



Service of Lessons & Carols

December 24, 2023

* *Please stand if you are able*

Prelude: "Noel: Good Joseph, Hear Me" Dandrieu

Gathering

LIGHTING THE ADVENT CANDLES
Instrumental: "Come Light, Light of God"

CALL TO WORSHIP
Please remain seated...

Liturgist: My soul magnifies the Lord, and my spirit rejoices in God my Savior. For the Mighty One has done great things for me.

All: Holy is his name.

Liturgist: His mercy extends to those who fear him, from generation to generation. He has done mighty deeds with his arm; he has scattered those who are proud in their inmost thoughts. He has brought down rulers from their thrones but has lifted up the humble.

All: He has filled the hungry with good things but has sent the rich away empty.

Liturgist: He has helped his servant Israel, remembering to be merciful to Abraham and his descendants forever, just as he promised our ancestors.

Luke 1:49-55 adapted

Choir: "Christmastime" Smith/Larsen

Ring Christmas bells, ring them loud with the message bringing
Peace on the earth, tidings of good cheer!
Come, carolers, come and join with the angels singing
Joy to the world—Christmastime is here!

Children gather around and listen.
You'll hear the sound of angels filling the sky
Telling everyone Christmastime is here!

Loved ones close to our hearts and strangers in lands afar
Together sharing the joy, Emmanuel! Go tell the world!
He has come to dwell! The time is near!
With one voice, let the world rejoice!

Angels we have heard on high, sweetly singing o'er the plains,
And the mountains in reply echo back their joyous strains.
Gloria in excelsis Deo!

* GOD'S GREETING

* GOD'S PEOPLE GREETING ONE ANOTHER

* **All Singing: 88 "O Little Town of Bethlehem"**

*Children ages 2–7 may come forward for a brief word and blessing
before they leave for "God Loves Me" and "Children in Worship."*

CHILDREN'S BLESSING

Children: The peace of Christ be with you.

All: And also with you.

Lessons & Carols

All Singing: 87 "Once in Royal David's City"

Soloist singing verse 1, choir singing verses 2 and 3

* **All standing and singing verses 4 and 5**

OPENING PRAYER

Minister: Beloved in Christ, this Christmas Eve be it our care and delight to prepare ourselves to hear again the message of the angels; in heart and mind to go to Bethlehem and see this thing which is come to pass, and the Babe lying in a manger. 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 place 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 because this would rejoice his heart, 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 those who mourn; the lonely and the unloved; the aged and the little children; all who do not know the Lord Jesus, or who by sin have grieved his heart of love.

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, in this Lord Jesus, 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 taught us:

People: Our Father, which 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. And lead us not into

**temptation; but deliver us from evil. For thine is the kingdom, the power,
and the glory forever. Amen.**

FIRST LESSON: Genesis 3:8-15, 17-19
THE SEPARATION FROM PARADISE

Silent Confession and Lament

All Singing: 56 “Come, Thou Long-Expected Jesus”

SECOND LESSON: Genesis 22:15-18
GOD’S PROMISE TO FAITHFUL ABRAHAM

Choir: Praise Ye the Lord” (from Christmas Oratorio) by Camille Saint-Saëns
arr. Edward Forsythe

Praise ye the Lord of Hosts, come and adore Him,
Bless His name and worship Him in His holy shrine.
Sing O ye heavens, on earth be ye joyful,
Sing ye in praise of the Lord for He cometh, Alleluia.

THIRD LESSON: Isaiah 40:1-5
THE GLORY OF THE LORD REVEALED

Choir: “And the Glory” (from *Messiah*) by G. F. Handel

And the glory, the glory of the Lord, shall be revealed.
And all flesh shall see it together; for the mouth of the Lord has spoken it.

FOURTH LESSON: Isaiah 60:1-6, 19
THE LORD WILL BE EVERLASTING LIGHT

* **All Singing: 103 “Arise, Shine for Your Light is Come”**
Singing verses 1, 2, and 5

FIFTH LESSON: Luke 1:26-35, 38
THE ANGEL GABRIEL & MARY

* **All Singing: 68 “Told of God’s Favor”**
Soloist and choir singing verses 1 – 3. All joining to sing verses 4 and 5

SIXTH LESSON: Luke 2:1-7
THE BIRTH OF JESUS

Choir: “Gaudete” (from *Piae Cantiones*, 1582) arr. Robert Batastini

Gaudete, gaudete, Christus est natus ex Maria Virgine, gaudete.
(Rejoice! Christ is born of the Virgin Mary. Rejoice!)

Gentle Mary laid her child, lowly in a manger;
There he lay, the undefiled, to the world a stranger.

Such a babe in such a place, can he be the Savior?
Ask the saved of all the race who have found his favor.

Gentle Mary laid her child lowly in a manger;
He is still the undefiled, but no more a stranger.

Son of God of humble birth, beautiful the story!
Praise his name in all the earth, hail the King of glory!

SEVENTH LESSON: Luke 2:8-20
THE SHEPHERDS GO TO THE MANGER

* **All Singing: 80** “Hark the Herald Angels Sing”

EIGHTH LESSON: Matthew 2:1-11
THE MAGI FOLLOW THE STAR

OFFERING

1. General Fund
2. Restoration Ministries

Choir: “Were You There on That Christmas Night?” Sleeth/Larsen

Were you there, were you there on that Christmas night,
when the world was filled with a holy light?
Were you there to behold when the wonder foretold came to earth?

Did you see, did you see how they hailed him King,
with the gifts so rare that they chose to bring?
Did you see how they bowed, as they praised him aloud at his birth?

Did you hear how the choir of angels sang at the glory of the sight?
Did you hear how the bells of heaven rang all through the night?

Did you know it was God's own Son, the salvation of the world begun?
Did you know it was love that was sent from above to the earth?

* NINTH LESSON: John 1:1-14
THE MYSTERY OF THE INCARNATION

* **All Singing: 76** “O Come All Ye Faithful”

Sending

* Minister: Now to him who is able to establish you in accordance with the gospel of Jesus Christ, in keeping with the revelation of the mystery hidden for long ages past, but not revealed and made known through the prophetic writings by the command of the eternal God, so that all might come to faith and obedience –

All: to the only wise God be glory forever through Jesus Christ.

Romans 16:25-27 adapted

Choir: “A Christmas Blessing” by Philip Stopford

May the joy of the angels, the gladness of the shepherds, the worship of the wise men, and the peace of the Christ child be yours this Christmas; May Christ, who by his incarnation gathered into one all things earthly, all things heavenly, fill you with joy and peace. And the blessing of God the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit, be with you and remain with you always. Amen.

Postlude: “Tidings of Comfort and Joy” Peterson / Pacheco

Worship Leaders

Organist:	Dora Diephouse	Liturgist:	Schuyler Roozeboom
Pianist:	Erin Pacheco	First Lesson:	David Gabrielse
Soloists:	Marissa Carpenter Helen Van Wyck	Second Lesson:	Tyler Hughes
Choir Director:	David Baar	Third Lesson:	Lisa Thomson
Guest Director:	Lori Evenhouse	Fourth Lesson:	Sandi Nelson
Violinist:	Frances Boerman-Cornell	Fifth Lesson:	Greda Gabrielse
Children's Ensemble:	Elizabeth van den Brink Evelyn Evenhouse	Sixth Lesson:	Emily Hillegonds
Percussionists:	Clay Carlson Elias LaChonce Henry Evenhouse	Seventh Lesson:	Dexter Thomson
Minister:	Roger Nelson	Eighth Lesson:	Megan DeJong
		Ninth Lesson:	Roger Nelson

Hymns are from *Lift Up Your Hearts* (Faith Alive Christian Resources, 2013)
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