



Source: Unknown.

Service of Lessons *and* Carols

December 21, 2025 | 11:00 am



St. John's Lutheran Church | Salisbury, NC
stjohns-salisbury.org | 704.636.3431

WELCOME TO ST. JOHN'S!

We're so glad God has brought you here!

Our nursery is available during the service, please see an usher for details.

No Sunday School 12/21 and 12/28.

Offering Envelopes—Are available in the Sanctuary narthex and Peeler Hall through the end of the year, and in the Church Office beginning in January.

Church Office Holiday Schedule – St. John's Church Office will be **closed from Dec. 24 – Jan. 2**, for the Christmas/New Year break. Our Staff will be back in the office on Mon., Jan. 5. If you have a pastoral emergency during this time, please call 704-636-3431 and dial ext. 2990 or select Option "9" for the pastor on call.

Altar Flowers—Given to the glory of God and in honor and memory of Emily Stirewalt's family, by Emily Stirewalt.

Christmas at St. John's

CHRISTMAS EVE

Wednesday, December 24



4 pm Christmas Eve Family Service—in the Sanctuary. A beautiful Christmas service created with children in mind.

8 pm Christmas Eve Candlelight Service—in the Sanctuary. This Holy Communion service celebrates the Nativity of Our Lord, led by Choir, brass, timpani, organ and other musicians.

11 pm A Sacred and Reflective Christmas Eve Candlelight Service—in the Chapel. This Holy Communion service is a time to worship and bring in the birth of Jesus together in fellowship.

*(4 pm and 8 pm Christmas Eve services will be broadcast via live video stream.
Visit our website at stjohns-salisbury.org and click "Worship Online.")*

SERVICE of LESSONS and CAROLS

A Festival of Nine Lessons and Carols was first held on Christmas Eve 1918 at Kings College in Cambridge, England. It was conceived as a gift to the City of Cambridge, a sacred offering to the community. In that same spirit we at St. John's have offered this sacred service as a gift to our community for over 35 years.

Since the very first year in Cambridge and for each subsequent year, the service has begun with the English tune, Once in Royal David's City. Traditionally the first verse is unaccompanied by a solo boy chorister, and at St. John's this year we continue that tradition with the voices of our Children's Choir.


The nine lessons, which guide us through the service, trace the long arc of salvation found in the Bible. It begins with Genesis and the fall of humanity, traces the promises of the coming Messiah through the prophets, and then culminates with the birth of Jesus as told narratively in St. Luke and St. Matthew's gospels and poetically in the prologue to St. John's gospel.

Interspersed between the readings we will enjoy an assortment of Choral anthems and congregational hymns, all sung to the glory of God, Immanuel. 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.

Qui bene cantat bis orat
"He who sings, prays twice."
-St. Augustine

PRELUDE

Stanza 1) Children Stanza 2) Congregation Stanza 3) Congregation



1 Once in roy - al Da - vid's cit - y stood a low - ly cat - tle shed,
 2 He came down to earth from heav-en who is God and Lord of all,
 3 And our eyes at last shall see him, through his own re - deem-ing love;

where a moth-er laid her ba - by in a man - ger for his bed:
 and his shel-ter was a sta - ble, and his cra - dle was a stall;
 for that child so dear and gen - tle is our Lord in heav'n a - bove;

Mar - y was that moth-er mild, Je - sus Christ, her lit - tle child.
 with the poor and meek and low-ly, lived on earth our Sav-ior ho - ly.
 and he leads his chil - dren on to the place where he is gone.

GREETING & PRAYER

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.

Let us pray: Stir up the wills of your faithful people, Lord God, and open our ears to the words of your prophets, that, anointed by your Spirit, we may testify to your light; through Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. **Amen.**

Be seated.

LIGHTING OF THE ADVENT WREATH

*The Rusher Family,
Bob, Bobby, and Joey
will light the Advent Wreath*

We praise you, O God, for this wheel of time that marks our days of preparation for Christ's advent. As we light the candles on this wreath, open our eyes to see your presence in the lowly ones of this earth. Enlighten us with your grace, that we may sing of your advent among us in the Word made flesh. Grant this through Christ our Lord, whose coming is certain and whose day draws near. **Amen.**

Light all four candles.

MUSICAL INTERLUDE

'Wexford Variations'

by Davis Brown

Lesson I Carol

LESSON

**Genesis 1:26-27, 31
3:1-13, 21-24**

*God creates the first humans and acknowledges all creation as very good.
An account of the first sin and the origin of the brokenness of creation.*

CAROL

‘O Come, Emmanuel’

Elaine Hagenberg

O Come.

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

O Come.

O come thou Dayspring come and cheer
our spirits by thine advent here,
and drive away the shades of night,
and pierce the clouds and bring us light!

Rejoice!
Emmanuel, shall come to thee O Israel.

O come, Desire of nations,
bind all people in one heart and mind;
bid envy strife and quarrels cease,
and fill the world with heaven’s peace.

Rejoice!
Emmanuel, shall come to thee O Israel.

O Come.

Lesson II Carol

LESSON

The prophet foretells the coming of the Savior.

Isaiah 9:2, 6-7

CAROL

‘Come, Messiah’

Lloyd Larson

O Come, Divine Messiah,
the world in silence waits the day
when hope shall sing its triumph,
and sorrows flee away.

O come, Desire of nations,
whom priest and prophets long foretold,
and break the chains that bind us,
redeem your long lost fold.

Come, Messiah! Dispel our night with the dawn of grace.
Come, Messiah! We long to see your face.
Come, Messiah, come!

O come, dear Child of promise,
for lowly shall your cradle be;
though clothed in human likeness,
we shall the Godhead see!



Lesson III Carol

LESSON

God's coming to the exiles.

Isaiah 40:1-11

CAROL

'The Coming of the Lord'

Pepper Choplin

Lift up your heads, O gates,
and make the highway straight,
prepare to celebrate the coming of the Lord.

Your waiting soon will end,
God's glory will descend,
rise up and welcome in the coming of the Lord.

Prepare the way for the coming of the Lord!

The ancient words foretell,
God with us he will dwell,
Christ, our Emmanuel,
and all will see the glory of the Lord!

O come, O come, Emmanuel,
and ransom captive Israel,

And then the deaf will hear,
the blind will see him clear,
the mute will find their voice,
the lame will leap for joy,
prepare the way of the Lord!

Rejoice! Emmanuel, our God will come to us.
Prepare the way for the coming of the Lord.

Lesson IV Carol

LESSON

The angel Gabriel salutes Mary.

Luke 1:26-38

CAROL

'Room in My Heart'

Mark Burrows

I'm making room in my heart for love.
Room for the baby. No, I don't mean maybe.
Room in my heart for love.

I'm making room in my heart for peace.
Room for the baby. No, I don't mean maybe.
Room in my heart for peace.

Room for the baby.

I'm making room in my heart for joy.
Room for the baby. No, I don't mean maybe.
Room in my heart for joy.



Lesson V Carol

LESSON

Mary proclaims the goodness of God.

Luke 1:39-46

CAROL

'Canticle of the Turning'

Anne Krentz, Organ

Choir My soul cries out with a joyful shout that the God of my heart is great,
and my spirit sings of the wondrous things that you bring to the ones who wait.
You fixed your sight on your servant's plight, and my weakness you did not spurn,
so from east to west shall my name be blest. Could the world be about to turn?

Refrain - ALL



Choir Though I am small, my God, my all, you work great things in me,
and your mercy will last from the depths of the past to the end of the age to be.
Your very name puts the proud to shame, and to those who would for you yearn,
you will show your might, put the strong to flight, for the world is about to turn. *Refrain*

Choir From the halls of pow'r to the fortress tow'r, not a stone will be left on stone.
Let the king beware for your justice tears ev'ry tyrant from his throne.
The hungry poor shall weep no more, for the food they can never earn;
there are tables spread, ev'ry mouth be fed, for the world is about to turn. *Refrain*

Choir Though the nations rage from age to age, we remember who holds us fast:
God's mercy must deliver us from the conqueror's crushing grasp.
This saving word that our forebears heard is the promise which holds us bound,
till the spear and rod can be crushed by God, who is turning the world around. *Refrain*

Lesson VI Carol

LESSON

St. Luke tells of the birth of Jesus.

Luke 2:1-7

CAROL

*'What Child is This'
St. John's Women's Ensemble*

Ruth Elaine Schram

What child is this who, laid to rest,
on Mary's lap is sleeping?
Whom angels greet with anthems sweet,
while shepherds watch their keeping?

Why lies he in such mean estate,
where ox and lamb are feeding?
Good Christian, fear, for sinners here
the silent Word is pleading!

This, this is Christ the King,
whom shepherds guard and angels sing:
haste, haste to bring him laud,
the babe, the Son of Mary.

So bring him incense, gold and myrrh;
come, peasant, king, to own him!
The king of kings salvation brings,
let loving hearts enthrone him!

This, this is Christ the King,
whom shepherds guard and angels sing:
haste, haste to bring him laud,
the babe, the Son of Mary.



Lesson VII Carol

LESSON

The angels announce the birth of the Messiah.

Luke 2:8-14

We rise.

CAROL

'Angels We Have Heard on High'

ELW 289



All
Men
All

1 An - gels we have heard on high, sweet - ly sing - ing o'er the plains,
2 Shep-herds, why this ju - bi - lee? Why your joy - ous strains pro - long?
3 Come to Beth - le - hem and see him whose birth the an - gels sing;



All
Women
All

and the moun-tains in re - ply, ech - o - ing their joy - ous strains.
What the glad - some tid - ings be which in - spire your heav'n - ly song?
come, a - dore on bend - ed knee Christ the Lord, the new - born king.

Refrain



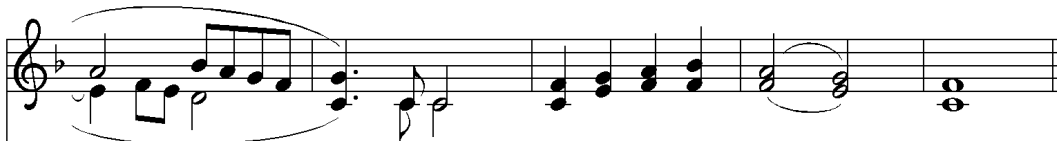
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Glo

ri - a



in ex - cel - sis De - o; glo



ri - a in ex - cel - sis De - o.



Lesson **VIII** *Carol*

Be seated.

LESSON

The shepherds go to the manger.

Luke 2:15-20

OFFERING

We gather our gifts to offer them before God to use in God's mission. All are invited to participate in God's mission as they are called, either by placing your offering in the offering plate, scanning the QR Code provided, or giving online at stjohns-salisbury.org. Connect with us, as we live out our faith and share God's love with the world.



CAROL

'Fantasy on Hark! The Herald Angels Sing'
Luther Ringers

arr. Paul Douglas



Lesson IX Carol

LESSON

St. John unfolds the great mystery of the Incarnation.

John 1:1-5,14

We rise.

CAROL

'Joy to the World'

ELW 267

1 Joy to the world, the Lord is come! Let earth re -
2 Joy to the earth, the Sav - ior reigns! Let all their
3 No more let sin and sor - row grow nor thorns in -
4 He rules the world with truth and grace and makes the

ceive her king; let ev - 'ry heart pre - pare him
songs em - ploy, while fields and floods, rocks, hills, and
fest the ground; he comes to make his bless - ings
na - tions prove the glo - ries of his righ - teous -

room and heav'n and na - ture sing, and heav'n and na - ture
plains re - peat the sound-ing joy, re - peat the sound-ing
flow far as the curse is found, far as the curse is
ness and won - ders of his love, and won - ders of his

and heav'n and na - ture sing, and

sing, and heav'n, and heav'n and na - ture sing.
joy, re - peat, re - peat the sound - ing joy.
found, far as, far as the curse is found.
love, and won - ders, won - ders of his love.

heav'n and na - ture sing,

Remain standing.

PRAYERS

Each petition ends:

“Lord, in your mercy; **hear our 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.**

Be seated.

CRISMON DISTRIBUTION

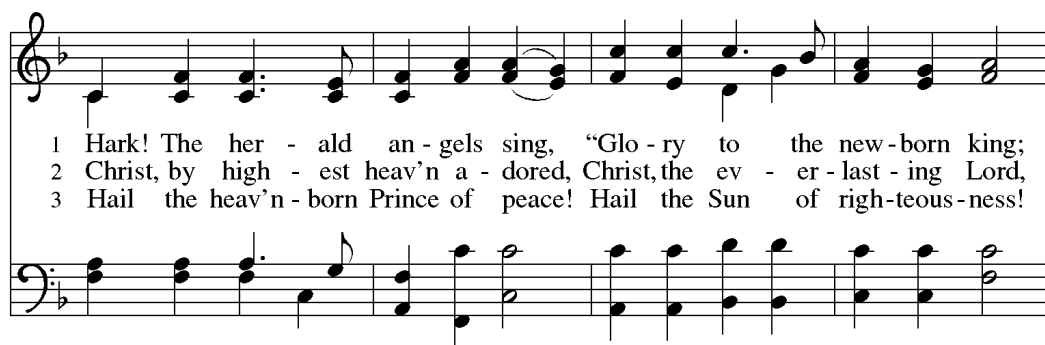
*Every year at Christmas, all children and youth of St. John's are presented
with a Chrismon (Christ monogrammed) ornament. The Chrismon this year is a cross.*

We rise.

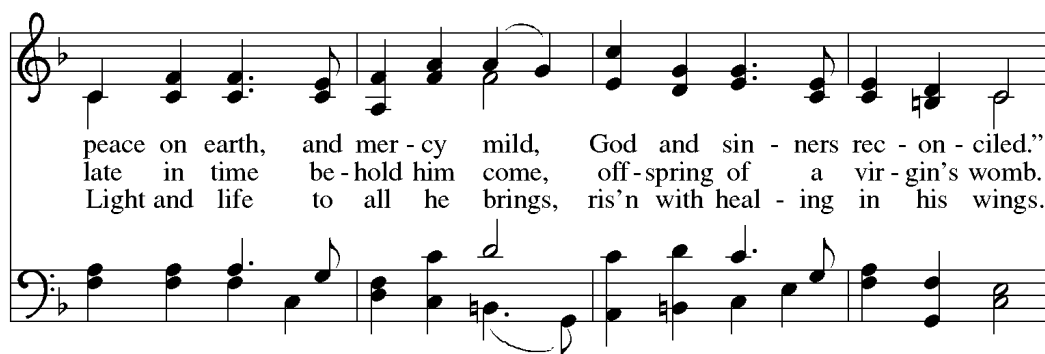
BENEDICTION

The Lord bless you and keep you.
The Lord's face shine on you with grace and mercy.
The Lord look upon you with favor and ✠ give you peace. **Amen.**

*We face the cross as it leaves the sanctuary,
reminding us that Jesus leads us into the world.*



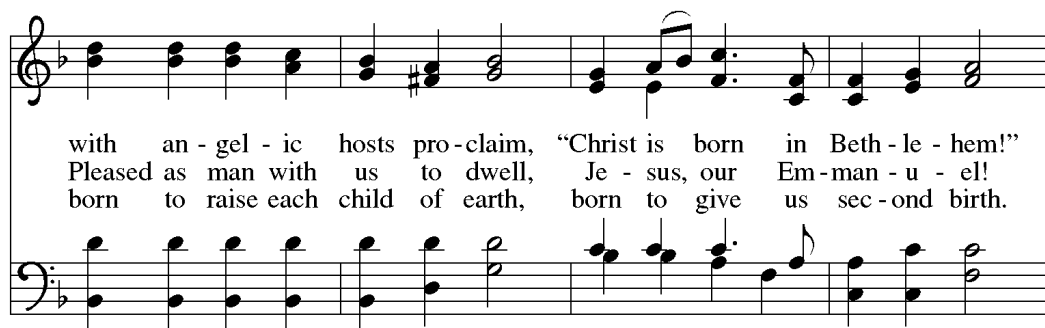
1 Hark! The her - ald an - gels sing, "Glo - ry to the new-born king;
2 Christ, by high - est heav'n a - dored, Christ, the ev - er - last - ing Lord,
3 Hail the heav'n - born Prince of peace! Hail the Sun of righ-teous-ness!



peace on earth, and mer - cy mild, God and sin - ners rec - on - ciled."
late in time be - 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 man 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 & POSTLUDE

People of God, prepare the way of the Lord.
We will! Thanks be to God!





PARTICIPANTS

John Harsh, *violin*
Luke Benton, *violin*
Nicholas Fuqua, *viola*
Kevin Agner, *cello*
Michelle Rose, *flute*
Joanna Porter, *oboe*
Davis Brown, *percussion*
Thom Hinson, *organist*

Janie Rollins
Associate Parish Musician

Kimberly Lentz
Director of the Luther Ringers Ensemble

Spence Robertson
Pastor for Worship and the Arts

Readers:
The Rev. Lori Carter
The Rev. James Demmel
Elaine Gerst
The Rev. Dan Joyner Miller
Chuck Moll
Wesley Rhyne
Grace Shafer
Mitch Siegel
Colleen Young

Order of St. John's

Holden Roach
Acolyte

Anna Kate Goodman
Crucifer

Wyatt Barnhardt
Acolyte

Balian Witt
Banner Bearer

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ST. JOHN'S LUTHERAN CHURCH

200 West Innes Street, Salisbury, North Carolina 28144 | 704.636.3431
stjohns-salisbury.org | To contact a staff member: *first-name*@stjohns-salisbury.org

Pastoral Ministry

Senior Pastor.....Dan Joyner Miller...ext. 2060
Pastor for Congregational CareLori Carter...ext. 2050
Pastor for Youth and OutreachJames Demmel...ext. 2040

Worship and Music Ministry

Pastor for Worship and the Arts.....Spence Robertson...ext. 2080
Production Manager.....Taylor Hutchins...ext. 2190
Associate Parish Musician.....Janie Rollins
Contemporary Worship Leaders.....Michael Board and Ondria Witt
Director of Music *emeritus*.....Karl Kinard, Jr., *deacon*

Program Ministry

Children.....Stacey Shafer...ext. 2020
St. John's Kindergarten (4 & 5 year olds), Director.....Bonita Rowland...ext. 2120
Child Development Center, Executive Director.....Lea Anne Thomas...ext. 3212

Administrative Team

Church Administrator.....Deborah Cross...ext. 2030
Office Manager.....Vivian Connor...ext. 2000
Bookkeeper.....Mark Bias...ext. 2170
Communication Specialist.....Stephanie Mesimer...ext. 2220
Ministry Program Coordinator.....Mary Wymbs...ext. 2180
Facility Manager.....David Ellenburg...ext. 2070
Custodian.....Steven Elliott



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