A Festival of Nine Lessons and Carols

The Virgin Mary with the baby Jesus surrounded by saints and angels. Fresco in the Franciscan Church of the Annunciation in Ljubljana, Slovenia.

St Michael and All Angels, Great Torrington

22nd December 2024

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

Mulled wine and mince pies will be served after the service.

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

Organ
Once in Royal David's City *and* On Christmas Night Maureen Howell
Nun komm der Heiden Heiland B.W.V. 659 J.S.Bach

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
Adam Lay Ybounden Medieval c. 15th century / Boris Ord

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

Carol
Lo! he comes with clouds descending,
Once for favoured sinners slain;
Thousand thousand saints attending
Swell the triumph of his train:
Alleluya!
God appears, on earth to reign.

2. Every eye shall now behold him
Robed in dreadful majesty;
Those who set at naught and sold him,
Pierced and nailed him to the tree,
Deeply wailing
Shall the true Messiah see.

3. Those dear tokens of his passio
Still his dazzling body bears,
Cause of endless exultation
To his ransomed worshippers:
With what rapture
Gaze we on those glorious scars!

4. Yea, Amen! leat all adore thee,
High on thine eternal throne;
Saviour, take the power and glory;
Claim the kingdom for thine own:
O come quickly!
Alleluia! Come, Lord, come!

Charles Wesley / Hemsley, melody noted by T. Olivers, arr. David Read

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
Good Christian Men Rejoice
John Mason Neale / In dulci jubilo, 14th century German 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.*

Carol
I saw three ships English Traditional arr. Philip Marshal

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

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

3 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//:

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

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

6. 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

Long the night Alick Rowe / Ukranian melody arr. Roy Massey

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…

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

Our Father which art in heaven,
Hallowed be thy name,
Thy kingdom come,
Thy will be done in earth as it is in heaven,
Give us this day our daily bread:
And forgive us our trespasses,
As we forgive them that trespass against us:
And lead us not into temptation,
But deliver us from evil.
For thine is the kingdom, the power, and the glory,
For ever and ever.
Amen.

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

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

Postlude on a French Noël: *Un flambeau, Jeanette, Isabelle* Denis Bédard