

A Service of Nine Lessons & Carols

Welcome and introduction

The tradition of the Service of Nine Lessons and Carols dates from 1880. It was introduced by the Bishop of Truro, The Rt. Rev. E. W. Benson. In 1918, the service was adopted by King's College, Cambridge, where over the last century it has become justly famous. This service, in its original form, is broadcast from the Chapel at King's College every Christmas Eve.

While this great liturgy and music has its origins in Great Britain, we, as Lutheran, celebrate the birth of our Lord and Savior through our own vernacular musical language. Music is a great testament of the faith and courage that brought us here. We sing heartily and with joy, not only at the blessed birth of our Lord, but also His glorious Resurrection and Ascension.

The Invocation and Responsorial

P In the name of the Father and of the † Son and of the Holy Spirit.

C Amen.

P The people who walked in darkness have seen a great light;

C those who dwelt in a land of deep darkness, on them has light shined.

P When the fullness of time had come, God sent forth His Son, born of woman,

C born under the law, to redeem those who were under the law.

P Restore us, O God of Hosts.

C Show us the light of Your countenance and we shall be saved. Glory be to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit; as it was in the beginning, is now, and shall be forever.

Amen.

Carol: O Come, All Ye Faithful

The First Lesson: Genesis 3:8-15

God announces in the Garden of Eden that the seed of woman shall bruise the serpent's head.

Then the man and his wife heard the sound of the LORD God as he was walking in the garden in the cool of the day, and they hid from the LORD God among the trees of the garden. But the LORD God called to the man, "Where are you?" He answered, "I heard you in the garden, and I was afraid because I was naked; so I hid." And he said, "Who told you that you were naked? Have you eaten from the tree that I commanded you not to eat from?" The man said, "The woman you put here with me- -she gave me some fruit from the tree, and I ate it." Then the LORD God said to the woman, "What is this you have done?" The woman said, "The serpent deceived me, and I ate." So the LORD God said to the serpent, "Because you have done this, "Cursed are you above all the livestock and all the wild animals! You will crawl on your belly and you will eat dust all the days of your life. And I will put enmity between you and the woman, and between your offspring and hers; he will crush your head, and you will strike his heel."

L The Word of the Lord.

C Thanks be to God!

Carol: O Come, O Come Emmanuel

The Second Lesson: Genesis 22:15-18

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

The angel of the LORD called to Abraham from heaven a second time and said, "I swear by myself, declares the LORD, that because you have done this and have not withheld your son, your only son, I will surely bless you and make your descendants as numerous as the stars in the sky and as the sand on the seashore. Your descendants will take possession of the cities of their enemies, and through your offspring all nations on earth will be blessed, because you have obeyed me."

L The Word of the Lord.

C Thanks be to God!

Carol: Come thou long expected Jesus

The Third Lesson: Isaiah 9:2,6-7

Christ's birth and kingdom are foretold by Isaiah.

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 Counselor, 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 forever. The zeal of the LORD Almighty will accomplish this.

L The Word of the Lord.

C Thanks be to God!

Carol: Once in royal David's city

The Fourth Lesson: Micah 5:2-4

The prophet Micah foretells the glory of little Bethlehem.

"But you, Bethlehem Ephrathah, 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 labor 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.

L The Word of the Lord.

C Thanks be to God!

Carol: Go, Tell It on the Mountain

The Fifth Lesson: Luke 1:26-35,38

The angel Gabriel salutes the blessed virgin Mary.

In the sixth month, God sent the angel Gabriel to Nazareth, a town in Galilee, to a virgin pledged to be married to a man named Joseph, a descendant of David. The virgin's name was Mary. The angel went to her and said, "Greetings, you who are highly favored! The Lord is with you." Mary was greatly troubled at his words and wondered what kind of greeting this might be. But the angel said to her, "Do not be afraid, Mary, you have found favor with God. You will be with child and give birth to a son, and you are to give him the name Jesus. He will be great and will be called the Son of the Most High. The Lord God will give him the throne of his father David, and he will reign over the house of Jacob forever; his kingdom will never end." "How will this be," Mary asked the angel, "since I am a virgin?" The angel answered, "The Holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the Most High will overshadow you. So the holy one to be born will be called the Son of God. "I am the Lord's servant," Mary answered. "May it be to me as you have said." Then the angel left her.

L The Word of the Lord.

C Thanks be to God!

SONG OF MARY

L My soul proclaims the greatness of the Lord,

C my spirit rejoices in God my Saviour,

who has looked with favour on his lowly servant.

From this day all generations will call me blessed:

the Almighty has done great things for me

and holy is his name.

God has mercy on those who fear him,

from generation to generation.

The Lord has shown strength with his arm

and scattered the proud in their conceit,

casting down the mighty from their thrones

and lifting up the lowly.

God has filled the hungry with good things

and sent the rich away empty.

He has come to the aid of his servant Israel,

to remember the promise of mercy,

the promise he made to our forebears,

to Abraham and his children for ever.

The Sixth Lesson: Luke 2:1-7

Luke tells of the birth of Jesus.

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.

L The Word of the Lord.

C Thanks be to God!

Carol: Infant Holy, Infant Lowly

The Seventh Lesson: Luke 2:8-16

The shepherds go to the manger.

And there were shepherds living out in the fields nearby, 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 Savior 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 favor 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.

L The Word of the Lord.

C Thanks be to God!

Carol: While shepherd watched

The Eighth Lesson: Matthew 2:1-11

The wise men are led by the star to Jesus.

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 worshiped him. Then they opened their treasures and presented him with gifts of gold and of incense and of myrrh.

L The Word of the Lord.

C Thanks be to God!

Carol: For Unto Us A Child Is Born/Holy, Holy, Holy

The Ninth Lesson: John 1:1-14

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 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.

P The Gospel of the Lord.

C Praise to You, O Christ.

Carol: Mary, Did You Know

The Prayer of the Church

P With longing for the coming of Christ, let us pray for the Church, the world, and all people according to their needs. For the whole Christian Church that we might bear fruits worthy of Repentance. - For leaders of the world, that they would turn their hearts to You and work for peace among all people. - For the hungry, the lonely, the homeless, and those who lack the basic necessities of life, that our sharing may bring them joy. - For those who are hospitalized or ill (especially...), that they might cast all their cares upon You. - With thanksgiving we remember all the faithful departed who have died and rest securely in Your arms. God of joy, hear the prayers we offer in the name of Jesus Christ, whose coming is certain and whose day is drawing near.

C Amen.

Holy Communion Liturgy

The Lord's Prayer

C 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 forever and ever. Amen.

The Benediction

P May Almighty God, by whose mercy our Savior the Christ came among us in great humility, sanctify you with the light of His blessing. May He whose second coming in power and great glory we await, make you steadfast in faith, joyful in hope, and constant in love.

May you, who rejoice in the first advent of our Redeemer, at His second advent receive, by His great mercy, unending life. And the blessing of the Almighty God, the Father, † Son, and Holy Spirit, be upon you and remain with you forever.

C Amen.

Carol: Joy To The World