

### **ABOUT THE SERVICE OF NINE LESSONS AND CAROLS**

The Service of Nine Lessons and Carols is a traditional Christian worship service celebrated on or near Christmas Eve. The service's origins go back at least to the mid-late 1800s, and today it is popularly associated with King's College at Cambridge. Over time, the order of the readings and hymns has remained largely unchanged. The story of humanity's fall into sin, God's promised Messiah, and the birth of Jesus Christ is told in nine short Bible readings from Genesis, Isaiah, and the gospels of St. Matthew, St. Luke, and St. John, interspersed with beloved Christmas hymns. In place of a sermon, four short meditations on the readings are included. All together, these "lessons and carols" reveal the fulfillment of God's plan of salvation as it unfolded over the centuries and culminated in the arrival of the baby Jesus. We thank you for joining us in this telling of the Christmas story in word and song, and we pray this evening will be a blessing to you. Merry Christmas!

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## **A FESTIVAL OF NINE LESSONS AND CAROLS**

### **CHRISTMAS EVE 2020**

## Prelude Music and Ringing of the Bells

*Please stand at the ringing of the bells.*

### Processional Hymn: Of the Father's Love Begotten

Of the Father's 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.

Oh, that birth forever blessed, When the Virgin, full of grace,  
By the Holy Ghost conceiving, Bore the Savior of our race,  
And the babe, the world's Redeemer, First revealed His sacred face  
Evermore and evermore.

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.

O ye heights of heav'n, adore Him; Angel hosts, His praises sing.  
Pow'rs, dominions, bow before Him And extol our God and King.  
Let no tongue on earth be silent, Ev'ry voice in concert ring.  
Evermore and evermore.

Christ, to Thee, with God the Father, And, O Holy Ghost, to Thee  
Hymn and chant and high thanksgiving And unending praises be,  
Honor, glory, and dominion, And eternal victory  
Evermore and evermore. Amen.

## Christmas Eve Address

### The Lord's Prayer

#### Hymn: 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!

Highest, most holy, Light of Light eternal,  
Born of a virgin, a mortal He comes;  
Son of the Father Now in flesh appearing! *Refrain*

Sing, choirs of angels, Sing in exultation,  
Sing, all ye citizens of heaven above!  
Glory to God In the highest: *Refrain*

## The First Lesson: Genesis 3:1-15 – Humanity's Fall Into Sin

### Hymn: O Come, O Come, Emmanuel

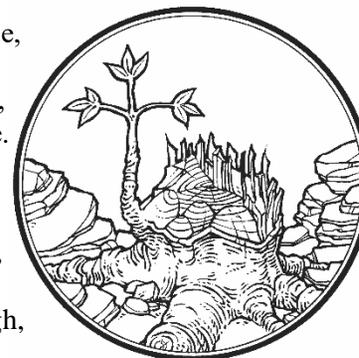
O come, O come, Emmanuel, And ransom captive Israel,  
That mourns in lonely exile here Until the Son of God appear.  
Rejoice! Rejoice! Emmanuel Shall come to thee, O Israel!

O come, Thou Branch of Jesse's tree,  
Free them from Satan's tyranny  
That trust Thy mighty pow'r to save,  
And give them vict'ry o'er the grave.  
Rejoice! Rejoice! Emmanuel  
Shall come to thee, O Israel!

O come, Thou Key of David, come,  
And open wide our heav'nly home;  
Make safe the way that leads on high,  
And close the path to misery.  
Rejoice! Rejoice! Emmanuel Shall come to thee, O Israel!

O come, Thou Dayspring from on high, And cheer us by Thy drawing nigh;  
Disperse the gloomy clouds of night, And death's dark shadows put to flight.  
Rejoice! Rejoice! Emmanuel Shall come to thee, O Israel!

O come, Desire of nations, bind In one the hearts of all mankind;  
Bid Thou our sad divisions cease, And be Thyself our King of Peace.  
Rejoice! Rejoice! Emmanuel Shall come to thee, O Israel!



## Meditation I

### The Second Lesson: Genesis 22:15-18 – God's Promise to Abraham

#### Hymn: Angels from the Realms of Glory

Angels from the realms of glory, Wing your flight o'er all the earth;  
Ye who sang creation's story, Now proclaim Messiah's birth.

*Refrain:* Come and worship, come and worship;  
Worship Christ, the newborn King.

Shepherds in the field abiding, Watching o'er your flocks by night,  
God with us is now residing, Yonder shines the Infant Light. *Refrain*

Sages, leave your contemplations, Brighter visions beam afar;  
Seek the great Desire of nations, Ye have seen His natal star. *Refrain*

Saints before the altar bending, Watching long in hope and fear,  
Suddenly the Lord, descending, In His temple shall appear. *Refrain*

### The Third Lesson: Isaiah 9:2-7 – To Us a Child Is Born

#### Hymn: It Came upon the Midnight Clear

It came upon the midnight clear, That glorious song of old,  
From angels bending near the earth  
To touch their harps of gold:  
“Peace on the earth, goodwill to all,  
From heav’n’s all-gracious king.”  
The world in solemn stillness lay  
To hear the angels sing.



All you, beneath your heavy load,  
By care and guilt bent low,  
Who toil along a dreary way  
With painful steps and slow:  
Look up, for golden is the hour, Come swiftly on the wing,  
The Prince was born to bring you peace; Of Him the angels sing.

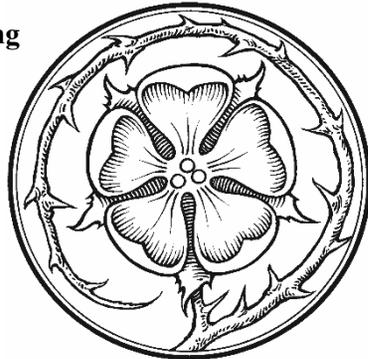
For lo, the days have come to pass By prophets seen of old,  
When down into the circling years Came Christ as was foretold.  
His word of peace shall to the earth God’s ancient promise bring,  
And all who take this gift will hear The song the angels sing.

#### Meditation II

### The Fourth Lesson: Isaiah 11:1-9 – A Shoot from the Stump of Jesse

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

Lo, how a rose e'er blooming  
From tender stem hath sprung!  
Of Jesse's lineage coming  
As prophets long have sung,  
It came, a flow'ret bright,  
Amid the cold of winter,  
When half-spent was the night.



This flow'r, whose fragrance tender  
With sweetness fills the air,  
Dispels with glorious splendor The darkness ev'rywhere.  
True man, yet very God,  
From sin and death He saves us And lightens ev'ry load.

O Savior, child of Mary, Who felt our human woe;  
O Savior, King of glory, Who dost our weakness know:  
Bring us at length we pray  
To the bright courts of heaven, And to the endless day.

### The Fifth Lesson: Luke 1:26-38 – The Annunciation to Mary

#### Hymn: The Angel Gabriel from Heaven Came

The angel Gabriel from heaven came,  
With wings as drifted snow, with eyes as flame:  
“All hail to thee, O lowly maiden Mary,  
Most highly favored lady.” Gloria!



“For know a blessed mother thou shalt be,  
All generations laud and honor thee;  
Thy son shall be Emmanuel, by seers foretold,  
Most highly favored lady.” Gloria!

Then gentle Mary meekly bowed her head;  
“To me be as it pleaseth God,” she said.  
“My soul shall laud and magnify God’s holy name.”  
Most highly favored lady, Gloria!

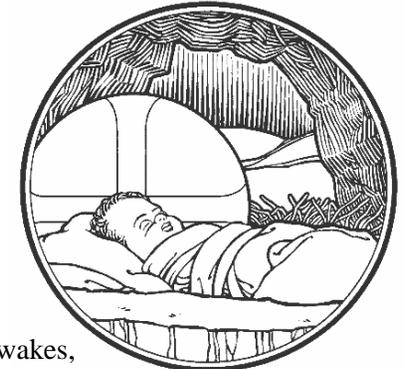
Of her, Emmanuel, the Christ, was born  
In Bethlehem all on a Christmas morn,  
And Christian folk throughout the world will ever say:  
“Most highly favored lady.” Gloria!

#### Meditation III

### The Sixth Lesson: Luke 2:1-7 – The Birth of Jesus

#### Hymn: Away in a Manger

Away in a manger,  
no crib for a bed,  
The little Lord Jesus  
laid down His sweet head.  
The stars in the sky  
looked down where He lay,  
The little Lord Jesus  
asleep on the hay.



The cattle are lowing, the baby awakes,  
But little Lord Jesus, no crying He makes.  
I love Thee, Lord Jesus! Look down from the sky,  
And stay by my cradle till 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.

## The Seventh Lesson: Luke 2:8-20 – The Angels' Proclamation

### Hymn: Angels We Have Heard On High

Angels we have heard on high, Sweetly signing o'er the plains,  
And the mountains in reply, Echoing their joyous strains.

*Refrain:* 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 heav'nly song? *Refrain*

Come to Bethlehem and see  
Him whose birth the angels sing;  
Come, adore on bended knee  
Christ the Lord, the newborn King. *Refrain*



## The Eighth Lesson: Matthew 2:1-12 – The Visit of the Magi

### Hymn: As With Gladness Men of Old

As with gladness men of old Did the guiding star behold;  
As with joy they hailed its light, Leading onward, beaming bright;  
So, most gracious Lord, may we Evermore be led by Thee.

As with joyful steps they sped,  
Savior, to Thy lowly bed,  
There to bend the knee before  
Thee, whom heav'n and earth adore;  
So may we with willing feet  
Ever seek Thy mercy seat.

Holy Jesus, ev'ry day  
Keep us in the narrow way;  
And when earthly things are past,  
Bring our ransomed souls at last  
Where they need no star to guide,  
Where no clouds Thy glory hide.

In the heav'nly country bright Need they no created light;  
Thou its light, its joy, its crown, Thou its sun which goes not down;  
There forever may we sing Alleluias to our King.



## Meditation IV

## The Ninth Lesson: John 1:1-14 – The Word Became Flesh

### Hymn: 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 heav'n 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 as Man with man to dwell, Jesus, our Immanuel! *Refrain*

Hail, the heav'n-born Prince of Peace! Hail, the Sun of Righteousness!  
Light and life to all He brings, Ris'n with healing in His wings.  
Mild He lays His glory by, Born that man no more may die,  
Born to raise the sons of earth, Born to give them second birth. *Refrain*

### The Lighting of the Candles

*Light is passed from Christ to Pastor to People by tilting only unlit candles as they receive light from lit candles.*

### The Prayers

### The Benediction

### Hymn: 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! Shepherds quake at the sight;  
Glories stream from heaven afar, Heav'nly hosts sing, Alleluia!  
Christ, the Savior, is born! Christ, the Savior, is born!

Silent night, holy night! Son of God, love's pure light  
Radiant beams from Thy holy face With the dawn of redeeming grace  
Jesus, Lord, at Thy birth, Jesus, Lord, at Thy birth.



*You are welcome to remain in the nave for a time of silent prayer. Please extinguish your candles and drop them in the box as you leave tonight. God's richest blessings to you and your family in this holy season of Christmas.*