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Saint James Lutheran Church



A Parish of the North Carolina Synod of the
Evangelical Lutheran Church in America



"Growing in Christ Through Worship, Learning, Fellowship, and Service"

FIRST SUNDAY OF CHRISTMAS DECEMBER 27, 2020



FESTIVAL OF LESSONS AND CAROLS

The Festival of Lessons and Carols was first held on Christmas Eve 1918. It was planned by Eric Milner-White, who, at the age of thirty-four, had just been appointed Dean of King's College, Cambridge, England after experience as an army chaplain. A revision of the Order of Service was made in 1919, involving rearrangement of the lessons. The backbone of the service has always been and still remains the lessons and the prayers. The original service was adapted from an Order drawn up by E. W. Benson, later Archbishop of Canterbury, for use in the wooden shed, which then served as his cathedral in Truro, at 10 p.m. on Christmas Eve 1880.

WELCOME

PRELUDE

In the Bleak Midwinter

WORD

FIRST READING *Isaiah 9:2-7*

James Hughes

Christ's birth and kingdom are foretold by Isaiah.

A reading from the ninth chapter of Isaiah.

The people who walked in darkness have seen a great light; those who lived in a land of deep darkness —on them light has shined. ³You have multiplied the nation, you have increased its joy; they rejoice before you as with joy at the harvest, as people exult when dividing plunder. ⁴For the yoke of their burden, and the bar across their shoulders, the rod of their oppressor, you have broken as on the day of Midian. ⁵For all the boots of the tramping warriors and all the garments rolled in blood shall be burned as fuel for the fire. ⁶For a child has been born for us, a son given to us; authority rests upon his shoulders; and he is named Wonderful Counselor, 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 onward and forevermore. The zeal of the LORD of hosts will do this.

The Word of the Lord.

Thanks be to God.

CAROL

Lo, How a Rose E'er Blooming

1 Lo, how a rose e'er blooming
from tender stem hath sprung!
Of Jesse's lineage coming
as seers of old have sung,
it came, a flow'r so bright,
amid the cold of winter,
when half-spent was the night.

2 Isaiah had foretold it,
the rose I have in mind;
with Mary we behold it,
the virgin mother kind.
To show God's love aright,
she bore to us a Savior,
when half-spent was the night.

3 This flow'r, whose fragrance tender
with sweetness fills the air,
dispels with glorious splendor
the darkness everywhere.
True man, yet very God,
from sin and death he saves us
and lightens ev'ry load.

SECOND READING *Micah 5:2-5a*

Caroline Bestler

The Prophet Micah foretells the glory of little Bethlehem

A reading from the fifth chapter of Micah.

But you, O Bethlehem of Ephrathah, who are one of the little clans of Judah, from you shall come forth for me one who is to rule in Israel, whose origin is from of old, from ancient days. ³Therefore he shall give them up until the time when she who is in labor has brought forth; then the rest of his kindred shall return to the people of Israel. ⁴And he shall stand and feed his flock in the strength of the LORD, in the majesty of the name of the LORD his God. And they shall live secure, for now he shall be great to the ends of the earth; ⁵and he shall be the one of peace.

The Word of the Lord.

Thanks be to God.

CAROL

O Little Town of Bethlehem

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.

3 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.

THIRD READING *Luke 1:26-38*

Campbell Overby

The angel Gabriel salutes the Blessed Virgin Mary.

A reading from the first chapter of the Gospel according to Saint Luke.

In 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, favored 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 favor 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 forever, 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. ³⁶And 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. ³⁷For nothing will be impossible with 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.

The Word of the Lord.

Thanks be to God.

ANTHEM

For Unto Us a Child is Born

For unto us a Child is born; Unto us a Son is given. For unto us a Child is born; Unto us a Son is given. And the government shall be upon His shoulder, And the government shall be upon His shoulder. And His name shall be called Wonderful Counselor, The Mighty god, the Everlasting Father, the Prince of Peace! The Everlasting Father, the Prince of Peace!

In the little village of Bethlehem, There lay a Child one day, And the sky was bright with a holy light O'er the place where Jesus lay. Alleluia! O how the angels sang! Alleluia! How it rang! And the sky was bright with a holy light; 'Twas the birthday of a King. Alleluia! O how the angels sang! Alleluia! How it rang! And the sky was bright with a holy light; 'Twas the birthday of a King. 'Twas the birthday of a King!

FOURTH READING *Luke 2:1-7*

Lily Kartheiser

Saint Luke tells of the birth of Jesus

A reading from the second chapter of the Gospel according to Saint Luke.

In those days a decree went out from Emperor Augustus that all the world should be registered. ²This was the first registration and was taken while Quirinius was governor of Syria. 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.

The Word of the Lord.

Thanks be to God.

CAROL

Away in a Manger

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| 1 Away in a manger, no crib for his 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. | 3 Be near me, Lord Jesus; I ask you to stay
close by me forever and love me, I pray.
Bless all the dear children in your tender care
and fit us for heaven, to live with you there. |
| 2 The cattle are lowing; the baby awakes,
but little Lord Jesus, no crying he makes.
I love you, Lord Jesus; look down from the sky
and stay by my cradle till morning is nigh. | |

FIFTH READING *Luke 2:8-16*

Abigail Bestler

The shepherds go to the manger.

A reading from the second chapter of the Gospel according to Saint Luke.

In 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 Savior, 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 favors!" 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.

The Word of the Lord.

Thanks be to God.

CAROL

Hark! The Herald Angels Sing

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| 1 Hark! The herald angels sing,
"Glory to the newborn king;
peace on earth, and mercy mild,
God and sinners reconciled."
Joyful, all you nations, rise;
join the triumph of the skies;
with angelic hosts proclaim,
"Christ is born in Bethlehem!" | 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 we no more may die,
born to raise each child of earth,
born to give us second birth. Refrain |
| Refrain
Hark! The herald angels sing,
"Glory to the newborn king!" | |

SIXTH READING *Luke 2:22-40*

Mason Overby

Purification of Jesus in Jerusalem and the Annunciation of Mary

A reading from the second chapter of the Gospel according to Saint Luke.

When the time came for their purification according to the law of Moses, they brought him up to Jerusalem to present him to the Lord ²³(as it is written in the law of the Lord, "Every firstborn male shall be designated as holy to the Lord"), ²⁴and they offered a sacrifice according to what is stated in the law of the Lord, "a pair of turtledoves or two young pigeons." ²⁵Now there was a man in Jerusalem whose name was Simeon; this man was righteous and devout, looking forward to the consolation of Israel, and the Holy Spirit rested on him. ²⁶It had been revealed to him by the Holy Spirit that he would not see death before he had seen the Lord's Messiah. ²⁷Guided by the Spirit, Simeon came into the temple; and when the parents brought in the child Jesus, to do for him what was customary under the law, ²⁸Simeon took him in his arms and praised God, saying, ²⁹"Master, now you are dismissing your servant in peace, according to your word; ³⁰for my eyes have seen your salvation, ³¹which you have prepared in the presence of all peoples, ³²a light for revelation to the Gentiles and for glory to your people Israel." ³³And the child's father and mother were amazed at what was being said about him. ³⁴Then Simeon blessed them and said to his mother Mary, "This child is destined for the falling and the rising of many in Israel, and to be a sign that will be opposed ³⁵so that the inner thoughts of many will be revealed — and a sword will pierce your own soul too." ³⁶There was also a prophet, Anna the daughter of Phanuel, of the tribe of Asher. She was of a great age, having lived with her husband seven years after her marriage, ³⁷then as a widow to the age of eighty- four. She never left the temple but worshiped there with fasting and prayer night and day. ³⁸At that moment she came, and began to praise God and to speak about the child to all who were looking for the redemption of Jerusalem. ³⁹When they had finished everything required by the law of the Lord, they returned to Galilee, to their own town of Nazareth. ⁴⁰The child grew and became strong, filled with wisdom; and the favor of God was upon him.

The Word of the Lord.

Thanks be to God.

CAROL

Good Christian Friends Rejoice

Jonas Jay, violin

SEVENTH READING *Matthew 2:1-11*

Avery Miller

The Wise Men are led by the star to Jesus.

A reading from the second chapter of the Gospel according to Saint Matthew..

In 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.

The Word of the Lord.

Thanks be to God.

CAROL

The First Noel

1 The first Noel 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

Noel, Noel, Noel, Noel!
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**

4 This star drew near 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**

PRAYERS OF THE PEOPLE

Charlotte Davis

Joining our voices with the song of the angels, let us pray for the church, the world, and all who are in need.

A brief silence.

Night and day, all creation praises you, O God. Strengthen your church across nations, denominations, and traditions. Fill us with wisdom and unify our proclamation of your forgiveness and mercy. Hear us, O God.

Your mercy is great.

All creation is holy to you, O God. You cause the earth to bring forth its shoots and gardens to spring up. Protect hibernating animals and frozen lands that wait earnestly for longer days of awakening and growth. Hear us, O God.

Your mercy is great.

The nations are upheld by your hand, O God. Cause righteousness and praise to spring forth, inspiring leaders to serve with compassion and integrity. Send your spirit of discernment upon legislators grappling with complex decisions for the sake of the common good. Hear us, O God.

Your mercy is great.

Send the spirit of your Son into our hearts, O God. Come quickly to hearts that race with fear, hearts that break with grief, and hearts that long for wholeness. Reveal your power to heal and to save. Hear us, O God.

Your mercy is great.

Adopt us into your family, O God. Bless our elders with the peace and joy of Simeon and Anna. Strengthen those who have retired, those who work in older age, and those in need of income, food, company, or health care. Connect young and old across generations. Hear us, O God.

Your mercy is great.

Let us depart in peace, O God, according to your word. For all your saints, we give you thanks. Prepare our salvation in the sight of all your witnesses of every time and place. Hear us, O God.

Your mercy is great.

God of mercy, come quickly to us with grace upon grace as we lift these and all our prayers to you, in the name of Jesus.

Amen.

LORD'S PRAYER

Hudson Davis

And now as our Savior Christ has taught us, we are bold to pray,

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

CHRISTMAS BLESSING

May the Word that Mary brought to birth carry you into new and abundant life.

May the Word that Joseph cradled in his arms enfold you with love and strength.

May the Word that angels proclaimed in song bring harmony to our world.

And the blessing of almighty God, the Father, the ✠ Son, and the Holy Spirit, be upon you now and remain with you always

Amen.

DISMISSAL

Let us go forth in the name of the holy child of Bethlehem: Jesus Christ, our Lord.

Thanks be to God!

POSTLUDE

Joy to the World

arr. Fred Bock



VIRTUAL POINSETTIAS

GIVEN IN MEMORY OF

In Memory Of:	Given By:
Frances and Earl Propst Mary Propst	Annette and Kenny Propst
Dale and Mary Edith Rogers Peanut and Betty Ridenhour	Ann and Tom Ridenhour
Gilbert Heilig	Beverly, Janet, Sam, Charles, Emily, and Helen
J. W. "Mickey" McGee	Ashleigh and Trevor Matthews
Our parents, Ed and Lib Davis and Stan Fridlund	Robert and Debbie Davis
Madge and Byron Harrison Jake Whitaker	Sylvia H. Corl
Mamie and John Bullock Elizabeth and Leonard Gillon	Ann and Will Gillon

GIVEN IN HONOR OF

In Honor Of:	Given By:
Bradley and Ashley Propst Andrew and Jenny Propst	Annette and Kenny Propst
Our Children	Ann and Tom Ridenhour
In honor of the faithful and committed staff of St. James	Ann and Tom Ridenhour
Janet and Sam, Charles, Emily and Helen	Beverly Heilig
To the Glory of God	Don and Jo Eng
Sandy Barnhardt	Ralph Barnhardt
Evelina Matthews	Ashleigh and Trevor Matthews
Pastor Tony and Debbie Bradshaw Tom and Ann Ridenhour Kenny and Annette Propst	The Jay Family
Our Children, Eddie and Amy Clifton Clint and Sarah Poplin Our Grandchildren, Noah Clifton and Tanner Poplin Our Mom, Ann Fridlund	Robert and Debbie Davis
Brent, Michelle and Mason Corl	Sylvia H. Corl
Martha and Jimmy Summers	Ann and Will Gillon

\$1,785 was donated with the virtual poinsettias. This will be divided among local agencies to help those in special need. Thank you to everyone who participated.