



Service of Lessons and Carols

Third Sunday in Advent | December 15, 2019



St. John's Lutheran Church | Salisbury, NC

Welcome to St. John's!

For more information about today's worship, please refer to the pew card found in the hymnal. You'll notice that our worship follows a simple pattern that has guided the church's worship since the first century — Gather, Word, Meal, Sending — a pattern designed to nourish and strengthen us for the week ahead. Welcome to worship!

In these few days before Christmas, the world is reminded of a simple yet profound story: of a baby born in the backstreets of Bethlehem. A baby who would change the world forever. But why Christmas? Through a series of lessons and carols, today's worship addresses that very question. The first reading retells the age-old struggle with sin despite God's desire to be in relationship with his people. As humans continued to fall away, the prophecy of Isaiah sets the stage for God's dramatic intervention — becoming one of us, born of Mary. May the beautiful music and these time-honored readings be a blessing to you this morning as we prepare our hearts and minds for the Christmas celebration.

*Congregation's responses are in **bold**.*

Prelude

Savior of the Nations, Come
Festival Brass

arr. Aleksandr Witt

The Glory of Christmas
The Luther Ringers and the Festival Brass
Kimberly Lentz, Director

setting by Joel Raney

Greetings and Announcements



The Advent Wreath. One of the most recognizable customs for the season is the Advent wreath. The unbroken circle of greens is an image of everlasting life. Its circular shape, without beginning or end, symbolizes God's unending love for us. The wreath itself is made of various evergreens, signifying continuous life, even during the dormant time of winter. The four candles mark the progress of the four weeks of Advent and the growth of light, despite the wintry darkness that surrounds us.

A Service of Lessons and Carols

The festival of “Lessons and Carols” was first held on Christmas Eve 1918 at Kings College in England. The service always begins with the English tune, *Once in Royal David’s City*, and includes lessons that span throughout salvation’s history. Lessons and Carols at St. John’s has been held for over 35 years.

Announcement of Isaiah’s Prophecy: *Comfort Ye*, from *The Messiah*, by G.F. Handel
Norman Sloop, tenor
from Isaiah 40:1-3

Comfort ye my people, saith your God.
Speak ye comfortably to Jerusalem,
And cry unto her that her warfare is accomplished,
That her iniquity is pardoned.
The voice of him that crieth in the wilderness,
Prepare ye the way of the Lord,
Make straight in the desert a highway for our God

After the third Advent candle is lit, please stand, turning to face the light of Christ

Those who have walked in darkness have seen a great light; those who lived in a land of deep darkness, on them light has shined.

For a child has been born for us, a son given to us.

Isaiah 9:2

Let us pray. Blessed are you, O God, king of the universe. You call all people to walk in your light and to seek your way of justice and peace; for the night is past, and the dawn of your coming is near. Rouse us from sleep, bless us with light, that we may be ready to greet our Lord when he comes and welcome him into our hearts and homes.

Amen.

Entrance Hymn

Once In Royal David’s City

ELW 269

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 Savior holy.

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 has gone.

The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God, and the communion of the Holy Spirit be with you all. **And also with you.**

Stir up the wills of all who look to you, Lord God, and strengthen our faith in your coming, that, transformed by grace, we may walk in your way; through Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. **Amen.**

Please be seated

THE FIRST LESSON *God holds Adam and Eve accountable for their sin* **Genesis 3:8-13, 24**

Anthem *The Yearning* by Craig Courtney

There is a yearning in hearts weighed down by ancient grief and centuries of sorrow.
There is a yearning in hearts that in the darkness hide and in the shades of death abide,
a yearning for tomorrow.

There is a yearning, a yearning for the promised One, the Firstborn of creation.
There is a yearning for the Lord who visited His own,
and by His death for sin atoned, to bring to us salvation.
Emmanuel, Emmanuel, within our hearts, the yearning.

There is a yearning that fills the hearts of those who wait the day of His appearing.
There is a yearning when all our sorrows are erased
and we shall see the One who placed within our hearts the yearning.
Emmanuel, Emmanuel, within our hearts, the yearning.

THE SECOND LESSON *Christ's birth and kingdom are foretold by Isaiah* **Isaiah 9:2b, 6-7**

Congregational Carol *O Come, O Come, Emmanuel*

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

Oh come, blest Dayspring, come and cheer our spirits by your 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.

THE THIRD LESSON *The angel Gabriel reveals God's plan to Mary* **Luke 1:26-35, 38**

Anthem

The Angel Gabriel
A 19th Century Basque Carol

arr. J. Leavitt

The angel Gabriel from heaven came. His wings as drifted snow, his eyes as flame:
"All hail," said he, "thou lowly maiden Mary. Most highly favored lady!" Gloria!

"For know a blessed mother thou shalt be, all generations laud and honor thee.
Thy Son shall be Emmanuel, by seers foretold, most highly favored lady!" Gloria!

Then gentle Mary meekly bowed her head, "To me be as it pleaseth God," she said.
"My soul shall laud and magnify His holy name." Most highly favored lady, Gloria!

Of her, Emmanuel, the Christ, was born in Bethlehem, all on a Christmas morn,
And Christian fold around the world will ever say, "Most highly favored lady, Gloria!"

THE FOURTH LESSON

The birth of Jesus

Luke 2:1-4

Congregational Carol

O Little Town of Bethlehem

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.

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;
Oh, come to us, abide with us, Our Lord Immanuel!

Anthem

Of the Father's Love Begotten
St. John's Women's Ensemble

arr. Barry Talley

Of the Father's love begotten so the world began to be.
Of the things that are, that have been and future years shall ever see.
He is the beginning and the end, He is Alpha and Omega, He.
Of the Father's love begotten born for you and me.

O the birth forever blessed, Mary filled with grace.
By the Holy Ghost conceiving bore the Savior of our race.
And the Babe, the world's Redeemer first revealed his sacred face.
Of the Father's love begotten in that lowly manger place. Alleluia!
Now he shines the long expected, let creation praise its Lord.
Of the Father's love begotten evermore and evermore.

O ye heights of heaven adore him, angels sing his praise.
Powers and dominions bow before him songs of adoration raise. Alleluia!
Let no tongue on earth be silent, every voice in concert ring!
Of the Father's love begotten born for us this tiny King.
Born to set his people free. Born to us our heavenly King

THE FIFTH LESSON

The birth of Jesus

Luke 2:5-7

Congregational Carol

Away in a Manger

Away in a manger, no crib for a bed,
the little Lord Jesus laid down his sweet head;
The stars in the 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.

THE SIXTH LESSON

An angel tells local shepherds about the birth of Jesus

Luke 2:8-14

Please stand

Congregational Carol

Angels We Have Heard On High

Angels we have heard on high, sweetly singing o'er the plains,
and the mountains in reply, echo back their joyous strains.
Gloria in excelsis Deo; Gloria in excelsis Deo.

Shepherds, why this jubilee? Why your joyous strains prolong?
What the gladsome tiding be which inspire your heavenly song?
Gloria in excelsis Deo; Gloria in excelsis Deo.

Please be seated

Anthem

Rise Up, Shepherd, And Follow
St. John's Men's Chorus

arr. Jeff Funk

There's a star in the East on Christmas morn, rise up, shepherd, and follow.
It will lead to the place where the Savior's born. Rise up, shepherd, and follow.
Oh, follow, follow, rise up, shepherd, and follow.
Follow the star to Bethlehem. Rise up, shepherd, and follow.

If you take good heed to the angel's words, rise up, shepherd, and follow.
You'll forget your flocks, you'll forget your herds, rise up, shepherd, and follow.
Oh, follow, follow, rise up, shepherd, and follow.
Follow the star to Bethlehem. Rise up, shepherd, and follow.

Carol Response

Angels, We Have Heard on High, verse 3

Come to Bethlehem and see him whose birth the angels sing;
Come, adore on bended knee Christ the Lord, the newborn king.
Gloria in excelsis Deo; Gloria in excelsis Deo.

THE SEVENTH LESSON

The shepherds make their way to Bethlehem

Luke 2:15-16

Collection of our Tithes and Offerings**Offertory Anthem**

Rejoice and Be Merry!

by John Rutter

Rejoice and be merry in songs and in mirth, O praise our Redeemer, all mortals on earth:
For this is the birthday of Jesus our King, who brought us salvation: his praises we'll sing.

A heavenly vision appeared in the sky, vast numbers of angels the shepherds did spy,
proclaiming the birthday of Jesus our King, who brought us salvation: his praises we'll sing.

Likewise a bright star in the sky did appear, which led the wise men from the East to draw near;
They found the Messiah, sweet Jesus our King, who brought us salvations, his praises we'll sing.

And when they were come, they their treasures unfold, and unto him offered myrrh,
incense and gold.

So blessed forever be Jesus our King, who brought us salvation his praises we'll sing.
Rejoice and be merry! Rejoice!

Please stand

Offertory Carol

Joy to the World

Joy to the world! The Lord is come; Let earth receive her King;
Let ev'ry heart prepare him room, and heaven and nature sing,
and heaven and nature sing, and heaven, and heaven and nature sing.

Joy to the earth! The Savior reigns; Let men their songs employ;
While fields and flood, rocks, hills and plains
Repeat the sounding joy, repeat the sounding joy!

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.

Prayers, followed by 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, and the power, and the glory, forever and ever.
Amen.**

Please be seated

Giving of Chrismons. *All children and youth of the church are invited to receive a Chrismon ("Christ Monogram"), distributed annually by our Chrismon Team.*

THE EIGHTH LESSON

Jesus identified as "Word made flesh"

John 1:1-5,14

Choral Benediction

Christmas Benediction

arr. B.C. Ballard

Let sadness now give way to joy as we adore the holy boy.
Let Christians all rejoice and sing and go to serve the new-born king.
Alleluia! Amen!

Please stand for the spoken Benediction



1 Hark! The her - ald an - gels sing, "Glo - ry to the new-born king;
2 Christ, by high - est heav'n a - dored, Christ, the ev - er - last - ing Lord,
3 Hail the heav'n - born Prince of peace! Hail the Sun of right - eous - ness!



peace on earth, and mer - cy mild. God and sin - ners rec - on - ciled."
late in time he - hold him come, off - spring of a vir - gin's womb.
Light and life to all he brings, ris'n with heal - ing in his wings.



Joy - ful, all you na - tions, rise; join the tri - umph of the skies;
Veiled in flesh the God-head see! Hail, in - car - nate de - i - ty!
Mild he lays his glo - ry by. born that we no more may die.



with an - gel - ic hosts pro - claim, "Christ is born in Beth - le - hem!"
Pleased as men with us to dwell, Je - sus, our Em - man - u - el!
born to raise each child of earth, born to give us sec - ond birth.

Refrain



Hark! The her - ald an - gels sing, "Glo - ry to the new-born king!"

Dismissal

Go in peace. Prepare the way of the Lord.

Thanks be to God!

Postlude

Gaudete, Christus Natus Est

arr. Simon Hogg



Participants in Today's Service



RJ Wohlman—violin I
Marguerite Keller — violin II
Tim Gudger — viola
Gretchen Tracy — cello
Davis Brown—percussion

St. John's Men's Chorus—Jason Harwood, Director
Janie Rollins — accompanist for St. John's Men's Chorus

The Classic Ringers—Kimberly Lentz, Director

Brass—Mark Hibschan, trumpet; Luke Boudreault, trumpet; Mary Boudreault, horn; Charles Fisher, trombone; Aleksandr Witt, trombone

Rob Durocher, Minister of Worship and the Arts —organist, Chancel Choir Director,
Women's Ensemble Director

Rosemary C. Kinard, Associate Parish Musician—assisting organist,
accompanist for Chancel Choir, guest conductor for the St. John's Men's Chorus

Deanna Boksleitner, Assisting Musician—accompanist for Women's Ensemble

Readers: Judy Childress, Dan Waggoner, John Odell,
Mary Willis Page, Gary Freeze, Callie Wisecarver, Steve Puckett, and Bradley Chestnut

Pastors: Rhodes Woolly and Laura Henrik

Processionalists: crucifer, Noah Hines; acolytes, Kaydence McDaniel and Grace Shafer;
wreath bearer, Hannah Greene

Sound: Taylor Hutchins, Production Manager

Camera: Cory Gebhardt

Christmas at St. John's

Sunday, December 23 — 4th Sunday of Advent

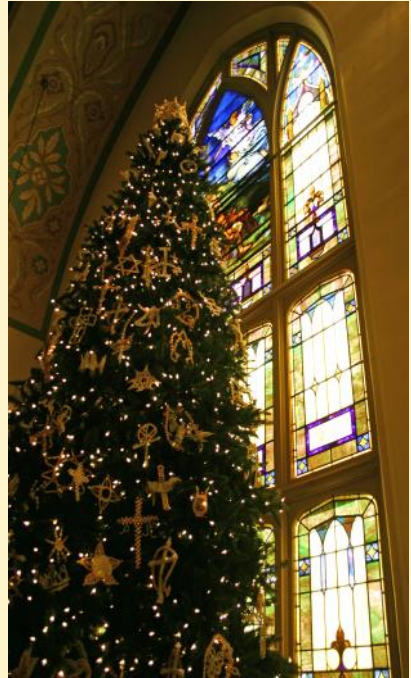
9:27am "O Come, let us adore him,"
A Contemporary Christmas Celebration,
featuring Destiny Stone,
Brad Stephenson, and Corinne Mauldin

8:30 am Traditional worship
11 am

Tuesday, December 24 — CHRISTMAS EVE

5 pm Christmas Eve Family Worship in Sanctuary

8 pm Christmas Eve Candlelight Worship of Holy
Communion in Sanctuary



Both Christmas Eve services will be broadcast via live video stream. Visit our website at stjohns-salisbury.org and click "Watch Live."



Let's connect faith and life. *Together.*