

A CHRISTMAS SERVICE OF LESSONS AND CAROLS
Sunday, January 4, 2026
The Second Sunday after Christmas

Prelude

A Bidding Prayer

Beloved in Christ, be it this Christmastide our care and delight to prepare ourselves to hear again the message of the angels: in heart and mind to go even unto Bethlehem and see this thing which is come to pass, and with the Magi adore the Child lying in his Mother's arms. 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; and let us make this church glad with our carols of praise:

But first let us pray for the needs of his whole world; for peace and goodwill over all the earth; for unity and brotherhood within the Church he came to build: And let us at this time remember in his name the poor and the helpless, the cold, the hungry and the oppressed; the sick in body and in mind and them that mourn; the lonely and the unloved; the aged and the little children; and all who know not the loving kindness of God.

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 one can number, whose hope was in the Word made flesh, and with whom we for evermore are one. These prayers and praises let us humbly offer up to the throne of heaven, in the words which Christ himself has taught us:

***Our Father, who art in heaven,
hallowed be thy Name,
thy kingdom come,
thy will be done,
on earth as it is in heaven.
Give us this day our daily bread.
And forgive us our trespasses,
as we forgive those
who trespass against us.
And lead us not into temptation,
but deliver us from evil.
For thine is the kingdom,
and the power, and the glory,
for ever and ever. Amen.***

May the Almighty God bless us with his grace: Christ give us the joys of everlasting life: and unto the fellowship of the citizens above may the King of Angels bring us all.
Amen.

The First Lesson is from the Book of Genesis.

The man and his wife heard the sound of the LORD God walking in the garden at the time of the evening breeze, and they 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."

Here ends the reading.

Music:

Creator of the stars of night

H 60

**1. Creator of the stars of night,
Your people's everlasting light,
Jesu, Redeemer, save us all,
And hear your servants when they call.**

**2. In sorrow at the helpless cry
Of all creation doomed to die,
Did save our lost and guilty race
By healing gifts of heav'nly grace.**

**3. When Earth was near its evening hour,
You did, in love's redeeming pow'r,
Like bridegroom from his chamber, come
Forth from a virgin mother's womb.**

**4. At your great name, exalted now,
All knees in lowly homage bow;
All things in Heav'n and Earth adore
And own you King forevermore.**

**5. To you, O Holy One, we pray,
Our Judge in that tremendous day,
Ward off, while yet we dwell below,
The weapons of our crafty foe.**

**6. To God the Father, God the Son,
And God the Spirit, Three in One,
Praise, honor, might, and glory be,
From age to age eternally.**

The Second Lesson is from the Book of the Prophet 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.
Here ends the reading.

Music:

Rejoice! rejoice, believers

H 68

**1 Rejoice! rejoice, believers,
and let your lights appear!
The evening is advancing,
and darker night is near.
The Bridegroom is arising,
and soon he will draw nigh;
up, watch with expectation!
at midnight comes the cry.**

**2 See that your lamps are burning,
replenish them with oil;
look now for your salvation,
the end of sin and toil.
The marriage-feast is waiting,
the gates wide open stand;
rise up, ye heirs of glory,
the Bridegroom is at hand!**

**3 Our hope and expectation,
O Jesus, now appear;
arise, thou Sun so longed for,
above this darkened sphere!
With hearts and hands uplifted,
we plead, O Lord, to see
the day of earth's redemption,
and ever be with thee!**

The Third Lesson is from the Gospel of Luke.

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 forever, 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.

Here ends the reading.

Music:

The angel Gabriel from heaven came

H 265

**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!**

The Fourth Lesson is from the Gospel of Luke.

In those days a decree went out from Emperor Augustus that all the world should be registered. 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.

Here ends the reading.

Music:

O little town of Bethlehem

H 78

**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 blessed Child,
where misery cries out to thee,
Son of the mother mild;
where charity stand 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!

The Fifth Lesson is from the Gospel of Luke.

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.

Here ends the reading.

Music: *While shepherds watched their flocks by night* H 94

1. While shepherds watched their flocks by night,
all seated on the ground,
the angel of the Lord came down,
and glory shone around.

2. "Fear not," said he, for mighty dread
had seized their troubled mind;
"Glad tidings of great joy I bring
to you and all mankind.

**3. "To you, in David's town, this day
is born of David's line
a Savior, who is Christ the Lord;
and this shall be the sign:**

**4. "The heavenly Babe you there shall find
to human view displayed,
all meanly wrapped in swathing bands,
and in a manger laid."**

**5. Thus spake the seraph, and forthwith
appeared a shining throng
of angels praising God, who thus
addressed their joyful song:**

**6. "All glory be to God on high
and on earth be peace;
good will henceforth from heaven to men
begin and never cease."**

The Sixth Lesson is from the Gospel of John.

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.

Here ends the reading.

Music:

Go tell it on the mountain

H 99

Refrain:

**Go tell it on the mountain,
over the hills and everywhere;
go tell it on the mountain
that Jesus Christ is born!**

**1. While shepherds kept their watching
o'er silent flocks by night,
behold, throughout the heavens
there shone a holy light. [Refrain]**

**2. The shepherds feared and trembled
when lo! above the earth**

**rang out the angel chorus
that hailed our Savior's birth. [Refrain]**

**3. Down in a lowly manger
the humble Christ was born,
and God sent us salvation
that blessed Christmas morn. [Refrain]**

The Lord be with you.

And also with you.

Let us pray.

O God, who makes us glad with the yearly remembrance of the birth of your only son, Jesus Christ: Grant that as we joyfully receive him for our redeemer, so we may with sure confidence behold him, when he shall come to be our judge; who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, world without end.

Amen.

May he who by his Incarnation gathered into one all things earthly and heavenly, grant us the fullness of inward peace and goodwill; and the blessing of God Almighty, the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit, be upon us and remain with us always.

Amen.

Postlude