



Lessons & Carols
Christmas Eve Service
December 24, 2017

*To all who are spiritually weary and seek rest;
to all who mourn and long for comfort;
to all who struggle and desire victory;
to all who sin and need a Savior;
to all who are strangers and want fellowship;
to all who hunger and thirst after righteousness;
and to all who will come,
this church opens wide her doors
and offers welcome
in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ.*

Church Staff & Officers

David J. Wilcher
Lead Pastor

Kyle Bobos
Pastor of Children's Ministries

Todd Crusey
Pastor of Community Life

Grayson Baird
Director of Student Ministries

Elders

*Dan Brink
Jon Green
Mike Hume
Andy Yung*

Deacons

*Matt Bradshaw
Mike Bellin
Amy Bottorff
Justin Chandler
Jeff Cranford
Mark Hill
Scott Johnston
Steve Kovach
Rob McIntosh
Mike Ryan
Sunny Yung*

Grace Church is affiliated with the Presbyterian Church in America (PCA).

Reflections

You have come to us as a small child, but you have brought us the greatest of all gifts, the gift of eternal love. Caress us with your tiny hands, embrace us with your tiny arms, and pierce our hearts with your soft sweet cries.

– Bernard of Clairvaux
(1090-1153)

It's good to be children sometimes, and never better than at Christmas, when it's mighty Founder was a child Himself.

– Charles Dickens

Jesus Christ founded his kingdom on the weakest link of all – a baby.

– Oswald Chambers
(1874-1917)

For most of the residents of Bethlehem, Jesus' birth went unnoticed, but heaven and earth converged in this little pocket of the Promised Land for the most important birth in history. The angels orchestrated the unlikely meeting of the poor, the displaced, and the curious to announce the coming of the Savior of the world. To some they appeared in dreams. To others they spoke from the sky. To others still, perhaps they shone like a star, leading the Magi to the place where the child was born. Through it all, the angels of the heavenly host had their eyes fixed on this village south of Jerusalem.

– Russ Ramsey
Behold the Lamb of God: An Advent Narrative

A Service of Lessons and Carols

December 24, 2017

Introduction¹

This service is based on the Service of Lessons and Carols, which was first drawn up by Archbishop Benson in 1880 when he was the Bishop of Truro for use in that Cathedral. It was later modified for use at King's College Chapel, Cambridge, in 1918 by its then Dean, the Very Reverend Eric Milner-White.

The service joins scripture texts that speak of the birth of Christ with carols that highlight the themes found in those texts. Universally beloved, this service is used with some variation all over the world.

Prelude

Words of Welcome

Carol

Angels, From the Realms of Glory

Carol

Hark! the Herald Angels Sing

Prayer of Adoration

¹ As a courtesy, please program all communication devices to silent mode. Thank you!

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

Now the serpent was more crafty than any of the wild animals the LORD God had made. He said to the woman, "Did God really say, 'You must not eat from any tree in the garden'?"

2 The woman said to the serpent, "We may eat fruit from the trees in the garden, 3 but God did say, 'You must not eat fruit from the tree that is in the middle of the garden, and you must not touch it, or you will die.'"

4 "You will not surely die," the serpent, said to the woman. 5 "For God knows that when you eat of it your eyes will be opened, and you will be like God, knowing good and evil."

6 When the woman saw that the fruit of the tree was good for food and pleasing to the eye, and also desirable for gaining wisdom, she took some and ate it. She also gave some to her husband, who was with her, and he ate it. 7 Then the eyes of both of them were opened, and they realized they were naked; so they sewed fig leaves together and made coverings for themselves.

8 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. 9 But the LORD God called to the man, "Where are you?"

10 He answered, "I heard you in the garden, and I was afraid because I was naked; so I hid."

11 And he said, "Who told you that you were naked? Have you eaten from the tree that I commanded you not to eat from?"

12 The man said, "The woman you put here with me--she gave me some fruit from the tree, and I ate it."

13 Then the LORD God said to the woman, "What is this you have done?"

The woman said, "The serpent deceived me, and I ate."

14 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. 15 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."

The Second Lesson

Isaiah 7:10-14; 9:2,6-7

The prophet Isaiah foretells of the coming of the Savior.

Again the LORD spoke to Ahaz, 11 "Ask the LORD your God for a sign, whether in the deepest depths or in the highest heights."

12 But Ahaz said, "I will not ask; I will not put the LORD to the test."

13 Then Isaiah said, "Hear now, you house of David! Is it not enough to try the patience of men? Will you try the patience of my God also? 14 Therefore the Lord himself will give you a sign: The virgin will be with child and will give birth to a son, and will call him Immanuel.

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.
7 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.

Carol

O Come, O Come, Emmanuel

The Third Lesson

Micah 5:2-5

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."

3 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.

4 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.

5 And he will be their peace.
When the Assyrian invades our land
and marches through our fortresses,
we will raise against him seven shepherds,
even eight leaders of men.

Carol

O Little Town of Bethlehem

The Fourth Lesson

Luke 1:26-38

The angel Gabriel greets the Blessed Virgin Mary.

In the sixth month, God sent the angel Gabriel to Nazareth, a town in Galilee,
27 to a virgin pledged to be married to a man named Joseph, a descendant of David. The virgin's
name was Mary. 28 The angel went to her and said, "Greetings, you who are highly favored! The Lord is
with you."

29 Mary was greatly troubled at his words and wondered what kind of greeting this might be. 30
But the angel said to her, "Do not be afraid, Mary, you have found favor with God. 31 You will be with
child and give birth to a son, and you are to give him the name Jesus. 32 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, 33 and he will
reign over the house of Jacob forever; his kingdom will never end."

34 "How will this be," Mary asked the angel, "since I am a virgin?"

35 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. 36 Even Elizabeth your
relative is going to have a child in her old age, and she who was said to be barren is in her sixth month. 37
For nothing is impossible with God."

38 "I am the Lord's servant," Mary answered. "May it be to me as you have said." Then the angel
left her.

The Fifth Lesson

Luke 1:46-56

*The Virgin Mary responds
to the words of the angel Gabriel
in worship and humility.*

And Mary said: "My soul glorifies the Lord 47 and my spirit rejoices in God my Savior, 48 for he has been mindful of the humble state of his servant. From now on all generations will call me blessed, 49 for the Mighty One has done great things for me-- holy is his name. 50 His mercy extends to those who fear him, from generation to generation. 51 He has performed mighty deeds with his arm; he has scattered those who are proud in their inmost thoughts. 52 He has brought down rulers from their thrones but has lifted up the humble. 53 He has filled the hungry with good things but has sent the rich away empty. 54 He has helped his servant Israel, remembering to be merciful 55 to Abraham and his descendants forever, even as he said to our fathers." 56 Mary stayed with Elizabeth for about three months and then returned home.

The Offering

The offering is a way for members and friends of Grace Church to support the church's mission and ministry. If you are our guest today, please feel under no compulsion to give.

Carol

Come, Thou Long-Expected Jesus

The Sixth Lesson

Matthew 1:18-25; Luke 2:1-7

St. Matthew and St. Luke tell of the birth of Jesus.

This is how the birth of Jesus Christ came about: His mother Mary was pledged to be married to Joseph, but before they came together, she was found to be with child through the Holy Spirit. 19 Because Joseph her husband was a righteous man and did not want to expose her to public disgrace, he had in mind to divorce her quietly.

20 But after he had considered this, an angel of the Lord appeared to him in a dream and said, "Joseph son of David, do not be afraid to take Mary home as your wife, because what is conceived in her is from the Holy Spirit. 21 She will give birth to a son, and you are to give him the name Jesus, because he will save his people from their sins."

22 All this took place to fulfill what the Lord had said through the prophet:

23 "The virgin will be with child and will give birth to a son, and they will call him Immanuel"-- which means, "God with us."

24 When Joseph woke up, he did what the angel of the Lord had commanded him and took Mary home as his wife. 25 But he had no union with her until she gave birth to a son. And he gave him the name Jesus.

In those days Caesar Augustus issued a decree that a census should be taken of the entire Roman world. 2 (This was the first census that took place while Quirinius was governor of Syria.) 3 And everyone went to his own town to register.

4 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. 5 He went there to register with Mary, who was pledged to be married to him and was expecting a child. 6 While they were there, the time came for the baby to be born, 7 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.

The Seventh Lesson**Matthew 2:1-11***The Magi 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."

3 When King Herod heard this he was disturbed, and all Jerusalem with him. 4 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. 5 "In Bethlehem in Judea," they replied, "for this is what the prophet has written:

6 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.

7 Then Herod called the Magi secretly and found out from them the exact time the star had appeared. 8 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."

9 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. 10 When they saw the star, they were overjoyed. 11 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.

Carol*O Come, All Ye Faithful***The Eighth Lesson****Luke 2:8-16***The shepherds go to the manger and the angels celebrate the birth of Jesus.*

And there were shepherds living out in the fields nearby, keeping watch over their flocks at night. 9 An angel of the Lord appeared to them, and the glory of the Lord shone around them, and they were terrified. 10 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. 11 Today in the town of David a Savior has been born to you; he is Christ the Lord. 12 This will be a sign to you: You will find a baby wrapped in cloths and lying in a manger."

13 Suddenly a great company of the heavenly host appeared with the angel, praising God and saying,

14 "Glory to God in the highest,
and on earth peace to men on whom his favor rests."

15 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."

16 So they hurried off and found Mary and Joseph, and the baby, who was lying in the manger.

The Jesus Storybook Bible

They caught their breath. Then quietly, they tiptoed inside.
They knelt on the dirt floor. They had heard about this Promised Child and now he was here. Heaven's Son. The Maker of the Stars. A baby sleeping in his mother's arms.
This baby would be like that bright star shining in the sky at night. A light to light up the whole world. Chasing away darkness. Helping people to see.
And the darker the night got, the brighter the star would shine.

Carol

Angels We Have Heard on High

Carol

The First Noel

Silent Prayer and Thanksgiving

Communion

Guidelines for Reception of Communion

Communion is a family meal of Christians. We welcome all committed followers of Jesus Christ to partake of this sacrament: those who are baptized members of a congregation which proclaims the gospel, who are at peace with God and with their neighbor, and who seek strength to live more faithfully for Christ. If you are not a Christian, or if you are not prepared to share in this meal, we encourage you to spend this time in prayer using the prayers that follow as guidelines. We hope that this time is helpful as you consider your relationship with Jesus Christ, and with his people, the church.

The Great Thanksgiving

Minister: Lift up your hearts!

People: *We lift them up to the Lord!*

Minister: Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.

People: *It is right to give Him thanks and praise.*

Prayer of Consecration and the Words of Institution

Special Music

O Holy Night!

Prayer for those not communing:

Prayer for Covenant Children (Not Yet Confirmed)

Lord Jesus, thank you for placing me inside your family, the church. Help me more and more to know you, to love you, and to follow you as your faithful disciple. Amen

Prayer for Those Searching for Truth

Lord Jesus, you claim to be the way, the truth and the life. If what you claim is true, please guide me, teach me, and open to me the reality of who you are. Grant that I might be undaunted by the cost of following you as I consider the reasons for doing so. Give me an understanding of you that is coherent, convincing, and that leads to the life that you promise. Amen.

Prayer of Belief

Lord Jesus, I admit that I am weaker and more sinful than I ever before believed, but, through you, I am more loved and accepted than I ever dared to hope. I thank you for paying my debt, bearing my punishment on the cross and offering forgiveness and new life. Knowing that you have been raised from the dead, I turn from my sins and receive you as my Savior. Amen.

Prayer for Those Struggling with Sin

Lord Jesus, grant that I may see in you the fulfillment of all my needs, and may turn from every false satisfaction to feed on you, the true and living bread. Enable me to lay aside the sin that clings so closely, and run with perseverance the race set before me, looking only to you, the author and finisher of my faith. Amen.

Prayer of Commitment

Lord Jesus, you have called us to follow you in baptism and in a life of committed discipleship in your church. Grant that I may take the necessary steps to be one with your people, and live in the fullness of your Spirit. Amen.

Distribution of the Bread and the Cup

Grace Presbyterian uses wine in the celebration of Holy Communion. If you prefer non-alcoholic grape juice, please take a cup from the outer circle of the tray. Please hold the elements until all have received so we can celebrate this meal together.

Silent Prayer during Communion

Lighting of the Candles

Carol

Silent Night! Holy Night!

Benediction and Response²

Minister: And the Word became flesh and lived among us,
 and we have seen his glory,
 the glory of the Father's only begotten,
 full of grace and truth.
 From his fullness we have received grace upon grace.
 Glory to God in the highest,
 and peace to his people on earth.

People: Rejoice! Rejoice! Emmanuel has come to us!

*The pastoral staff and other church leaders are available following the service,
to pray with you or to answer your questions about the Christian faith or Grace Church.*

Worship Music

Thank you for sharing your gifts and talents with Grace Presbyterian Church.

Brent Allmon - Tenor Sax
Joey Mason - Trombone
Debra Moses - Flute
Rae Moses - Piano
Ashley Yarbrough - Oboe

Hannah Yarbrough - Oboe
Rebecca Yarbrough - Trumpet
Sarah Yarbrough - Horn
Tony Yarbrough - Trumpet

² The benediction is much more than a wish or even a prayer. It is a renewed ordination of the people of God to their service to each other, their community and the world. God declares his own favor toward his people.

Poinsettias for the Holidays

Once again, the sanctuary has been trimmed with beautiful poinsettias for the Christmas season. Some have been purchased in memory of or in honor of someone and others have been purchased to decorate for the holidays.

In Memory of:

Joan Shimeall/ Richard Shimeall
Steven P. Stahl/ Gayle Stahl
Bob & Billie Sampson/ The Sampson Family
Marvin Smith, Cassandra Barth & Tracy Taylor/ The Sampson Family
Our Parents/ Al & Barbara Adams
Dan Atkinson/ Jon & Connie Graham
Bob Green & David Green/ Jon & Ann Green
Sarah Green, Bob Green, David Green, Ellie Wyatt & Verna Wyatt/ Jon & Ann Green
Bob & David Green/ Jane Green
Chuck Haynes/ The Webster Family
Linda Faye Findley/ Todd & Liz Crusey
Larry & Corinne Fuller/ Todd & Liz Crusey
Our Parents & Grandparents/ Michael & Angela Chuchmuch
Arthur Bessenbach/ Angela Kinsey
Maddie Opperman/ Kyle & Megan Bobos
Our Parents/ Rae, Debra & Emily Moses
David Allison/ Shannon Allmon
Shauna Rae Geffon/ Bailey & Anish Patel
Bob & Mary Stageberg and Susie/ The Johnston Family
Dan & Helen Johnston/ The Johnston Family
Mr & Mrs. W. H. McIntosh Jr./ Rob & Jennifer McIntosh
Pierre Burns, Faithful servant/ Andy & Sunny Yung
Glenn Walrath/ The Walrath Family
Mattie Tucker/ Sandra & Thomas Walrath

In Honor of:

Jon Green, Lauren Waggoner , Cindy Miller and Families/ Jane Green
Rachel, Kevin & Jack Henderson / Jon & Ann Green
Mary & Jimmie Ryan/ Jon & Ann Green
Those who helped during Hurricane Harvey/ Cheryl & Buster Schroeder
Dorothy & Eddie Salge/ Rae, Debra & Emily Moses
Findley Fuller Crusey/ Todd & Liz Crusey
Our granddaughters, Gracie, Amy & Avery Moncla/ David & Bev Moncla
Jack & Elta Johnson/ Rob & Jennifer McIntosh
Our precious daughters, Faith, Espi, Victoria & Justice/ Christie VanVleet
Matt, Lauren, Jack, Josh, Ashley, Kylie & Reid/ David Wilcher
Vicki, Hannah & Jonathan/ David Wilcher
The Officers of Grace Presbyterian Church/ David Wilcher

Thank you for making the sanctuary so beautiful.