

# St. John's Anglican Church

46 Ridout Street West, Tillsonburg ON N4G 5L8

*Rector:*

*The Rev'd. Fr. Tom Stradwick*

*Deacon:*

*The Rev'd. Vermell Stevens*

*Honorary Assistant:*

*The Rev'd. Fr. David Joyce*

*Choir Director/Organist:*

*Joanne Smith*

## *THE THIRD SUNDAY OF ADVENT*



### **THE FESTIVAL OF LESSONS AND CAROLS**

**Order of Service  
December 14, 2025**

# *JOY*



*Book of Alternative Services  
of the Anglican Church of Canada—1992*

# The Festival of Lessons and Carols



*This service is based on the Sarum Rite mediæval monastic office of Vigils for Christmas and is sung annually on Christmas Eve at King's College Chapel, Cambridge. The service consists of a procession, a bidding prayer and Lord's Prayer, nine lessons with appropriate carols and hymns, a closing collect, blessing and recessional. Traditionally, the lessons are read in a defined order: a chorister first...ending with the Bishop reading the last lesson from the High Altar.*

## **First Lesson from Genesis 3: 8–15; 17–19 (Read by Paul Wood)**

*God tells sinful Adam that he has lost the life of Paradise and that his seed will bruise the serpent's head.*

## **Second Lesson from Genesis 22: 15–18 (Read by Nancy McDowell)**

*God promises to faithful Abraham that in his seed shall all the nations of the earth be blessed.*

## **Third Lesson from Isaiah 9: 2; 6–7 (Read by Harold Ford)**

*The prophet foretells the coming of the Saviour.*

## **Fourth Lesson from Isaiah 11: 1–3a; 4a; 6–9 (Read by Gloria Aykroyd)**

*The peace that Christ will bring is foreshown.*

## **Fifth Lesson from the Gospel of Luke 1: 26–35; 38 (Read by Nancy Stradwick)**

*The angel Gabriel salutes the Blessed Virgin Mary.*

## **Sixth Lesson from Luke 2: 1; 3–7 (Jeff Monk)**

*St Luke tells of the birth of Jesus.*

## **Seventh Lesson from Luke 2: 8–16 (Read by The Rev'd. Vermell Stevens)**

*The shepherds go to the manger.*

## **Eighth Lesson from the Gospel of Matthew 2: 1–12 (Read by Janet Booker)**

*The wise men are led by the star to Jesus.*

## **Ninth Lesson from the Gospel of John 1: 1–14 (Read by The Rev'd. Fr. Tom Stradwick)**

*St. John unfolds the great mystery of the Incarnation.*

## Processional Hymn

Lo, He Comes with Clouds Descending (114)

*Please be seated.*

## Lighting of the Advent Candle

The Third Candle (Candle of Joy)

**Lighting the Candles: Jim and Vermell Stevens**

*(Light First and Second Candle)*

We light again the first two candles in our Advent wreath, to remind us of God's gifts of Hope and Peace.

The third candle reminds us that true and lasting JOY is only found in Jesus Christ.

*(Light Third Candle)*

On the Third Sunday in Advent, churches throughout the world light a pink candle on the Advent Wreath. The Third Sunday has traditionally been a respite from the penitential themes of Advent emphasizing instead the joy of the coming of the Lord. On this Sunday, also known as **Gaudete Sunday**, we celebrate the Joy of Christ's coming to earth, extolled in Paul's letter to the Philippians: "***Rejoice in the Lord always; again I will say, Rejoice. Let your gentleness be known to everyone. The Lord is near.***" (Phil. 4:4-5)

**Congregation:**

**O God, help us to remember that true JOY comes  
when the lowly are lifted up, when the hungry are filled  
with good things, and relationships are restored.  
May your love flow through us, out into the world,  
giving birth to great JOY. Amen!**

## HYMN

Hope Is a Star (NB 35 verses 1, 2 and 3 only)

## GREETING/ANNOUNCEMENTS

### Birthdays

Colleen Molnar

### Anniversaries

Ruth and Harold Ford and David and Pat Dalton

**CAROL:** Once in Royal David's City (123)

*The congregation will be invited to stand, congregation will be silent when the hymn starts. All join in singing at the third verse.*

## THE BIDDING PRAYER (Said responsively)

**Priest:** Beloved in Christ, at this Advent and Christmas-tide let it be our care and delight to hear again the message of the angels, and in heart and mind to go even unto Bethlehem and see this thing which is come to pass, and the Babe lying in a manger.

Therefore 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 to us by this Holy Child. But first, let us pray for the needs of the whole world;

**All:** for peace on earth and goodwill among all his people; for unity and brotherhood within the Church he came to build, and especially in this our community.

**Priest:** And because this would rejoice his heart, let us remember, in his name, the poor and helpless, the cold, the hungry, and the oppressed;

**All:** the sick and them that mourn, the lovely and the unloved, the aged and the little children; all those who know not the Lord Jesus, or who love him not, or who by sin have grieved his heart of love.

**Priest:** Lastly, let us remember before God all those who rejoice with us, but upon another shore, and in a greater light,

**All:** that multitude which no man can number, whose hope was in the Word made flesh, and with whom in the Lord Jesus we are one for evermore.

**Priest:** These prayers and praises let us humbly offer up to the Throne of Heaven, in the words which Christ himself hath taught us:

**All:** 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 sins, as we forgive those who sin against us. And lead us not into temptation; But deliver us from evil: for thine is the kingdom, the power, and the glory, for ever and ever. Amen.

**Priest:** The Almighty God bless us with his grace: Christ give us the joys of everlasting life: and unto the fellowship of the citizens above may the King of Angels bring us all.

**All:** Amen.

*The congregation sits.*

**FIRST LESSON** - read by Paul Woods

*God tells sinful Adam that he has lost the life of Paradise and that his seed will bruise the serpent's head.*

They heard the sound of the Lord God walking in the garden at the time of the evening breeze, 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?'

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 from 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 from 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 tricked me, and I ate.' The Lord God said to the serpent, 'Because you have done this, cursed are you among all animals and among all wild creatures; up 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 hers; he will strike your head, and you will strike his heel.' And to the man he said, 'Because you have listened to the voice of your wife, and have eaten of the tree about which I commanded you, "You shall not eat of it", cursed is the ground because of you; in toil 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 until you return to the ground, for out of it you were taken; you are dust, and to dust you shall return.' (*Genesis 3: 8–15, 17–19*)

The Word of the Lord

**Thanks be to God**

**CAROL:** When the King Shall Come Again (109)

**SECOND LESSON** - read by Nancy McDowell

*God promises to faithful Abraham that in his seed shall all the nations of the earth be blessed.*

The angel of the Lord called to Abraham a second time from heaven, and said, 'By myself I have sworn,' says the Lord: 'Because you have done this, and have not withheld your son, your only son, I will indeed bless you, and I will make your offspring as numerous as the stars of heaven and as the sand that is on the seashore.'



And your offspring shall possess the gate of their enemies, and by your offspring shall all the nations of the earth gain blessing for themselves, because you have obeyed my voice.  
(Genesis 22: 15–18)

The Word of the Lord

**Thanks be to God**

**CAROL:** People, Look East! The Time Is Near (91)

**THIRD LESSON** - read by Harold Ford

*The prophet foretells the coming of the Saviour.*

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. (Isaiah 9: 2, 6–7)

The Word of the Lord

**Thanks be to God**

**CAROL:** Prepare The Way, O Zion (102)

**FOURTH LESSON** - read by Gloria Aykroyd

*The peace that Christ will bring is foreshown.*

A shoot shall come out from the stock of Jesse, and a branch shall grow out of his roots.

The spirit of the Lord shall rest on him, the spirit of wisdom and understanding, the spirit of counsel and might, the spirit of knowledge and the fear of the Lord. His delight shall be in the fear of the Lord. He shall not judge by what his eyes see, or decide by what his ears hear; but with righteousness he shall judge the poor, and decide with equity for the meek of the earth; 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 live with the lamb, the leopard shall lie down with the kid, the calf and the lion and the fatling 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 asp, and the weaned child shall put its hand on the adder's den. They will not hurt or destroy on all my holy mountain, for the earth will be full of the knowledge of the Lord as the waters cover the sea. (*Isaiah 11:1–4a, 6–9*)

The Word of the Lord

**Thanks be to God**

**CAROL:** While Shepherds Watched Their Flocks (136)

**FIFTH LESSON** - read by Nancy Stradwick

*The angel Gabriel salutes the Blessed Virgin Mary.*

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, favoured 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 favour 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 for ever, 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. (*Luke 1: 26–35, 38*)

The Word of the Lord

**Thanks be to God**

**CAROL:** Silent Night (119)

**SIXTH LESSON** - read by Jeff Monk

*St. Luke tells of the birth of Jesus.*

In those days a decree went out from Emperor Augustus that all the world should be registered. This was the first registration and was taken while Quirinius was governor of Syria. All went to their own towns to be registered. Joseph also went from the town of Nazareth in Galilee to Judea, to the city of David called Bethlehem, because he was descended from the house and family of David. He went to be registered with Mary, to whom he was engaged and who was expecting a child.

While they were there, the time came for her to deliver her child. And she gave birth to her firstborn son and wrapped him in bands of cloth, and laid him in a manger, because there was no place for them in the inn. (*Luke 2: 1–7*)

The Word of the Lord

**Thanks be to God**

**CAROL:** Away In A Manger (126)

## SEVENTH LESSON - read by The Rev'd. Vermell Stevens

*The shepherds go to the manger.*

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 Saviour, 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 favours!' 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. *(Luke 2: 8–16)*

The Word of the Lord

**Thanks be to God**

**CAROL:** Joy to the World (154)

## EIGHTH LESSON - read by Janet Booker

*The wise men are led by the star to Jesus.*

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. And having been warned in a dream not to return to Herod, they left for their own country by another road. (*Matthew 2: 1–12*)

The Word of the Lord

**Thanks be to God**

**CAROL:** All Poor Folk and Humble (151)

**NINTH LESSON** - read by The Rev’d. Fr. Tom Stradwick

*St. John unfolds the great mystery of the Incarnation.*

*Please stand.*

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. (*John 1: 1–14*)

**Priest:** The Word of the Lord

**All:** Thanks be to God.

**CAROL:** The First Nowell (139)

*(Offering to be presented at the end of this carol)*

### **Doxology (sung)**

**Praise God from whom all blessings flow;  
praise him, all creatures here below;  
praise him above, ye heavenly host;  
praise Father, Son, and Holy Ghost.**

### **Prayer Over Gifts**

**Priest:** God of hope,  
renew in us the joy of your salvation  
and make us a living sacrifice to you,  
for the sake of Jesus Christ our Lord.

# THE COLLECTS

The Rev'd. Fr. Tom Stradwick

**Priest:** The Lord be with you.

**All:** And with your spirit.

**Priest:** Let us pray.

## Collect for Advent

**A**lmighty God, give us grace to cast away the works of darkness and put on the armour of light, now in the time of this mortal life in which your Son Jesus Christ came to us in great humility, that on the last day, when he shall come again in his glorious majesty to judge both the living and the dead, we may rise to the life immortal; through him who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and for ever. **Amen.**

## Collect of the Day

**A**lmighty God, who sent your servant John the Baptist to prepare your people to welcome the Messiah, inspire us, the ministers and stewards of your truth, to turn our disobedient hearts to you, that when the Christ shall come again to be our judge, we may stand with confidence before his glory; who is alive and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and for ever. **Amen.**

## BENEDICTION

**Celebrant:** The peace of God, which passeth all understanding,  
keep your hearts and minds in the knowledge and love of God,  
and of his Son Jesus Christ our Lord:

And the blessing of God almighty,  
the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit  
be amongst you and remain with you always. **Amen.**

**CAROL:** Hark! The Herald Angels Sing (138)



**Dismissal**