



The Festival of Nine Lesson and Carols

with the combined choirs of All Saints and Holy Trinity

WELCOME

CAROL [Verses 1 & 2 choir only]

Please remain seated

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 Saviour holy.

Please stand

**3. And through all his wondrous
childhood
he would honour and obey,
love and watch the lowly maiden
in whose tender 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;
When like stars his children
crowned
All in white shall wait around.**

BIDDING PRAYER

We have come together, in our Father's presence, to celebrate the great festival of Christmas. In this service we hear and receive the good news of the birth of Christ and we offer to God our thanksgiving in the joyful singing of carols.

As we gather together in the name of Christ, we pray for the world he came to save:

for the Church, that it may be enabled in our generation to surrender anew to God's holy Wisdom, and bear the good news of God's love to a needy world;

for the world, which is already Christ's, that all its peoples may recognise their responsibility for its future, and may be inspired by the message of Christmas to work together for the establishment of justice, freedom and peace everywhere;

for all in special need, the sick, the anxious, the lonely, the fearful and the bereaved, that the peace and light of the Christ-child may bring hope and healing to all who sit in darkness.

We commend all whom we love, or who have asked for our prayers, to the unfailing mercy of our heavenly Father, and say together, as Christ himself 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 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.**

FIRST LESSON: Isaiah 9: 2, 6-7

Christ's birth and kingdom are foretold by the prophet Isaiah

The people walking in darkness
have seen a great light;
on those living in the land of deep darkness
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 Counsellor, Mighty God,
Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace.
Of the greatness 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

**Of the Father's love begotten,
ere the worlds began to be,
he is Alpha and Omega,
he the source, the ending he,
of the things that are, that have been,
and that future years shall see,
evermore and evermore.**

**O that birth forever blessed,
when the virgin, full of grace,
by the Holy Ghost conceiving,
bare the Saviour of our race;
and the babe, the world's Redeemer,
first revealed his sacred face,
evermore and evermore.**

**O ye heights of heaven, adore him;
angel hosts, his praises sing;
powers, dominions, bow before him
and extol our God and King:
let no tongue on earth be silent,
every voice in concert ring,
evermore and evermore.**

SECOND LESSON: Isaiah 40: 1-5, 9-11

God comforts his people and calls on them to prepare for redemption

Comfort, comfort my people,
says your God.
Speak tenderly to Jerusalem,
and proclaim to her
that her hard service has been completed,
that her sin has been paid for,
that she has received from the Lord's hand
double for all her sins.

A voice of one calling:
"In the wilderness prepare
the way for the Lord;
make straight in the desert
a highway for our God.
Every valley shall be raised up,
every mountain and hill made low;
the rough ground shall become level,
the rugged places a plain.
And the glory of the Lord will be revealed,
and all people will see it together.
For the mouth of the Lord has spoken."

You who bring good news to Zion,
go up on a high mountain.
You who bring good news to Jerusalem,
lift up your voice with a shout,
lift it up, do not be afraid;

say to the towns of Judah,
“Here is your God!”
See, the Sovereign Lord comes with power,
and he rules with a mighty arm.
See, his reward is with him,
and his recompense accompanies him.
He tends his flock like a shepherd:
He gathers the lambs in his arms
and carries them close to his heart;
he gently leads those that have young.

CAROL: *People look east* [Eleanor Farjeon; trad. Besançon]

THIRD 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 labour bears a son,
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.

CAROL

**1. O little town of Bethlehem,
how still we see thee lie!
Above thy deep and dreamless sleep
the silent stars go by.
Yet in thy dark streets shineth
the everlasting light;
the hopes and fears of all the years
are met in thee tonight.**

**2. O morning stars, together
proclaim the holy birth,
and praises sing to God the King,
and peace to men on earth.
For Christ is born of Mary;
and, gathered all above,
while mortals sleep, the angels keep
their watch of wondering love.**

**3. How silently, how silently,
the wondrous gift is given!
So God imparts to human hearts
the blessings of His heaven.
No ear may hear His coming,
but in this world of sin,
where meek souls will receive Him
still, the dear Christ enters in.**

**4. O holy Child of Bethlehem,
descend to us, we pray;
cast out our sin and enter in;
be born in us today.
We hear the Christmas angels,
the great glad tidings tell;
O come to us, abide with us,
our Lord Emmanuel!**

FOURTH LESSON: Luke 1: 26-35

The angel Gabriel greets Mary

In the sixth month of Elizabeth's pregnancy, 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 favoured! 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 favour with God. You will conceive and give birth to a son, and you are to call him 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 Jacob's descendants 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 on 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."

CAROL: *What child is this* [William Chatterton Dix; arr. Nielsen]

CAROL

**Angels from the realms of glory,
wing your flight o'er all the earth;
ye who sang creation's story
now proclaim Messiah's birth:**

*Come and worship Christ the new-born King,
come and worship, worship Christ the new-born king.*

**Shepherds in the field abiding,
watching o'er your flocks by night,
God with us is now residing;
yonder shines the infant Light:**

**Sages, leave your contemplations;
brighter visions beam afar;
seek the great Desire of Nations;
ye have seen his natal star:**

**Saints before the altar bending,
watching long in hope and fear,
suddenly the Lord, descending,
in His temple shall appear:**

**Though an infant now we view him,
he shall fill his Father's throne,
gather all the nations to him;
every knee shall then bow down:**

*Come and worship Christ the new-born King,
come and worship, worship Christ the new-born king.*

FIFTH LESSON: Matthew 1: 18-23

Matthew tells of the birth of Jesus.

This is how the birth of Jesus the Messiah came about: His mother Mary was pledged to be married to Joseph, but before they came together, she was found to be pregnant through the Holy Spirit. Because Joseph her husband was faithful to the law, and yet did not want to expose her to public disgrace, he had in mind to divorce her quietly.

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. 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."

All this took place to fulfill what the Lord had said through the prophet: "The virgin will conceive and give birth to a son, and they will call him Immanuel" (which means "God with us").

CAROL: *Suo Gan* 'Sleep my baby, little Jesus' [trad. Welsh; arr. Malcolm Archer]

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 their 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 guest room available for them.

CAROL

**1. 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.’**

SEVENTH LESSON: Luke 2: 8-17

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 that will cause great joy for all the people. Today in the town of David a Saviour has been born to you; he is the Messiah, 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 heaven,
and on earth peace to those on whom his favour 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. When they had seen him, they spread the word concerning what had been told them about this child,

CAROL: *The first nowell* [trad. arr. Bob Chilcott]

CAROL

**1. It came upon the midnight clear,
that glorious song of old,
from angels bending near the earth
to touch their harps of gold:
'Peace on the earth, good will to
men,
from heaven's all gracious King!
the world in solemn stillness lay
to hear the angels sing.**

**2. Still through the cloven skies they
come,
with peaceful wings unfurled;
and still their heavenly music floats
o'er all the weary world:
above its sad and lowly plains
they bend on hovering wing;
and ever o'er its Babel-sounds
the blessed angels sing.**

**3. Yet with the woes of sin and strife
the world has suffered long;
beneath the angel-strain have rolled
two thousand years of wrong;
and man, at war with man, hears
not
the love song which they bring:
O hush the noise, ye men of strife,
And hear the angels sing.**

**4. For lo, the days are hastening on,
by prophet-bards foretold,
when, with the ever circling years,
comes round the age of gold;
when peace shall over all the earth
its ancient splendours fling,
and the whole world give back the
song
which now the angels sing.**

EIGHTH LESSON: Matthew 2: 1-12

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 when it rose 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 Messiah 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 shepherd 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 search carefully 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 when it rose 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, frankincense and myrrh. And having been warned in a dream not to go back to Herod, they returned to their country by another route.

CAROL: *Gaudete* [16thc 'Piae Cantiones' arr. Stuart Donaldson]

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 all mankind. The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness has not overcome it.

There was a man sent from God whose name was John. He came as a witness to testify concerning that light, so that through him all might believe. He himself was not the light; he came only as a witness to the light.

The true light that gives light to everyone was coming into the world. He was in the world, and though the world was made through him, the world did not recognise him. He came to that which was his own, but his own did not receive him. Yet to all who did receive 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 Son, who came from the Father, full of grace and truth.

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:**

**3. Sing, choirs of angels,
sing in exultation,
sing, all ye citizens of heav'n
above!
Glory to God, in the highest:**

THE COLLECT

Almighty God,
you make us glad with the yearly remembrance
of the birth of your Son Jesus Christ:
grant that, as we joyfully receive him as our redeemer,
we may with sure confidence behold him
when he shall come to be our judge;
who is alive and reigns with you,
in the unity of the Holy Spirit,
one God, now and for ever.

Amen.

THE 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 with 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,
Ris'n 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.**

Please be seated.

Organ voluntary

Bach: *In dulci jubilo* [BWV 727]

Gordon Young: Postlude on *Adeste fidelis*

There will be a retiring collection for four charities which are supported by both our Parish Church Councils: Archway, Oxfordshire Homeless Movement, Wateraid UK, and Christians against Poverty. Please give generously.

Please stay behind at the end of the service to enjoy conversation, with mince pies and mulled wine provided by both our churches.

Christmas at All Saints and Holy Trinity

Sunday 24 December – Christmas Eve

8am	Said Communion (BCP)	Holy Trinity
10am	Service of carols and testimony	All Saints
10am	Parish Eucharist	Holy Trinity
2.30pm	Christingle Service	Holy Trinity
3.30pm	Christingle Service	Holy Trinity
4pm	Crib and Christingle Service	All Saints
4.30pm	Christingle Service	Holy Trinity
11.30pm	Midnight Mass	Holy Trinity

Monday 25 December – Christmas Day

8am	Said Communion (BCP)	Holy Trinity
10am	Christmas Day Holy Communion	All Saints
10am	Family Eucharist	Holy Trinity

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