



TWENTY-FIFTH ANNUAL
SERVICE OF

Lessons and Carols

THE LORD'S DAY, DECEMBER 20, 2020

8:30 A.M. AND 11:00 A.M.

TRINITY PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

25th
Anniversary
1996-2020



The 25th Annual Service of Lessons and Carols

THE PEOPLE'S PREPARATION

Come, Thou Savior of our race, choicest Gift of heavenly grace! O Thou blessed Virgin's Son be Thy race on earth begun. Not of mortal blood or birth, He descends from heaven to earth; by the Holy Spirit conceived, God and man by us believed. From the Father forth He came, and returneth to the same. Captive, leading death and hell, high the song of triumph swell.

— TEXT BY AURELIUS AMBROSE, 340-397; MARTIN LUTHER, 1483 -1546



The Prelude

Overture from Cantata BWV 142 (For Unto Us a Child Is Born)
Pastorale from Christmas Concerto, Op. 6, No. 8
Improvisation on *Sussex Carol*

Johann Sebastian Bach
Arcangelo Corelli
English traditional carol

Please sit only in open pews and maintain social distancing. Masks are required for attendees over six years old at all times. Those who are not present physically will be invited to stand when able, and to be seated when necessary. Worship is participative and not passive. God has designed us to be physical creatures and sometimes our hearts and minds will follow our posture. Overflow seating is available in Trinity Hall.

The Striking of the Hour

The Invitatory Carol

Text: C. F. Alexander

Once in Royal David's City

IRBY

David Willcocks

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.

†

ALL: 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 meek and lowly, lived on earth our Savior holy.

For He is our child-hood'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.

And our eyes at last shall see Him, through His own redeeming love;
for that Child so dear and gentle, is our Lord in heaven above,
and He leads His children on, to the place where He is gone.

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 be around.

†

The Call to Worship and the Lord's Prayer

Mr. McRoberts

Beloved in Christ, at this Christmastide let it be our care and delight to hear again the message of the angels, and in heart and mind to go even unto Bethlehem and see this thing which is come to pass, and the Babe lying in a manger. Therefore, let us read and mark in Holy Scripture the tale of the loving purposes of God from the first days of our disobedience unto the glorious Redemption brought to us by this Holy Child. Let us be emboldened to pray for the needs of the whole world; for peace on earth and goodwill among all His people; for unity and brotherhood within the Church, and especially in this country and within our city. And because this would rejoice His heart, let us remember, in His name the poor and the helpless, the cold, 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 all those who rejoice with us, but upon another shore, and in a greater Light; that multitude which no man can number, whose hope was in the Word made flesh, and with whom in the Lord Jesus we are one forevermore. Now let us humbly offer up to the throne of heaven, the words which Christ Himself has taught us:

Our Father Which art in heaven, hallowed be Thy name. Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done in earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread. And forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors. And lead us not into temptation but deliver us from evil: for Thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, forever. Amen.

Now the serpent was more crafty than any other beast of the field that the Lord God had made. He said to the woman, “Did God actually say, ‘You shall not eat of any tree in the garden?’” And the woman said to the serpent, “We may eat of the fruit of the trees in the garden, but God said, ‘You shall not eat of the fruit of the tree that is in the midst of the garden, neither shall you touch it, lest you die.’” But the serpent said to the woman, “You will not surely die. For God knows that when you eat of it your eyes will be opened, and you will be like God, knowing good and evil.” So when the woman saw that the tree was good for food, and that it was a delight to the eyes, and that the tree was to be desired to make one wise, she took of its fruit and ate, and she also gave some to her husband who was with her, and he ate. Then the eyes of both were opened, and they knew that they were naked. And they sewed fig leaves together and made themselves loincloths. And they heard the sound of the Lord God walking in the garden in the cool of the day, 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?” And 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 of 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 of 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 deceived me, and I ate.” The Lord God said to the serpent, “Because you have done this, cursed are you above all livestock and above all beasts of the field; on your belly you shall go, and dust you shall eat all the days of your life. I will put enmity between you and the woman, and between your offspring and her offspring; he shall bruise your head, and you shall bruise his heel.” To the woman he said, “I will surely multiply your pain in childbearing; in pain you shall bring forth children. Your desire shall be contrary to your husband, but he shall rule over you.” And to Adam He said, “Because you have listened to the voice of your wife and have eaten of the tree of which I commanded you, ‘You shall not eat of it,’ cursed is the ground because of you; in pain you shall eat of it all the days of your life; thorns and thistles it shall bring forth for you; and you shall eat the plants of the field. By the sweat of your face you shall eat bread, till you return to the ground, for out of it you were taken; for you are dust, and to dust you shall return.”

The Congregational Carol*Of the Father’s Love Begotten*

DIVINE MYSTERIUM

Text: Prudentius, 348-413

English trans. By J. M. Nehalem

Of the Father’s love begotten ere the worlds began to be;
 He is Alpha and Omega, He the Source, the Ending He;
 of the things that are, that have been, and that future years shall see,
 evermore and evermore!

O that birth for ever blessed when the Virgin, full of grace,
 by the Holy Ghost conceiving, bare the Savior of our race;
 and the Babe, the world’s Redeemer, first revealed His sacred face,
 evermore and evermore!

Christ, to Thee, with God the Father, and, O Holy Ghost, to Thee,
 hymn and chant and high thanksgiving and unwearied praises be,
 honor, glory, and dominion, and eternal victory,
 evermore and evermore!

The Second Lesson – Isaiah 9:2-7 – The Prophet Isaiah Foretells the Coming of the Savior

Mr. Howell

The people who walked in darkness have seen a great light; those who dwelt in a land of deep darkness, on them has light shone. You have multiplied the nation; You have increased its joy; they rejoice before You as with joy at the harvest, as they are glad when they divide the spoil. For the yoke of His burden, and the staff for His shoulder, the rod of His oppressor, You have broken as on the day of Midian. For every boot of the tramping warrior in battle tumult and every garment rolled in blood will be burned as fuel for the fire. For to us a Child is born, to us a Son is given; and the government shall be upon His shoulder, and His name shall be called Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace. Of the increase of His government and of peace there will be no end, on the throne of David and over His kingdom, to establish it and to uphold it with justice and with righteousness from this time forth and forevermore. The zeal of the Lord of hosts will do this.

The Congregational Carol*O Come, O Come Emmanuel*

VENI EMMANUEL

Text: Latin Advent Antiphons

English trans. by J. M. Neale (1818-66)

O come, O come, Emmanuel and ransom captive Israel,
that mourns in lonely exile here until the Son of God appear.

Refrain: Rejoice! Rejoice! Emmanuel shall come to thee, O Israel.

O come, Thou Dayspring, come and cheer our spirits by Thine advent here;
disperse the gloomy clouds of night, and death's dark shadows put to flight. [*Refrain*]

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. [*Refrain*]

The Third Lesson – Isaiah 11:1-9 – The Peace the Christ Will Bring Is Foreshown

Mr. McRoberts

There shall come forth a shoot from the stump of Jesse, and a branch from His roots shall bear fruit. And the Spirit of the Lord shall rest upon Him, the Spirit of wisdom and understanding, the Spirit of counsel and might, the Spirit of knowledge and the fear of the Lord. And His delight shall be in the fear of the Lord. He shall not judge by what His eyes see, or decide disputes by what His ears hear, but with righteousness He shall judge the poor, and decide with equity for the meek of the earth; and 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 of His waist, and faithfulness the belt of His loins. The wolf shall dwell with the lamb, and the leopard shall lie down with the young goat, and the calf and the lion and the fattened calf 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 cobra, and the weaned child shall put his hand on the adder's den. They shall not hurt or destroy in all my holy mountain; for the earth shall be full of the knowledge of the Lord as the waters cover the sea.

The Congregational Carol*Lo! How a Rose 'Er Blooming*

PRAETORIUS

Text: Theodore Baker, 1851-94

Lo, how a rose e'er blooming from tender stem hath sprung;
of Jesse's lineage coming, as men of old have sung.
It came a flow 'ret bright amid the cold of winter, when half-spent was the night.

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

O Savior, child of Mary, Who felt our human woe;
O Savior, King of glory, Who dost our weakness know;
bring us at length, we pray to the bright courts of heaven and to the endless day.

The Fourth Lesson – Micah 5:2-5a – The Prophet Micah Foretells the Glory of Little Bethlehem

Mr. Howell

But you, O Bethlehem Ephrathah, who are too little to be among the clans of Judah, from you shall come forth for Me One Who is to be ruler in Israel, Whose coming forth is from of old, from ancient days. Therefore He shall give them up until the time when she who is in labor has given birth; then the rest of His brothers shall return to the people of Israel. And He shall stand and shepherd His flock in the strength of the Lord, in the majesty of the name of the Lord His God. And they shall dwell secure, for now He shall be great to the ends of the earth. And He shall be their peace. When the Assyrian comes into our land and treads in our palaces, then we will raise against Him seven shepherds and eight princes of men.

† **The Congregational Carol**

Text: Phillips Brooks, 1835-93

O Little Town of Bethlehem

FOREST GREEN

Traditional English Melody

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.

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

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.

The Fifth Lesson – Luke 1: 39-49 – Mary Visits Elizabeth and Sings a Song of Praise

Mr. McRoberts

In those days Mary arose and went with haste into the hill country, to a town in Judah, and she entered the house of Zechariah and greeted Elizabeth. And when Elizabeth heard the greeting of Mary, the baby leaped in her womb. And Elizabeth was filled with the Holy Spirit, and she exclaimed with a loud cry, “Blessed are you among women, and blessed is the fruit of your womb! And why is this granted to me that the mother of my Lord should come to me? For behold, when the sound of your greeting came to my ears, the baby in my womb leaped for joy. And blessed is she who believed that there would be a fulfillment of what was spoken to her from the Lord.” And Mary said, “My soul magnifies the Lord, and my spirit rejoices in God my Savior, for He has looked on the humble estate of His servant. For behold, from now on all generations will call me blessed; for He Who is mighty has done great things for me, and holy is His name.

The Solo

“Et exsultavit” from Magnificat in D Major

Johann Sebastian Bach BWV 243

[My soul doth magnify the Lord], and my spirit hath exalted in God my Savior.

The Sixth Lesson – Matthew 1: 18-25 – Matthew Tells of the Birth of Jesus

Mr. Howell

Now the birth of Jesus Christ took place in this way. When His mother Mary had been betrothed to Joseph, before they came together she was found to be with Child from the Holy Spirit. And her husband Joseph, being a just man and unwilling to put her to shame, resolved to divorce her quietly. But as he considered these things, behold, an angel of the Lord appeared to him in a dream, saying, “Joseph, son of David, do not fear to take Mary as your wife, for that which is conceived in her is from the Holy Spirit. She will bear a Son, and you shall call His name Jesus, for He will save His people from their sins.” All this took place to fulfill what the Lord had spoken by the prophet: “Behold, the virgin shall conceive and bear a Son, and they shall call His name Immanuel” (which means, God with us). When Joseph woke from sleep, he did as the angel of the Lord commanded him: he took his wife, but knew her not until she had given birth to a Son. And he called His name Jesus.

The Solo

I Wonder as I Wander

APPALACHIAN CAROL

Text: John Jacob Niles, 1892-1980

I wonder as I wander out under the sky, how Jesus, the Savior did come for to die.
For poor, ornery people like you and like I? I wonder as I wander out under the sky.

When Mary birthed Jesus ‘twas in a cow’s stall with wise men and farmers and shepherds and all.
But high from God’s heaven a star’s light did fall. And the promise of ages it did then recall.

If Jesus had wanted for any wee thing; a star in the sky, or a bird on the wing;
or all of God’s angels in heaven to sing, He surely could have had it, for He was the King!

I wonder as I wander out under the sky, how Jesus, the Savior, did come for to die.
For poor, ornery people like you and like I? I wonder as I wander out under the sky.

The Seventh Lesson – Luke 2:8-20 – The Shepherds Go to the Manger

Mr. McRoberts

And in the same region there were shepherds out in the field, keeping watch over their flock by night. And an angel of the Lord appeared to them, and the glory of the Lord shone around them, and they were filled with great fear. And the angel said to them, “Fear not, for behold, I bring you good news of great joy that will be for all the people. For unto you is born this day in the city of David a Savior, Who is Christ the Lord. And this will be a sign for you: you will find a Baby wrapped in swaddling cloths 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, and on earth peace among those with whom He is pleased!” When the angels went away from them into heaven, the shepherds said to one another, “Let us go over to Bethlehem and see this thing that has happened, which the Lord has made known to us.” And they went with haste and found Mary and Joseph, and the Baby lying in a manger. And when they saw it, they made known the saying that had been told them concerning this Child. And all who heard it wondered at what the shepherds told them. But Mary treasured up all these things, pondering them in her heart. And the shepherds returned, glorifying and praising God for all they had heard and seen, as it had been told them.

The Congregational Carol

While Shepherds Watched Their Flocks by Night

WINCHESTER OLD

Text: Nahum Tate, 1652-1715

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.

‘To you in David’s town this day is born of David’s line,
a Savior Who is Christ the Lord; and this shall be the sign.
‘The Heavenly babe you there shall find to human view displayed,
all meanly wrapped in swathing bands and in a manger laid.’

Thus, spake the seraph; and forthwith appeared a shining throng,
of angels praising God, who thus addressed their joyful song:
“All glory be to God on high, and to the earth be peace;
good will henceforth from heaven to men begin and never cease.’

The Eighth Lesson – Matthew 2:1-12 – The Wise Men are Led by the Star to Jesus

Mr. Howell

Now after Jesus was born in Bethlehem of Judea in the days of Herod the king, behold, wise men from the east came to Jerusalem, saying, “Where is He Who has been born King of the Jews? For we saw His star when it rose and have come to worship Him.” When Herod the king heard this, he was troubled, and all Jerusalem with him; and assembling all the chief priests and scribes of the people, he inquired of them where the Christ was to be born. They told him, “In Bethlehem of Judea, for so it is written by the prophet: “‘And you, O Bethlehem, in the land of Judah, are by no means least among the rulers of Judah; for from you shall come a Ruler who will shepherd my people Israel.’” Then Herod summoned the wise men secretly and ascertained from them what time the star had appeared. And he sent them to Bethlehem, saying, “Go and search diligently for the Child, and when you have found Him, bring me word, that I too may come and worship Him.” After listening to the king, they went on their way. And behold, the star that they had seen when it rose went before them until it came to rest over the place where the Child was. When they saw the star, they rejoiced exceedingly with great joy. And going into the house, they saw the Child with Mary His mother, and they fell down and worshiped Him. Then, opening their treasures, they offered Him gifts, gold and frankincense and myrrh. And being warned in a dream not to return to Herod, they departed to their own country by another way.

The Congregational Carol

The First Noel

THE FIRST NOEL

Text: William Sandys and Davies Gilbert

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.

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]

Then let us all with one accord sing praises to our heavenly Lord.
That hath made heav’n and earth of naught, and with His blood mankind hath bought. [Refrain]

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 were made through Him, and without Him was not any thing made that was made. In Him was life, and the life was the light of men. The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness has not overcome it. There was a man sent from God, whose name was John. He came as a witness, to bear witness about the Light, that all might believe through him. He was not the light, but came to bear witness about the Light. The true Light, which gives light to everyone, was coming into the world. He was in the world, and the world was made through Him, yet the world did not know Him. He came to His own, and His own people did not receive Him. But to all who did receive Him, who believed in His name, He gave the right to become children of God, who were born, not of blood nor of the will of the flesh nor of the will of man, but of God. And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, and we have seen His glory, glory as of the only Son from the Father, full of grace and truth.

† **The Congregational Carol**

O Come, All Ye Faithful

ADESTES FIDELIS

Text: J. F. Wade, 1711-1786

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, Christ the Lord.

Child for sinners, poor and in the manger,
fain we embrace Thee with awe and with love,
who would not love Thee, loving us so dearly.
O come, let us adore Him, Christ the Lord.

Sing, choirs of angels, sing in exultation,
sing, all ye citizens of heav'n above,
Glory to God in the highest.
O come, let us adore Him, Christ the Lord.

Yea, Lord, we greet Thee, born this happy morning;
Jesus, to Thee be all glory giv'n.
Word of the Father, now in flesh appearing.
O come, let us adore Him, Christ the Lord.

† **The Confession of Our Faith**

The Apostles' Creed

I believe in God the Father Almighty, Maker of heaven and earth; and in Jesus Christ, His only Son, our Lord, Who was conceived by the Holy Ghost; born of the Virgin Mary; suffered under Pontius Pilate; was crucified, dead, and buried; He descended into hell; the third day He rose again from the dead; He ascended into heaven and sitteth at the right hand of God the Father Almighty. From thence He shall come to judge the quick and the dead. I believe in the Holy Spirit, the holy catholic church, the communion of saints, the forgiveness of sins, the resurrection of the body, and the life everlasting. Amen

† **The Closing Prayer**

Minster: The Lord be with you.

People: And with Your spirit.

Minister: *Let us pray.* O God, Who makes us glad by the yearly remembrance of the birth of Thine only Son, Jesus Christ: Grant that as we joyfully receive Him for our Redeemer, so we may with sure confidence behold Him, when He shall come to be our Judge, Who lives and reigns with Thee and the Holy Ghost, one God, world without end. Amen.

† **The Benediction of God's Grace and the Congregation's AMEN**

Minster: May He Who by His Incarnation gathers into one, things earthly and heavenly, fill you with the sweetness of inward peace and good will, and the blessing of God Almighty, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost, be upon you and remain with you always.

People: Amen.

Hark! the herald angels sing, “Glory to the newborn King;
peace on earth, and mercy mild, God and sinners reconciled!”
Joyful, all ye nations, rise, join the triumph of the skies;
with th’angelic host proclaim, “Christ is born in Bethlehem!”

Refrain: 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, ris’n with healing in His wings.
Mild He lays His glory by, born that man no more may die,
born to raise the sons of earth, born to give them second birth. *[Refrain]*



WORSHIP AND MUSIC LEADERSHIP

The Reverend Claude E. McRoberts III, Senior Minister
The Reverend Michael Howell, Minister of Pastoral Care
Edward M. Patterson, Organist-Choirmaster Emeritus

The Soloist

Michele Lott, *Mezzo-Soprano*

The Instrumentalists

Sylva Wehers, *Violin*
Ruslan Apostolova, *Violin*
Nikko White, *Viola*
Ina Petkova-Apostolova, *Cello*
Dr. Brian Reeves and Dr. Dennis Herrick, *Trumpets*
Thomas Tirnh, *Oboe*
Edward M. Patterson, *Organ*

The Festival of Lessons and Carols originated in England with Archbishop Edward White Benson when he was the Bishop of Truro for use in that Cathedral from 1877 to 1883. In 1918, it was simplified and modified to use in King’s College Chapel, Cambridge, by its Dean, The Very Reverend Eric Milner-White.

On December 22, 1996, this service was further modified by Edward M. Patterson for use in Trinity Presbyterian Church (PCA). Today marks the 25th consecutive year that Trinity Church has held this traditional Christmas service of worship in our sanctuary involving the community of believers in this place.

We welcome all who join us this morning on this special occasion of worship. Soli Deo Gloria!



A congregation of the Presbyterian Church in America (PCA)

trinitypca.org