

Ascension Lutheran Church

Festival of Lessons and Carols December 27, 2020

Welcome, All, In the Name of Jesus Christ our Lord!

We come to this service with joy and anticipation to hear the message of the angels and to again return in heart and mind to Bethlehem to experience the loving kindness of our God in the form of a baby lying in a manger. In our worship, the Word of God as well as music old and new will draw us again to the heart of the Christmas message--a message filled with eternal hope and joy.

THE HISTORY OF LESSONS AND CAROLS

The service of Lessons and Carols dates back to 1918 when the first such service was held at Kings College in Cambridge, England. The origin, however, actually goes back to 1880 when a service of carols and related scriptures was developed by the Bishop of Truro Cathedral (England) for Christmas Eve. Over the years the basic format has been adapted and utilized by churches around the world over and over again.

CHRISTMAS PRELUDE

OPENING SENTENCES

The people who walked in darkness have seen a great light.

The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness has not overcome it.

Those who dwelt in the land of deep darkness, on them has light shined.

We have beheld Christ's glory, glory as of the only Son from the Father.

For to us a child is born, to us a Son is given.

In him was life, and the life was the light of humanity.

OPENING HYMN #289

“Angels We Have Heard on High”



1 An - gels we have heard on high, sweet - ly sing - ing o'er the plains,
2 Shep-herds, why this ju - bi - lee? Why your joy - ous strains pro - long?
3 Come to Beth - le - hem and see him whose birth the an - gels sing;



and the moun-tains in re - ply, ech - o - ing their joy - ous strains.
What the glad - some tid - ings be which in - spire your heav'n - ly song?
come, a - dore on bend - ed knee Christ the Lord, the new - born king.

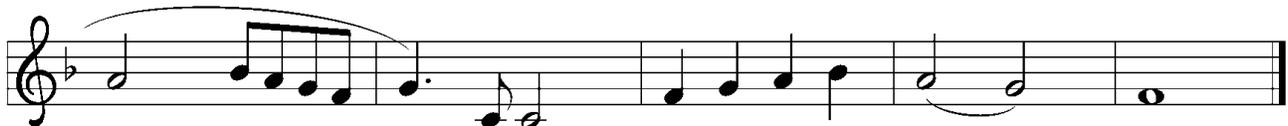
Refrain



Glo - ri - a



in ex - cel - sis De - o; glo -



ri - a in ex - cel - sis De - o.

Text: French carol; tr. H. F. Hemy, *The Crown of Jesus Music*, 1864
Music: GLORIA, French carol

PRAYER OF THE DAY

Let us pray.

Almighty God, you wonderfully created the dignity of human nature and yet more wonderfully restored it. In your mercy, let us share the divine life of the one who came to share our humanity, Jesus Christ, your Son, our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.

Amen.



1 O come, all ye faith - ful, joy - ful and tri - um - phant! O
 2 The high - est, most ho - ly, light of light e - ter - nal,
 3 Sing, choirs of an - gels, sing in ex - ul - ta - tion,
 4 Yea, Lord, we greet thee, born this hap - py morn - ing;



come ye, O come ye to Beth - le - hem;
 born of a vir - gin, a mor - tal he comes;
 sing, all ye cit - i - zens of heav - en a - bove!
 Je - sus, to thee be . . . glo - ry giv'n!

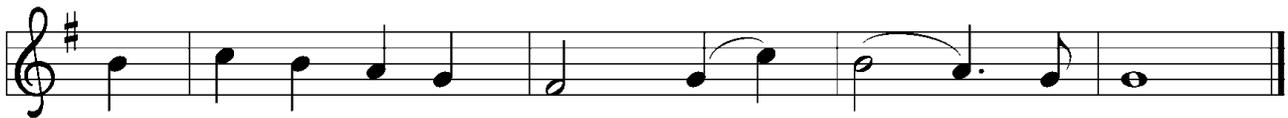


come and be - hold him, born the king of an - gels:
 Son of the Fa - ther now in flesh ap - pear - ing!
 Glo - ry to God . . . in . . . the . . . high - est:
 Word of the Fa - ther, now in flesh ap - pear - ing:

Refrain



Ve - ni - te a - do - re - mus, ve - ni - te a - do - re - mus,
 O come, let us a - dore him, O come, let us a - dore him,



ve - ni - te a - do - re - mus Do - mi - num.
 O come, let us a - dore him, Christ the Lord!

Text: attr. John Francis Wade, 1711–1786; tr. Frederick Oakeley, 1802–1880, sts. 1, 3–4; tr. unknown, st. 2
 Music: ADESTE FIDELES, attr. John Francis Wade

FIRST LESSON

Gail Sherman

Genesis 3:8-15, 17-19

Adam and Eve disobey God’s command and disrupt the order and goodness of creation.

HYMN #275

“Angels from the Realm of Glory”



1 An - gels, from the realms of glo - ry, wing your flight o'er all the earth;
2 Shep-herds, in the fields a - bid - ing, watch-ing o'er your flocks by night,
3 Sa - ges, leave your con - tem-pla - tions, bright-er vi - sions beam a - far;
4 All cre - a - tion, join in prais-ing God, the Fa - ther, Spir - it, Son,



once you sang cre - a - tion's sto - ry, now pro - claim Mes - si - ah's birth:
God with us is now re - sid - ing, yon - der shines the in - fant light.
seek the great de - sire of na - tions, you have seen his na - tal star.
ev - er - more your voic - es rais - ing to the e - ter - nal Three in One.

Refrain



Come and wor-ship, come and wor-ship, wor-ship Christ, the new-born king.

Text: James Montgomery, 1771–1854, alt., sts. 1–3; *Salisbury Hymn Book*, 1857, st. 4
Music: REGENT SQUARE, Henry T. Smart, 1813–1879

SECOND LESSON

Sandra Waldrop

Genesis 22:15-18

God promises that, through Abraham, all the peoples of the world will be blessed.

HYMN #282

“It Came Upon the Midnight Clear”



1 It came up - on the mid - night clear, that glo - rious song of old,
2 Still through the clo - ven skies they come with peace - ful wings un - furled,
3 And you, be - neath life's crush - ing load, whose forms are bend - ing low,
4 For lo! The days are has - t'ning on, by proph - ets seen of old,



from an - gels bend - ing near the earth to touch their harps of gold:
and still their heav'n - ly mu - sic floats o'er all the wea - ry world.
who toil a - long the climb - ing way with pain - ful steps and slow:
when with the ev - er - cir - cling years shall come the time fore - told,



“Peace on the earth, good will to all, from heav’n’s all - gra - cious king.”
 A - bove its sad and low - ly plains they bend on hov - ’ring wing,
 look now, for glad and gold - en hours come swift - ly on the wing;
 when peace shall o - ver all the earth its an - cient splen - dors fling,



The world in sol - emn still - ness lay to hear the an - gels sing.
 and ev - er o’er its ba - bel sounds the bless - ed an - gels sing.
 oh, rest be - side the wea - ry road and hear the an - gels sing!
 and all the world give back the song which now the an - gels sing.

Text: Edmund H. Sears, 1810–1876
 Music: CAROL, Richard S. Willis, 1819–1900

THIRD LESSON

Ludy Wilkie

Isaiah 9:2, 6-7

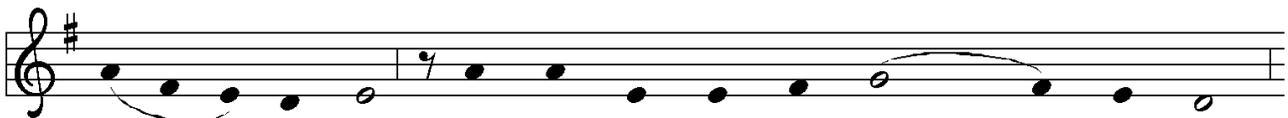
The people who walk in darkness receive the promise of the Messiah.

HYMN #257

“O Come, O Come Emmanuel”



1 O come, O come, Em - man - u - el, and ran - som cap - tive
 2 O come, O Wis - dom from on high, em - brac - ing all things
 3 O come, O come, O Lord of might, as to your tribes on
 4 O come, O Branch of Jes - se, free your own from Sa - tan’s



Is - ra - el, that mourns in lone - ly ex - ile here
 far and nigh: in strength and beau - ty come and stay;
 Si - nai’s height in an - cient times you gave the law
 tyr - an - ny; from depths of hell your peo - ple save,



un - til the Son of God ap - pear.
 teach us your will and guide our way. Re-joyce! Re-joyce!
 in cloud, and maj - es - ty, and awe.
 and give them vic - t’ry o’er the grave.



Em - man - u - el shall come to you, O Is - ra - el.

Text: *Psalterium Canticum Catholicarum*, Köln, 1710; tr. composite
Music: VENI, EMMANUEL, French processional, 15th cent.
Text sts. 2, 6, 7 © 1997 Augsburg Fortress.

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FOURTH LESSON

Judy Bridges

Isaiah 11:1-4a, 6-9

The Messiah will come from the root of Jesse to restore the peace of creation.

HYMN #272

“Lo, How a Rose E’er Blooming”



1 Lo, how a rose e'er bloom - ing from ten - der stem hath
2 I - sai - ah had fore - told it, the rose I have in
3 This flow'r, whose fra - grance ten - der with sweet-ness fills the
4 O Sav - ior, child of Mar - y, who felt our hu - man



sprung! Of Jes - se's lin - eage com - ing as
mind; with Mar - y we be - hold it, the
air, dis - pels with glo - rious splen - dor the
woe; O Sav - ior, king of glo - ry, who



seers of old have sung, it came, a flow'r so bright, a -
vir - gin moth - er kind. To show God's love a - right, she
dark-ness ev - 'ry - where. True man, yet ver - y God, from
dost our weak - ness know: bring us at length, we pray, to



mid the cold of win - ter, when half - spent was the night.
bore to us a Sav - ior, when half - spent was the night.
sin and death he saves us and light - ens ev - 'ry load.
the bright courts of heav - en and in - to end - less day.

Text: German carol, 15th cent.; tr. Theodore Baker, 1851–1934, sts. 1–2; Harriet R. Krauth, 1845–1925, st. 3; John C. Mattes, 1876–1948, st. 4
Music: ES IST EIN ROS, *Alte catholische geistliche Kirchengesänge*, Köln, 1599

FIFTH LESSON

Carol Berger

Luke 1:26-35, 38

An angel appears to Mary and announces that she will bear a holy child.

HYMN #279

“O Little Town of Bethlehem”



O lit - tle town of Beth - le - hem, how still we see thee lie!
For Christ is born of Mar - y, and, gath - ered all a - bove
How si - lent - ly, how si - lent - ly the won - drous gift is giv'n!
O ho - ly child of Beth - le - hem, de - scend to us, we pray;



A - bove thy deep and dream-less sleep the si - lent stars go by;
while mor - tals sleep, the an - gels keep their watch of won - d'ring love.
So God im - parts to hu - man hearts the bless - ings of his heav'n.
cast out our sin, and en - ter in, be born in us to - day.



yet in thy dark streets shin - eth the ev - er - last - ing light.
O morn - ing stars, to - geth - er pro - claim the ho - ly birth,
No ear may hear his com - ing; but, in this world of sin,
We hear the Christ - mas an - gels the great glad tid - ings tell;



The hopes and fears of all the years are met in thee to - night.
and prais - es sing to God the king, and peace to all the earth!
where meek souls will re - ceive him, still the dear Christ en - ters in.
oh, come to us, a - bide with us, our Lord Im - man - u - el!

Text: Phillips Brooks, 1835–1893

Music: ST. LOUIS, Lewis H. Redner, 1831–1908

SIXTH LESSON

Rose Cook

Luke 2:1-7

Joseph and Mary travel to Bethlehem, where Mary gives birth to her child.

HYMN #277**“Away in a Manger”**

1 A - way in a man - ger, no crib for his bed, the lit - tle Lord
 2 The cat - tle are low - ing; the ba - by a - wakes, but lit - tle Lord
 3 Be near me, Lord Je - sus; I ask you to stay close by me for -



Je - sus laid down his sweet head; the stars in the bright sky looked
 Je - sus, no cry - ing he makes. I love you, Lord Je - sus; look
 ev - er and love me, I pray. Bless all the dear chil - dren in



down where he lay, the lit - tle Lord Je - sus a - sleep on the hay.
 down from the sky and stay by my cra - dle till morn - ing is nigh.
 your ten - der care and fit us for heav - en, to live with you there.

Text: North American, 19th cent.

Music: AWAY IN A MANGER, James R. Murray, 1841–1905

SEVENTH LESSON

Steve White

Luke 2:8-16

Angels appear to shepherds in the fields and announce the birth of the Messiah.

HYMN #276**“Infant Holy, Infant Lowly”**

1 In - fant ho - ly, in - fant low - ly, for his bed a cat - tle stall;
 2 Flocks were sleep - ing, shep - herds keep - ing vig - il till the morn - ing new



ox - en low - ing, lit - tle know - ing Christ the child is Lord of all.
 saw the glo - ry, heard the sto - ry, tid - ings of a gos - pel true.



Swift-ly wing-ing, an-gels sing-ing, bells are ring-ing, tid-ings bring-ing:
Thus re-joic-ing, free from sor-row, prais-es voic-ing, greet the mor-row:



Christ the child is Lord of all! Christ the child is Lord of all!
Christ the child was born for you! Christ the child was born for you!

Text: Polish carol; tr. Edith M. G. Reed, 1885–1933, alt.
Music: W ŻŁOBIE LEZY, Polish carol

EIGHTH LESSON

Lisa Philbeck

Matthew 2:1-11

Magi from the East come seeking the Messiah and offer gifts to the baby Jesus.

HYMN #290

“Go Tell It on the Mountain”

Refrain



Go tell it on the moun-tain, o-ver the hills and ev-'ry-where;



go tell it on the moun-tain that Je-sus Christ is born!



- 1 While shep-herds kept their watch-ing o'er si-lent flocks by night,
- 2 The shep-herds feared and trem-bled when, lo, a-bove the earth
- 3 Down in a lone-ly man-ger the hum-ble Christ was born;

Refrain



be-hold, through-out the heav-ens there shone a ho-ly light.
rang out the an-gel cho-rus that hailed our Sav-ior's birth.
and God sent us sal-va-tion that bless-ed Christ-mas morn.

Text: African American spiritual, refrain; John W. Work Jr., 1872–1925, stanzas, alt.
Music: GO TELL IT, African American spiritual

NINTH LESSON

Pastor Christina Auch

John 1:1-14

The Word of God becomes flesh and lives among us, full of grace and truth.

HYMN #281

“Silent Night, Holy Night”



Stil - le Nacht, hei - li - ge Nacht! Al - les schläft,
1 Si - lent night, ho - ly night! All is calm,
2 Si - lent night, ho - ly night! Shep - herds quake
3 Si - lent night, ho - ly night! Son of God,



ein - sam wacht nur das trau - te, hoch - hei - li - ge Paar.
all is bright round yon vir - gin moth - er and child.
at the sight; glo - ries stream from heav - en a - far,
love's pure light ra - diant beams from your ho - ly face,



Hold - er Kna - be im lok - ki - gen Haar, schlaf in himm - li - scher
Ho - ly In - fant, so ten - der and mild, sleep in heav - en - ly
heav'n - ly hosts . . . sing, al - le - lu - ia! Christ, the Sav - ior, is
with the dawn of re - deem - ing grace, Je - sus, Lord, at your



Ruh, schlaf in himm - li - scher Ruh.
peace, sleep in heav - en - ly peace.
born! Christ, the Sav - ior, is born!
birth, Je - sus, Lord, at your birth.

Text: Joseph Mohr, 1792–1849; tr. John F. Young, 1820–1885
Music: STILLE NACHT, Franz Gruber, 1787–1863

PRAYERS OF THE PEOPLE

Gathered with all who seek the Christ child, let us pray for the church, the world, and all who are in need.

A brief silence.

Praise is on our lips and in our hearts, Holy One, for the gracious deeds and acts that you have bestowed upon your church. Give to your whole church open hearts that we might work together to share your good news in Christ Jesus.

Hear us, O God. **Your mercy is great.**

Praise to you, Creator of all, for you have created a rich diversity of nature and creatures: sun, moon, stars, mountains and all hills, oceans and rivers. Sustain all that you made and keep us faithful in our care for creation.

Hear us, O God. **Your mercy is great.**

We bless you, Ruler of all, for the communities and nations of which we are a part. Gather into your arms the many peoples of the world and grant humility to all leaders, so that all may find blessing and peace.

Hear us, O God. **Your mercy is great.**

O Holy One, you overcame death and freed us from all fear. Give patience and compassion to those who provide care. Give courage to all who are afraid and comfort to all who suffer in any way. We pray especially for all whom we name or hold silently in our hearts...

Hear us, O God. **Your mercy is great.**

Nurturing God, you care for your children in any danger. Grant courage to our congregation, that we are present with children who need our love and protection, with parents who grieve the loss of children, and with those who seek safety from hurtful situations.

Hear us, O God. **Your mercy is great.**

Light of life, you claim us as your children forever. We praise you for those who have gone before us in the faith, serving as witnesses to your presence (*especially*).

Hear us, O God. **Your mercy is great.**

Into your gracious hands we commend all for whom we pray, trusting in your steadfast mercy; through Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord.

Amen.

PASSING OF THE PEACE

Unto us a child is born, unto us a Son is given, and his name is Prince of Peace.
The peace of the Lord be with you all.

And also with you.

The people may greet one another with a sign of Christ's peace and say: "Peace be with you" from wherever you are or type it in the chat or comments.

THE LORD'S PRAYER

Gathered into one by the Holy Spirit, let us pray as Jesus 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, forever.

Amen.

BLESSING

May Christ, who by his incarnation has filled us with grace and truth, give you peace this Christmas and always. Almighty God, Father, + Son, and the Holy Spirit, be upon you and remain with you always.

Amen.

CLOSING HYMN #267

“Joy to the World!”



1 Joy to the world, the Lord is come! Let earth re -
2 Joy to the earth, the Sav - ior reigns! Let all their
3 No more let sin and sor - row grow nor thorns in -
4 He rules the world with truth and grace and makes the



ceive her king; let ev - 'ry heart pre - pare him
songs em - ploy, while fields and floods, rocks, hills, and
fest the ground; he comes to make his bless - ings
na - tions prove the glo - ries of his righ - teous -



room and heav'n and na - ture sing, and heav'n and na - ture
plains re - peat the sound - ing joy, re - peat the sound - ing
flow far as the curse is found, far as the curse is
ness and won - ders of his love, and won - ders of his



sing, and heav'n, and heav'n and na - ture sing.
joy, re - peat, re - peat the sound - ing joy.
found, far as, far as the curse is found.
love, and won - ders, won - ders of his love.

Text: Isaac Watts, 1674–1748

Music: ANTIOCH, English melody, 18th cent.; arr. Lowell Mason, 1792–1872

DISMISSAL

Christ is born! Go tell it on the mountain and everywhere. **Thanks be to God.**

POSTLUDE

THANK YOU TO THESE GREENERY DONORS

In Memory of:

Evelyn and Chic Roche
Dot and Calvin Blalock
Marge and Jack Riviere
All the Saints who have gone before us

Given by:

Judy Bridges
Chrys and Greg Blalock
Chrys and Greg Blalock
Karen Long

In Honor of:

J. L. Setzer
Lee Barry
Dot Paul
Fred DeBell
Greg Blalock
Steve Hudgins
Carol Berger
Debby Chaffin

Given by:

Anonymous
Anonymous
Anonymous
Anonymous
Anonymous
Anonymous
Anonymous
Jennie and Dave Lambert

The greenery on the columbarium has been given to the Glory of God and in memory of all the loved ones of the Lacy and Smolzer families who have entered the church triumphant.

The greenery in the Prayer Garden has been given to the Glory of God and in loving memory of their daughter Elizabeth by Mr. and Mrs. Allen Philbeck.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Coronavirus Response: Our sanctuary remains closed, but the fellowship hall is available for small groups (less than 10) with social distancing and masks required. Contact Debby in the church office for more information.

Prayer Concerns: Please call or email the office or text Pastor Christina at 704-472-7783 to update prayer requests.

Please continue your tithes and offerings. Make a one time or recurring gift using **the website** or **the GivePlus app** on iPhone or Android. You can give using ACH (bank account), Visa, MasterCard, Discover or American Express.

Or **text 844-906-2283** and enter the amount you wish to donate. Then click the registration link and enter your payment information. You will receive a verification text as well as an email receipt. For future giving, simply send a text to the same number with the amount you wish to give, and your donation will process automatically.

Or **mail your regular tithe or offering** to PO Box 266, Shelby, NC 28151.

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