



*Covenant Christmas*

## *Festival of Nine Lessons and Carols*

This evening's service is based on the Festival of Nine Lessons and Carols, which was first drawn up by E.W. Benson for use in the Cathedral at Truro. It was adapted from ancient sources as a Christmas Eve service and was first celebrated on Christmas Eve in 1880. It was later modified for use at King's College in Cambridge, in 1918, by its then Dean, the Reverend Eric Milner-White. In 1928, the Festival of Lessons and Carols at King's College was broadcast on the radio, and to this day, the annual broadcast is heard by hundreds of millions of listeners each year. This service has been and continues to be used with some variation by churches around the world. We have slightly modified the service this evening to reflect our own worship traditions.

Our service this evening combines scripture texts from the breadth of God's Word that speak of the coming of the Christ-child, with carols that highlight the themes found in those texts. As a people living in the time between the times – a people living both in the reality of the present and with the sure hope of the promised future – we often find these themes fresh on our lips and expressed by the deepest longing of our hearts. Our prayer is that the service this evening will help strengthen your faith, as you find comfort in the God of all comfort, peace in the Prince of Peace, and victory in the forever-reigning King who will one day return to make all things right.

“Amen. Come, Lord Jesus!” (Revelation 22.20)



# **ORDER OF WORSHIP**

December 24, 2023 | Christmas Eve | 6:00 p.m.

## PRELUDE

<i>Bring a Torch, Jeanette Isabella</i>	Keith Chapman
<i>Sonata in D Major for Trumpet</i>	Giuseppe Torelli
<i>II. Allegro</i>	
<i>III. Grave</i>	
<i>IV. Allegro</i>	
<i>From Heaven Came the Angels Bright</i>	Johann Sebastian Bach
<i>Angels We Have Heard on High</i>	Tim Zimmermann
<i>Noël "Votre bonté Grand Dieu"</i>	Claude Balbastre
<i>O Holy Night</i>	Adolphe Adam; arr. Arthur Frackenpohl
<i>Carols of the Manger</i>	Dale Wood

## PROCESSIONAL CAROL

*Once in Royal David's City*

Soloist:

*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.*

*Please stand and sing*



2. He came down to earth from heav - en who is  
3. And through all his won - drous child - hood he would  
4. And our eyes at last shall see him, through his  
5. Not in that poor low - ly sta - ble, with the



God and Lord of all, and his shel - ter was a  
hon - or and o - bey, love and watch the low - ly  
own re - deem - ing love; for that child so dear and  
ox - en stand - ing by, we shall see him, but in



sta - ble, and his cra - dle was a stall: with the poor, and  
maid - en in whose gen - tle arms he lay: Chris - tian child - dren  
gen - tle is our Lord in heav'n a - bove, and he leads his  
heav - en, set at God's right hand on high; when like stars his



mean, and low - ly, lived on earth our Sav - ior ho - ly.  
all must be mild, o - be - dient, good as he.  
chil - dren on to the place where he is gone.  
chil - dren crowned all in white shall wait a - round.

Words: Cecil Frances Alexander, 1848

Music: Henry J. Gauntlett, 1849; arr. David Willcocks

## WELCOME AND OPENING PRAYER

Minister: Beloved in Christ, it is our care and delight this Christmas Eve to prepare ourselves to hear again the message of the angels and in heart and mind to go even to Bethlehem and see this thing which has come to pass, the babe lying in a manger. Let us hear again the tale of the loving purposes of God from the first days of our sin until the glorious Redemption brought to us by this child, and let us make this place glad with our carols of praise.

But first, let us pray for the needs of the world; for peace upon the earth he came to save; for love and unity within the Church that he came to build, within our country, our city, and our church. And let us remember before him the poor, the cold, the hungry, the oppressed, the sick, the lonely, those that mourn, 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 man can number, whose hope was in the Word made flesh, and with whom, we for evermore are one.

These prayers and praises we humbly offer in the words that Christ himself taught us:

**People: 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 debts, as we forgive our debtors. Lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil, for thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory forever. Amen.**

HOMILY

Rev. Chad Scruggs

# *The First Lesson*

## THE FALL OF MAN AND THE FIRST PROCLAMATION OF THE GOSPEL

### SCRIPTURE READING

Genesis 3:8-15, 17-19

And they heard the sound of the LORD God walking in the garden in the cool of the day, 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?" And 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 of 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 of 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 deceived me, and I ate."

The LORD God said to the serpent,

"Because you have done this,  
    cursed are you above all livestock  
    and above all beasts of the field;  
on 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 her offspring;  
He shall bruise your head,  
    and you shall bruise his heel."

And to Adam he said,

"Because you have listened to the voice of your wife  
    and have eaten of the tree  
of which I commanded you,  
    'You shall not eat of it,'  
cursed is the ground because of you;  
    in pain 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,  
till you return to the ground,  
for out of it you were taken;  
for you are dust,  
and to dust you shall return.”

## **ANTHEM**

*Remember, O Thou Man*

Thomas Ravenscroft

Remember, O thou Man, O thou Man, O thou Man,  
Remember, O thou Man, Thy time is spent.  
Remember, O thou Man, though cast out from Eden's land  
Our God did'st stay his hand: therefore repent.

Remember Adam's fall, O thou Man, O thou Man,  
Remember Adam's fall from heaven to hell!  
Remember Adam's fall, how we were condemned all  
In hell perpetual, there for to dwell.

Remember God's goodness, O thou Man, O thou Man,  
Remember God's goodness and promise made!  
Remember God's goodness, how he sent his Son, doubtless,  
Our sins for to redress. Be not afraid.

The Angels all did sing, O thou Man, O thou Man,  
The Angels all did sing upon the shepherd's hill;  
The Angels all did sing praises to our heavenly King,  
And peace to man living, with a good will.



## *The Second Lesson*

GOD PROMISES TO ABRAHAM THAT IN HIS SEED SHALL ALL THE NATIONS OF THE EARTH BE BLESSED

### **SCRIPTURE READING**

Genesis 22:15-18

And the angel of the LORD called to Abraham a second time from heaven and said, “By myself I have sworn, declares the LORD, because you have done this and have not withheld your son, your only son, I will surely bless you, and I will surely multiply your offspring as the stars of heaven and as the sand that is on the seashore. And your offspring shall possess the gate of his enemies, and in your offspring shall all the nations of the earth be blessed, because you have obeyed my voice.”

## CAROL

*Creator of the Stars of Night*

*Please remain seated*

Choir:

*Creator of the stars of night,  
Your people's everlasting light,  
O Christ, Redeemer of us all,  
We pray you hear us when we call*

*When this old world drew on toward night,  
You came; but not in splendor bright,  
Not as a monarch, but the child  
Of Mary, blessed mother mild.*

*Please stand and sing*



3. At your great name, O Je - sus, now all knees must bend, all  
4. Come in your ho - ly might, we pray, re - deem us for e -  
5. To God the Fa - ther, God the Son, and God the Spir - it,



hearts must bow: all things on earth with one ac - cord,  
ter - nal day; de - fend us while we dwell be - low  
Three - in - One, praise, hon - or, might, and glo - ry be



like those in heav'n shall call you Lord.  
from all as - saults of our dread foe.  
from age to age e - ter - nal - ly. A - men.

Words and Music: 9th Century Latin hymn; translation *Hymnal 1940*; arr. Michael Burkhardt

# *The Third Lesson*

## THE PROPHET ISAIAH FORETELLS THE COMING OF THE SAVIOR

### **SCRIPTURE READING**

Isaiah 9:2, 6-7

The people who walked in darkness  
have seen a great light;  
those who dwelt in a land of deep darkness,  
on them has light shone.

For to us a child is born,  
to us a son is given;  
and the government shall be upon his shoulder,  
and his name shall be called  
Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God,  
Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace.  
Of the increase of his government and of peace  
there will be no end,  
on the throne of David and over his kingdom,  
to establish it and to uphold it  
with justice and with righteousness  
from this time forth and forevermore.  
The zeal of the LORD of hosts will do this.

### **ANTHEM**

*For Unto Us a Child Is Born from "Messiah"*

G.F. Handel

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 Counselor, The Mighty God, The Everlasting Father, The Prince of Peace.

Isaiah 9:6

# *The Fourth Lesson*

## THE PEACE THAT CHRIST WILL BRING IS FORESHOWN

### SCRIPTURE READING

Isaiah 11:1-4, 6-9

There shall come forth a shoot from the stump of Jesse,  
and a branch from his roots shall bear fruit.  
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 the fear of the LORD.  
And his delight shall be in the fear of the LORD.  
He shall not judge by what his eyes see,  
or decide disputes by what his ears hear,  
but with righteousness he shall judge the poor,  
and decide with equity for the meek of the earth;  
and 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 dwell with the lamb,  
and the leopard shall lie down with the young goat,  
and the calf and the lion and the fattened calf 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 cobra,  
and the weaned child shall put his hand on the adder's den.  
They shall not hurt or destroy  
in all my holy mountain;  
for the earth shall be full of the knowledge of the LORD  
as the waters cover the sea.

## ANTHEM

*Lo, How a Rose E'er Blooming*

Michael Praetorius

Lo, how a Rose e'er blooming  
From tender stem hath sprung!  
Of Jesse's lineage coming  
As men of old have sung.  
It came, a flower bright,  
Amid the cold of winter  
When half-gone was the night.

Isaiah 'twas foretold it,  
The Rose I have in mind:  
With Mary we behold it,  
The virgin mother kind.  
To show God's love aright  
She bore to men a Savior  
When half-gone was the night.

## *The Fifth Lesson*

### THE ANGEL GABRIEL GREETES THE VIRGIN MARY

#### SCRIPTURE READING

Luke 1:26-35, 38

In the sixth month the angel Gabriel was sent from God to a city of Galilee named Nazareth, to a virgin betrothed to a man whose name was Joseph, of the house of David. And the virgin's name was Mary. And he came to her and said, "Greetings, O favored one, the Lord is with you!" But she was greatly troubled at the saying and tried to discern what sort of greeting this might be. And the angel said to her, "Do not be afraid, Mary, for you have found favor with God. And behold, you will conceive in your womb and bear a son, and you shall call his name 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 father David, and he will reign over the house of Jacob forever, and of his kingdom there will be no end."

And Mary said to the angel, “How will this be, since I am a virgin?”

And the angel answered 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 called holy—the Son of God.

And Mary said, “Behold, I am the servant of the Lord; let it be to me according to your word.” And the angel departed from her.

*Please stand*

## CAROL

*Hark! the Herald Angels Sing*



1. Hark! the her - ald an - gels sing, “Glo - ry to the new-born King;
2. Christ, by high - est heav'n a - dored, Christ, the ev - er - last - ing Lord!
3. Hail the heav'n-born Prince of Peace! Hail the Sun of Righ-teous-ness!



peace on earth, and mer - cy mild, God and sin - ners rec - on - ciled!”  
Late in time be - hold him come, off - spring of the Vir - gin's womb.  
Light and life to all he brings, ris'n with heal - ing in his wings.



Joy - ful, all ye na - tions, rise, join the tri - umph of the skies;  
Veiled in flesh the God-head see; hail th'in - car - nate De - i - ty,  
Mild he lays his glo - ry by, born that man no more may die,



with th'an - gel - ic host pro - claim, “Christ is born in Beth - le - hem!”  
pleased as man with men to dwell, Je - sus, our Em - man - u - el.  
born to raise the sons of earth, born to give them sec - ond birth.



*Hark! the her - ald an - gels sing, “Glo - ry to the new-born King.”*

Words: Charles Wesley, 1739; alt. George Whitefield, 1753, and others  
Music: Felix Mendelssohn, 1840; arr. David Willcocks

# *The Sixth Lesson*

## ST. LUKE TELLS OF THE BIRTH OF JESUS

### **SCRIPTURE READING**

Luke 2:1, 3-7

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

And all went to be registered, each to his own town. And Joseph also went up from Galilee, from the town of Nazareth, to Judea, to the city of David, which is called Bethlehem, because he was of the house and lineage of David, to be registered with Mary, his betrothed, who was with child. And while they were there, the time came for her to give birth. And she gave birth to her firstborn son and wrapped him in swaddling cloths and laid him in a manger, because there was no place for them in the inn.

*Please stand*

CAROL

*On Christmas Night All Christians Sing*



1. On Christ - mas night all Chris - tians sing, to hear the  
 2. Then why should men on earth be sad, since our Re -  
 3. When sin de - parts be - fore his grace, then life and  
 4. All out of dark - ness we have light, which made the



news the an - gels bring; on Christ - mas night all  
 deem - er made us glad? Then why should men on  
 health come in its place; when sin de - parts be -  
 an - gels sing this night; all out of dark - ness



Chris - tians sing, to hear the news the an - gels bring:  
 earth be sad, since our Re - deem - er made us glad?  
 fore his grace, then life and health come in its place;  
 we have light, which made the an - gels sing this night:



news of great joy, news of great mirth,  
 When from our sin he set us free,  
 an - gels and men with joy may sing,  
 "Glo - ry to God and peace to men,



news of our mer - ci - ful King's birth.  
 all for to gain our lib - er - ty.  
 all for to see the new - born King,  
 now and for - e - ver - more. A - men."

Words: Trad. English Carol

Music: English carol; arr. Ralph Vaughan Williams, 1912



# *The Seventh Lesson*

## THE SHEPHERDS GO TO THE MANGER

### SCRIPTURE READING

Luke 2:8-16

And in the same region there were shepherds out in the field, keeping watch over their flock by night. And an angel of the Lord appeared to them, and the glory of the Lord shone around them, and they were filled with great fear. And the angel said to them, “Fear not, for behold, I bring you good news of great joy that will be for all the people. For unto you is born this day in the city of David a Savior, who is Christ the Lord. And this will be a sign for you: you will find a baby wrapped in swaddling cloths 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,  
and on earth peace among those with whom he is pleased!”

When the angels went away from them into heaven, the shepherds said to one another, “Let us go over to Bethlehem and see this thing that has happened, which the Lord has made known to us.” And they went with haste and found Mary and Joseph, and the baby lying in a manger.

### ANTHEM

*Glory to God from “Messiah”*

G.F. Handel

Glory to God in the highest, and peace on earth, good will towards men. Luke 2:14

# *The Eighth Lesson*

## THE WISE MEN ARE LED BY THE STAR TO JESUS

### SCRIPTURE READING

Matthew 2:1-11

Now after Jesus was born in Bethlehem of Judea in the days of Herod the king, behold, wise men from the east came to Jerusalem, saying, “Where is he who has been born king of the Jews? For we saw his star when it rose and have come to worship him.” When Herod the king heard this, he was troubled, and all Jerusalem with him; and assembling all the chief priests and scribes of the people, he inquired of them where the Christ was to be born. They told him, “In Bethlehem of Judea, for so it is written by the prophet:

“And you, O Bethlehem, in the land of Judah,  
are by no means least among the rulers of Judah;  
for from you shall come a ruler  
who will shepherd my people Israel.”

Then Herod summoned the wise men secretly and ascertained from them what time the star had appeared. And he sent them to Bethlehem, saying, “Go and search diligently for the child, and when you have found him, bring me word, that I too may come and worship him.” After listening to the king, they went on their way. And behold, the star that they had seen when it rose went before them until it came to rest over the place where the child was. When they saw the star, they rejoiced exceedingly with great joy. And going into the house, they saw the child with Mary, his mother, and they fell down and worshiped him. Then, opening their treasures, they offered him gifts, gold and frankincense and myrrh.

## ANTHEM

*Christ is the Morning Star*

John Rutter

Christ is the morning star,  
The light of God that shines from afar;  
The Son of God in human form revealed,  
The wound of Adam's sin for ever healed.

For God, who formed mankind of clay  
Will bring forth our salvation that day  
When he, who made all things since time began,  
Will send his Son, to live on earth as man.

And when he comes, a child on earth,  
The sun and stars will shine at his birth,  
To light a world that long in darkness lay:  
The light of God, the gift of Christmas Day.

Christ is the morning star.

And when he comes again as King,  
Then heav'n and all creation shall sing;  
With saints in glory seated round his throne  
We'll see his face, and know as we are known.

Christ is the morning star.

# *The Ninth Lesson*

ST. JOHN UNFOLDS THE GREAT MYSTERY OF THE INCARNATION

## **SCRIPTURE READING**

John 1:1-14

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 were made through him, and without him was not any thing made that was made. In him was life, and the life was the light of men. The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness has not overcome it.

There was a man sent from God, whose name was John. He came as a witness, to bear witness about the light, that all might believe through him. He was not the light but came to bear witness about the light.

The true light, which gives light to everyone, was coming into the world. He was in the world, and the world was made through him, yet the world did not know him. He came to his own, and his own people did not receive him. But to all who did receive him, who believed in his name, he gave the right to become children of God, who were born, not of blood nor of the will of the flesh nor of the will of man, but of God.

And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, and we have seen his glory, glory as of the only Son from the Father, full of grace and truth.

*Please light your candle and stand*

## CANDLELIGHT CAROL

*Silent Night! Holy Night!*



1. Si - lent night! Ho - ly night! All is calm, all is bright  
2. Si - lent night! Ho - ly night! Shep-herds quake at the sight!  
3. Si - lent night! Ho - ly night! Son of God, love's pure light



round you vir - gin mot-her and child. Ho - ly in - fant, so ten - der and  
Glo - ries stream from heav-en a - far, heav'n - ly hosts sing, "Al - le - lu -  
ra - dian beams from thy ho - ly face, with the dawn of re - deem - ing



mild, sleep in heav - en - ly peace, sleep in heav - en - ly peace.  
ial!" Christ, the Sav - ior, is born! Christ, the Sav - ior, is born!  
grace, Je - sus, Lord, at thy birth. Je - sus Lord, at thy birth.

Words: Joseph Mohr, 1818; tr. John Freeman Young  
Music: Franz Gruber, 1818; arr. Samuel Metzger, 2022

## PRAYER

**People: O God, you have caused this holy night to shine with the brightness of the true Light: Grant that we, who have known the mystery of that Light on earth, may also enjoy him perfectly in heaven; where with you and the Holy Spirit he lives and reigns, one God, in glory everlasting. Amen.**

## BLESSING

Minister: 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.

# CAROL OF JOY

*O Come, All Ye Faithful*



1. O come, all ye faith - ful, joy - ful and tri - um - phant,
2. God of God, Light of Light;
3. Sing, choirs of an - gels, sing in ex - ul - ta - tion,
4. Yea, Lord, we greet thee, born this hap - py morn - ing:



O come ye, O come ye to Beth - le - hem;  
 lo, he ab - hors not the Vir - gin's womb;  
 sing, all ye ci - ti - zens of heav'n a - bove;  
 Je - sus, to thee be all glo - ry giv'n;



come and be - hold him born the King of an - gels;  
 ver - y God, be - got - ten, not cre - a - ted;  
 glo - ry to God in the high - est;  
 Word of the Fa - ther, late in flesh ap - pear - ing;

## *Refrain*



*O come, let us a - dore him, O come, let us a - dore him,*



*O come, let us a - dore him, Christ the Lord!*

Words: Latin hymn; attr. John Francis Wade, ca. 1743; tr. Frederick Oakley, 1841  
 Music: John Francis Wade, ca. 1743; arr. David Willcocks

## POSTLUDE

*Festive Flourish on “Joy to the World”*

Michael Dell



CCLI #906141. Unless otherwise noted, all Scripture is from the English Standard Version.

The Christ Candle, the white one in the center of the wreath, proclaims the birth of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Light of the World, who gives the Light of Salvation to those who walked in sin’s darkness. It is lighted on Christmas Eve and Christmas Day. Please light your candle and stand.

## MUSICIANS ASSISTING IN WORSHIP

Preston Bailey, trumpet; Evan Clifton, bass trombone; Buddy Creech, timpani; Sarah Crocker, harp; Angela DeBoer, French horn; Liam McCarron, soloist; Samuel Metzger, organ; Catharine Proctor, children’s choir director; Adrienne Richardson, trumpet; Marshall Richardson, percussion; Josh Scalf, trombone; Sloan Yarborough, choir director.

## SUNDAY MORNING WORSHIP

Next Sunday, December 31, we will have one worship service at 10:00 a.m. On Sunday, January 7, we will return to our normal schedule of worship at 8:30 and 11:00 a.m.

*For 50 years, the PCA Ministerial Relief Fund has filled the financial gap facing many retired ministry workers, their spouses, and especially their widows. Many live at or near the poverty line, causing stress in what should be a season of rest. It’s our turn to serve them. Tonight’s offering helps to provide monthly supplemental, temporary, or one-time assistance to our retired and disabled pastors, missionaries, pastors without call, church lay workers, and their widows and dependent children who have low incomes. Please place your gift in the offering plates as you exit the sanctuary.*

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