

ORDER OF SERVICE

CHRISTMAS LESSONS & CAROLS



4:00PM

DECEMBER 28, 2025

St.Thomas
THE APOSTLE

2345 Alta Vista Dr.
Ottawa, ON K1H 7M6
613.733.0336
www.stthomasaltavista.ca

Christmas Service of Lessons and Carols

Based on the book of Occasional Celebrations

December 28, 2025 4pm

Prelude: Domine Deus ~ Antonio Vivaldi

Welcome

Land Acknowledgement

Dear friends, we gather on traditional Anishinaabe Algonquin territory.

May we dwell on this land with respect and peace.

May we always seek to respect the histories, spiritualities and cultures of First Nations, Metis and Inuit.

May we walk together the path of reconciliation and right relations.

Processional Hymn: 123 Once in Royal David's City

Text Cecil Frances Alexander, Music Henry John Gauntlett © Public Domain CCLI License #1826689

1 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.

2 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 mean and lowly
lived on earth our Saviour holy.

3 Not in that poor lowly stable,
with the oxen standing by,
we shall see him, but in heaven,
set at God's right hand on high,
when, like stars, his children crowned
all in white shall gather round.

A Bidding for Christmas

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 find new hope in the promise that God is with us,
raise our voices with the messenger
who announces good news of great joy to all people,
and 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.

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 forebears in faith in offering our worship.

Amen.

Bidding Carol: 153 Good Christians All, Rejoice

Text German-Latin carol, tr. John Mason Neale, Music Geistliche Lieder, Wittenberg, 1533 © Public Domain CCLI License #1826689

1 Good Christians all, rejoice
with heart and soul and voice!
Listen now to what we say:
Jesus Christ is born today;
ox and ass before him bow,
and he is in the manger now.
Christ is born today;
Christ is born today!

2 Good Christians all, rejoice
with heart and soul and voice!
Hear the news of endless bliss:
Jesus Christ was born for this;
he has opened heaven's door
and we are blessed for evermore!

Christ was born for this;
Christ was born for this!

3 Good Christians all, rejoice
with heart and soul and voice!
Now you need not fear the grave;
Jesus Christ was born to save:
come at his most gracious call
to find salvation, one and all!
Christ was born to save;
Christ was born to save!

The Readings

First Lesson from Genesis 3: 8–15; 17–19

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;

upon 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.’

Prayer

Almighty God, to you all hearts are open,
all desires known, and from you no secrets are hidden.
Cleanse the thoughts of our hearts
by the inspiration of your Holy Spirit,
that we may perfectly love you,
and worthily magnify your holy name;
through Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

Choir: The Truth from Above - Ralph Vaughan Williams

Second Lesson from Genesis 22:15–18

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.’

Prayer

O God, you have assured the human family
of eternal life through Jesus Christ our Saviour.
Deliver us from the death of sin and raise us to new life in him,
who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit,
one God, now and for ever. **Amen.**

Choir: O Child of the Nations - Howard Helvey

Third Lesson from Isaiah 9:2, 6–7

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.

Prayer

Almighty God, you have shed upon us
the new light of your incarnate Word.
May this light, enkindled in our hearts, shine forth in our lives;
through Jesus Christ our Lord, who lives and reigns with you,
in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God, now and for ever.

Amen.

Hymn: 132 Of Eternal Love Begotten

Text Aurelius Clemens Prudentius, tr. John Mason Neale, Music plainsong, Mode 8, adapt. *Piae Cantiones*, 1582
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1 Of eternal love begotten,
ere the worlds began to be,
he is Alpha and Omega,
he the source, the ending he,
of the things that are, that have been,
and that future years shall see,
evermore and evermore.

2 At his Word the worlds were framed.
He commanded, it was done:
heaven and earth and depths of ocean,
in their threefold order one;

all that grows beneath the shining,
of the moon and burning sun,
evermore and evermore.

3 O that birth for ever blessed,
when the virgin, full of grace,
by the Holy Ghost conceiving,
bare the Saviour of our race,
and the babe, the world's redeemer,
first revealed his sacred face,
evermore and evermore.

4 This is he whom seers in old time
chanted of with one accord,
whom the voices of the prophets
promised in their faithful word;
now he shines, the long expected;
let creation praise its Lord,
evermore and evermore.

5 O ye heights of heaven, adore him;
angel hosts, his praises sing;
all dominions, bow before him,
and extol our God and king;
let no tongue on earth be silent,
every voice in concert ring,
evermore and evermore.

6 Christ, to thee, with God the Father,
and, O Holy Ghost, to thee,
hymn and chant and high thanksgiving,
and unwearied praises be,
honour, glory, and dominion,

and eternal victory,
evermore and evermore.

Fourth Lesson from Isaiah 11:1–3a, 4a, 6–9
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.

Prayer

God of justice,
clear our lives of hatred and despair
and sow in us seeds of joy and peace;
so that shoots of hope may spring forth in us
as we await the coming of the Christ,
who with you and the Holy Spirit,
lives and reigns, one God, now and for ever. Amen.

Hymn: 89 O Come, O Come, Emmanuel, v 1-4, 7

Text Latin, tr. John Mason Neale, Music Plainsong, Mode 1, Processionale (15th cent.) © Public Domain CCLI License #1826689

1 O come, O come, Emmanuel,
and ransom captive Israel
that mourns in lonely exile here
until the Son of God appear.
Rejoice! Rejoice! Emmanuel
shall come to you, O Israel.

2 O come, O Wisdom from on high,
Who orders all things mightily;
To us the path of knowledge show,
And teach us in her ways to go.
Rejoice! Rejoice! Emmanuel
shall come to you, O Israel.

3 O come, O come, great Lord of might,
who to your tribes, on Sinai's height
in ancient times once gave the law,
in cloud, and majesty and awe.
Rejoice! Rejoice! Emmanuel
shall come to you, O Israel.

4 O come, O Rod of Jesse's stem,

From every foe deliver them
That trust your mighty power to save,
And give them victory o'er the grave.
Rejoice! Rejoice! Emmanuel
shall come to you, O Israel.

7 O come, Desire of nations, bind
in one the hearts of humankind;
O bid our bitter conflict cease,
and be for us our Prince of Peace
Rejoice! Rejoice! Emmanuel
shall come to you, O Israel.

Fifth Lesson from the Gospel of Luke 1:26–35, 38
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.

Choir: Ave Maria - Giulio Caccini

Prayer

Pour your grace into our hearts, O Lord,
that we who have known the incarnation of your Son Jesus Christ,
announced by an angel to the Virgin Mary,
may by his cross and passion
be brought to the glory of his resurrection;
who lives and reigns with you,
in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God, now and for ever.

Amen.

Hymn: 117 Lo, How a Rose E'er Blooming

Text St. 1-2 German, tr. Theodore Baker, St. 3 Friedrich Layritz, tr. Harriet Reynolds Krauth Spaeth, Music Alte Catholische Geistliche Kirchengesäng, Köln, 1599 © Public Domain CCLI License #1826689

1 Lord, how a Rose e'er blooming
from tender stem hath sprung!
of Jesse's lineage coming
as seers of old have sung.
It came, a blossom bright,
amid the cold of winter,
when half spent was the night.

2 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 us a Saviour,
when half spent was the night.

3 O Flower, whose fragrance tender
with sweetness fills the air,

dispel in glorious splendour
the darkness everywhere;
true man, yet very God,
from sin and death now save us,
and share our every load.

Sixth Lesson from Luke 2:1, 3–7

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

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

Prayer

O God our Father,
whose Word has come among us in the Holy Child of Bethlehem,
may the light of faith illumine our hearts
and shine in our words and deeds;
through him who is Christ our Lord,
who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit,
one God, now and for ever. **Amen.**

Choir: Candlelight Carol - John Rutter

Seventh Lesson from Luke 2:8–16

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.

Prayer

Lord Jesus Christ,
your birth at Bethlehem draws us to kneel in wonder
at heaven touching earth:
accept our heartfelt praise as we worship you,
our Saviour and our eternal God. **Amen.**

Choir: Ding Dong! Merrily on High

Eighth Lesson from the Gospel of Matthew 2:1–12

The star leads the wise men 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.

Prayer

Eternal God, who by a star led wise men
to the worship of your Son.

Guide by your light the nations of the earth,

that the whole world may know your glory;
through Jesus Christ our Lord,
who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit,
one God, now and forever. **Amen.**

Hymn: 139 The First Nowell

Text and Music English trad. © Public Domain CCLI License #1826689

1 The first nowell the angel did say
was to certain poor shepherds in fields as they lay,
in fields where they lay keeping their sheep,
on a cold winter's night that was so deep.

Refrain:

Nowell, nowell, nowell, nowell,
Born is the King of Israel.

2 They looked up and saw a star
Shining in the east, beyond them far;
And to the earth it gave great light,
And so it continued both day and night. **R**

3 And by the light of that same star
Three wise men came from country far;
To seek for a king was their intent,
And to follow the star wherever it went. **R**

4 This star drew nigh to the northwest;
O'er Bethlehem it took its rest,
And there it did both stop and stay,
Right over the place where Jesus lay. **R**

5 Then entered in those wise men three,
Full reverently upon their knee,

And offered there in his presence
Their gold and myrrh and frankincense. **R**

6 Then let us all with one accord
Sing praises to our heavenly Lord,
Who has made heaven and earth of nought,
And with his blood salvation bought. **R**

Ninth Lesson from the Gospel of John 1:1–14

St. John unfolds the great mystery of the Incarnation.

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.

Prayer

Eternal Wisdom, creating, ordering, and saving,
we give you thanks that we have seen you
in the selfless love of Jesus Christ.

Now reign within our minds and hearts,
and mobilize our will, that by your power
and through our hands
this world may be re-made to be the garden
and the city of your glory.

We ask this in the name of Jesus Christ. **Amen**

Choir: In the Bleak Mid-Winter - Harold Darke

Hymn: 118 O Come, All Ye Faithful

Text and Music John Francis Wade, tr. Frederick Oakley © Public Domain CCLI License #1826689

1 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.

2 God of God, Light of Light,
lo, he abhors not the virgin's womb;
very God, begotten not created: [Refrain]

3 Sing, choirs of angels, sing in exultation,
sing, all ye citizens of heaven above;
glory to God, glory in the highest: [Refrain]

4 See how the shepherds, summoned to his cradle,
leaving their flocks, draw nigh with lowly fear;
we too will thither bend our joyful footsteps; [Refrain]

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

Collect

Almighty God, you wonderfully created
and yet more wonderfully restored our human nature.
May we share the divine life of your Son Jesus Christ,
who humbled himself to share our humanity,
and now lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit,
one God, now and for ever. **Amen.**

Lord's Prayer

Rejoicing in the presence of God here among us and gathering our
prayers and praises into one, let us pray as our Saviour taught us.:

Our Father who art in heaven,

Hallowed be thy name.

Thy kingdom come, thy will be done

On earth as it is 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, the power, and the glory,

for ever and ever. Amen.

Blessing

May the God of infinite goodness
scatter the darkness of sin

and brighten your hearts with holiness;
and the blessing of God almighty, the Father, the Son,
and the Holy Spirit, be among you and remain with you always.

Amen

Recessional Hymn: 138 Hark! The Herald Angels Sing

Text Charles Wesley, Music Felix Mendelssohn-Bartholdy, adapt. William Hayman Cummings © Public Domain CCLI License #1826689

1 Hark! The herald angels sing,
"Glory to the new-born 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 hosts proclaim,
"Christ is born in Bethlehem!"

Refrain:

Hark! the herald angels sing,
"Glory to the newborn King."

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

3 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 each child of earth,
born to give us second birth. [Refrain]

Postlude: Sussex Carol ~ arr. David Willcocks

*Thank you to Celina Hawkins, oboe; John Hong, clarinet;
Aly Ahrens, Double Bass; Torin Gauld, Cello; Tom Sear, Piano;
Garth Hampson, Jessica Fraser, Abby Wilson, Matthew Jaekel, soloists
for sharing the gift of music with us today.*

4:00 P.M. LESSONS & CAROLS

Presiders: Rev Maria Nightingale, Rev Tim Kehoe

Readers: Joy Mighty, Jim Doherty, Liz Scobie, Joan Fisher, Andrea Teekasingh, Babs Dunstan, Karen Gravelle, Tom Bryant, Josiah Davies

Altar Guild: Karen Scott, Liz Scobie

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In the event of a **pastoral emergency** please contact Fr Tim or Rev Maria. For other enquiries, please call Wendy at the office.