A Festival of Nine Lessons and Carols



St Michael and All Angels, Great Torrington

17th December 2023

Welcome to this Festival of Nine Lessons and Carols which is based on the traditional service held each Christmas Eve since 1918 in the chapel of King's College, Cambridge. The origins of such a service can, however, be traced back to Truro Cathedral in 1880 when the then Bishop, The Right Rev. Edward White Benson, conducted the first formal service of "Nine Lessons and Carols" in an effort to attract Cornish revellers out of the pubs and into church — in which he was succesful, as more than 400 people attended the service in the temporary wooden structure being used during the time when the Victorian-gothic cathedral we all know today was under construction.

The congregation is invited to stand and join in those carols where the words are printed in full in this leaflet, following the rubric (*in italic*) where shown.

The Winkleigh Singers
Musical Director: Roland Smith

Organist: David Read BMus MMus FRCO

Priest in Charge
Fr. Steve Turner

Retiring collection in aid of St Michael's Church funds.
Please give generously.

Organ
Toccata Prelude on 'Wachet Auf' Francis Jackson
Chorale Prelude on 'Wachet Auf' Flor Peeters

Carol

Solo

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.

Choir only

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.

All

3 And through all his wondrous childhood
He would honour and obey,
Love and watch the lowly maiden,
In whose gentle arms he lay;
Christian children all must be
Mild, obedient, good as he.

4 For he is our childhood's pattern,
Day by day like us he grew;
He was little, weak, and helpless,
Tears and smiles like us he knew;
And he feeleth for our sadness,
And he shareth in 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 heaven 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;
Where like stars his children crowned
All in white shall wait around.

C F Alexander / Irby, H J Gauntlett, harm. A.H. Mann, Descant David Willcocks

Remain standing

Bidding Prayer

Carol

1 O come, O come, Emmanuel!
Redeem thy captive Israel
That into exile drear is gone
Far from the face of God's dear Son.
Rejoice! Rejoice! Emmanuel
Shall come to thee, O Israel.

2 O come thou Branch of Jesse! draw
The quarry from the lion's claw;
From the dread caverns of the grave,
From nether hell, thy people save.
Rejoice! Rejoice! Emmanuel
Shall come to thee, O Israel.

3 O come, O come thou Day-spring bright
Pour on our souls thy healing light;
Dispel the long night's ling'ring gloom
And pierce the shadows of the tomb.
Rejoice! Rejoice! Emmanuel
Shall come to thee, O Israel.

4 O come, thou Lord of David's Key!
The royal door fling wide and free;
Safeguard for us the heav'nward road,
And bar the way to death's abode.
Rejoice! Rejoice! Emmanuel
Shall come to thee, O Israel.

5 O come, O come, Adonaï,
Who in thy glorious majesty
From that high mountain clothed with awe
Gavest thy folk the elder law.
Rejoice! Rejoice! Emmanuel
Shall come to thee, O Israel.

15th cent. French processional; arr. David Willcox

First Lesson: Genesis 3: *In the Garden of Eden, God tells Adam that the serpent will be punished.*

Carol
Adam Lay Ybounden Medieval c. 15th century / Philip Ledger

Second Lesson: Genesis 22: *God promises Abraham that his children will be blessed.*

Carol
My Dancing Day Traditional / John Sanders

Third Lesson: Isaiah 9: *The prophet Isaiah foretells the birth of Christ.*

Carol
All What child is this, who, laid to rest,
On Mary's lap is sleeping?
Whom angels greet with anthems sweet,
While shepherds watch are keeping?
This, this is Christ the king
Whom shepherds guard and angels sing;
Haste, haste to bring him laud,
The babe, the son of Mary.

Choir only
Why lies he in such mean estate
Where ox and ass are feeding?
Good Christian, fear: for sinners here
The silent Word is pleading.
All
This, this is Christ the king…

All So bring him incense, gold, and myrrh,
Come, peasant, king, to own him;
The King of kings salvation brings,
Let loving hearts enthrone him
This, this is Christ the king…

William Chatterton Dix / Greensleeves arr. Philip Ledger

Fourth Lesson: Isaiah 11: *Isaiah speaks of the peace that Christ will bring the world.*

Carol

All

God rest you merry, gentlemen, let nothing you dismay,
For Jesus Christ our Saviour was born upon this day,
To save us all from Satan's power when we were gone astray.
O tidings of comfort and joy, comfort and joy, O tidings of comfort and joy.

Choir only

From God our Heavenly Father a blessed angel came,
And unto certain shepherds brought tidings of the same,
How that in Bethlehem was born the Son of God by name:

All

O tidings of comfort and joy, comfort and joy, O tidings of comfort and joy.

All

The shepherds at those tidings rejoicéd much in mind,
And left their flocks a-feeding, in tempest, storm and wind,
And went to Bethlehem straightway this blesséd babe to find:
O tidings of comfort and joy, comfort and joy, O tidings of comfort and joy.

Choir only

But when to Bethlehem they came, whereat this infant lay,
They found him in a manger, where oxen feed on hay;
His mother Mary kneeling, unto the Lord did pray:

All

O tidings of comfort and joy, comfort and joy, O tidings of comfort and joy.

All

Now to the Lord sing praises, all you within this place,
And with true love and brotherhood each other now embrace;
This holy tide of Christmas all others doth deface:
O tidings of comfort and joy, comfort and joy, O tidings of comfort and joy.

English traditional carol arr. David Willcocks

Fifth Lesson: St. Luke 1: *The Angel Gabriel appears to the Virgin Mary*

Carol

Gabriel's Message Sabine Baring Gould / Old Basque Noel arr. Philip Ledger

Sixth Lesson: St. Luke 2: *The birth of Jesus is described by St. Luke*

Carol

Love came down at Christmas Christina Rossetti / Adrian Vernon Fish

Carol

Joy to the world, the Lord is come!
Let earth receive her King;
Let every heart prepare Him room,
And Heav'n and nature sing,
And Heav'n and nature sing,
And Heav'n, and Heav'n, and nature sing.

Joy to the world, the Saviour reigns!
Let all their songs employ;
While fields and floods, rocks, hills and plains
Repeat the sounding joy,
Repeat the sounding joy,
Repeat, repeat, the sounding joy.

He rules the world with truth and grace,
And makes the nations prove
The glories of His righteousness,
And wonders of His love,
And wonders of His love,
And wonders, wonders, of His love.
Joy to the world, the Lord is come!

Isaac Watts / from *Voce di Melodia* arr. William Llewellyn

Seventh Lesson: St. Luke 2: *The shepherds journey to the manger.*

Carols

I saw three ships English Traditional arr. Philip Marshal

While shepherds watched their flocks by night,
All seated on the ground,
The angel of the Lord came down,
//And glory shone around//.

'Fear not', said he (for mighty dread
Had seized their troubled mind);
'Glad tidings of great joy I bring
//To you and all mankind//.

To you in David's town this day
Is born of David's line
A Saviour, who is Christ the Lord;
//And this shall be the sign//:

The heavenly Babe you there shall find
To human view displayed,
All meanly wrapped in swathing bands,
//And in a manger laid//.'

Thus spake the seraph; and forthwith
Appeared a shining throng
Of angels praising God, who thus
//Addressed their joyful song//:

All glory be to God on high,
And to the earth be peace;
Good-will henceforth from heaven to men
//Begin and never cease//.

Natham Tate / Lyngham, Thomas Jarman

Eighth Lesson: St. Matthew 2: *Three wise men follow the star and are led to Jesus.*

Carol

How brightly shines the Morning Star!
The nations see and hail afar
The Light in Judah shining.
Thou David's son of Jacob's race,
The Bridegroom, and the King of grace,
For thee our hearts are pining!
Lowly, holy,
Great and glorious, thou victorious
Prince of graces,
Filling all the heavenly places!

Though circled by the hosts on high,
He deigns to cast a pitying eye
Upon his helpless creatures;
The whole creation's Head and Lord,
By highest seraphim adored,
Assumed our very nature.
Jesu, grant us,
Through thy merit, to inherit
Thy salvation;
Hear, O hear our supplication.

Rejoice, ye heav'ns; thou earth, reply;
With praise, ye sinners, fill the sky,
For this his incarnation.
Incarnate God, put forth thy power,
Ride on, ride on, great Conqueror,
Till all know thy salvation.
Amen, Amen!
Alleluya, Alleluya!
Praise be given
Evermore by earth and heaven.

Wie schön leuchtet / Philipp Nicolai, harm. J.S. Bach

Watts' Cradle Song Isaac Watts / Philip Moore

All stand

Ninth Lesson: St. John 1: *St. John unfolds the mystery of Christ's birth.*

Carol

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:
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:
O come, let us adore him,
O come, let us adore him,
O come, let us adore him,
Christ the Lord!

3 Sing, choirs of angels,
Sing in exultation,
Sing, all ye citizens of heav'n above;
Glory to God
In the highest:
O come, let us adore him…

4 Yea, Lord, we greet thee,
Born on Christmas morning,
Jesu, to thee be glory giv'n;
Word of the Father,
Now in flesh appearing:
O come, let us adore him…

Text and tune attributed to John F. Wade / ADESTE FIIDELES arr. David Willcocks

Collect for Christmas Day

Lord's Prayer

Blessing

Carol

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 th'angelic host proclaim,
Christ is born in Bethlehem.
Hark! the herald-angels sing
Glory to the new-born King.

2 Christ, by highest heav'n adored,
Christ, the everlasting Lord,
Late in time behold Him come,
Offspring of a Virgin's womb
Veiled in flesh the Godhead see!
Hail, th'incarnate Deity!
Pleased as Man with man to dwell,
Jesus, our Emmanuel!
Hark! the herald-angels sing
Glory to the new-born King.

3 Hail, the Heav'n-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 man no more may die,
Born to raise the sons of earth,
Born to give them second birth.
Hark! the herald-angels sing
Glory to the new-born King.

Charles Wesley / MENDELSSOHN arr. David Willcocks

Organ

Toccata sur 'Il est né, le divin Enfant' Denis Bedard