

Anglican & United Church Ministries

**Home of St. Mary the Virgin Anglican
& Vegreville United Churches**

A FESTIVAL OF NINE LESSONS & CAROLS



December 21st, 2025

Church Minister: The Rev. Laureta Blondin

Mrs. Ellen Johnstone,

Vegreville Handbell Choir

Holy Trinity Ukrainian Catholic Choir

St. John's Lutheran Church Choir & Friends

'Companions on the Journey' Worship Music Team



Welcome in the name of Christ to the Ecumenical Shared Ministry of St. Mary the Virgin Anglican Church and Vegreville United Church.

We thank you for joining us for this special evening of worship through scripture and song. We pray that you enjoy your time with us and that your spirit is enriched as we prepare for the birth of our Saviour. We believe that no matter who you are, or where you are on life's journey God welcomes you... and so do we! If you are visiting us, a warm welcome to you. We pray that you and your family are blessed and experience Christ's love in this evening's service. God's richest blessings be on you!

The congregations of St. Mary the Virgin Anglican Church and Vegreville United Church are committed to the ongoing work of being fully affirming churches. Inspired by the radical hospitality of Jesus Christ, we welcome everyone into the life of our congregations, without exception to ability, age, race, place of origin, ancestry, marital status, gender identity, sexual orientation, life stage, or any other basis by which a person can be pre-judged. You are invited to join us at this intersection of faith and life as we share God's grace with one another and the world through worship and ministries of healing, reconciliation, and justice.

The congregations of Vegreville United Church and St. Mary the Virgin Anglican Church respectfully acknowledge that we are located on ancestral Treaty Six Territory land ᓂᓴᓴᓴᓴᓴᓴ (Siksikaitsitapi), a traditional gathering place, travelling route and home for diverse indigenous peoples including the Nehiyawak (Cree), Tsuut'ina (Sarcee), Niitsitapi (Blackfoot), Métis, Nakota Sioux, Haudenosaunee (Iroquois), Dënë Sųłıně (Chipewyan), Anishinaabe (Ojibway-Saulteaux), Inuk (Inuit), and many others whose histories, languages and cultures continue to influence our vibrant local communities. We give thanks for their hospitality and the opportunity to share common ground.

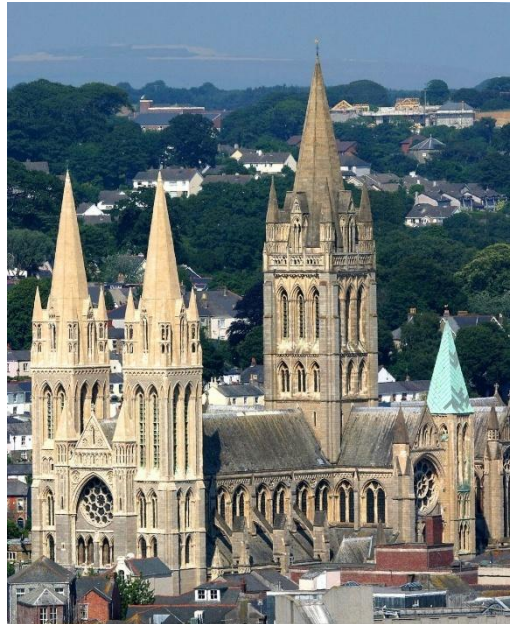
Children are welcome at all our services! We believe it is very important for families to worship together. Don't feel your child must be absolutely quiet or still, for we are glad to have children — and all their wiggles, giggles, and squiggles — as part of our community and worship life! After all... as an old saying goes, "faith is caught, not taught!"

history of the service of lessons & carols

The Service of Lessons and Carols had its origin at Truro Cathedral (England) on Christmas Eve, 1880, when the Bishop of Truro, the Right Reverend F.W. Benson, developed a service of scripture readings and supporting carols. Some 38 years later in 1918, this format was adapted for Christmas at King's College Chapel, Cambridge, England.

The service was first broadcast in 1928, and with the exception of 1930, 2020 and 2021, it has been broadcast annually on BBC, even during the Second World War, when the ancient glass had been removed from the Chapel (some say you could even hear the tarpaper flapping in the background over the radio). Since then, there have been millions of listeners worldwide. And as the annual BBC broadcast from King's College further helped to popularize the Service of Lessons and Carols, which Cathedrals and small churches throughout the world quickly duplicated.

The service is usually held sometime between the first Sunday of Advent and Christmas Eve but also sometimes in the season of Christmas. The heart of the service continues to this day — that is, the retelling of the Christians' story of faith from the fall of Adam to the coming of the Word Incarnate following a format of nine lessons, which include biblical passages from the Old and New Testaments, interspersed with carols sung by choirs, soloists and the congregation.



Truro Cathedral, Cornwall, England
Photo by: Carrek Ltd., UK

GREETINGS FROM OUR MINISTER

Thank you for joining us for this wonderful evening. This is a great act of worship, and I am so glad that you chose to join us. This evening's service is an opportunity to prepare our hearts for the birth of our saviour, Jesus and all the other celebrations of Christmas.

I also want to warmly invite you to join us for our Family Christmas Eve service with Holy Communion and lots of Christmas music at 7:00 PM on Wednesday evening as well as our Christmas Day service with a quiet and reverent service of Holy Communion (no music) at 10:00 AM. Finally, I hope you enjoy tonight's service. And in closing, I wish you and all your family a very happy Christmas and a peaceful and healthy New Year.

MUSIC VOLUNTARIES

- § **Vegreville Handbell Choir:** Lisa Topilko, Director; Ken Allan, Annette Schieck, Ashley Henderson, Bryan Butler, Dorothy Casey, Holly Cependa, Joanne Veldkamp, Lindsay Petro, Martha Die, Tracy Stewart
- § **Companions on the Journey:** Lisa Topilko, Director; Jim Bragg
- § **Organist:** Ellen Johnstone
- § **Pianist:** Colleen Albert
- § **St. John's Lutheran Church Choir:** Colleen Albert, Director;
SOPRANOS: Emily Booth, Debbie Fedoruk, Jane Hoffman, Julie Kim, Annette Schieck, Becky Yurko, Linda Ziprick. *ALTOS:* Martha Die, Elizabeth Nawrot, Julie Thompson, Ashley Ziprick.
BARITONES: Bryan Butler, Tim Nawrot, Hugh Ziprick
- § **Holy Trinity Ukrainian Catholic Church Choir:** Larissa Bombak, Director; Khrystyna Kohut, Soloist

prelude music by ELLEN JOHNSTONE

§ **O Holy Night** (original title: *Cantique de Noël*)

Text: Placide Cappeau;

Music: Adolphe Adam; arr.: Alfred Judson.

§ **Silent Night**

Music: Melody Franz Xavier Gruber (1787-1863);

arr.: Lennie Carroll.

§ **What Child is This**

Text: William Chatterton Dix (1837-1898)

Music: English Melody - GREENSLEEVES

§ **Star of the East**

Text: Alfred Hans Zoller English trans.: George Cooper (1890)

Music: Amanda Kennedy (1883)

prelude music by the VEGREVILLE HANDBELL CHOIR

§ **O Come, All Ye Faithful**

Latin Words & Music: John Francis Wade (1743); Translated by Frederick Oakeley & others

Arranged by Douglas E. Wagner

§ **O Come, Little Children**

Music: Johann A.P. Schultz (1747-1800)

Arranged by Charles Maggs

§ **On Christmas Night All Christians Sing**

Music: Traditional English — Sussex Carol

Arranged by Martha Lynn Thompson

§ **Patapan**

Music: Traditional French — Burgundian Carol

Arranged by James L. Fisher

postlude music by COLLEEN ALBERT

§ **O Holy Night** (original title: *Cantique de Noël*)

Text: Placide Cappeau;

Music: Adolphe Adam

All music for this evening's service is provided under
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All bible scripture readings for this evening's service are taken from the
New Revised Standard Version, Updated Edition (NRSVUE).

A FEW COURTESIES

To help all who attend this service find it to be a beautiful and meaningful experience, we ask that you please:

- § Ensure your phone is turned off, and that you refrain from any photography or recording during the service.
- § Follow the invitations to stand or sit as you are able, and know that you always are free to sit, if that is more comfortable for you.
- § Place your offering, which goes to support the work of the Church, in the Gift envelope which you will find in this Order of Service, adding it to the collection plate as you leave.
- § Refrain from talking and wait quietly for the service to start.

TRAVAIL

The young woman trembles.

Every inmost part of her is shaken, all comfort broken.

Her hand gropes for something firm to grasp,
but all that was certain has become obscure,
all encompassing, racked with pain.

Scarcely able to catch her breath, she feels each wave larger,
more frightening than the last.

And the great wave breaks over her, she is broken,
momentarily forgetting what she accepted,
what love she bears, yet choosing to believe when all seems lost.

Suddenly and completely she, still bathed in sweat,
enfolds love in her arms, knows joy as one victorious,
sees clearly as one who has been stretched and changed,
that peace is always born of travail.

June M. Schulte, Morehouse Publishing

Order of Service

prelude music

§ The congregation is invited to stand as able.

PROCESSIONAL HYMN

Once in Royal David's City

Music accompaniment provided by: Ellen Johnstone

§ The Cantor alone sings verse 1.

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.*

§ The congregation is invited to join in the singing.

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.
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 heav'n 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.

Text: Cecil Frances Alexander

Tune: 'Irby' Henry Gauntlett, harm. Arthur Henry Mann kc; verse 6 arr. Philip Ledger kc

WELCOME & LAND ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

§ All may be seated.

BIDDING & INVITATION TO PRAYER

Minister Beloved friends in Christ, in this season of Advent, let it be our care and delight to prepare ourselves to hear again the message of the Angels, and in heart and mind to go even unto Bethlehem, to see the Babe lying in a manger.

Let us read and mark in Holy Scripture the tale of the loving purposes of God from the first days of our disobedience to the glorious Redemption brought us by his holy Child; 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 goodwill over all the earth; for the mission and unity of the Church for which he died, and especially in this country and within this town.

And because this of all things would rejoice his heart, let us at this time remember in his name the poor and the helpless; the hungry and the oppressed; the sick and those who mourn; the lonely and the unloved; the aged and the little children; and all those who know not the Lord Jesus, or who love him not, or who by sin have grieved his heart of love.

Lastly, let us remember before God his pure and lowly Mother, and all those who rejoice with us, but upon another shore and in a greater light, that multitude which no one can number, whose hope was in the Word made flesh, and with whom, in this Lord Jesus, we for evermore are one.

ADVENT LITANY OF PRAYER

Leader: Vicky Paranych

Leader O Wisdom, from the mouth of the Most High, you reign over all things to the ends of the earth: come and teach us how to live.

All **Lord Jesus, come soon!**

Leader O Lord, and head of the house of Israel, you appeared to Moses in the fire of the burning bush and you gave the law on Sinai: come with outstretched arm and ransom us.

All **Lord Jesus, come soon!**

Leader O Branch of Jesse, standing as a sign among the nations, all kings will keep silence before you and all peoples will summon you to their aid: come, set us free and delay no more.

All **Lord Jesus, come soon!**

Leader O Key of David and sceptre of the house of Israel, you open and none can shut; you shut and none can open: come and free the captives from prison.

All **Lord Jesus, come soon!**

Leader O Morning Star, splendour of the light eternal and bright Sun of righteousness: come and enlighten all who dwell in darkness and in the shadow of death.

All **Lord Jesus, come soon!**

Leader O King of the nations, you alone can fulfil their desires: Cornerstone, you make opposing nations one: come and save the creature you fashioned from clay.

All **Lord Jesus, come soon!**

Leader O Emmanuel, hope of the nations and their Saviour: come and save us, Lord our God.

All **Lord Jesus, come soon!**

the LORD's PRAYER

Minister With these prayers and all our praises, let us humbly offer up to the throne of heaven the words which Jesus, the Christ himself has taught us:

All **Our Father which 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.**

Minister The Almighty God bless us with his grace: Christ give us the joys of everlasting life: and unto the fellowship of the citizens above may the King of Angels bring us all.

All **Amen.**

§ The congregation may remain seated.

hymn

This is God's Wondrous World

Music accompaniment provided by: Companions on the Journey

1. This is God's wondrous world, and to my listening ears
All nature sings, and round me rings the music of the spheres.
This is God's wondrous world: I rest me in the thought
Of rocks and trees, of skies and seas,
God's hand the wonders wrought.
2. This is God's wondrous world: the birds their carols raise,
The morning light, the lily white, declare their Maker's praise.
This is God's wondrous world: God shines in all that's fair;
In the rustling grass or mountain pass,
God's voice speaks everywhere.

3. This is God's wondrous world: O let me ne'er forget
That though the wrong seems oft so strong, God is the Ruler yet.
This is God's wondrous world: why should my heart be sad?
The Lord is King: let the heavens ring!
God reigns; let earth be glad!

Words: Maltbie D. Babcock (1858- 1901) / Music: Franklin L. Sheppard Public Domain.

Minister Friends, now with longing in our hearts for God's reign of peace,
let us now hear again the history and story of Christ's coming,
and join with Mary and Joseph, and all our forebearers in faith,
in offering our worship.

LESSON I

Genesis 3:8-15, 17-19

Reader: Ardythe Butler

A lesson from the Book of Genesis.

*(God tells sinful Adam that he has lost the life of Paradise
and that his seed will bruise the serpent's head.)*

⁸They 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.

⁹But the Lord God called to the man, and said to him, 'Where are you?'

¹⁰He said, 'I heard the sound of you in the garden, and I was afraid, because I was naked; and I hid myself.' ¹¹He said, 'Who told you that you were naked? Have you eaten from the tree of which I commanded you not to eat?' ¹²The man said, 'The woman whom you gave to be with me, she gave me fruit from the tree, and I ate.' ¹³Then the Lord God said to the woman, 'What is this that you have done?' The woman said, 'The serpent tricked me, and I ate.' ¹⁴The 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. ¹⁵I will put enmity

between you and the woman, and between your offspring and hers; he will strike your head, and you will strike his heel.'

¹⁷And to the man he said, 'Because you have listened to the voice of your wife, and have eaten of the tree about which I commanded you, "You shall not eat of it", cursed is the ground because of you; in toil you shall eat of it all the days of your life; ¹⁸thorns and thistles it shall bring forth for you; and you shall eat the plants of the field. ¹⁹By the sweat of your face you shall eat bread until you return to the ground, for out of it you were taken; you are dust, and to dust you shall return.'

Reader The word of the Lord.

People **Thanks be to God.**

ANthem

Ancient Words

Anthem sung by: St. John's Lutheran Choir

1. Holy words, long preserved, for our walk in this world.
They resound with God's own heart;
Oh, let the ancient words impart.
2. Words of life, words of hope:
Give us strength, help us cope.
In this world, wherever we roam,
Ancient words will guide us home.

Refrain:

***Ancient words, ever true,
Changing me and changing you.
We have come with open hearts.
Oh, let the ancient words impart.***

3. Holy words of our faith
Handed down to this age
Came to us through sacrifice
Oh, heed the faithful words of Christ

4. Holy words, long preserved, for our walk in this world.
They resound with God's own heart;
Oh, let the ancient words impart. **[Refrain X 2]**

Coda:

We have come with open hearts.

O let the ancient words impart.

O let the ancient words impart.

Words & Music: Lynn DeShazo © Copyright 2001 Integrity's Hosanna!

LESSON ii

Genesis 22: 15–18

Reader: Antoinette Fortier

A lesson from the Book of Genesis.

*(God promises to faithful Abraham that in his seed
shall all the nations of the earth be blessed.)*

¹⁵The angel of the Lord called to Abraham a second time from heaven,
¹⁶and said, 'By myself I have sworn, says the Lord: Because you have
done this, and have not withheld your son, your only son, ¹⁷I 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, ¹⁸and by your
offspring shall all the nations of the earth gain blessing for themselves,
because you have obeyed my voice.'

Reader The word of the Lord.

People **Thanks be to God.**

§ The congregation may remain seated.

Music accompaniment provided by: Ellen Johnstone

§ The Cantor alone sings verse 1.

1. *O come, O come, Emmanuel,
and ransom captive Israel,
that mourns in lonely exile here
until the Son of God appear.
Rejoice! Rejoice! Emmanuel shall come to you, O Israel!*

§ The congregation is invited to join in the singing.

2. O come, thou Rod of Jesse,
free thine own from Satan's tyranny;
From depths of hell thy people save,
And give them victory o'er the grave.
Rejoice! Rejoice! Emmanuel shall come to you, O Israel!
3. O come, thou Dayspring, come and cheer
Our spirits by thy advent here;
Disperse the gloomy clouds of night
And death's dark shadows put to flight.
Rejoice! Rejoice! Emmanuel shall come to you, O Israel!
4. O come, O come, thou Lord of might,
Who to thy tribes, on Sinai's height,
In ancient times didst give the law
In cloud and majesty and awe.
Rejoice! Rejoice! Emmanuel shall come to you, O Israel!
5. O come, thou Key of David, come,
And open wide our heav'nly home;
Make safe the way that leads on high,
And close the path to misery.
Rejoice! Rejoice! Emmanuel shall come to you, O Israel!

Text: Latin (9th Century); tr. John Mason Neale (1818-1866), alt.

Music: Plainsong, Mode J. Processionale (15th Century); arr. Healey Willan (1880-1968), alt

LESSON iii

Isaiah 9:2, 6-7

Reader: Pat Buehler

A lesson from the Prophet Isaiah.

(The prophet foretells the coming of the Saviour.)

²The people who walked in darkness have seen a great light; those who lived in a land of deep darkness—on them light has shined. ⁶For a child has been born for us, a son given to us; authority rests upon his shoulders; and he is named Wonderful Counsellor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace. ⁷His authority shall grow continually, and there shall be endless peace for the throne of David and his kingdom. He will establish and uphold it with justice and with righteousness from this time onwards and for evermore. The zeal of the Lord of hosts will do this.

Reader The word of the Lord.

People **Thanks be to God.**

CAROL

Hark the Herald Angels Sing

Music accompaniment provided by: Companions on the Journey

§ The congregation may remain seated and sing.

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 the angelic hosts proclaim, "Christ is born in Bethlehem!"

Refrain:

***Hark! the herald angels sing,
"Glory to the newborn King."***

2. Christ, by highest heaven adored; Christ, the everlasting Lord;
late in time behold him come, offspring of a virgin's womb.
Veiled in flesh the Godhead see; hail, the incarnate Deity,
pleased as one of us to dwell, Jesus, our Emmanuel! ***[Refrain]***

3. Hail, the heaven-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 we no more may die,
born to raise each child of earth, born to give us second birth. **[Refrain]**

Text: Charles Wesley (1701-1788), alt. Music: Felix Mendelssohn Bartholdy (1809-1847);
adapt. William Hayman Cummings (1831-1915); altern. Harm. David Willcocks (1919 - 2015)
Altern. Harm. © 1961 Oxford University Press

LESSON IV

Isaiah 11:1–3a, 4a, 6–9

Reader: Joanne Veldkamp

A lesson from the Prophet Isaiah.

(The peace that Christ will bring is foreshown.)

¹A shoot shall come out from the stock of Jesse, and a branch shall grow out of his roots. ²The 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. ^{3a}His delight shall be in the fear of the Lord, ^{4a}but with righteousness he shall judge the poor, and decide with equity for the meek of the earth.

⁶The 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. ⁷The cow and the bear shall graze, their young shall lie down together; and the lion shall eat straw like the ox. ⁸The nursing child shall play over the hole of the asp, and the weaned child shall put its hand on the adder's den. ⁹They 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.

Reader The word of the Lord.

People **Thanks be to God.**

§ All may remain seated.

Anthem sung by: St. John's Lutheran Choir

1. Light of peace, calm our despair.
Light of hope, lift us up when we fall.
Light of joy, brighten our days;
Light of love, teach us your ways.
Light of life, Maker of day,
gather our shadows and cast them away.
Beacon of truth gleaming and bright,
shine in our hearts, shatter our night.
2. Come, thou long expected Jesus,
born to set thy people free;
from our hearts and fears release us;
let us find our rest in thee.
3. Light of peace, calm our despair.
Light of hope, lift us up when we fall.
Light of joy, brighten our days;
Light of love, teach us your ways.
Light of life, Maker of day,
gather our shadows and cast them away.
Beacon of truth gleaming and bright,
shine in our hearts, shatter our night.

Words & Music: Joel Raney

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§ The congregation may remain seated and sing.

Music accompaniment provided by: Colleen Albert

1. Mary did you know that your baby boy
would someday walk on water?
Mary did you know that your baby boy

would save our sons and daughters?

Did you know that your baby boy has come to make you new?

This child that you've delivered will soon deliver you.

2. Mary did you know that your baby boy
would give sight to a blind man?

Mary did you know that your baby boy
would calm a storm with his hand?

Did you know that your baby boy has walked where angels trod?

And when you kiss your little baby, you have kissed the face of God.

Bridge:

The blind will see, the deaf will hear, the dead will live again.

The lame will leap, the dumb will speak, the praises of the Lamb

3. Mary did you know that your baby boy
is Lord of all creation?

Mary did you know that your baby boy
would one day rule the nations?

Did you know that your baby boy is heaven's perfect Lamb?

This sleeping child you're holding is the great I Am.

Words & Music: Mark Lowry & Buddy Green

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Lesson V

Luke 1:26–35, 38

Reader: Diane Ksiondzyna

A reading from the Gospel of Luke

(The angel Gabriel salutes the Blessed Virgin Mary.)

²⁶In the sixth month the angel Gabriel was sent by God to a town in Galilee called Nazareth, ²⁷to a virgin engaged to a man whose name was Joseph, of the house of David. The virgin's name was Mary. ²⁸And he came to her and said, 'Greetings, favoured one! The Lord is with you.' ²⁹But she was much perplexed by his words and pondered what sort of greeting this might be. ³⁰The angel said to her, 'Do not be afraid, Mary, for you have found favour with God. ³¹And now, you will

conceive in your womb and bear a son, and you will name him Jesus.
³²He 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. ³³He will reign over the house of Jacob for ever, and of his kingdom there will be no end.' ³⁴Mary said to the angel, 'How can this be, since I am a virgin?' ³⁵The 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.

³⁸Then 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.

Reader The word of the Lord.

People **Thanks be to God.**

§ The congregation may remain seated and sing.

CAROL

It Came Upon a Midnight Clear

Music accompaniment provided by: Ellen Johnstone

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, to all good will 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 we amid our wars hear not the words of peace they bring;
O listen now, and still your strife to hear the angels sing.

4. And you, beneath life's crushing load, whose forms are bending low,
who toil along the climbing way with painful steps and slow;
look now, for glad and golden hours come swiftly on the wing:
O rest beside the weary road and hear the angels sing.
5. For lo, the days are hastening on, by prophets seen of old,
when with the ever-circling years shall come the time foretold:
when the new heaven and earth shall own the Prince of Peace their King,
and the whole world send back the song which now the angels sing.

Text: Edmund Hamilton Sears 1849, (1810-1876), alt.

Music: Richard Storrs Willis 1830 (1819-1900)

§ The congregation may remain seated and sing.

CAROL

Away in a Manger

Music accompaniment provided by: Companions on the Journey

1. Away in a manger, no crib for a bed,
the little Lord Jesus laid down his sweet head.
The stars in the bright sky looked down where he lay,
the little Lord Jesus asleep on the hay.
2. The cattle are lowing, the baby awakes,
but little Lord Jesus, no crying he makes.
I love you, Lord Jesus; look down from on high,
and stay by my side until morning is nigh.
3. Be near me, Lord Jesus, I ask you to stay
close by me for ever, and love me, I pray.
Bless all the dear children in your tender care,
and fit us for heaven, to live with you there.

Text: American, 19th century.

Music: William James Kirkpatrick (1838-1921) adapt

LESSON VI

Luke 2:1-7

Reader: Val Rowe

A reading from the Gospel of Luke.

(St. Luke tells of the birth of Jesus.)

2In those days a decree went out from Emperor Augustus that all the world should be registered. ³All went to their own towns to be registered. ⁴Joseph 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. ⁵He went to be registered with Mary, to whom he was engaged and who was expecting a child. ⁶While they were there, the time came for her to deliver her child. ⁷And 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.

Reader The word of the Lord.

People **Thanks be to God.**

CAROL

The First Nowell

Music accompaniment provided by: Ellen Johnstone

§ The congregation is invited to stand and sing.

1. The first Nowell the angel did say
was to certain poor shepherds in fields as they lay,
in fields where they lay keeping their sheep,
on a cold winter's night that was so deep.

Refrain:

***Nowell, Nowell, Nowell, Nowell,
born is the King of Israel.***

2. They looked up and saw a star
shining in the east beyond them far,

and to the earth it gave great light,
and so it continued both day and night. **[Refrain]**

3. And by the light of that same star
three wise men came from country far;
to seek for a king was their intent,
and to follow the star wherever it went. **[Refrain]**
4. This star drew nigh to the northwest,
o'er Bethlehem it took its rest,
and there it did both stop and stay
right over the place where Jesus lay. **[Refrain]**
5. Then entered in those wise men three,
full reverently upon their knee,
and offered there in his presence
their gold, and myrrh, and frankincense. **[Refrain]**
6. Then let us all with one accord
sing praises to our heavenly Lord,
who has made heaven and earth of nought,
and with his blood salvation bought. **[Refrain]**

Words: English traditional

Music: Melody – English traditional 17th century, arr. John Stainer (1840-1901).,alt.

§ All may be seated.

LESSON vii

Luke 2:8-16

Reader: Shari Purkis-Sherburne

A reading from the Gospel of Luke.

(The shepherds go to the manger.)

⁸In that region there were shepherds living in the fields, keeping watch over their flock by night. ⁹Then an angel of the Lord stood before them, and the glory of the Lord shone around them, and they were terrified.

¹⁰But the angel said to them, 'Do not be afraid; for see—I am bringing

you good news of great joy for all the people: ¹¹to you is born this day in the city of David a Saviour, who is the Messiah, the Lord. ¹²This will be a sign for you: you will find a child wrapped in bands of cloth and lying in a manger.' ¹³And suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host, praising God and saying, ¹⁴'Glory to God in the highest heaven, and on earth peace among those whom he favours!'

¹⁵When 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.' ¹⁶So they went with haste and found Mary and Joseph, and the child lying in the manger.

Reader The word of the Lord.

People **Thanks be to God.**

CAROL

We Three Kings of Orient Are

Music accompaniment provided by: Companions on the Journey

§ The congregation is invited to remain seated and sing.

1. We three kings of Orient are;
Bearing gifts we traverse afar,
Field and fountain, moor and mountain,
Following yonder star.

Refrain:

***O star of wonder, star of night!
Star with royal beauty bright;
Westward leading, still proceeding,
Guide us to thy perfect light!***

2. Born a King on Bethlehem's plain
Gold I bring to crown Him again,
King forever, ceasing never,
Over us all to reign. ***[Refrain]***

3. Frankincense to offer have I;
Incense owns a Deity nigh;
Prayer and praising, gladly raising,
Worshipping God Most High. **[Refrain]**
4. Myrrh is mine, its bitter perfume
Breathes a life of gathering gloom;
Sorrowing, sighing, bleeding, dying,
Sealed in the stone-cold tomb. **[Refrain]**
5. Glorious now behold Him arise;
King and God and Sacrifice;
Heav'n sing alleluia:
Alleluia the earth replies. **[Refrain]**

TEXT: John Henry Hopkins, Jr., 1857, alt.

MUSIC (KINGS OF ORIENT 8.8.8.6 with refrain): John Henry Hopkins, Jr., 1857, alt.

LESSON viii

Matthew 2:1-12

Reader: Bryan Butler

A reading from the Gospel of Matthew.

(The wise men are led by the star to Jesus.)

2In the time of King Herod, after Jesus was born in Bethlehem of Judea, wise men from the East came to Jerusalem, ²asking, '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.' ³When King Herod heard this, he was frightened, and all Jerusalem with him; ⁴and calling together all the chief priests and scribes of the people, he inquired of them where the Messiah was to be born. ⁵They told him, 'In Bethlehem of Judea; for so it has been written by the prophet: ⁶"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." '

⁷Then Herod secretly called for the wise men and learned from them the exact time when the star had appeared. ⁸Then 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.' ⁹When 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. ¹⁰When they saw that the star had stopped, they were overwhelmed with joy. ¹¹On 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. ¹²And having been warned in a dream not to return to Herod, they left for their own country by another road.

Reader The word of the Lord.

People **Thanks be to God.**

§ The congregation is invited to remain seated

MUSICAL SOLO

Oy, Tam Za Horoyu

(A Ukrainian carol translated as 'Oh Over There Behind the Mountain')
Sung by: Holy Trinity Ukrainian Catholic Church Soloist, Khrystyna Kohut

§ The congregation is invited to stand as able to sing.

CAROL

O Come All Ye Faithful

Music accompaniment provided by: Ellen Johnstone

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;

Refrain:

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: ***[Refrain]***
3. Sing, choirs of angels, sing in exultation,
sing, all ye citizens of heaven above;
glory to God, glory in the highest: ***[Refrain]***
4. See how the shepherds, summoned to his cradle,
leaving their flocks, draw nigh with lowly fear;
we too will thither bend our joyful footsteps; ***[Refrain]***

TEXT: John Francis Wade, c. 1743; trans. Frederick Oakeley, 1841, alt.

MUSIC (ADESTE FIDELES, Irregular): John Francis Wade, c. 1743; harm.

§ All remain standing as able.

LESSON IX

John 1:1–14

Reader: Rev. Laureta Blondin

A reading from the Gospel of John.

(St. John unfolds the great mystery of the Incarnation.)

¹In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. ²He was in the beginning with God. ³All things came into being through him, and without him not one thing came into being. What has come into being ⁴in him was life, and the life was the light of all people. ⁵The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness did not overcome it.

⁶There was a man sent from God, whose name was John. ⁷He came as a witness to testify to the light, so that all might believe through him.

⁸He himself was not the light, but he came to testify to the light. ⁹The true light, which enlightens everyone, was coming into the world.

¹⁰He was in the world, and the world came into being through him; yet the world did not know him. ¹¹He came to what was his own, and his own people did not accept him. ¹²But to all who received him, who believed in his name, he gave power to become children of God, ¹³who were born, not of blood or of the will of the flesh or of the will of man, but of God.

¹⁴And 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.

Reader The word of the Lord.

People **Thanks be to God.**

§ All may be seated and join in the singing.

CAROL

Angels From the Realms of Glory

Music accompaniment provided by: Companions on the Journey

1. Angels, from the realms of glory,
wing your flight o'er all the earth;
you who sang creation's story,
now proclaim Messiah's birth:
come and worship, come and worship,
worship Christ, the new-born King.
2. Shepherds in the field abiding,
watching o'er your flocks by night,
God with us is now residing;
yonder shines the infant Light:
come and worship, come and worship,
worship Christ, the new-born King.
3. Sages, leave your contemplations;
brighter visions beam afar;
seek the great desire of nations;
you have seen his natal star:

come and worship, come and worship,
worship Christ, the new-born King.

4. Saints before the altar bending,
watching long in hope and fear,
suddenly the Lord, descending,
in his temple shall appear:
come and worship, come and worship,
worship Christ, the new-born King.
5. Though an infant now we view him,
he shall fill the eternal throne,
gather all the nations to him;
every knee shall then bow down:
come and worship, come and worship,
worship Christ, the new-born King.

Words: James Montgomery, 1816, alt., P.D.

Music (REGENT SQUARE 8.7.8.7 refrain 4.4.6): Henry Smart, 1867, P.D.

§ All remain seated.

the COLLECT PRAYER

One The Lord be with you,
People **And also with you.**

One Let us pray.
Almighty God, give us grace to cast away the works of
darkness and put on the armour of light, now in the time of
this mortal life in which your Son Jesus Christ came to us in
great humility, that on the last day, when he shall come again
in his glorious majesty to judge both the living and the dead,
we may rise to the life immortal; through him who lives and
reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and for ever.
People **Amen.**

§ The congregation is invited to stand as able.

the BLESSING / BENEDICTION

One Be steadfast in faith, joyful in hope,
and untiring in love all the days of your life;
and the blessing of God almighty, the Father, the Son, and the
Holy Spirit, be among you and remain with you always.

People **Amen.**

§ All remain standing as able.

RECESSIONAL hymn

Joy to the World

Music accompaniment provided by: Ellen Johnstone

1. Joy to the world! The Lord is come:
let earth receive the King;
let every heart prepare him room,
and heaven and nature sing,
and heaven and nature sing,
and heaven, and heaven and nature sing.
2. Joy to the world! The Saviour reigns:
let us glad songs employ,
while fields and floods, rocks, hills, and plains
repeat the sounding joy,
repeat the sounding joy,
repeat, repeat the sounding joy.
3. No more let wrongs and sorrows grow,
nor thorns infest the ground;
he comes to make his blessings flow
far as our sin is found,
far as our sin is found,
far as, far as our sin is found.

4. 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.

Words: Isaac Watts (1674-1748), 1719, P.D.

Music (ANTIOCH 8.6.8.6.6.8): Lowell Mason, 1848, P.D.

postlude

AT THE END OF THE SERVICE

- § All remain standing as the congregation leaves the Chapel during the playing of the Postlude. Please check your seats to make sure you have everything with you.
- § Please place your giving envelope that was provided to you with this Order of Service into the plate in the Narthex as you leave the Sanctuary. All monetary gifts support and ensure that the life and good works of the Church in our wider community continues. Thank you for your generosity.
- § You are warmly invited to join us for light refreshments and treats in the auditorium following the service.

ANNOUNCEMENTS:

The Life AND work of The Church

Donations to our churches: To continue the good work of St. Mary the Virgin Anglican and Vegreville United churches and ensure their ongoing presence in our community, your financial support is most appreciated. Donations can be made by either cash, cheque or e-transfer. Please use one of the envelopes located in the Narthex for cash or cheque donations and place the envelope in the offertory plate by the door. If writing a cheque, please ensure the cheque is made payable to either Vegreville United Church or St. Mary the Virgin Anglican Church. Annual Tax Receipts are provided for all donations totalling \$20 or more per year to the church of your choice. E-transfers for Vegreville United Church can be sent to vegucc@telusplanet.net and e-transfers for St. Mary's can be sent to stmarysvegreville@gmail.com. Cheques can also be delivered to 5126-48 Avenue, Vegreville, AB T9C 1M7.

Our Upcoming Ministry Schedule

Our worship services alternate between the Anglican and United worship styles at Vegreville United with occasional blended services:

- Dec. 24th **A Family Christmas Eve:** A blended service including Holy Communion at 7:00 PM.
- Dec. 25th **Christmas Day:** A blended communion service at 10:00 AM.
- Dec. 28th **First Sunday After Christmas:** An Anglican communion service at 10:00 AM.
- Jan. 4th **Feast of Epiphany:** A United Church communion service at 10:00 AM followed by a potluck lunch.



The Reverend Laureta Blondin and all the members of the Council and Vestry of the Anglican & United Church Ministries in Vegreville wish to thank you for joining us for this very special worship service this evening. Your presence was a blessing, and we are so glad you chose to be a part of this celebration as we await the birth of our dear LORD Saviour.

We also want to extend our sincerest thanks for all the hard work and time given by the musicians and singers who helped to prepare this special service. We are especially grateful to those musicians from other church communities in Vegreville who agreed to join us and share their musical gifts and talents. Musically speaking, our community is truly blessed.

Finally, all the members of the Council and Vestry of the Anglican & United Church Ministries in Vegreville join in wishing you and your loved ones a very Merry Christmas and most blessed and prosperous New Year. It is our fervent hope that we will see you again soon.