



SERVICE OF LESSONS AND CAROLS

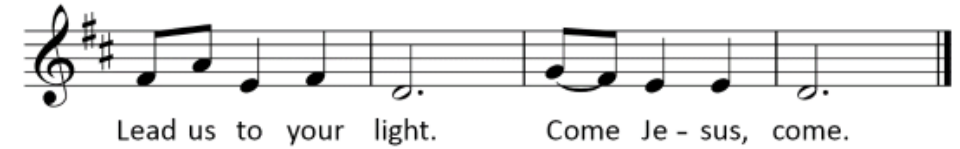
One of the great traditions of the Advent/Christmas season is the Service of Lessons and Carols, sung by choirs and congregations large and small in every part of the English-speaking world. This service is based on a service that takes place annually on Christmas Eve at King's College, Cambridge, England. It has been a tradition there since 1918.

As the creator of this service pointed out in that first service in 1918, the pattern and strength of this service resides with the lessons themselves and not with the music. "The main theme of the service is the development, through the Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments, of the loving purpose of God in sending his Son. The carols and hymns are simply here to guide us in our response to the word of God's promise."



GATHERING RITE: LEAD US TO YOUR LIGHT

Please stand. The leader introduces the refrain. The congregation repeats the refrain and sings it as indicated.



Lord, we await your coming to our world;
Bring us the gift of salvation. **Refrain**

Lord, you are hope and healing for our world;
Come, now, and bring us your good news. **Refrain**

Come, O come, O come, Emmanuel;
Come with us on earth here to dwell. **Refrain**

Rouse us from sleep, wake us from our slumber;
Banish the darkness of night. **Refrain**

Child of the light and love beyond all telling,
Fill our hearts with wonder and praise. **Refrain**

GREETING

M: The grace of our Lord ✕ Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with you.



LORD, HAVE MERCY

M: John the Baptist looked to Jesus as his hope of salvation even in difficult days. It is good for us to focus on Christ and wait patiently for his return.

Lord Jesus, you came to gather the nations into the peace of God's kingdom. Lord, have mercy.

(echoing the minister)



C: Lord, have mer - cy.

M: You come in Word and Sacrament to strengthen us in holiness. Christ, have mercy.



C: Christ, have mer - cy.

M: You will come in glory with salvation for your people. Lord, have mercy.



C: Lord, have mer - cy.

M: May almighty God, have mercy on us, forgive our sins, and bring us to everlasting life. Amen.



C: A - men.

ABSOLUTION

M: The almighty God has been merciful to us and has sent his Son to die for all. For his sake, he forgives us our sins and calls us from darkness to his marvelous light. Therefore, as a called servant of Christ and by his authority, I forgive you all your sins in the name of the Father and of the Son ✠ and of the Holy Spirit.

C: **Amen.**

EXHORTATION & PRAYER

M: Dear people of God, in the season of Advent, it is our responsibility and joy to prepare ourselves to hear again the message of the angels, to go to Bethlehem and see the Son of God lying in a manger.

Let us heed and hear in Holy Scripture the story of God's loving purpose from the time of our rebellion against him until the glorious redemption brought to us by his holy child, Jesus, and let us look forward to the yearly remembrance of his birth with hymns and songs of praise.

But first, let us pray for the needs of his whole world, for peace and justice on earth, for the mission and unity of the Church for which he died, for the people in our country and in this city, and especially for the brothers and sisters in our synod and in our own congregation.

And because he particularly loves them, let us remember in his name the poor and helpless, the cold, the hungry, and the oppressed, the sick and those who mourn, the lonely and unloved, and the aged and the little children as well as all those who do not know and love the Lord Jesus Christ.

Finally, let us praise God for the faith of Mary, mother of our Lord, and that whole multitude which no one can number, whose hope was in the Word made flesh, and with whom, in Jesus, we are one forevermore.

To sum up all these petitions, let us pray as Christ himself taught us:

C: **Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your name, your kingdom come, your will be done on earth as in heaven. Give us today our daily bread. Forgive us our sins, as we forgive those who sin against us. Lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil. For the kingdom, the power, and the glory are yours now and forever. Amen.**

LESSON:

GENESIS 3:1-15

Adam and Eve disobey God and are banished from the garden.

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'?"

²The woman said to the serpent, "We may eat fruit from the trees in the garden, ³but 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 certainly die," the serpent said to the woman. ⁵"For God knows that when you eat from it your eyes will be opened, and you will be like God, knowing good and evil."

⁶When 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. ⁷Then 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.

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

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

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

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

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

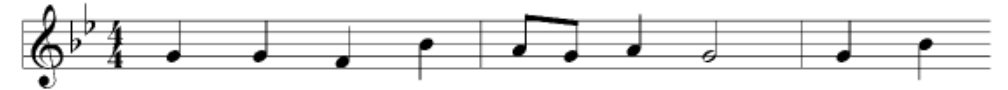
The woman said, "The serpent deceived me, and I ate."

¹⁴So the LORD God said to the serpent, "Because you have done this, cursed are you above all livestock and all wild animals! You will crawl on your belly and you will eat dust all the days of your life. ¹⁵And 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."

M: The Word of the Lord.

C: Thanks be to God!

CAROL: CW #28 (v. 1, 4-6), *LET THE EARTH NOW PRAISE THE LORD*



1 Let the earth now praise the Lord, Who has
2 What the fa - thers most de - sired, What the
3 A - bram's prom - ised great re - ward, Zi - on's
4 Wel - come, O my Sav - ior, now! Joy - ful,
5 Crush for me the ser - pent's head That, set



tru - ly kept his word And at last to
proph - ets' heart in - spired, What they longed for
help - er, Ja - cob's Lord— Him of two - fold
Lord, to you I bow. Come in - to my
free from doubt and dread, I may cling to



us did send Christ, the sin - ner's help and friend.
man - y a year Stands ful - filled in glo - ry here.
race be - hold— Tru - ly came, as long fore - told.
heart, I pray; Oh, pre - pare your - self a way.
you in faith, Safe - ly kept through life and death,

6 And, when you shall come again
As a glorious king to reign,
I with joy may see your face,
Freely ransomed by your grace.

LESSON:

ISAIAH 64:1-9

Oh, look on us, we pray,
for we are all your people.

God is called upon to come among us and deliver us from our iniquities.

Oh, that you would rend the heavens and come down,
that the mountains would tremble before you!

²As when fire sets twigs ablaze
and causes water to boil,
come down to make your name known to your enemies
and cause the nations to quake before you!

³For when you did awesome things that we did not expect,
you came down, and the mountains trembled before you.

⁴Since ancient times no one has heard,
no ear has perceived,
no eye has seen any God besides you,
who acts on behalf of those who wait for him.

⁵You come to the help of those who gladly do right,
who remember your ways.

But when we continued to sin against them,
you were angry.
How then can we be saved?

⁶All of us have become like one who is unclean,
and all our righteous acts are like filthy rags;
we all shrivel up like a leaf,
and like the wind our sins sweep us away.

⁷No one calls on your name
or strives to lay hold of you;
for you have hidden your face from us
and have given us over to our sins.

⁸Yet you, LORD, are our Father.
We are the clay, you are the potter;
we are all the work of your hand.

⁹Do not be angry beyond measure, LORD;
do not remember our sins forever.

M: The Word of the Lord.

C: **Thanks be to God!**

ADULT CHOIR CAROL: *THE KING SHALL COME*

*The King shall come when morning dawns
and light triumphant breaks,
when beauty gilds the eastern hills and
life to joy awakes.*

*Not as of old a little child,
to bear and fight and die,
but crowned with glory like the sun
that lights the morning sky.*

*The King shall come when morning dawns
and earth's dark night is past.
O haste the rising of that morn,
the day that e'er shall last;*

*and let the endless bliss begin,
by weary saints foretold,
when right shall triumph over wrong,
and truth shall be extolled.*

*Come quickly, come.
Come quickly, King of kings.
Come quickly, come.
Come quickly, King of kings.*

*The King shall come when morning dawns
and light and beauty brings.
Hail, Christ the Lord! Your people pray:
Come quickly, King of kings.*

Rejoice! O Israel! Come quickly, King of kings!

LESSON:

ISAIAH 35:1-10

God will prepare a way in the wilderness for his people.

The desert and the parched land will be glad;
 the wilderness will rejoice and blossom.
 Like the crocus, ² it will burst into bloom;
 it will rejoice greatly and shout for joy.
 The glory of Lebanon will be given to it,
 the splendor of Carmel and Sharon;
 they will see the glory of the LORD,
 the splendor of our God.

³ Strengthen the feeble hands,
 steady the knees that give way;
⁴ say to those with fearful hearts,
 "Be strong, do not fear;
 your God will come,
 he will come with vengeance;
 with divine retribution
 he will come to save you."

⁵ Then will the eyes of the blind be opened
 and the ears of the deaf unstopped.
⁶ Then will the lame leap like a deer,
 and the mute tongue shout for joy.
 Water will gush forth in the wilderness
 and streams in the desert.

⁷ The burning sand will become a pool,
 the thirsty ground bubbling springs.
 In the haunts where jackals once lay,
 grass and reeds and papyrus will grow.

⁸ And a highway will be there;
 it will be called the Way of Holiness;
 it will be for those who walk on that Way.
 The unclean will not journey on it;
 wicked fools will not go about on it.

⁹ No lion will be there,
 nor any ravenous beast;
 they will not be found there.
 But only the redeemed will walk there,
¹⁰ and those the LORD has rescued will return.
 They will enter Zion with singing;
 everlasting joy will crown their heads.
 Gladness and joy will overtake them,
 and sorrow and sighing will flee away.

M: The Word of the Lord!

C: Thanks be to God!

CAROL: CWS #703, MY SOUL IN STILLNESS WAITS

After the refrain is sung once, join to sing it. Then sing the refrain as indicated.

For you, O Lord, my soul in still-ness waits, tru-ly my hope is in you.



O Lord of Light, our only hope of glory,
 Your radiance shines in all who look to you.
 Come, light the hearts of all in dark and shadow. **Refrain**

O Spring of Joy, rain down upon our spirits.
 Our thirsty hearts are yearning for your Word.
 Come, make us whole, be comfort to our hearts. **Refrain**



O Root of Life, implant your seed within us,
 And in your advent draw us all to you,
 Our hope reborn in dying and in rising. **Refrain**

O Key of Knowledge, guide us in our pilgrimage,
 We ever seek, yet unfulfilled remain.
 Open to us the pathway of your peace. **Refrain**



LESSON:

ZEPHANIAH 3:14-18

CAROL: CW #7, REJOICE, REJOICE, BELIEVERS

The Lord takes away his punishment against his people.

Sing, Daughter Zion;
shout aloud, Israel!

Be glad and rejoice with all your heart,
Daughter Jerusalem!

¹⁵ The LORD has taken away your punishment,
he has turned back your enemy.

The LORD, the King of Israel, is with you;
never again will you fear any harm.

¹⁶ On that day
they will say to Jerusalem,

“Do not fear, Zion;
do not let your hands hang limp.

¹⁷ The LORD your God is with you,
the Mighty Warrior who saves.

He will take great delight in you;
in his love he will no longer rebuke you,
but will rejoice over you with singing.”

¹⁸ “I will remove from you
all who mourn over the loss of your appointed festivals,
which is a burden and reproach for you.

M: The Word of the Lord!

C: **Thanks be to God!**



1 Re - joice, re - joice, be - liev - ers, And let your
2 The watch - ers on the moun - tain Pro - claim the
3 You saints, who here in pa - tience Your cross and
4 A - rise, De - sire of na - tions; O Je - sus,



lights ap - pear; The eve - ning is ad - vanc - ing,
Bride - groom near; Go forth, as he ap - proach - es,
suf - f'ring bore, Shall live and reign for - ev - er
now ap - pear, The Hope and Ex - pec - ta - tion



And dark - er night is near. The Bride - groom
With al - le - lu - ias clear. The mar - riage
When sor - row is no more. A - round the
Of ev - 'ry Chris - tian here. With hearts and



is a - ris - ing And soon is draw - ing nigh. Up,
feast is wait - ing; The gates wide o - pen stand. A -
throne of glo - ry The Lamb you shall be - hold; In
hands up - lift - ed We plead, O Lord, to see The



pray and watch and wres - tle; At mid - night comes the cry.
rise, O heirs of glo - ry; The Bride - groom is at hand.
tri - umph lay be - fore him Your shin - ing crowns of gold.
day of earth's re - demp - tion That sets your peo - ple free.

ADVENT COMMENTARY:

Do not be afraid, your prayer has been heard

LESSON:

LUKE 1:5-25

An angel announces the birth of John, the forerunner of the Messiah.

In the time of Herod king of Judea there was a priest named Zechariah, who belonged to the priestly division of Abijah; his wife Elizabeth was also a descendant of Aaron. ⁶ Both of them were righteous in the sight of God, observing all the Lord’s commands and decrees blamelessly. ⁷ But they were childless because Elizabeth was not able to conceive, and they were both very old.

⁸ Once when Zechariah’s division was on duty and he was serving as priest before God, ⁹ he was chosen by lot, according to the custom of the priesthood, to go into the temple of the Lord and burn incense. ¹⁰ And when the time for the burning of incense came, all the assembled worshipers were praying outside.

¹¹ Then an angel of the Lord appeared to him, standing at the right side of the altar of incense. ¹² When Zechariah saw him, he was startled and was gripped with fear. ¹³ But the angel said to him: “Do not be afraid, Zechariah; your prayer has been heard. Your wife Elizabeth will bear you a son, and you are to call him John. ¹⁴ He will be a joy and delight to you, and many will rejoice because of his birth, ¹⁵ for he will be great in the sight of the Lord. He is never to take wine or other fermented drink, and he will be filled with the Holy Spirit even before he is born. ¹⁶ He will bring back many of the people of Israel to the Lord their God. ¹⁷ And he will go on before the Lord, in the spirit and power of Elijah, to turn the hearts of the parents to their children and the disobedient to the wisdom of the righteous—to make ready a people prepared for the Lord.”

¹⁸ Zechariah asked the angel, “How can I be sure of this? I am an old man and my wife is well along in years.”

¹⁹ The angel said to him, “I am Gabriel. I stand in the presence of God, and I have been sent to speak to you and to tell you this good news. ²⁰ And now you will be silent and not able to speak until the day this happens, because you did not believe my words, which will come true at their appointed time.”

²¹ Meanwhile, the people were waiting for Zechariah and wondering why he stayed so long in the temple. ²² When he came out, he could not speak to them. They realized he had seen a vision in the temple, for he kept making signs to them but remained unable to speak.

²³ When his time of service was completed, he returned home. ²⁴ After this his wife Elizabeth became pregnant and for five months remained in seclusion. ²⁵ “The Lord has

done this for me,” she said. “In these days he has shown his favor and taken away my disgrace among the people.”

M: The Word of the Lord!

C: Thanks be to God!

CAROL: CW #20, WHEN ALL THE WORLD WAS CURSED



1 When all the world was cursed By Mo - ses’ con - dem -
2 Be - fore Saint John was born, He leaped in joy - ful
3 Be - hold the Lamb of God, Who bears the world’s trans -
4 Oh, grant, dear Lord of love, That we re - ceive, re -



na - tion, Saint John the Bap - tist came With
meet - ing, Con - fess - ing him as Lord Whose
gres - sion, Whose sac - ri - fice re - moves The
joic - ing, The word pro - claimed by John, Our



words of con - so - la - tion. With true fore - run - ner’s
moth - er he was greet - ing. By Jor - dan’s roll - ing
dev - il’s dread op - pres - sion. Be - hold the Lamb of
true re - pent - ance voic - ing, That glad - ly we may



zeal The great - er one he named, And him, as
stream, A new E - li - jah bold, He tes - ti -
God, Who takes a - way our sin, Who for our
walk Up - on our Sav - ior’s way Un - til we



yet un - known, As Sav - ior he pro - claimed.
fied of him Whom proph - ets had fore - told.
peace and joy Will full a - tone - ment win.
live with him In his e - ter - nal day.

LESSON:

LUKE 1:26-38

The angel Gabriel announces that Jesus will be conceived by the Holy Spirit and born of the Virgin Mary.

In the sixth month of Elizabeth’s pregnancy, 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 conceive and give birth to a son, and you are to call him 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 Jacob’s descendants 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 on you, and the power of the Most High will overshadow you. So the holy one to be born will be called^(b) 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 unable to conceive is in her sixth month. ³⁷ For no word from God will ever fail.”

³⁸ “I am the Lord’s servant,” Mary answered. “May your word to me be fulfilled.” Then the angel left her.

M: The Word of the Lord!

C: Thanks be to God!



CAROL: CW #24, THE ANGEL GABRIEL FROM HEAVEN CAME

1 The an - gel Ga - bri - el from heav - en came, His
 2 “I come from heav’n to tell the Lord’s de - cree: A
 3 Then gen - tle Mar - y meek - ly bowed her head; “To
 4 Of her Im - man - u - el, the Christ, was born In

wings as drift - ed snow, his eyes as flame; “All
 bless - ed vir - gin moth - er you shall be. Your
 me be as it pleas - es God,” she said. “My
 Beth - le - hem, all on a Christ - mas morn, And

hail,” said he to meek and low - ly Mar - y, “Most
 Son shall be Im - man - u - el, by seers fore - told, Most
 soul shall praise and mag - ni - fy his ho - ly name.” Most
 Chris - tian folk through - out the world will ev - er say, “Most

high - ly fa - vored maid - en.” Glo - ri - a!
 high - ly fa - vored maid - en.” Glo - ri - a!
 high - ly fa - vored maid - en, Glo - ri - a!
 high - ly fa - vored maid - en.” Glo - ri - a!

OFFERING

Please take a moment to sign and pass along the friendship registers located at the end of each row if you have not done so already.

Please stand.

PRAYER OF THE CHURCH

M: O God, you make us glad with the expectation of the coming of your one and only Son, our Lord Jesus Christ. Grant that we, who with joy receive him as our Redeemer, may without fear behold him when he will come to be our judge, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.

C: Amen.

LORD'S BLESSING

M: Go forth into the world in peace, be of good courage, hold fast to that which is good, render to no one evil for evil, strengthen the fainthearted, support the weak, help the afflicted, honor all people, love and serve the Lord, rejoicing in the power of the Holy Spirit.

And the blessing of God Almighty – the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit – be upon you and remain with you forever.

C: Amen.

Be Seated.

REJOICE
IN THE LORD
ALWAYS

STUDENT CLOSING CAROL: LOOK TO THE LIGHT

*Look to the light, the candle of love.
Jesus is coming. Jesus is coming.
Look to the Light, God's gift from above.
Jesus is coming. Jesus is coming.
Put away anger and open your heart.
Keep your light burning and let Christmas start.
Look to the light, the candle of love.
Jesus is coming. Jesus is coming soon.*

*People arise! Prepare the way!
Let your music greet the day.
Let all the earth break forth with singing.
Let all the mountains and valleys start ringing.
People arise and share the news:
Christ the Light is coming soon.
Christ is coming soon.*

*Look to the light, the candle of love.
Jesus is coming. Jesus is coming.
Look to the Light, God's gift from above.
Jesus is coming. Jesus is coming.
Put away anger and open your heart.
Keep your light burning and let Christmas start.
Look to the light, the candle of love.
Jesus is coming. Jesus is coming soon.
Coming soon! Coming soon!*

