wife, O Mary, my wife! What do I see?
I took you blameless before the Lord
From the priests of the Temple.
What do I see?

Joseph, the Bridegroom, O Joseph, the Bridegroom! Do not fear.
God in His mercy has come down to earth,
He takes flesh in my womb
For all the world to see.

Mary, my Bride, O Mary, my Bride! What do I see?
You, a Virgin giving birth.
Strange mystery!

Joseph, the Bridegroom, O Joseph, the Bridegroom! Do not fear.
God in His mercy has come down to earth,
He takes flesh in my womb
For all the world to see.

Warned by the Angel we believe
That Mary gives birth inexplicable
To the infant, Christ our God.
~ Mother Thekla (1918-2011)

The First Lesson

read by Sebastian Lorenz

God announces in the Garden of Eden that the offspring of women will strike the serpent's head.

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

O Come, O Come Emmanuel

Joseph Jennings
(b. 1954)

O come, O come, Emmanuel and ransom captive Israel,
that mourns in lowly exile here until the Son of God appear.
Rejoice, rejoice Emmanuel shall come to thee, O Israel.

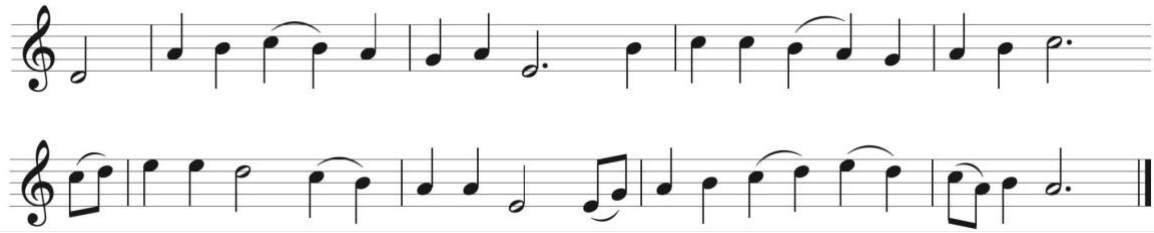
O come, Thou Rod of Jesse, free thine own from Satan's tyranny;
from depths of Hell thy people save and give them vict'ry o'er the grave.

O come thou Dayspring, come and cheer our spirits by Thy advent here.
O drive away the shades of night and pierce the clouds and bring us light.
Rejoice, rejoice Emmanuel shall come to thee, O Israel.

~ 8th or 9th century

Hymn: This Is the Truth Sent from Above

The Truth from Above



- | | |
|--|--|
| 1. This is the truth sent from above, The truth of God, the God of love; Therefore don't turn me from your door, But hearken all, both rich and poor. | 3. Then after this, 'twas God's own choice To place them both in Paradise, There to remain from evil free Except they ate of such a tree. |
| 2. The first thing, which I do relate, That God at first did man create; The next thing, which to you I tell, Woman was made with man to dwell. | 4. But they did eat, which was a sin, And thus their ruin did begin; Ruined themselves, both you and me, And all of their posterity. |
| 5. Thus we were heirs to endless woes, 'Till God the Lord did interpose; For so a promise soon did run That He'd redeem us with a Son. | |

-Words: English Folk Carol
-Music: Trad., arr. Ralph Vaughan Williams (1872-1958)

The Second Lesson

read by Jane Land

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

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
The Holly and the Ivy

arr. Alice Parker & Robert Shaw
(1925-2023 & 1927-1978)

The holly and the ivy,
When they are both full grown,
Of all the trees that are in the wood,
The holly bears the crown.

*O the rising of the sun
And the running of the deer,
The playing of the merry organ,
Sweet singing in the choir.*

The holly bears a blossom
As white as the lily flow'r,
And Mary bore sweet Jesus Christ
To be our sweet Savior.

The holly bears a berry
As red as any blood,
And Mary bore sweet Jesus Christ
To do poor sinners good.

The holly bears a prickle
As sharp as any thorn,
And Mary bore sweet Jesus Christ
On Christmas Day in the morn.

The holly bears a bark
As bitter as any gall,
And Mary bore sweet Jesus Christ
For to redeem us all.

~ traditional English

Hymn 93 Angels from the Realms of Glory

Regent Square



1. Angels from the realms of glory,
Wing your flight o'er all the earth;
Ye, who sang creation's story,
Now proclaim Messiah's birth:
*Come and worship, come and worship,
Worship Christ, the new-born King.*

2. Shepherds in the fields abiding
Watching o'er your flocks by night,
God with man is now residing,
Yonder shines the infant light:
*Come and worship, come and worship,
Worship Christ, the new-born King.*

3. Sages, leave your contemplations,
Brighter visions beam afar;
Seek the great desire of nations,
Ye have seen His natal star:
*Come and worship, come and worship,
Worship Christ, the new-born King.*

4. Saints before the altar bending,
Watching long in hope and fear,
Suddenly, the Lord, descending,
In His temple shall appear;
*Come and worship, come and worship,
Worship Christ, the new-born King.*

-Words: James Montgomery (1771-1854)
-Music: Henry Thomas Smart (1813-1879)

The Third Lesson

read by Fiona McElwain

Christ's birth and kingdom are foretold by Isaiah.

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 Counselor, 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 onward and forevermore. The zeal of the Lord of hosts will do this.

THANKS BE TO GOD.

Carol

In dulci jubilo

- v1. Anon 16th Century
- v2. Michael Praetorius (c.1549-1611)
- v3. Hieronymus Praetorius (1560-1629)
- v4. Johann Sebastian Bach (1685-1750)

*In dulci jubilo,
Nun singet und seid froh!
Unsers Herzens Wonne
liegt in praesepeio,
Und leuchtet als die Sonne
Matris in gremio,
Alpha es et O!*

In sweet jubilation,
now sing and be joyous!
Our heart's bliss
rests in a manger
and shines like the sun
in his mother's lap.
You are the alpha and omega.

*O Jesu parvule
Nach dir ist mir so weh!
Tröst' mir mein Gemüte
O puer optime
Durch alle deine Güte
O princeps gloriae.
Trahe me post te!*

O tiny Jesus,
my heart aches for Thee.
Console me in my heart and soul,
o best of boys;
through all your good,
o prince of glory,
draw me to you.

*O patris caritas!
O nati lenitas!
Wir wären all verloren
Per nostra crimina
So hat er uns erworben
Caelorum gaudia
Eia, wären wir da!*

Oh love of the Father
oh gentleness of the Mother
We were lost
by our crimes:
thus he has for us acquired
the joys of heaven.
Oh, were we only there!

*Ubi sunt gaudia
Nirgend mehr denn da!
Da die Engel singen
Nova cantica,
Und die Schellen klingen
In regis curia!
Eia, wären wir da!*

Where are joys?
Nowhere more than there
where angels sing
new songs
and the bells ring
in the courts of the King.
Oh, were we only there!

~ text attr. Heinrich Seuse, c. 1328 (1295- 1366)

Hymn 79 O Little Town of Bethlehem

St. Louis



1. O little town of Bethlehem, how still we see thee lie!
Above thy deep and dreamless sleep the silent stars go by;
Yet in thy dark streets shineth the everlasting light;
The hopes and fears of all the years are met in thee tonight.
2. For Christ is born of Mary; and gathered all above,
While mortals sleep, the angels keep their watch of wondering love.
O morning stars together proclaim the holy birth!
And praises sing to God the King, and peace to men on earth.
3. How silently, how silently the wondrous gift is given!
So God imparts to human hearts the blessings of his heaven.
No ear may hear his coming, but in this world of sin,
Where meek souls will receive him, still the dear Christ enters in.
4. Where children pure and happy pray to the blessèd Child,
Where misery cries out to thee, Son of the mother mild;
Where charity stands watching and faith holds wide the door,
The dark night wakes, the glory breaks, and Christmas comes once more.
5. O holy child of Bethlehem, descend to us we pray;
Cast out our sin and enter in, be born in us today.
We hear the Christmas angels the great glad tidings tell;
O come to us, abide with us, our Lord Emmanuel!

-Words: Philips Brooks (1835-1893)

-Music: Lewis H. Redner (1831-1908)

The Fourth Lesson

Read by Jay Bragdon

The peace that Christ will bring is foreshown.

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
What Sweeter Music

John Rutter (b. 1945)

What sweeter music can we bring
Than a carol, for to sing
The birth of this our heav'nly King?
Awake the voice! Awake the string!

We see him come, and know him ours,
Who with his sunshine and his show'rs,
Turns all the patient ground to flow'rs.

Dark and dull night, fly hence away,
And give the honour to this day
That sees December turn'd to May.

The darling of the world is come,
And fit it is, we find a room
To welcome him.

Why does the chilling winter's morn
Smile, like a field beset with corn?
Or smell like a meadow newly shorn
Thus on the sudden? Come and see
The cause, why things thus fragrant be:

The noblest part of all the house here, is the
heart,
Which we will give him; and bequeath
This holly, and this ivy wreath,
To do him honour; who's our King,
And Lord of all this revelling.

'Tis he is born, whose quick'ning birth
Give life and lustre, public mirth,
To heaven and the underearth.

~ Robert Herrick (1591-1674)

Hymn 89 It Came Upon the Midnight Clear

Carol



1. It came upon the midnight clear, That glorious song of old,
From angels bending near the earth, To touch their harps of gold;
"Peace on the earth, good will to men, From Heav'n's all gracious King."
The world in solemn stillness lay To hear the angels sing.

2. Still through the cloven skies they come With peaceful wings unfurled,
And still their heavenly music floats O'er all the weary world;
Above its sad and lowly plains, They bend on hov'ring wing,
And ever o'er its Babel sounds The blessed angels sing.

3. Yet with the woes of sin and strife The world has suffered long;
Beneath the angel strain have rolled Two thousand years of wrong:
And man at war with man hears not The love song which they bring;
Oh, hush the noise, ye men of strife, And hear the angels sing.

4. And ye, beneath life's crushing load, Whose forms are bending low
Who toil along the climbing way With painful steps and slow,
Look now! for glad and golden hours Come swiftly on the wing,
Oh, rest beside the weary road, And hear the angels sing.

5. For lo! the days are hast'ning on, By prophet bards foretold,
When with the ever circling years Comes round the age of gold;
Where Peace shall over all the earth Its ancient splendors fling,
And the whole world give back the song Which now the angels sing.

- Words: Edmund H. Sears (1810-1876)
- Music: Richard Storrs Willis (1819-1900)

The Fifth Lesson

read by Alison Clarkson

The Angel Gabriel salutes the Blessed Virgin Mary.

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
The Carol of the Birds

arr. Parker & Shaw

When in the eastern skies
The wondrous star did rise
And fill the night with splendor,
Came birds in joyful throng
To sound their dainty song
In a carol sweet and tender,
Hosanna to the Child
And to his Mother mild
Full rev'rently to render.

The kingly eagle came
To praise His holy name
In mighty proclamation;
The sparrow then replied:
"Tonight is Christmastide,

A night of jubilation."
Then robin redbreast sang:
"Now death has lost its pang;
In Christ is our salvation."

The nightingale sang sweet
The Holy Babe to greet
In Mary's arms a-lying,
The cuckoo and the quail
Flew over hill and dale
In admiration vying.
The barn owl's eyes were dim,
Such radiance blinded him,
And homeward he went flying.

~ Traditional Spanish

Hymn 265 The Angel Gabriel

Gabriel's Message



1. The angel Gabriel from heaven came,
His wings as drifted snow, his eyes as flame;
"All hail," said he, "thou lowly maiden Mary,
Most highly favored lady," Gloria!

2. "For know a blessed Mother thou shalt be,
All generations laud and honor thee,
Thy Son shall be Emmanuel, by seers
foretold,
Most highly favored lady," Gloria!

3. Then gentle Mary meekly bowed her head,
"To me be as it pleaseth God," she said,
"My soul shall laud and magnify his holy
Name."

Most highly favored lady, Gloria!

4. Of her, Emmanuel, the Christ, was born
In Bethlehem, all on a Christmas morn,
And Christian folk throughout the world will
ever say – "Most highly favored lady,"
Gloria!

-Words: Basque carol; paraphrased by Sabine Baring-Gould (1834-1924)

-Music: Basque carol; harmonized by Edgar Pettmen (1865-1943)

The Sixth Lesson

read by Stephen Land

St. Luke tells of the birth of Jesus.

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

Lux aurumque

Eric Whitacre
(b.1970)

*Lux,
Calida gravisque pura velut aurum
Et canunt angeli molliter
modo natum.*

Light,
warm and heavy as pure gold,
and the angels sing softly
to the new born babe.

~ Edward Esch
translated into Latin by Charles Anthony Silvestri (b. 1965)

Hymn 115 What Child Is This?

Greensleeves



1. What child is this, who, laid to rest,
On Mary's lap is sleeping?
Whom angels greet with anthems sweet
While shepherds watch are keeping?
This, this is Christ the King,
Whom shepherds guard and angels sing;
Haste, haste to bring him laud,
The babe, the son of Mary!

2. Why lies he in such mean estate
Where ox and ass are feeding?
Good Christian, fear; for sinners here
The silent Word is pleading.

Nails, spear shall pierce him through,
The cross be borne for me, for you,
Hail, hail the Word made flesh,
The babe, the son of Mary!

3. So bring him incense, gold, and myrrh;
Come, peasant, king, to own him.
The King of kings salvation brings;
Let loving hearts enthrone him.
Raise, raise the song on high,
The virgin sings her lullaby;
Joy, joy, for Christ is born,
The babe, the son of Mary!

-Words: William C. Dix, (1837-1898)

-Music: English ballad, 16th century

The Seventh Lesson

read by Isabelle Bradley

The shepherds go to the manger.

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.

THANKS BE TO GOD.

Carol
Il est né

John Rutter
(b. 1945)

*Il est né le divin enfant,
Jouez hautbois, résonnez musettes;
Il est né le divin enfant,
Chantons tous son avènement.*

He is born the divine child,
Play oboe, resonate bagpipes!
He was born the divine child,
Let's all sing his advent!

*Depuis plus de quatre mille ans
Nous le promettaient les prophètes,
Depuis plus de quatre mille ans
Nous attendions cet heureux temps.*

For over four thousand years,
The prophets foretold his coming
For over four thousand years,
We were waiting for this happy time.

*Ah! qu'il est beau, qu'il est charmant,
Ah! que ses grâces sont parfaites!
Ah! qu'il est beau, qu'il est charmant,
Qu'il est doux ce divin enfant!*

Ah! how beautiful he is, how charming he is!
Ah! how his graces are perfect!
Ah! how beautiful he is, how charming he is!
How sweet is this divine child!

*Une étable est son logement,
Un peu de paille est sa couchette;
Une étable est son logement,
Pour un Dieu quel abaissement!*

A stable is his lodging,
A bit of hay is his little bed,
A stable is his lodging,
Such humbling for a god.

*Ô Jésus, Roi tout puissant,
Si petit enfant que vous êtes;
Ô Jésus, Roi tout puissant,
Réglez sur nous entièrement.*

O Jesus! O Almighty King
Though a little babe you came here,
O Jesus! O Almighty King,
Rule on us entirely.

~ traditional French

Hymn 112 In the Bleak Midwinter

Cranham



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

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

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

4. 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 my heart.

- Words: Christina Rossetti (1830-1894)
- Music: Gustav Theodore Holst (1874-1934)
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The Eighth Lesson

read by Shari Casey

The wise men are led by the star to the child Jesus.

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. And having been warned in a dream not to return to Herod, they left for their own country by another road.

THANKS BE TO GOD.

Carol
The Three Kings

Healy Willan
(1880-1968)

“Who knocks tonight so late?”
The weary porter said.
Three Kings stood at the gate,
Each with a crown on head.
The serving man bowed down;
The inn was full, he knew.
Said he, “In all this town
Is no fit place for you!”

A light the manger lit;
There lay the Mother meek.
Said they, “This place is fit;
Here is the rest we seek!”
They loosed their latchet strings;
So stood they all unshod.
Come in, ye Kings!
And kiss the feet of God.

~ Laurence Housman (1865-1959)

Hymn 109 The First Nowell

The First Nowell



1. The first Nowell the angel did say
Was to certain poor shepherds in fields as they lay;
In fields where they lay keeping their sheep,
On a cold winter's night that was so deep:
Refrain
Nowell, Nowell, Nowell, Nowell,
Born is the King of Israel!

2. They looked up and saw a star,
Shining in the east, beyond them far;
And to the earth it gave great light,
And so it continued both day and night:
Refrain

3. And by the light of that same star,
Three wise men came from country far;
To seek for a king was their intent,
And to follow the star wherever it went:
Refrain

4. This star drew night to the north-west;
O'er Bethlehem it took its rest,
And there it did both stop and stay
Right over the place where Jesus lay:
Refrain

5. Then entered in those wise men three,
Full rev'rently upon their knee,
And offer'd there in his presence
Their gold and myrrh and frankincense:
Refrain

6. Then let us all with one accord
Sing praises to our heav'nly Lord,
That hath made heav'n and earth of naught,
And with his blood mankind hath bought:
Refrain

-Words: English Traditional Carol

-Music: English Traditional; arranged by David Willcocks (1919-2015)

The congregation shall stand for the Ninth Lesson.

The Ninth Lesson

read by the Rev. Amy Spagna

St. John unfolds the mystery of the incarnation.

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.

Hymn 83 O Come All Ye Faithful

Adeste fideles



1. O Come, all ye faithful,
Joyful and triumphant,
O come ye, O come ye to Bethlehem;
Come and behold him
Born the King of angels:

Refrain

O come, let us adore him, O come, let us adore him,
O come, let us adore him, Christ the Lord!

2. God of God,
Light of Light
Lo! he abhors not the Virgin's womb;
Very God,
Begotten, not created:
Refrain

3. See how the shepherds,
Summoned to his cradle,
Leaving their flocks,
draw nigh with lowly fear;
We too with thither
Bend our joyful footsteps:
Refrain

4. Lo! star-led chieftans,
Magi, Christ adoring,
Offer him incense, gold and myrrh;
We to the Christ Child
Bring our heart's oblations:
Refrain

5. Child, for us sinners
Poor and in the manger,
Fain we embrace thee, with awe and love;
Who would not love thee,
Loving us so dearly?
Refrain

6. Sing, choirs of angels,
Sing in exultation,
Sing, all ye citizens of heav'n above;
Glory to God
In the highest:
Refrain

7. Yea, Lord, we greet thee
Born this happy morning,
Jesu, to thee be glory given:
Word of the Father,
Now in flesh appearing:
Refrain

-Words: translated by F. Oakeley, W. T. Brooke and others

-Music: Anonymous; arranged by David Willcocks (1919-2015)

Priest: The Lord be with you.
Congregation: *And with thy spirit.*
Priest: Let us pray.

The Collect

O God, who makest us glad with the yearly remembrance of the birth of thy only Son, Jesus Christ: Grant that as we joyfully receive him for our redeemer, so may we with sure confidence behold him, when he shall come to be our judge; who liveth and reigneth with thee and the Holy Ghost, one God, world without end. *Amen.*

The Blessing

May he who by his Incarnation gathered into one things earthly and heavenly, fill you with the sweetness of inward peace and goodwill; and the blessing of God Almighty, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost, be upon you and remain with you always. *Amen.*

St. James Choir

Annabel Cellini, Elizabeth March Harley, Oliver Goodenough,
Julie Groppe, Jill Lorenz, Sebastian Lorenz, Ellen Phillips Soroka,
Sara Stadler, Teresa Vorhees

With guests

Anne Felde, John Felde, Nate Flockton, Daniel Gottsegen, Nicole Gottsegen,
Gabby Laroche, Tate Mosenthal, Arlo Philip

Christmas Services at St. James

Christmas Eve

Tuesday, December 24

3:00 pm: Blessing of the Creche, with children and their families (in-person only)

5:00 pm: Holy Eucharist with Carols (in-person and via Zoom)

10:00 pm: Festival Eucharist with Carols and Choir
(in-person and via Zoom)

Christmas Day

Wednesday, December 25

10:00 am "Come as you are" Eucharist (in-person and via Zoom)

Hybrid services will use the same Zoom link as regular Sunday services.
Please go to the parish website (www.stjameswoodstock.org) for full information.

We wish you and your loved ones every blessing of the Christmas season.