

# Welcome to St. John's Church



## A Traditional Service of Nine Lessons and Carols

*December 17, 2023*

*4:00 p.m.*

### **ST. JOHN'S EPISCOPAL CHURCH**

**78 Green Hill Road  
Washington, CT 06793**

**Parish Office Telephone:** (860) 868-2527

**Parish Office Hours:** *Wednesdays and Fridays, 9:30 a.m. to 2:30 p.m.*

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**St. John's Website:** <http://stjohnswashington.com/>

**St. John's Facebook Page:**

<https://www.facebook.com/StJohnsChurchWashingtonCT>

**St. John's YouTube Page:**

<https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCoOwTnqIRss4BT8VwFul4qg>

# A TRADITIONAL SERVICE OF NINE LESSONS AND CAROLS FOR CHRISTMAS

*The Festival of Nine Lessons and Carols was first celebrated at King's College, Cambridge, on Christmas Eve, 1918. It was an adaptation of a similar service that had been written for the cathedral at Truro in 1880. The lessons were reordered in 1919, and what follows are the lessons that have been used since that time. At King's College, the Festival is a Christmas Eve service, and the lessons, and music, move deliberately from the season of Advent into Christmastide. Many other parishes have adopted the tradition, occasionally modifying it as needed, and it is not unusual to omit a reading.*

## **Prelude** *Zion Hears The Watchmen Voices*

Johann Sebastian Bach (1685-1750)

*Come With Rejoicing!*

Tom Brand

*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. Come with Rejoicing, Hallelu, Hallelujah! Let us all rejoice, Hallelu!*

## **The Call to Worship with the tolling of the church bell**

### **Processional Hymn # 102** *Once In Royal David's City*

*first verse sung by choir only*

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 Savior holy.*

**3** *We, like Mary, rest confounded  
that a stable should display  
heaven's Word, the world's creator  
cradled there on Christmas Day  
yet this child, our Lord and brother,*

*brought us love for one another.*

*4 For he is our lifelong pattern;  
Daily, when on earth he grew,  
he was tempted, scorned, rejected,  
tears and smiles like us he knew.  
Thus he feels for all our sadness,  
and he shares in all our gladness.*

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

*6 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.  
Then like stars his children crowned,  
all in white, his praise will sound.*

### **A Bidding Prayer**

Beloved in Christ, in this Christmastide, let it be our care and delight to hear again the message of the Angels, and in heart and mind to go even unto Bethlehem, and see this thing which is come to pass, and the Babe lying in a manger.

Let us read and mark in Holy Scripture the tale of the loving purposes of God from the first days of our disobedience unto the glorious Redemption brought us by this holy Child; and let us make this place glad with our carols of praise.

But first, let us pray for the needs of his whole world; for peace and goodwill over all the earth; for the mission and unity of the Church for which he died, and especially in this country and within this city.

And because this of all things would rejoice his heart, let us at this time remember in his name the poor and the helpless, the hungry and the oppressed; the sick and those who mourn; the lonely and the unloved; the aged and the little children; and all those who know not the Lord Jesus, or who love him not, or who by sin have grieved his heart of love.

Lastly, let us remember before God his pure and lowly Mother, and all those who rejoice with us, but upon another shore and in a greater light, that multitude which no one can number, whose hope was in the Word made flesh, and with whom, in this Lord Jesus, we for evermore are one.

These prayers and praises let us humbly offer up to the throne of heaven, in the words which Christ himself hath taught us:

*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.*

The Almighty God bless us with his grace; Christ give us the joys of everlasting life; and unto the fellowship of the citizens above may the King of Angels bring us all. *Amen*.

**Anthem:** *The Truth From Above*                      *Ralph Vaughan Williams (1872-1958)*

*This is the truth sent from above, the truth of God, the God of love; therefore don't turn me from the door, but hearken all, both rich and poor. The first thing that I will relate, is that God Adam did create; the next thing which to you I tell - God then made Eve with him to dwell. And after that 'twas God's own choice to place them both in paradise, there to remain from evil free except they ate of such a tree. Thus we were heirs to endless woes till God the Lord did interpose; and so a promise soon did run: We'd be redeemed by God's own Son. And at this season of the year our blest Redeemer did appear, and here did live, and here did preach, and many thousands here did teach. O seek! O seek of God above that saving faith that works by love! If God is pleased to grant you this, you'll surely have eternal bliss. Arr. Tom Brand*

## **THE FIRST LESSON**

*read by Michael del Nin*

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

The man and his wife heard the sound of the LORD God walking in the garden at the time of the evening breeze, and they 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.”

*After each Reading, the Reader may say*  
The Word of the Lord.

*People*            ***Thanks be to God.***

**Anthem:**            *Adam Lay Ybounden*

Boris Ord

*Adam lay ybounden  
Bounden in a bond  
Four thousand winters  
Though he not too long  
And all was for an apple  
An apple that he took  
As clerkes finden written in their book  
Nay had the apple taken been  
The apple taken been  
Nay had never our lady  
Abeen heavenly queen  
Blessed be the time  
That apple taken was  
Therefore we moun singen  
Deo gracias, deo gracias!*

## **THE SECOND LESSON**

*read by John Magee*

*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.”

*After each Reading, the Reader may say*  
The Word of the Lord.

*People*        ***Thanks be to God.***

**Hymn # 60:**        *Creator Of the Stars Of Night*

*first verse sung by choir only*

1 Creator of the stars of night,  
your people’s everlasting light,  
O Christ, Redeemer of us all,  
we pray you hear us when we call.

2 *In sorrow that the ancient curse  
should doom to death a universe,  
you came, O Savior, to set free  
your own in glorious liberty.*

3 *When this old world drew on toward night,  
you came; but not in splendor bright,  
not as a monarch, but the child  
of Mary, blameless mother mild.*

4 *At your great Name, O Jesus, now  
all knees must bend, all hearts must bow:  
all things on earth with one accord,  
like those in heaven, shall call you Lord.*

5 *Come in your holy might, we pray,  
redeem us for eternal day;  
defend us while we dwell below  
from all assaults of our dread foe.*

6 *To God the Father, God the Son,  
and God the Spirit, Three in One,  
praise, honor, might, and glory be  
from age to age eternally.*

**THE THIRD LESSON**

*read by Rebecca Lambert*

*The prophet Isaiah foretells the coming of the Savior.*

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 Counselor, 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 onward and forevermore.  
The zeal of the LORD of hosts will do this.

*After each Reading, the Reader may say*

The Word of the Lord.

*People*      ***Thanks be to God.***

**Anthem:**      *This is the Record of John*      Orlando Gibbons (1583-1625)

*This is the record of John, when the Jews sent priests and Levites from Jerusalem to ask him, Who art thou? And he confessed and denied not, and said plainly, I am not the Christ. And they asked him, What art thou then? Art thou Elias? And he said, I am not. Art thou the prophet? And he answered, No. Then said they unto him, What art thou? that we may give an answer unto them that sent us. What sayest thou of thyself? And he said, I am the voice of him that crieth in the wilderness, Make straight the way of the Lord.*

## **THE FOURTH LESSON**

*read by William Worth Bracken*

*The peace that Christ will bring is foreshown.*

A shoot shall come out from the stump 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.  
With righteousness he shall judge the poor,  
and decide with equity for the meek of the earth;

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.

*After each Reading, the Reader may say*  
The Word of the Lord.

*People*            ***Thanks be to God.***

***Hymn # 81***            *Lo, How A Rose E'er Blooming*

- 1 Lo, 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 Savior,  
when half spent was the night.***
- 3 O Flower, whose fragrance tender  
with sweetness fills the air,  
dispel in glorious splendor  
the darkness everywhere;  
true man, yet very God,  
from sin and death now save us,***



*and share our every load.*

## THE FIFTH LESSON

*read by Mary Davis*

### *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, 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." 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.

*After each Reading, the Reader may say*

The Word of the Lord.

*People*            ***Thanks be to God.***

**Hymn # 265**        *The Angel Gabriel From Heaven Came*

- 1** *The angel Gabriel from heaven came,  
his wings as drifted snow, his eyes as flame;  
"All hail," said he, "thou lowly maiden Mary,  
most highly favored lady," Gloria!*
- 2** *"For know a blessèd Mother thou shalt be,  
all generations laud and honor thee,  
thy Son shall be Emmanuel, by seers foretold,  
most highly favored lady," Gloria!*
- 3** *Then gentle Mary meekly bowed her head,  
"To me be as it pleaseth God," she said,  
"my soul shall laud and magnify his holy Name."  
Most highly favored lady, Gloria!*
- 4** *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!*

## **THE SIXTH LESSON**

*read by Hunter Brown*

*St. Luke tells 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.

*After each Reading, the Reader may say*

The Word of the Lord.

*People*           ***Thanks be to God.***

**Anthem:**           *O Holy Night*

Adolphe Adam (1803-1856)

*O Holy night! The stars are brightly shining; It is the night of our dear Savior's birth. Long lay the world in sin and error pining 'Til He appears and the soul felt its worth. A thrill of hope the weary world rejoices, For yonder breaks a new and glorious morn. Fall on your knees; O hear the Angel voices! O night divine, O night when Christ was born, O night, O night, O 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 come 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, he guards us from all danger. Behold your King; before the lowly bend. Behold your King; before the lowly bend.*

## **THE SEVENTH LESSON**

*read by Holly Flor*

*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 Savior, 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 favors!”

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.

*After each Reading, the Reader may say*  
The Word of the Lord.

*People*           ***Thanks be to God.***

**Hymn # 96**           *Angels We Have Heard On High*

***1 Angels we have heard on high,  
singing sweetly through the night,  
and the mountains in reply  
echoing their brave delight.***

***Gloria in excelsis Deo.***

***2 Shepherds, why this jubilee?  
Why these songs of happy cheer?  
What great brightness did you see?  
What glad tidings did you hear?***

***Gloria in excelsis Deo.***

***3 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.***

***4 See him in a manger laid  
whom the angels praise above;  
Mary, Joseph, lend your aid,  
while we raise our hearts in love.***

***Gloria in excelsis Deo.***

**THE EIGHTH LESSON**

*read by the Reverend Dr. Lisa Hahneman*

*The wise men are led by the star 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.

*After each Reading, the Reader may say*  
The Word of the Lord.

*People*      **Thanks be to God.**

***An offering for the St. John's Music Program will be taken during this anthem,  
please be generous in your support.***

**Anthem**      *We Have Seen His Star*      Everett Titcomb (1884-1968)  
*"We have seen his star in the East and are come with our offerings to worship the Lord."*

**Hymn: # 119**      *As With Gladness Men of Old*

1 As with glad-ness men of old did the guid-ing star be-hold;  
2 As with joy-ful steps they sped to that low-ly man-ger-bed;  
3 As they of-fered gifts most rare at that man-ger rude and bare;  
4 Ho-ly Je-sus! ev-ery day keep us in the nar-row way;  
5 In the heaven-ly coun-try bright, need they no cre-a-ated light;

1 as with joy they hailed its light, lead - ing on - ward, beam - ing bright;  
 2 there to bend the knee be - fore him whom heaven and earth a - dore;  
 3 so may we with ho - ly joy, pure and free from sin's al - loy,  
 4 and, when earth - ly things are past, bring our ran - somed souls at last  
 5 thou its light, its joy, its crown, thou its sun which goes not down:

1 so, most gra - cious Lord, may we ev - er - more be led to thee.  
 2 so may we with will - ing feet ev - er seek the mer - cy - seat.  
 3 all our cost - liest trea - sures bring, Christ! to thee, our heaven - ly King.  
 4 where they need no star to guide, where no clouds thy glo - ry hide.  
 5 there for ev - er may we sing al - le - lu - ias to our King.

## THE NINTH LESSON

*read by the Reverend Dr. Geoff Hahneman*

*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.

*After each Reading, the Reader may say*  
The Word of the Lord.

*People*        ***Thanks be to God.***

**Hymn # 100**        *Joy To The world!*

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

***2 Joy to the world! the Savior reigns;***  
***let us our songs employ,***  
***while fields and floods, rocks, hills***  
***and plains,***  
***repeat the sounding joy.***

***3 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.***

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

## **THE FINAL PRAYER AND BLESSING**

*The Celebrant says to the people*  
The Lord be with you.

*People*        ***And with thy spirit.***

*Celebrant*    Let us pray.

*The Celebrant says the Collect.*

Merciful God, who sent thy messengers the prophets to preach repentance and prepare the way for our salvation: Give us grace to heed their warnings and forsake our sins, that we may greet with joy the coming of Jesus Christ our Redeemer; who liveth and reigneth with thee and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and for ever. ***Amen.***

*The Bishop when present, or the Priest, gives the blessing*

The peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, keep your hearts and minds in the knowledge and love of God, and of his Son Jesus Christ our Lord; and the blessing of God Almighty, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost, be among you, and remain with you always. *Amen.*

**Recessional Hymn # 87**      *Hark! The Herald Angels Sing*

*1 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!  
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 the Virgin's womb.  
Veiled in flesh the Godhead see;  
hail the incarnate Deity.  
Pleased as man with man to dwell;  
Jesus, our Emmanuel!*

*Refrain*

*3 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.  
Risen with healing in his wings,  
light and life to all he brings,  
hail, the Sun of Righteousness!  
hail, the heaven-born Prince of Peace!  
Refrain*

Let us go forth in the name of Christ.

*People*

*Thanks be to God.*

## Organ Postlude



## Reception

*There is a Reception in the Parish Hall following the Service.  
All are invited. Please join us and thank the members of the choir.*

### **Worship Ministers Today:**

The Reverend Dr. Geoffrey Hahneman, *Officiant*

Tom Brand, *Organist & Choirmaster*

Bob Futh, Natalie Dyer, *Usher*

MB Witt: *Altar Guild*

MB Witt, Corinne Johnson: *Hostesses*