

Christmas Festival of Lessons and Carols



December 15, 2024, 4 pm

Prelude

please stand as you are able

Opening Carol, #102

Once in Royal David's City (v.1 solo; v. 4 women only)

The Hymnal 1982

Welcome and Opening Words

Presider

Little One, born this day:

People

Savior, Redeemer, Beloved of God.

Presider

Let us pray. Blessed Savior,

People

in love you came to us as a child: Enlighten our hearts, that we may more deeply understand the richness of this gift and practice more faithfully your call to give ourselves in love. Amen.

A Bidding Prayer

Presider

People of God: In this Christmas Season, let it be our duty and delight to hear once more the message of the Angels, to go to Bethlehem and see the Son of God lying in a manger.

Let us hear and heed in Holy Scripture the story of God's loving purpose from the time of our rebellion until the glorious redemption brought to us by the holy Child, Jesus, and let us make this place glad with our carols of praise.

Intern

But first, let us pray for the needs of the whole world, for peace and justice on earth, for the unity and mission of the Church for which Christ died, and especially for God's Church here and away.

a time of silence.

And because God particularly loves them, let us remember in Jesus' name the poor and helpless, the cold, the hungry and the oppressed, the sick and those who mourn, the lonely and unloved, the aged and little children, as well as all those who do not yet know and love the Lord Jesus Christ.

a time of silence.

Finally, let us remember before God Jesus' pure and lowly Mother, and that whole multitude which no one can number, whose hope was in the Word made flesh, and with whom, in Jesus, we are one for evermore.

a time of silence.

Presider

And now, to gather up all these petitions, let us pray in the words which Christ has taught us, saying:

People

**Our Father in heaven,
hallowed be your Name,
your kingdom come,
your will be done,
on earth as in heaven.
Give us today our daily bread.
Forgive us our sins
as we forgive those
who sin against us.
Save us from the time of trial,
and deliver us from evil.
For the kingdom, the power,
and the glory are yours,
now and for ever. Amen.**

Presider

Almighty God bless us with unending grace; Christ give us the joys of everlasting life; and to the fellowship of the citizens above, may the Sovereign of the Angels bring us all.

People

Amen.

the congregation may be seated

Lessons and Carols

*The congregation will stand and sing for each Carol but
may remain seated for the readings and anthems.*

The First Lesson: Poem - "On Christmas" by Marion Strobel

Kathleen Damon

Often, on Christmas,
I listen to a chant
Float from a colored window
Softly sibilant.

Often, on Christmas,
I wait until a glow
From a colored pane of glass
Slides across the snow.

Yet though I hear songs,
And listen from without,
I never quite know what
Christmas is about.

I never quite know –
Till, singing on my breast
And warm as a colored light,
Your head is at rest.

Anthem

"In the Stillness" by Sally Beamish

*In the stillness of a church Where candles glow,
In the softness of a fall
Of fresh white snow,*

*In the brightness of the stars That shine this night,
In the calmness of a pool
Of healing light,*

*In the clearness of a choir That softly sings,
In the oneness of a hush Of angels' wings,*

*In the mildness of a night By stable bare,
In the quietness of a lull Near cradle fair,*

*There's a patience as we wait For a new morn,
And the presence of a child Soon to be born.*

The Second Lesson: Isaiah 9:2,6-7

Mary Curlew

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.

Lector The word of the Lord.
People **Thanks be to God.**

Carol, #81

Lo, How a Rose

The Hymnal 1982

The Third Lesson: Micah 5:2-6

Kathleen Damon

But you, O Bethlehem of Ephrathah, who are one of the little clans of Judah, from you shall come forth for me one who is to rule in Israel, whose origin is from of old, from ancient days. Therefore he shall give them up until the time when she who is in labor has brought forth; then the rest of his kindred shall return to the people of Israel. And he shall stand and feed his flock in the strength of the Lord, in the majesty of the name of the Lord his God. And they shall live secure, for now he shall be great to the ends of the earth; and he shall be the one of peace. If the Assyrians come into our land and tread upon our soil, we will raise against them seven shepherds and eight installed as rulers. They shall rule the land of Assyria with the sword, and the land of Nimrod with the drawn sword; they shall rescue us from the Assyrians if they come into our land or tread within our border.

Lector The word of the Lord.
People **Thanks be to God.**

Poem – “The Bethlehem Explosion” by Madeleine L’Engle

Mary Curlew

The chemistry lab at school
was in an old greenhouse
surrounded by ancient live oaks
garnished with Spanish moss.
The experiment I remember best
was pouring a quart of clear fluid
into a glass jar, and dropping into it
grain by grain, salt-sized crystals,
until they layered
like white sand on the
floor of the jar.
One more grain – and suddenly –
water and crystal burst
into a living, moving pattern,

a silent, quietly violent explosion.
The teacher told us that only when
we supersaturated the solution,
would come the precipitation.
The little town
was like the glass jar in our lab.
One by one they came, grain by grain,
all those of the house of David,
like grains of sand to be counted.
The inn was full. When Joseph knocked,
his wife was already in labour;
there was no room even for compassion.
Until the barn was offered.
That was the precipitating factor.
A child was born,
and the pattern changed forever,
the cosmos shaken with that silent explosion.

Anthem

“Wexford Carol” trad. English (v.1+4)

*Good people all, this Christmas time,
Consider well, and bear in mind,
What our good God for us has done,
In sending his beloved Son.
With Mary holy, we should pray
To God with love this Christmas day;
In Bethlehem upon that morn,
There was a blessed Messiah born.*

*With thankful heart and joyful mind,
The shepherds went the babe to find,
And as God’s angels had foretold,
They did our Savior Christ behold.
Within a manger he was laid,
And by His side the virgin maid
Attending on the Lord of Life,
Who came to earth to end all strife.*

Carol, #78

O Little Town of Bethlehem

The Hymnal 1982

The Fourth Lesson: Luke 1:26-35, 38

Dan Hudkins

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.

Lector The word of the Lord.

People **Thanks be to God.**

Anthem

"Angelus ad Virginum" Medieval carol, arr. D. Wilcocks

English translation:

*The angel came to the Virgin,
entering secretly into her room;
the Virgin's fear
calming, he said, "Hail!
Hail, queen of virgins:
you will conceive the Lord of heaven and earth
and bear him, still a virgin,
to be the salvation of mankind;
you will be made the gate of heaven,
the cure of sins."*

*"How can I conceive,
When I have never known a man?
How can I transgress
resolutions that I have vowed with a firm mind?"
"The grace of the Holy Spirit
shall do all this.
Do not be afraid, but rejoice
without a care, since your chastity
will remain in you unspoilt
through the power of God."*

*To this, the noble Virgin,
replying, said to him,
"I am the humble maidservant
of almighty God.
To you, heavenly messenger,
and bearer of such a great secret,
I give my consent, and wishing to see
done what I hear,
I am ready to obey
the will of God."*

*The angel vanished,
and at once the girl's
womb swelled*

*with the force of the pregnancy of salvation.
He, protected by the womb
for nine months in number,
left it and began the struggle,
fixing to his shoulder
a cross, with which he dealt the blow
to the deadly Enemy.*

*Hail, Mother of our Lord,
who brought peace back
to angels and men
when you bore Christ!
Pray your son
that he may show favor to us
and blot out our sins,
giving us help
to enjoy a blessed life
after this exile.*

The Fifth Lesson: Matthew 1:18-21

Kathleen Damon

Now the birth of Jesus the Messiah took place in this way. When his mother Mary had been engaged to Joseph, but before they lived together, she was found to be with child from the Holy Spirit. Her husband Joseph, being a righteous man and unwilling to expose her to public disgrace, planned to dismiss her quietly. But just when he had resolved to do this, an angel of the Lord appeared to him in a dream and said, "Joseph, son of David, do not be afraid to take Mary as your wife, for the child conceived in her is from the Holy Spirit. She will bear a son, and you are to name him Jesus, for he will save his people from their sins."

Lector The word of the Lord.
People **Thanks be to God.**

Carol Joseph Dearest, Joseph Mine (see last page)

The Sixth Lesson: Luke 2:1, 3-7 (King James Translation)

Dan Hudkins

And it came to pass in those days, that there went out a decree from Caesar Augustus that all the world should be taxed.
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.

Lector The word of the Lord.
People **Thanks be to God.**

Anthem

“My Lord has Come” by Will Todd

*Shepherds, called by angels, called by love and angels: No place for them but a stable.
My Lord has come.
Sages, searching for stars, searching for love in heaven; No place for them but a stable.
My Lord has come.
His love will hold me, his love will cherish me, love will cradle me. Lead me, lead me to see him,
sages and shepherds and angels; No place for me but a stable.
My Lord has come.
Shepherds, called by angels, called by love and angels: No place for them but a stable.
My Lord has come.
Sages, searching for stars, searching for love in heaven; No place for them but a stable.
My Lord has come.
His love will hold me, his love will cherish me, love will cradle me. Lead me, lead me to see him,
sages and shepherds and angels; No place for me but a stable.
My Lord has come.*

The Seventh Lesson: Luke 2:8-16

The Zimmerman Family

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.

Lector The word of the Lord.
People **Thanks be to God.**

Poem – “Christmas Carol” by Paul Laurence Dunbar

Mary Curlew

Ring out, ye bells!
All Nature swells
With gladness at the wondrous story, —
The world was lorn,
But Christ is born
To change our sadness into glory.

Sing, earthlings, sing!
To-night a King
Hath come from heaven’s high throne to bless us.
The outstretched hand
O’er all the land
Is raised in pity to caress us.

Come at His call;
Be joyful all;
Away with mourning and with sadness!
The heavenly choir
With holy fire
Their voices raise in songs of gladness.

The darkness breaks
And Dawn awakes,
Her cheeks suffused with youthful blushes.
The rocks and stones
In holy tones
Are singing sweeter than the thrushes.

Then why should we
In silence be,
When Nature lends her voice to praises;
When heaven and earth
Proclaim the truth
Of Him for whom that lone star blazes?

No, be not still,
But with a will
Strike all your harps and set them ringing;
On hill and heath
Let every breath
Throw all its power into singing!

Carol, #94

While Shepherds watched their flocks by night

The Hymnal 1982

The Eighth Lesson: Matthew 2:1-11

Dan Hudkins

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.

Lector The word of the Lord.
People **Thanks be to God.**

Carol, #128

We Three Kings

The Hymnal 1982

Anthem

“O Magnum Mysterium” by T.L.de la Vittoria

Latin:

*O magnum mysterium
et admirabile sacramentum,
ut animalia viderent Dominum natum
jacentem in praeseptio.
O beata Virgo, cujus viscera meruerunt
portare Dominum Jesum Christum.
Alleluia!*

English:

*O great mystery
and wonderful sacrament,
that animals should see the new-born Lord
lying in a manger!
O blessed is the Virgin, whose womb
was worthy to bear Christ the Lord.
Alleluia!*

please stand as you are able

The Ninth Lesson: John 1:1-14

The Rev. Amanda Gerken-Nelson

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.

Lector The word of the Lord.
People **Thanks be to God.**

Carol, #83

O Come All Ye Faithful (v.1,2,3,6)

The Hymnal 1982

Closing Prayer

Presider Wonderful Counselor,
whose glory is beyond our understanding
and whose love is beyond measure:

People **Let us know your presence now.**

Intern Mighty God,

whose power girds creation,
whose hands cradle the hills, yet whose mercy is boundless:
People **Let us know your presence now.**

Presider Prince of Peace,
whose righteousness is like the strong mountains
and whose justice is as the great deep:

People **Let us know your presence now.**

Intern Emmanuel,
whose property it is always to have mercy,
and whose arm is long to save,
hold all those we love in your unbounded love.

People **Make us your healing presence in the world.**

Presider Loving Word of God, you have shown us the fullness of your glory in taking human
flesh: Fill us, in our bodily life, with your grace and truth, that our pleasure may be
boundless and our integrity complete.

People **Amen.**

Closing Carol, #87

Hark, the Herald Angels Sing

The Hymnal 1982

Dismissal

Deacon Go! Tell it on the mountain!

People **That Jesus Christ is born. Thanks be to God!**

Postlude

RESOURCES

Opening Words & Closing Prayer: from *Daily Prayer for all Seasons*. Church Publishing, Inc. 2014

Bidding Prayer: *The Book of Occasional Services* 2018

Old Testament, New Testament and Gospels readings are from the New Revised Standard
Version Bible unless otherwise noted, copyright ©1989 National Council of the Churches of
Christ in the United States of America. Used by permission. All rights reserved worldwide.

On Christmas by Marion Strobel: from *Poetry*, Vol. 25, No. 3 (Dec 1924)

The Bethlehem Explosion, by Madeleine L'Engle

Christmas Carol: The Complete Poems of Paul Laurence Dunbar (Dodd, Mead & Company, 1922)

SERVING IN WORSHIP TODAY

Presider: The Rev. Amanda Gerken-Nelson

Pastoral Intern: Mary Curlew

Music: Dr. Christina Edelen and the St. Bart's Choir

Readers: Mary Curlew, Kathleen Damon, Dan Hudkins, The Zimmerman Family

Ushers: Ann Donaghy, Nancy Gunzelmann

Altar Guild: Jan Burson

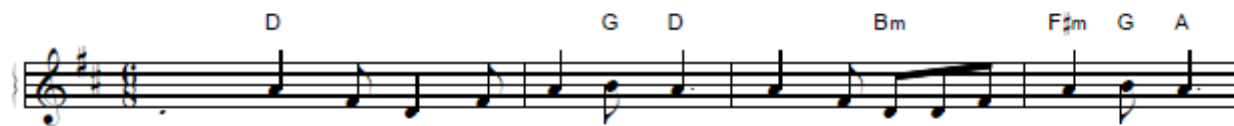
Advent Wreath: Altar Guild

A/V: Pal Covie

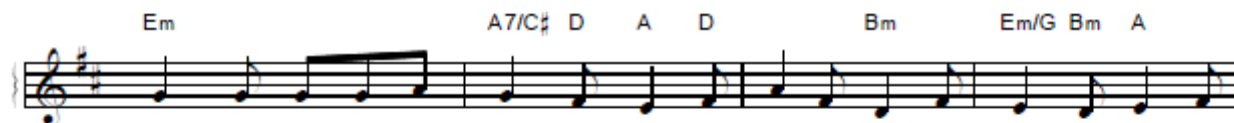
Joseph Dearest, Joseph Mine

words: traditional German
translator unknown

tune: *Resonet in Laudibus*, anonymous



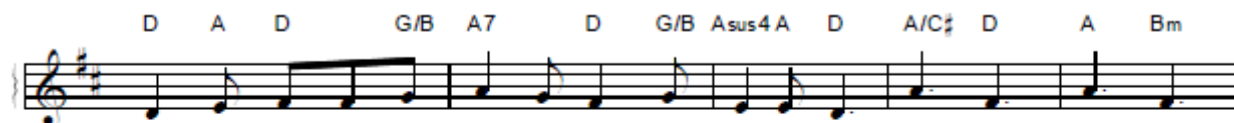
1. "Jo - seph dear - est, Jo - seph mine, Help me cra-dle the child di - vine;
2. "Glad - ly, dear one, la - dy mine, Help I cra-dle this child of thine;



God re - ward thee and all that's thine In par - a - dise," so prays the moth - er
God's own light on us both shall shine In par - a - dise, as prays the moth - er



Mar - y. He came a - mong us at Christ - mas - tide, At Christ - mas - tide, in Beth - le - hem;
Mar - y."



Men shall bring Him from far and wide Love's di - a - dem: Je - sus, Je - sus,



Lo, He comes, and loves, and saves, and frees us!