

# A Festival of Nine Lessons and Carols

17 December 2023  
*ten o'clock in the morning*

*Suffer me never to think that I have  
knowledge enough to need no teaching,  
wisdom enough to need no correction,  
talents enough to need no grace,  
goodness enough to need no progress,  
humility enough to need no repentance,  
devotion enough to need no quickening,  
strength sufficient without Your spirit;  
lest, standing still, I fall back for evermore.*

*The Very Reverend Eric Milner-White OGS, CBE, DSO*

*23 April 1884 – 15 June 1963*



*Christ Church  
Stevensville, Kent Island, Maryland*

A Festival of Nine Lessons and Carols  
Christ Church  
Stevensville, Kent Island, Maryland

Sunday, 17 December 2023, *being* The Third Sunday of Advent  
10am

Things we love and truths we treasure quickly become enshrined in our hearts, and almost overnight come to feel like ancient, time-honored features of our lives. That is certainly the case with The Festival of Nine Lessons and Carols. Its formal character and comforting warmth make it feel ancient, but it is not. The Very Rev'd Eric Milner-White, Dean of the Chapel at King's College, Cambridge, instituted this service to be sung on Christmas Eve, 1918, six weeks and one day after the Armistice concluding World War I. Milner-White adapted it from a similar service authorized for use in 1880 by The Rt. Rev'd Edward White Benson, Jr. in The Cathedral Church of The Blessed Virgin Mary at Truro. The lessons were reordered in 1919, and what we use here is the order as Dean Milner-White adjusted it that year. The Festival has become so firmly established in the life of the Church that since 1928, the service has been broadcast live from King's College every year save one (1930) *via* the BBC World Service.

Each year at King's, the service begins with "*Once in Royal David's City,*" sung as a treble solo by one of the choristers. "*The soloist is not selected until the final seconds before broadcast. 'We actually don't identify to the boy himself who's going to sing it until the BBC's red light starts flashing,' says Stephen Cleobury, fellow, organist and director of music at King's. 'It prevents one individual getting really stewed up for 10 days or a fortnight beforehand.'*"

Dean Milner-White intended that the Festival be (and at King's College it remains) a Christmas Eve service; the lessons, and music are meant to move deliberately from the season of Advent into Christmastide. Hundreds of parishes and cathedral churches throughout the Anglican Communion have adopted the Festival over the years, modifying its length and the music for local usage on other days as needed. So it is that we sing Lessons and Carols on Kent Island this morning rather than on Christmas Eve. *The Authorized Version of 1611* (the King James version) is always used at King's College; the lesson texts printed here are from the *New Revised Standard Version* of the Bible.

The Choir of Christ Church Parish -

*sopranos:* Betty Francis, Kathy Sells, Barbara O'Connor, Evelyn Kriby, Eileen Shreve, Kit Buckingham

*altos:* Donna Guilford, Helen Vansant, Ruthanne Herold, Carol Conrad, Chris Gschwend, Emily Van Essen

*tenors:* Tim Aland, Stan Link, Colleen Minahan, Cary Gates

*baritones:* Dennis Conrad, Goldey Vansant, John Gschwend, Ken Valentine, Lucas White

Dr. Gary Van Essen, Minister of Music

Mr. Warren Prender, Trumpeter

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<sup>1</sup> Peter Kingston (21 December 2007), "[The world's greatest carol event](#)", *The Guardian*

*“O Come All Ye Faithful”* *Adeste Fideles*  
*Hymn 83, verses 1-3 sung by the Choir and the Congregation*

### The Concluding Versicles and Responses, and the Blessing

Let us bless the living God:

He was born of the Virgin Mary,  
*Revealed in his glory,*  
Worshipped by angels,  
*Proclaimed among the nations,*  
Believed in throughout the world,  
*Exalted to the highest heavens.*  
Glory to God in the highest  
*and peace to his people on earth.*

The Lord be with you, *and also with you.*  
Let us bless the Lord, *Thanks be to God.*

May he who by his incarnation gathered into one things earthly and heavenly,  
bestow upon you the fullness of inward peace and goodwill; and the blessing  
of God almighty, the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit, be upon you and  
remain with you always. *Amen.*

Organ Postlude

*“Hark the Herald Angels Sing!”* arr. Cherwien



### Organ prelude

*“Chorale Prelude on ‘In dulci jubilo’”* Bach/arr. Ryan

**Procession** *The people standing, the Choir, Readers, and Clergy enter*

*“Once in Royal David’s City”* Irby  
*Hymn 102; Ms. Emily Van Essen, soprano, will sing the first verse,*  
*the Choir will join on the second verse,*  
*and the congregation then will join to sing*

*And through all his wondrous childhood, he would honor and obey,  
Love and watch the lowly maiden, in whose gentle arms he lay:  
Christian children all must be mild, obedient, good as he.*

*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.*

*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;  
Where like stars his children crowned, all in white shall wait around.*

### The Bidding and the Prayers

Beloved in Christ, be it in this holy season of Advent 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 us by this Holy  
Child.

But first, let us pray for the needs of the whole world; for peace on earth and goodwill  
among all his people; for unity within the Church he came to build, and especially in  
this town of Stevensville on Kent Island, and in The Diocese of Easton. And because  
this of all things would rejoice his heart, let us remember, in his name, the poor and

helpless, the cold, the hungry, and the oppressed; the sick and them that mourn, the lonely and the unloved, the aged and the little children; 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 one can number, whose hope was in the Word made flesh, and with whom in the Lord Jesus we are for ever one.

These prayers and praises let us humbly offer up to the Throne of Heaven, in the words which Christ himself taught us:

Our Father, *who 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 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.*

May 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. *Amen.*

Anthem  
*"Prepare the Way of the Lord"* Burkhardt  
The Choir

**The First Lesson** *read by Mr. Samuel Radley Taylor*

**Genesis 3: 8–15; 17–19** *God tells sinful Adam that he has lost the life of Paradise and that his seed will bruise the serpent's head.*

The man and his wife heard the sound of the LORD God walking in the garden at the time of the evening breeze, and they 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?" 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 from 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 from 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 tricked me, and I ate."

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

*"The first Nowell"* The first Nowell  
*Hymn 109, stanzas 3-5, sung by the Choir and the Congregation*

**The Ninth Lesson** *read by The Rev'd Frank B. Crumbaugh III*

**John 1: 1–14** *St John unfolds the great mystery of the Incarnation.*

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 came into being through him, and without him not one thing came into being. What has come into being in him was life, and the life was the light of all people. The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness did not overcome it.

There was a man sent from God, whose name was John. He came as a witness to testify to the light, so that all might believe through him. He himself was not the light, but he came to testify to the light. The true light, which enlightens everyone, was coming into the world. He was in the world, and the world came into being through him; yet the world did not know him. He came to what was his own, and his own people did not accept him. But to all who received him, who believed in his name, he gave power to become children of God, who were born, not of blood or of the will of the flesh or of the will of man, but of God.

And 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.

*"Good Christian friends, rejoice"* *in dulci júbilo*  
Hymn 107, sung by the Choir and the Congregation

**The Seventh Lesson** read by Ms. Jennifer Leach

**Luke 2: 8–16** *The shepherds go to the manger.*

In that region there were shepherds living in the fields, keeping watch over their flock by night. Then an angel of the Lord stood before them, and the glory of the Lord shone around them, and they were terrified. But the angel said to them, "Do not be afraid; for see-- I am bringing you good news of great joy for all the people: to you is born this day in the city of David a Savior, who is the Messiah, the Lord. This will be a sign for you: you will find a child wrapped in bands of cloth 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 heaven,  
and on earth peace among those whom he favors!"  
When 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." So they went with haste and found Mary and Joseph, and the child lying in the manger.

*"The first Nowell"* The first Nowell  
Hymn 109, stanzas 1-2, sung by the Choir and the Congregation

**The Eighth Lesson** read by The Rt. Rev'd James J. Shand

**Matthew 2: 1–12** *The wise men are led by the star to Jesus.*

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

'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.'"

The 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. I 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."

And 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; 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 until you return to the ground, for out of it you were taken; you are dust, and to dust you shall return."

*"Jesus Christ the Apple Tree"* arr. Poston  
Lucas White, tenor

**The Second Lesson** read by Ms. Vivian Dorsey

**Genesis 22: 15–18** *God promises to faithful Abraham that in his seed shall all the nations of the earth be blessed.*

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

*"O come, O come, Emmanuel"* *veni veni Emmanuel*  
Hymn 56, verses 1-4, sung by the Choir and the Congregation

**The Third Lesson** read by Mr. Keith Fulmer

**Isaiah 9: 2; 6–7** *The prophet foretells the coming of the Savior.*

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.  
For 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,  
Ever-lasting Father, Prince of Peace.  
His 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.

*“God Rest you merry Gentlemen”* God Rest You Merry  
*Hymn 105, sung by the Choir and the Congregation*

**The Fourth Lesson** *read by Ms. Helen Vansant*  
**Isaiah 11: 1–3a; 4a; 6–9** *The peace that Christ will bring is foreshown.*

A shoot shall come out from the stump of Jesse,  
and a branch shall grow out of his roots.  
The 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.  
His delight shall be in the fear of the LORD.

With righteousness he shall judge the poor,  
and decide with equity for the meek of the earth;

The 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.  
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 asp,  
and the weaned child shall put its hand on the adder's den.  
They 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.

*“Lo, how a Rose e'er blooming”*  
*Hymn 81, sung by the Choir and the Congregation*

*Es ist ein Ros*

**The Fifth Lesson** *read by Ms. Reagan Hohman*  
**Luke 1: 26–35; 38** *The angel Gabriel salutes the Blessed Virgin Mary.*

In the sixth month the angel Gabriel was sent by God to a town in Galilee called Nazareth, to a virgin engaged to a man whose name was Joseph, of the house of David. The virgin's name was Mary. And he came to her and said, "Greetings, favored one! The Lord is with you." But she was much perplexed by his words and pondered what sort of greeting this might be. The angel said to her, "Do not be afraid, Mary, for you have found favor with God. And now, you will conceive in your womb and bear a son, and you will name him Jesus. He 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. He will reign over the house of Jacob forever, and of his kingdom there will be no end." Mary said to the angel, "How can this be, since I am a virgin?" The 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." Then 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.

Anthem  
*“Mary on a Mountain”* Carter  
*The Choir & Helen Vansant, alto soloist*

**Anthem at the Offertory**

*“Still, Still, Still”* arr. Edwards  
*Organ Solo*

**The Sixth Lesson** *read by Mr. Michael Parker*  
**Luke 2: 1; 3–7** *St Luke tells of the birth of Jesus.*

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