

CHRISTMAS EVE SERVICE OF NINE LESSONS & CAROLS BY CANDLELIGHT

Welcome to St. John the Divine Anglican Church on this blessed and holy night. The Service of Lessons and Carols is observed this evening to focus upon the fulfillment of God's promise to send us a Saviour in the birth of Jesus Christ, our Lord. We pray that the Holy Spirit will enable us to truly listen to the Lord tonight as He speaks to us through His Holy Word and points us to the Baby Jesus lying in the manger. May we be led to faithfully confess with confidence that this Baby is the Eternal Word of God in human flesh, who came down from Heaven and was Incarnate by the Holy Spirit of the Virgin Mary in order to save us from our sins. He is our Emmanuel, which means "God with us." He is the King of kings and Lord of lords who was born to die for us! That is what Christmas is truly about - the salvation accomplished and won by Jesus Christ. May this Service of Lessons and Carols be a celebration for us of the forgiveness. life, and salvation we have through faith in Christ! If you are visiting with us this evening, we want you to know that we are overjoyed that you are here. Please make your visit known to us by introducing yourself to us after the Service and by signing the guest book that is in the narthex or foyer on the left as you leave the church. Thank you and have a MERRY CHRISTMAS!

Once in Royal David's City

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.



He came down to earth from heaven who is God and Lord of all, and his shelter was a stable, and his cradle was a stall; with the poor and meek and lowly, lived on earth our Savior holy.

Jesus is our childhood's pattern; day by day like us he grew; he was little, weak and helpless; tears and smiles like us he knew; and he feels for all our sadness, and he shares in all our gladness.

And our eyes at last shall see him, through his own redeeming love; for that child so dear and gentle is our Lord in heaven above; and he leads his children on to the place where he is gone.

Bidding Prayer

Priest: My sisters and brothers in Christ, in this season when we celebrate the birth of Jesus, let it be our duty and delight to hear once more the message of the angels and go in heart and mind to Bethlehem to see the Son of God lying in a manger. As we hear the reading of God's holy word, let us rejoice that the glory of the Lord has been revealed.

Let us find new hope in the promise that God is with us.

Let us join with Mary, the favoured handmaid, and offer ourselves in service to God's holy and saving purpose for the world.

Let us bless the name of the God of our salvation who brings the dawn of forgiveness and salvation to those who live in the shadow of death and despair.

Let us raise our voices with the messenger who announces good news of great joy to all people.

And let us give thanks to the one whose power has made us the children of God.

As we mark once more the mystery of the Word made flesh, let us join with the song of angels and saints and make this place ring with our carols and hymns of praise.

But first, let us remember the poverty of the birth of the Prince of Peace, and pray for the poor, the cold, the hungry, and those among us who find that there is no room for them at the inn.

Let us remember the flight of the Holy Family into Egypt, and pray for the oppressed, refugees, the isolated, and those on the edges of our society.

Let us remember that the Lord of Glory experienced the pain of life and death, and pray for the sick, the anxious, the weary, and the bereaved.

And remembering the promise that he shall reign for ever and ever.

Let us pray for the rulers of the nations,

For peace and justice on earth,

For the unity and mission of the Church,

That we may be a sign that God's rule on earth has already begun.

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

The Lord's Prayer

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, for ever and ever. Amen.

Priest: With joy in our hearts, let us hear again the story of the birth of Christ, and join with Mary and Joseph, with shepherds and wise men, and with all our forbears in faith in offering our worship.

Please be seated.

First Lesson

A reading from the Gospel of John 1:1-14

In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God. and the Word was God. He was with God in the beginning. Through him all things were made; without him nothing was made that has been made. In him was life, and that life was the light of men. The light shines in the darkness, but the darkness has not understood it. There came a man who was sent from God: his name was John. He came as a witness to testify concerning that light, so that through him all men might believe. He himself was not the light; he came only as a witness to the light. The true light that gives light to every man was coming into the world. He was in the world, and though the world was made through him, the world did not recognize him. He came to that which was his own, but his own did not receive him. Yet to all who received him, to those who believed in his name, he gave the right to become children of God -- children born not of natural descent, nor of human decision or a husband's will, but born of God. The Word became flesh and made his dwelling among us. We have seen his glory, the glory of the One and Only, who came from the Father, full of grace and truth.

Reader: The Word of the Lord

All: Thanks be to God

Carol: Joy to the World

Joy to the world, the Lord is come! Let earth receive her king; let every heart prepare him room, and heaven and nature sing, and heaven and nature sing, and heaven, and heaven and nature sing.



Joy to the earth, the Savior reigns! Let all their songs employ, while fields and floods, rocks, hills, and plains repeat the sounding joy, repeat the sounding joy, repeat, repeat the sounding joy. No more let sins and sorrows grow, nor thorns infest the ground; he comes to make his blessings flow far as the curse is found, far as the curse is found, far as, far as the curse is found.

He rules the world with truth and grace, and makes the nations prove the glories of his righteousness and wonders of his love, and wonders of his love, and wonders, wonders of his love.

Second Lesson

A reading from the Book of Micah 5:2-4

"But you, Bethlehem Ephratha, though you are small among the clans of Judah, out of you will come for me one who will be ruler over Israel, whose origins are from of old, from ancient times." Therefore Israel will be abandoned until the time when she who is in labour gives birth and the rest of his brothers return to join the Israelites. He will stand and shepherd his flock in the strength of the LORD, in the majesty of the name of the LORD his God. And they will live securely, for then his greatness will reach to the ends of the earth.

Reader: The Word of the Lord

Carol: O Come O Come Emmanuel

O come, O come, Emmanuel, and ransom captive Israel that mourns in lonely exile here until the Son of God appear.



Refrain:

Rejoice! Rejoice! Emmanuel shall come to you, O Israel.

O come, O Wisdom from on high, who ordered all things mightily; to us the path of knowledge show and teach us in its ways to go. *Refrain*

O come, O come, great Lord of might, who to your tribes on Sinai's height in ancient times did give the law in cloud and majesty and awe. *Refrain*

O come, O Branch of Jesse's stem, unto your own and rescue them! From depths of hell your people save, and give them victory o'er the grave. *Refrain*

O come, O Key of David, come and open wide our heavenly home. Make safe for us the heavenward road and bar the way to death's abode. *Refrain*

O come, O Bright and Morning Star, and bring us comfort from afar!
Dispel the shadows of the night and turn our darkness into light. *Refrain*

O come, O King of nations, bind in one the hearts of all mankind. Bid all our sad divisions cease and be yourself our King of Peace. *Refrain*

Third Lesson

A reading from the Gospel of Luke 1: 26-38

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. And now, your relative Elizabeth in her old age has also conceived a son; and this is the sixth month for her who was said to be barren. For nothing will be impossible with 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.

Reader: The Word of the Lord

Carol: Silent Night, Holy Night

Silent night, holy night!
All is calm, all is bright
'round yon virgin mother and child
Holy Infant, so tender and mild,
sleep in heavenly peace, sleep in heavenly
peace.



Silent night, holy night!
Only for shepherds' sight
Came blest visions of angel throngs,
With their loud alleluia songs,
Saying, Christ is come, saying, Christ is come.

Silent night, holy night!
Child of heaven, O how bright
Thou didst smile on us when thou wast born,
Blest indeed was that happy morn,
Full of heavenly joy, full of heavenly joy.

Fourth Lesson

A reading from the Gospel of Luke 2:1-7

In those days Caesar Augustus issued a decree that a census should be taken of the entire Roman world. (This was the first census that took place while Quirinius was governor of Syria.) And everyone went to his own town to register. So Joseph also went up from the town of Nazareth in Galilee to Judea, to Bethlehem the town of David, because he belonged to the house and line of David. He went there to register with Mary, who was pledged to be married to him and was expecting a child. While they were there, the time came for the baby to be born, and she gave birth to her firstborn, a son. She wrapped him in cloths and placed him in a manger, because there was no room for them in the inn.

Reader: The Word of the Lord

Carol: O Little Town of Bethlehem

O little town of Bethlehem, how still we see thee lie! Above thy deep and dreamless sleep the silent stars go by. Yet in thy dark streets shineth the everlasting light; the hopes and fears of all the years are met in thee tonight.



For Christ is born of Mary and, gathered all above, while mortals sleep, the angels keep their watch of wondering love.
O morning stars, together proclaim the holy birth, and praises sing to God the king, and peace to all on earth.

How silently, how silently, the wondrous gift is given!
So God imparts to human hearts the blessings of his heaven.
No ear may hear his coming, but in this world of sin, where meek souls will receive him, still the dear Christ enters in

O holy child of Bethlehem, descend to us, we pray; cast out our sin and enter in; be born in us today.
We hear the Christmas angels the great glad tidings tell;
O come to us; abide with us, our Lord Emmanuel!

Fifth Lesson

A reading from the Gospel of Luke 2:8-20

And there were shepherds living out in the fields near by, keeping watch over their flocks at night. An angel of the Lord appeared to them, and the glory of the Lord shone around them, and they were terrified. But the angel said to them, "Do not be afraid. I bring you good news of great joy that will be for all the people. Today in the town of David a Saviour has been born to you; he is Christ the Lord. This will be a sign to you: You will find a baby wrapped in cloths and lying in a manger." Suddenly a great company of the heavenly host appeared with the angel, praising God and saying, "Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace to men on whom his favour rests." When the angels had left them and gone into heaven, the shepherds said to one another, "Let's go to Bethlehem and see this thing that has happened, which the Lord has told us about." So they hurried off and found Mary and Joseph, and the baby, who was lying in the manger. When they had seen him, they spread the word concerning what had been told them about this child, and all who heard it were amazed at what the shepherds said to them. But Mary treasured up all these things and pondered them in her heart. The shepherds returned, glorifying and praising God for all the things they had heard and seen, which were just as they had been told

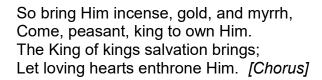
Reader: The Word of the Lord

Carol: What Child is this?

What Child is this, who, laid to rest, On Mary's lap is sleeping? Whom angels greet with anthems sweet, While shepherds watch are keeping?

Chorus:

This, this is Christ, the King,
Whom shepherds guard and angels sing:
Haste, haste to bring Him laud,
The Babe, the Son of Mary!
Why lies He in such mean estate,
Where ox and ass are feeding?
Good Christian, fear: for sinners here
The silent Word is pleading. [Chorus]





Sixth Lesson

A reading from the Gospel of Luke 2:21-35

And at the end of eight days, when he was circumcised, he was called Jesus, the name given by the angel before he was conceived in the womb. When the time came for their purification according to the law of Moses, they brought him up to Jerusalem to present him to the Lord (as it is written in the law of the Lord, "Every firstborn male shall be designated as holy to the Lord"), and they offered a sacrifice according to what is stated in the law of the Lord, "a pair of turtledoves or two young pigeons." Now there was a man in Jerusalem whose name was Simeon; this man was righteous and devout, looking forward to the consolation of Israel, and the Holy Spirit rested on him. It had been revealed to him by the Holy Spirit that he would not see death before he had seen the Lord's Messiah. Guided by the Spirit, Simeon came into the temple; and when the parents brought in the child Jesus, to do for him what was customary

under the law, Simeon took him in his arms and praised God, saying, "Master, now you are dismissing your servant in peace, according to your word; for my eyes have seen your salvation, which you have prepared in the presence of all peoples, a light for revelation to the Gentiles and for glory to your people Israel." And the child's father and mother were amazed at what was being said about him. Then Simeon blessed them and said to his mother Mary, "This child is destined for the falling and the rising of many in Israel, and to be a sign that will be opposed so that the inner thoughts of many will be revealed—and a sword will pierce your own soul too."

Reader: The Word of the Lord

All: Thanks be to God

Carol: Away in the Manger

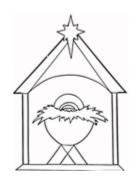
Away in a manger, No crib for His bed The little Lord Jesus Laid down His sweet head

The stars in the bright sky Looked down where He lay The little Lord Jesus Asleep on the hay

The cattle are lowing The poor Baby wakes But little Lord Jesus No crying He makes

I love Thee, Lord Jesus Look down from the sky And stay by my side, 'Til morning is nigh.

Be near me, Lord Jesus, I ask Thee to stay Close by me forever And love me I pray



Bless all the dear children In Thy tender care And take us to heaven To live with Thee there

Seventh Lesson

A reading from the Gospel of Matthew 2:1-12

After Jesus was born in Bethlehem in Judea, during the time of King Herod, Magi from the east came to Jerusalem and asked. "Where is the one who has been born king of the Jews? We saw his star in the east and have come to worship him." When King Herod heard this he was disturbed, and all Jerusalem with him. When he had called together all the people's chief priests and teachers of the law, he asked them where the Christ was to be born. "In Bethlehem in Judea," they replied, "for this is what the prophet has written: "'But you, Bethlehem, in the land of Judah, are by no means least among the rulers of Judah; for out of you will come a ruler who will be the shepherd of my people Israel." Then Herod called the Magi secretly and found out from them the exact time the star had appeared. He sent them to Bethlehem and said, "Go and make a careful search for the child. As soon as you find him, report to me, so that I too may go and worship him." After they had heard the king, they went on their way, and the star they had seen in the east went ahead of them until it stopped over the place where the child was. When they saw the star, they were overjoyed. On coming to the house, they saw the child with his mother Mary, and they bowed down and worshipped him. Then they opened their treasures and presented him with gifts of gold and of incense and of myrrh. And having been warned in a dream not to go back to Herod, they returned to their country by another route.

Reader: The Word of the Lord

Carol: Angels We Have Heard on High

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



Shepherds, why this jubilee?
Why your joyous strains prolong?
What the gladsome tidings be
which inspire your heavenly song?
Gloria in excelsis Deo!
Gloria in excelsis Deo!

Come to Bethlehem and see him whose birth the angels sing; come, adore on bended knee Christ, the Lord, the newborn King. Gloria in excelsis Deo! Gloria in excelsis Deo!

** Greeters will collect offerings during the 8th Christmas Carol. **

Eighth Lesson

A reading from the Gospel of Mathew 2: 13-18

Now after they had left, an angel of the Lord appeared to Joseph in a dream and said, "Get up, take the child and his mother, and flee to Egypt, and remain there until I tell you; for Herod is about to search for the child, to destroy him." Then Joseph got up, took the child and his mother by night, and went to Egypt, and remained there until the death of Herod. This was to fulfill what had been spoken by the Lord through the prophet, "Out of Egypt I have called my son."

When Herod saw that he had been tricked by the wise men, he was infuriated, and he sent and killed all the children in and

around Bethlehem who were two years old or under, according to the time that he had learned from the wise men. Then was fulfilled what had been spoken through the prophet Jeremiah: "A voice was heard in Ramah, wailing and loud lamentation, Rachel weeping for her children; she refused to be consoled, because they are no more."

Reader: The Word of the Lord

All: Thanks be to God

Carol: O Holy Night

Oh, holy night, the stars are brightly shining; It is the night of the dear Saviour's birth!

Long lay the world in sin and error pining,
Till He appeared and the soul felt its worth.

A thrill of hope, the weary soul rejoices,
For yonder breaks a new and glorious morn.

Fall on your knees, oh, hear the angel voices!
Oh, night divine, oh, night when Christ was born!
Oh, night divine, oh, night, oh, night divine!

Led by the light of faith serenely beaming,
With glowing hearts by His cradle we stand.
So led by light of a star sweetly gleaming,
Here came the wise men from Orient land.
The King of kings lay thus in lowly manger,
In all our trials born to be our Friend!
He knows our need—to our weakness is no stranger.
Behold your King; before Him lowly bend!
Behold your King; before Him lowly bend!

Truly He taught us to love one another;
His law is love and His Gospel is peace.
Chains shall He break for the slave is our brother,
And in His Name all oppression shall cease.
Sweet hymns of joy in grateful chorus raise we,
Let all within us praise His holy Name!
Christ is the Lord! Oh, praise His name forever!
His pow'r and glory evermore proclaim!
His pow'r and glory evermore proclaim!

Ninth Lesson

A reading from the Book of Isaiah 9: 2, 6-7

The people walking in darkness have seen a great light; on those living in the land of the shadow of death a light has dawned. For to us a child is born, to us a son is given, and the government will be on his shoulders. And he will be called Wonderful Counsellor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace. Of the increase of his government and peace there will be no end. He will reign on David's throne and over his kingdom, establishing and upholding it with justice and righteousness from that time on and for ever. The zeal of the LORD Almighty will accomplish this.

Reader: The Word of the Lord

All: Thanks be to God

Carol: O Come All Ye Faithful

O come, all ye faithful, joyful and triumphant;

O come ye; O come ye to Bethlehem!

Come, and behold him, born the King of angels!

Refrain:

O come, let us adore him; O come, let us adore him; O come, let us adore him, Christ, the Lord!

True God from true God,
Light from light eternal,
born of a virgin, a mortal he comes;
very God, begotten, not created! [Refrain]
Sing, choirs of angels;
sing in exultation;
sing, all ye citizens of heaven above!
Glory to God, all glory in the highest! [Refrain]
See hoe the Shepherds,
Summoned to his cradle,
Leaving their flocks, draw nigh with lowly fear;
We too will thither
Bend our joyful footsteps: [Refrain]

Yea, Lord, we greet thee, born this happy morning; Jesus, to thee be all glory given; Word of the Father, now in flesh appearing! [Refrain]

Christmas Blessing

Priest: The Lord be with you.

All: And also with you.

Priest: Let us pray.

O God, who makes us glad with the yearly remembrance of the birth of your only son, Jesus Christ: Grant that as we joyfully receive him for our redeemer, so we may with sure confidence behold him, when he shall come to be our judge; who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, world without end.

All: Amen.

Priest: Shepherds journey, the wise bring gifts, angels adore and the Holy Mother ponders. So must we this holy season, journey, bear gifts and adore, all the while pondering the meaning and mystery of this holy birth. And the blessing of God, the Creator and Father of all, the Son of God and Christ Child and the ever Holy, Present and Sanctifying Spirit, be upon you and remain with you for ever.

Amen

Carol: Hark the Herald Angels Sing

Hark! The herald angels sing, "Glory to the newborn king. Peace on earth and mercy mild, God and sinners reconciled!" Joyful all ye nations, rise; join the triumph of the skies; with the angelic host proclaim, "Christ is born in Bethlehem!"



Refrain:

Hark! The herald angels sing, "Glory to the newborn king!"

Christ, by highest heaven adored, Christ the everlasting Lord, late in time behold him come, offspring of the virgin's womb. Veiled in flesh the Godhead see; hail the incarnate deity, pleased in flesh with us to dwell, Jesus, our Emmanuel. [Refrain]

Hail the heaven-born Prince of Peace!
Hail the sun of righteousness!
Light and life to all he brings,
risen with healing in his wings.
Mild he lays his glory by,
born that we no more may die,
born to raise us from the earth,
born to give us second birth. [Refrain]