

The Festival of Nine Lessons and Carols

Sunday 20 December 2020, 6.30pm



Streamed online at www.facebook.com/SolihullParish
and the Solihull Parish YouTube channel.

The Festival of Nine Lessons and Carols was first drawn up by Edward Benson when Bishop of Truro for use in his cathedral. It was simplified and adapted for use in the chapel of King's College, Cambridge, on Christmas Eve, 1918, by the Dean, Eric Milner White.

A revision of the Order of Service was made in 1919, involving rearrangement of the lessons, and from that date the service has always begun with the hymn 'Once in Royal David's City'.

The service is most famous from its broadcasts by King's College Cambridge where the carols have remained largely unchanged, although new ones were introduced by successive organists.

Opening Carol

The first verse is sung solo, but please do join in with the other two verses.

Solo

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.

**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.**

**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.**

*Words – Cecil Francis Alexander; Melody – Henry John Gauntlett
Harmony – Arthur H Mann; Descant – David Willcocks*

Welcome and Opening Prayers – Rev Simon Marshall

Please join with Fr Simon in saying the Lord's Prayer.

**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, the power and the glory,
for ever and ever.
Amen.**

First Lesson: Genesis 3: 8-14 – read by two choristers from St Alphege Church

God tells sinful Adam that he has lost the life of paradise

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

Thanks be to God.

Choir Carol

Adam lay ybounden,
bounden in a bond;
four thousand winter
thought he not too long.

And all was for an apple,
an apple that he took,
as clerkes finden
written in their book.

Ne had the apple taken been,
the apple taken been,
ne had never our lady
a-been heavene queen.

Blessed be the time
that apple taken was,
therefore we moun singen,
Deo Gracias!

Words – anon 15th Century; Music – Peter Warlock

Second Lesson: Genesis 22: 15-18 – read by The Worshipful the Mayor of Solihull, Councillor Stuart Davis

The promise to Abraham

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.'

Thanks be to God.

Choir Carol

This is the truth sent from above,
The truth of God, the God of love:
Therefore don't turn me from your door,
But hearken all, both rich and poor.

The first thing which I do relate
Is that God did man create,
The next thing which to you I'll tell,
Woman was made with man to dwell.

Thus we were heirs to endless woes,
Till God the Lord did interpose,
And so a promise soon did run,
That he would redeem us by his Son.

English traditional carol arranged by R. Vaughan Williams

Third Lesson: Isaiah 9: 2, 6-7 – read by Joe Cooper, Director of Music

The prophecy of the Messiah's birth

The people who walked in darkness have seen a great light; they that dwell in the land of the shadow of death, upon them hath the light shined. For unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given: and the government shall be upon his shoulder: and his name shall be called Wonderful, Counsellor, the mighty God, the everlasting Father, the Prince of Peace. Of the increase of his government and peace there shall be no end, upon the throne of David, and upon his kingdom, to order it, and to establish it with judgement and with justice from henceforth even for ever. The zeal of the LORD of hosts will perform this.

Thanks be to God.

Choir Carol

A spotless Rose is blowing,
Sprung from a tender root,
Of ancient seers' foreshowing,
Of Jesse promised fruit;
Its fairest bud unfolds to light
Amid the cold, cold winter,
and in the dark mid-night.

The Rose which I am singing,
Whereof Isaiah said,
Is from its sweet root springing
In Mary, purest Maid;
For through our God's great love and
might
The Blessed Babe she bare us
In a cold, cold winter's night.

Words: 14th Century; Music: Herbert Howells

Congregational Carol

**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.**

**How silently, how silently,
the wondrous gift is giv'n!
so God imparts to human hearts
the blessings of his heav'n.
No ear may hear his coming;
but in this world of sin,
where meek souls will receive him, still
the dear Christ enters in.**

**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.**

Words: Phillips Brooks; Tune: Forest Green

Fourth Lesson: Isaiah 11: 1-9 – read by David Roots, Solihull Churches Action on Homelessness

The Prophecy of the Messiah's Kingdom of Peace

A shoot shall come out from the stock 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.

He shall not judge by what his eyes see, or decide by what his ears hear; but with righteousness he shall judge the poor, and decide with equity for the meek of the earth; he shall strike the earth with the rod of his mouth, and with the breath of his lips he shall kill the wicked. Righteousness shall be the belt around his waist, and faithfulness the belt around his loins.

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.

Thanks be to God.

Choir Carol

1. Now the holly bears a berry as white as the milk,
And Mary bore Jesus, who was wrapped up in silk:
Chorus: And Mary bore Jesus Christ our Saviour for to be,
And the first tree in the greenwood, it was the holly.
Holly! Holly!
And the first tree in the greenwood, it was the holly!

2. Now the holly bears a berry as green as the grass,
And Mary bore Jesus, who died on the cross:
Chorus: And Mary bore Jesus Christ our Saviour for to be,
And the first tree in the greenwood, it was the holly.
Holly! Holly!
And the first tree in the greenwood, it was the holly!

3. Now the holly bears a berry as black as the coal,
And Mary bore Jesus, who died for us all:
Chorus: And Mary bore Jesus Christ our Saviour for to be,
And the first tree in the greenwood, it was the holly.
Holly! Holly!
And the first tree in the greenwood, it was the holly!

4. Now the holly bears a berry, as blood is it red,
Then trust we our Saviour, who rose from the dead:
Chorus: And Mary bore Jesus Christ our Saviour for to be,
And the first tree in the greenwood, it was the holly.
Holly! Holly!
And the first tree in the greenwood, it was the holly!

*Words – Cornish (Traditional);
Music – John Rutter*

Fifth Lesson: Luke 1: 26-38 – read by Audrey Thompson, Town centre chaplaincy team

The Birth of Jesus Foretold

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, favoured 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 favour 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 for ever, 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. And now, your relative Elizabeth in her old age has also conceived a son; and this is the sixth month for her who was said to be barren. For nothing will be impossible with 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.

Thanks be to God.

Choir Carol

Of one who is so fair and bright
Velut maris stella, [Like a star of the sea]
Brighter than the day is light,
Parens et puella: [Both mother and maiden]
I cry to thee, thou see to me,
Lady, pray thy Son for me,
Tam pia, [so pure]
That I may come to thee.
Maria! [Mary]
All this world was forlorn,
Eva peccatrice, [because of Eve, a sinner]
Till our Lord was yborn,
De te genetrice. [through you, his mother]
With ave it went away,
Darkest night, and comes the day
Salutis; [of salvation]
The well springeth out of thee.
Virtutis. [of virtue]
Lady, flower of everything,
Rosa sine spina, [Rose without thorn]
Thou bare Jesu, heaven's king,
Gratia divina: [by divine grace]
Of all thou bearest the prize,
Lady, queen of paradise
Electa: [chosen]
Maid mild, mother
es effecta. [you are made]

Words: Anon; Music: Britten

Congregational Carol

Away in a manger, no crib for a bed
The little Lord Jesus lay down His sweet head
The stars in the bright sky looked down where He lay
The little Lord Jesus asleep on the hay.

Be near me, Lord Jesus; I ask Thee to stay
Close by me forever, and love me I pray
Bless all the dear children in Thy tender care
And fit us for Heaven to live with Thee there.

Sixth Lesson: Luke 2: 1-7 – read by Pam Price, Chair of Governors, Federation of St Alphege Schools

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. This was the first registration and was taken while Quirinius was governor of Syria. 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.

Thanks be to God.

Choir Carol

Procedenti puero
Eya, nobis annus est!
Virginis ex utero
Gloria! Laudes! Deus homo factus est et
immortalis.

Sine viri semine
Eya, nobis annus est!
Natus est de virgine (Gloria...)

Sine viri copia
Eya, nobis annus est!
Natus est ex Maria (Gloria...)

In hoc festo determino
Eya, nobis annus est!
Benedicamus Domino! (Gloria...)

A boy comes forth,
eya, this is our time,
from the womb of a virgin.
Glory! Praise! God is made man and immortal.

Without the seed of a man
eya, this is our time,
he is born of a virgin. (Glory!)

Without the means of a man,
eya, this is our time,
he is born of Mary (Glory!)

On this appointed feast,
eya, this is our time,
let us bless the Lord.
Glory!

Benedicamus Domino by Peter Warlock

Congregational Carol

**Silent night, holy night
All is calm, all is bright
Round yon virgin Mother and Child
Holy infant so tender and mild
Sleep in heavenly peace
Sleep in heavenly peace.**

**Silent night, holy night!
Shepherds quake at the sight!
Glories stream from heaven afar;
Heavenly hosts sing Alleluia!
Christ the Saviour is born!
Christ the Saviour is born!**

Seventh Lesson: Luke 2: 8-16 - read by Julian Knight, MP

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 Saviour, 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 favours!' 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.

Thanks be God

Choir Carol

Going through the hills on a night all starry, on the way to Bethlehem,
far away I heard a shepherd boy piping, on the way to Bethlehem.

Angels in the sky brought this message nigh:

"Dance and sing for joy that Christ the new-born King is come to bring us peace on earth
and he's lying cradled there at Bethlehem."

"Tell me, shepherd boy piping tunes so merrily, on the way to Bethlehem,
who will hear your tunes on these hills so lonely, on the way to Bethlehem?"

Angels in the sky brought this message nigh:

"Dance and sing for the joy that Christ the new-born King is come to bring peace on earth
and He's lying cradled there at Bethlehem."

"None may hear my pipes on these hills so lonely, on the way to Bethlehem;
but a King will hear me play sweet lullabies when I get to Bethlehem."
Angels in the sky came down from on high
hovered o'er the manger where the babe was lying cradled in the arms of his mother Mary,
sleeping now at Bethlehem.

"Where is this new King, shepherd boy piping merrily, is he there at Bethlehem?
I will find him soon by the star shining brightly in the sky o'er Bethlehem."
Angels in the sky brought this message nigh:
dance and sing for joy that Christ the new-born King is come to bring us peace on earth,
and he's lying cradled there at Bethlehem.

"May I come with you, shepherd boy piping merrily, come with you to Bethlehem?
Pay my homage too at the new King's cradle, is it far to Bethlehem?"
Angels in the sky brought this message nigh:
"Dance and sing for joy that Christ the infant King is born this night in lowly stable yonder,
born for you at Bethlehem."

Music and words: John Rutter

Congregational Carol

**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.'**

**'All glory be to God on high,
and to the earth be peace;
good-will henceforth from heaven to men
begin and never cease.'**

Words – Nahum Tate; Music – Este's Psalter

Eighth Lesson: Matthew 2: 1-11 – read by Tom Brassil, Chairman, Solihull Welcome

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.

Thanks be to God.

Choir Carol

Here is the little door.
Lift up the latch; O lift!
We need not wander more, but enter with our gift.
Our gift of finest Gold, Gold that was never bought nor sold;
Myrrh to be strewn about his bed;
Incense in clouds about his head;
all for the Child that stirs not in his sleep,
but Holy slumber holds with ass and sheep.

Bend low about his bed: for each he has a gift!
See how his eyes awake - lift up your hands! O lift!
For Gold he gives a keen-edged sword (defend with it thy little Lord)!
For incense, smoke of battle red.
Myrrh for the honoured happy dead.
Gifts for his children, terrible and sweet,
Touched by such tiny hands and oh! such tiny feet.

Text: Frances Chesterton (wife of G.K. Chesterton);

Music: Herbert Howells

Congregational Carol

**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.**

**God of God,
Light of Light,
Lo! he abhors not the Virgin's womb;
Very God,
Begotten, not created.
O come...**

**Sing, choirs of angels,
Sing in exultation,
Sing, all ye citizens of heaven above;
'Glory to God
In the highest.'
O come...**

*Words – F Oakeley, W Brooke; Melody – John Francis Wade;
Arrangement – David Willcocks*

Ninth Lesson: John 1:1-14 - read by Rev Sue Chandler

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.

Thanks be to God.

Congregational Carol

**Ding dong! Merrily on high in heav'n the bells are ringing:
Ding dong! Verily the sky is riv'n with angel singing.
Gloria, Hosanna in excelsis!**

**E'en so here below, below, let steeple bells be swungen,
And i-o, i-o, i-o, by priest and people sungen.
Gloria, Hosanna in excelsis!**

**Pray you, dutifully prime your matin chime, ye ringers;
May you beautifully rime your evetime song, ye singers
Gloria, Hosanna in excelsis!**

*Words – G.R. Woodward
Music – Martin Wilby*

Reflection – Linda Hicks, Director of Children’s and Families Ministry

It was at night, in the dark, that Jesus was born, and a brilliant star, so they say, stood over Bethlehem. Each of us must sometimes know what it is like to lie awake in the dark, longing for the dawn. For many the dawn, when it comes, doesn’t put an end to the darkness. It may be the darkness of a sudden and terrible loss, the darkness of bewilderment and grief. Or the darkness, perhaps, of the hospital bed or the terminal illness. Or it may be the darkness of inner fears and anxieties.

“The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness has not quenched it.”

I don’t know what form darkness may take for you at Christmas. But I do know this. If you can see beyond the crib and the candles and the angels and the stories of shepherds and wise men, if you can recognise that child for who he is and trust the man he became, then he will lead you to God. The God who speaks our language: the language of human love and human suffering. And then you will learn – perhaps for the first time, perhaps simply more deeply than ever before – that the darkness of human pain and loss is no less real, but that it is illuminated and ultimately transformed by the light of the steadfast love of God.

God has spoken. And in Jesus Christ, his Word made flesh, he invites us to trust him and choose to dwell in the house of love.

Michael Mayne: “Responding to the Light”

Congregational Carol

**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 the angelic host proclaim,
Christ is born in Bethlehem.
Hark! the herald angels sing
glory to the newborn King.**

**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 newborn King.**

**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 newborn King.**

Words – C. Wesley; Music – F. B. Mendelssohn; Descant – David Willcocks

Closing Prayers and Blessing – Rev Simon Marshall

Organ Voluntary: In Dulci Jubilo BWV 729 – J.S. Bach

In place of a retiring collection at the end of the service if you wish to make a donation to support the ministry of St Alphege Church as well as the upkeep and maintenance of the building, you can do so online on our website or at this link <https://tinyurl.com/y85c8dg2>.

Rector: The Revd Canon Jane Kenchington
Team Vicar of St Michael's: The Revd Simon Marshall
Associate Priest: The Revd Sue Chandler

Director of Music: Joe Cooper
Organist: Stephen Perrins



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