

THE SERVICE OF LESSONS AND CAROLS

Wednesday 24 December A†D 2025



OUR SAVIOR

EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN CHURCH

THE LUTHERAN CHURCH—Missouri Synod

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THE ORIGIN OF THE SERVICE OF LESSONS AND CAROLS

The original service of Nine Lessons and Carols was adapted from an Order drawn up by Bishop E.W. Benson for use on Christmas Eve 1880. The service of Nine Lessons and Carols as we know it today was first held on Christmas Eve 1918 at King's College, Cambridge, England. The backbone of the service, the lessons and the prayers, has remained virtually unchanged ever since. The service has been broadcast from King's on Christmas Eve since the 1930s.

Wherever the service is heard, whether the music is provided by choir or congregation, the pattern and strength of the service derive from the lessons and not the music. 'The main theme is the development of the loving purposes of God...' seen 'through the windows and words of the Bible'. Local interests appear, as they do here, in the bidding prayer, and personal circumstances give point to different parts of the service. Many of those who took part in the first service must have recalled those killed in the Great War when it came to the famous passage 'all those who rejoice with us but on another shore and in a greater light'. The centre of the service is still found by those who 'go in heart and mind' and who consent to follow where the story leads. — *Adapted from a King's College service folder*

6:00pm

The bell tolls three times to signify the beginning of service in reverence of the Holy Trinity. After the tolls, the Carol will begin.

Please STAND when the music begins.

THE OPENING CAROL

374 *Gentle Mary Laid Her Child*

Please remain STANDING or KNEEL if you desire and are able

THE BIDDING PRAYER (*each bid concludes with "through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen."*); concludes with **THE LORD'S PRAYER**

Please BE SEATED

THE FIRST LESSON

GENESIS 3:8-19



AND they heard the voice of the LORD God walking in the garden in the cool of the day: and Adam and his wife hid themselves from the presence of the LORD God amongst

the trees of the garden. And the LORD God called unto Adam, and said unto him, Where art thou? And he said, I heard thy voice in the garden, and I was afraid, because I was naked; and I hid myself. And he said, Who told thee that thou wast naked? Hast thou eaten of the tree, whereof I commanded thee that thou shouldest not eat? And the man said, The woman whom thou gavest to be with me, she gave me of the tree, and I did eat. And the LORD God said unto the woman, What is this that thou hast done? And the woman said, The serpent beguiled me, and I did eat. And the LORD God said unto the serpent, Because thou hast done this, thou art cursed above all cattle, and above every beast of the field; upon thy belly shalt thou go, and dust shalt thou eat all the days of thy life: And I will put enmity between thee and the woman, and between thy seed and her seed; it shall bruise thy head, and thou shalt bruise his heel. Unto the woman he said, I will greatly multiply thy sorrow and thy conception; in sorrow thou shalt bring forth children; and thy desire shall be to thy husband, and he shall rule over thee. And unto Adam he said, Because thou hast hearkened unto the voice of thy wife, and hast eaten of the tree, of which I commanded thee, saying, Thou shalt not eat of it: cursed is the ground for thy sake; in sorrow shalt thou eat of it all the days of thy life; Thorns also and thistles shall it bring forth to thee; and thou shalt eat the herb of the field; In the sweat of thy face shalt thou eat bread, till thou return unto the ground; for out of it wast thou taken: for dust thou art, and unto dust shalt thou return.

THE CAROL

352 *Let the Earth Now Praise the Lord*

THE SECOND LESSON

GENESIS 22:15-18

 **ND** the angel of the LORD called unto Abraham out of heaven the second time, And said, By myself have I sworn, saith the LORD, for because thou hast done this thing, and hast not withheld thy son, thine only son: That in blessing I will bless thee, and in multiplying I will multiply thy seed as the stars of the heaven, and as the sand which is upon the sea shore; and thy seed shall possess the gate of his enemies; And in thy seed shall all the nations of the earth be blessed; because thou hast obeyed my voice.

THE CAROL

387 *Joy to the World*

THE THIRD LESSON

ISAIAH 9:2, 6, 7

 **HE** people that walked in darkness have seen a great light: they that dwell in the land of the shadow of death, upon them hath the light shined. For unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given: and the government shall be upon his shoulder: and his name shall be called Wonderful, Counsellor, the mighty God, the everlasting Father, the Prince of Peace. Of the increase of his government and peace there shall be no end, upon the throne of David, and upon his kingdom, to order it, and to establish it with judgment and with justice from henceforth even forever. The zeal of the LORD of hosts will perform this.

THE CAROL

376 *Once in Royal David's City*

THE FOURTH LESSON

ISAIAH 11:1-9

 **ND** there shall come forth a rod out of the stem of Jesse, and a Branch shall grow out of his roots: And the spirit of the LORD shall rest upon him, the spirit of wisdom and understanding, the spirit of counsel and might, the spirit of knowledge and of the fear of the LORD; And shall make him of quick understanding in the fear of the LORD: and he shall not judge after the sight of his eyes, neither reprove after the hearing of his ears: But with righteousness shall he judge the poor, and reprove with equity for the meek of the earth: and he shall smite the earth: with the rod of his mouth, and with the breath of his lips shall he slay the wicked. And righteousness shall be the girdle of his loins, and faithfulness the girdle of his reins. The wolf also shall dwell with the lamb, and the leopard shall lie down with the kid; and the calf and the young lion and the fatling together; and a little child shall lead them. And the cow and the bear shall feed; their young ones shall lie down together: and the lion shall eat straw like the ox. And the sucking child shall play on the hole of the asp, and the weaned child shall put his hand on the cockatrice' den. They shall not hurt nor destroy in all my holy mountain: for the earth shall be full of the knowledge of the LORD, as the waters cover the sea.

THE CAROL

359 *Lo, How a Rose E'er Blooming*

THE FIFTH LESSON

ST. LUKE 1:26-38

 **ND** in the sixth month the angel Gabriel was sent from God unto a city of Galilee, named Nazareth, To a virgin espoused to a man whose name was Joseph, of the house of David; and the virgin's name was Mary. And the angel came in unto her, and said, Hail, thou that art highly favoured, the Lord is with thee: blessed art thou among women. And when she saw him, she was troubled at his saying, and cast in her mind what manner of salutation this should be. And the angel said unto her, Fear not, Mary: for thou hast found favour with God. And, behold, thou shalt conceive in thy womb, and bring forth a son, and shalt call his name Jesus. He shall be great, and shall be called the Son of the Highest: and the Lord God shall give unto him the throne of his father David: And he shall reign over the house of Jacob forever; and of his kingdom there shall be no end. Then said Mary unto the angel, how shall this be, seeing I know not a man? And the angel answered and said unto her, The Holy Ghost shall come upon thee, and the power of the Highest shall overshadow thee: therefore also that holy thing which shall be born of thee shall be called the Son of God. And, behold, thy cousin Elisabeth, she hath also conceived a son in her old age: and this is the sixth month with her, who was called barren. For with God nothing shall be impossible. And Mary said, Behold the handmaid of the Lord; be it unto me according to thy word. And the angel departed from her.

THE CAROL

356 *The Angel Gabriel from Heaven Came*

THE SIXTH LESSON

ST. LUKE 2:1-7

 **ND** it came to pass in those days, that there went out a decree from Caesar Augustus that all the world should be taxed. (And this taxing was first made when Cyrenius was governor of Syria.) And all went to be taxed, every one into his own city. And Joseph also went up from Galilee, out of the city of Nazareth, into Judaea, unto the city of David, which is called Bethlehem; (because he was of the house and lineage of David:) To be taxed with Mary his espoused wife, being great with child. And so it was, that, while they were there, the days were accomplished that she should be delivered. And she brought forth her firstborn son,

and wrapped him in swaddling clothes, and laid him in a manger; because there was no room for them in the inn.

THE CAROL

361 *O Little Town of Bethlehem*

THE SEVENTH LESSON

ST. LUKE 2:8-16

 **ND** there were in the same country shepherds abiding in the field, keeping watch over their flock by night. And, lo, the angel of the Lord came upon them, and the glory of the Lord shone round about them: and they were sore afraid. And the angel said unto them, Fear not: for, behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy, which shall be to all people. For unto you is born this day in the city of David a Saviour, which is Christ the Lord. And this shall be a sign unto you; Ye shall find the babe wrapped in swaddling clothes, 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, and on earth peace, good will toward men. And it came to pass, as the angels were gone away from them into heaven, the shepherds said one to another, Let us now go even unto Bethlehem, and see this thing which is come to pass, which the Lord hath made known unto us. And they came with haste, and found Mary, and Joseph, and the babe lying in a manger.

THE CAROL

358 *From Heaven Above to Earth I Come*
(All sing verses 1-7; only Men sing verses 8, 10; only Women sing verses 9, 11;
All sing verses 12-15)

THE EIGHTH LESSON

ST. MATTHEW 2:1-12

 **OW** when Jesus was born in Bethlehem of Judaea in the days of Herod the king, behold, there came wise men from the east to Jerusalem, Saying, Where is he that is born King of the Jews? for we have seen his star in the east, and are come to worship him. When Herod the king had heard these things, he was troubled, and all Jerusalem with him. And when he had gathered all the chief priests and scribes of the people together, he demanded of them where Christ should be born. And they said unto him, In Bethlehem of Judaea: for thus it is written by the prophet, And thou Bethlehem, in the land of Juda, art not the least among the princes of Juda: for out of thee shall come a Governor, that shall rule my people Israel. Then Herod, when he had privily called the wise

men, enquired of them diligently what time the star appeared. And he sent them to Bethlehem, and said, Go and search diligently for the young child; and when ye have found him, bring me word again, that I may come and worship him also. When they had heard the king, they departed; and, lo, the star, which they saw in the east, went before them, till it came and stood over where the young child was. When they saw the star, they rejoiced with exceeding great joy. And when they were come into the house, they saw the young child with Mary his mother, and fell down, and worshipped him: and when they had opened their treasures, they presented unto him gifts; gold, and frankincense and myrrh. And being warned of God in a dream that they should not return to Herod, they departed into their own country another way.

THE CAROL

370 *What Child is This*

THE NINTH LESSON

ST. JOHN 1:1-14

N the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. The same was in the beginning with God. All things were made by him; and without him was not any thing made that was made. In him was life; and the life was the light of men. And the light shineth in darkness; and the darkness comprehended it not. There was a man sent from God, whose name was John. The same came for a witness, to bear witness of the Light, that all men through him might believe. He was not that Light, but was sent to bear witness of that Light.

That was the true Light, which lighteth every man that cometh into the world. He was in the world, and the world was made by him, and the world knew him not. He came unto his own, and his own received him not. But as many as received him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on his name: Which were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God. And the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us, (and we beheld his glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father,) full of grace and truth.

THE CAROL

379 *Oh, Come, All Ye Faithful*

Please STAND

THE COLLECT

Lord God, Gracious Father, who in the fullness of the time didst send Thy Son to become man, to assume our flesh and become our Brother, we thank Thee for Thy truth and fatherly goodness in giving us this Savior, by whose birth we are delivered from sin, death, Satan, and hell; and we beseech Thee, keep us until the end in true knowledge of our Redeemer, that, with all the holy angels, we may rejoice at His nativity and behold Him, together with Thee and the Holy Ghost, in glory and majesty, worth without end.

Amen.

We pause to light the candles. Tip your unlit candle to light it from the flame of the person next to you. Once your candle is lit, hold it upright so someone may light their candle from yours. The hymn will begin once the lights are dimmed and everyone has a lit candle.

We sing Silent Night first in German (opposite pg. 363), then in English (363).

THE CANDLELIGHT CAROL

363 *Stille Nacht, heilige Nacht!*

Silent Night! Holy Night!

Candles are extinguished after the carol and the lights are returned.

THE BENEDICTION

The blessing of God Almighty, the Father, the ✠ Son, and the Holy Spirit, rest upon us and upon our work and worship done in His name. May He give us light to guide us, courage to support our work, and love to unite us, now and forevermore.

Amen.

THE FINAL CAROL

380 *Hark! The Herald Angels Sing*

Depart in ✠ peace.

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