

St. Stephen's Episcopal Church

The Nativity of Our Lord Jesus Christ

24 December 2020

Christmas Lessons and Carols

Prelude

O Little town of Bethlehem Arranged by Joel T. Rutherford,
transcribed for Saxophone quartet by Andrew Miller
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Vom Himmel hoch, da komm ich her (From Heaven Above to Earth I Come)
Johann Pachelbel (1653-1706)

O come, O come, Emmanuel Arranged by Kevin Keller,
transcribed for Saxophone quartet by Andrew Miller
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Once in royal David's city

*This carol is from a Diocesan Lessons and Carols service available on
Bishop Jennifer Baskerville-Burrows YouTube Channel.*

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, the scorned, the lowly, lived on earth our Savior holy.

Not in that poor lowly stable, with the oxen standing round,
we shall see him; but in heaven, where his saints his throne surround:
Christ, revealed to faithful eye, set at God's right hand on high.

A Bidding Prayer

The Rev. Drew Downs, Officiant

Officiant Dear Beloved in Christ, in this Christmastide, let it be our care and delight to hear again the message of the Angels, and in heart and mind to go to Bethlehem and see what has come to pass, and the Son of God lying in a manger.

Let us hear and heed in Holy Scripture the story of God's loving purpose from the first blessing to the glorious Redemption brought us by this Holy Child, and let us make this place glad with our carols of praise.

But first, let us pray for the needs of all creation; for peace and justice on earth; for unity and mission of the Church he came to build, and especially in this country and within this city.

And because God particularly loves them, let us remember 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; all those separated from Christ, or who by sin have grieved his heart of love.

Lastly, let us remember before God his blessed and lowly Mother, and 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.

And now, to sum up all these petitions, let us pray as our Savior Christ has taught us,

**Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your Name,
your kingdom come, your will be done, on earth as in heaven.
Give us today our daily bread.
Forgive us our sins as we forgive those who sin against us.
Save us from the time of trial, and deliver us from evil.
For the kingdom, the power, and the glory are yours,
now and for ever. Amen.**

Officiant 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.

People **Amen.**

The Lessons

Genesis 22:15-18

Sophia Downs, reader

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

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

O come, thou Key of David, come, and open wide our heavenly home;
make safe the way that leads on high, and close the path to misery.
Rejoice! Rejoice! Emmanuel shall come to thee, O Israel!

O come, Desire of nations, bind in one the hearts of all mankind;
bid thou our sad divisions cease, and be thyself our King of Peace.
Rejoice! Rejoice! Emmanuel shall come to thee, O Israel!

Isaiah 7:10-15

Peggy Allen, reader

The LORD spoke to Ahaz, saying, Ask a sign of the LORD your God; let it be deep as Sheol or high as heaven. But Ahaz said, I will not ask, and I will not put the LORD to the test. Then Isaiah said: "Hear then, O house of David! Is it too little for you to weary mortals, that you weary my God also? Therefore the Lord himself will give you a sign. Look, the young woman is with child and shall bear a son, and shall name him Immanuel. He shall eat curds and honey by the time he knows how to refuse the evil and choose the good."

Lo, how a Rose e'er blooming

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 blossom 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 show God's love aright, she bore to us a Savior,
when half spent was the night.

Luke 1:26-35, 38

Jessica Wayton, reader

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.

Of the Father's love begotten

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 blessèd, when the Virgin, full of grace,
by the Holy Ghost conceiving, bore the Savior of our race;
and the Babe, the world's Redeemer,
first revealed his sacred face, evermore and evermore!

Luke 2:1-7

James Greene, reader

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

Silent night, holy night

Silent night, holy night, all is calm, all is bright
round yon virgin mother and child.

Holy infant, so tender and mild, sleep in heavenly peace.

Silent night, holy night, shepherds quake at the sight,
glories stream from heaven afar,

heavenly hosts sing alleluia; Christ, the Savior, is born!

Silent night, holy night, Son of God, love's pure light
radiant beams from thy holy face,

with the dawn of redeeming grace, Jesus, Lord, at thy birth.

Luke 2:8-14

Gail Nattkemper, reader

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!"

O come, all ye faithful from *Diocesan Lessons and Carols*

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.

Sing, choirs of angels, sing in exultation,
sing, all ye citizens of heaven above;
glory to God, glory 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 glory given;
Word of the Father, now in flesh appearing;
O come, let us adore him, Christ the Lord.

Luke 2:15-20

John Salamone, reader

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. When they saw this, they made known what had been told them about this child; and all who heard it were amazed at what the shepherds told them. But Mary treasured all these words and pondered them in her heart. The shepherds returned, glorifying and praising God for all they had heard and seen, as it had been told them.

Go tell it on the mountain

Go tell it on the mountain, over the hills and everywhere;
go tell it on the mountain, that Jesus Christ is born!

The shepherds feared and trembled when lo! above the earth
rang out the angel chorus that hailed our Savior's birth.

Go tell it on the mountain, over the hills and everywhere;
go tell it on the mountain, that Jesus Christ is born!

Down in a lowly manger the humble Christ was born,
and God sent us salvation that blessed Christmas morn.

Go tell it on the mountain, over the hills and everywhere;
go tell it on the mountain, that Jesus Christ is born!

John 1:1-18

Deacon Deby Veach, reader

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. (John testified to him and cried out, "This was he of whom I said, 'He who comes after me ranks ahead of me because he was before me.'") From his fullness we have all received, grace upon grace. The law indeed was given through Moses; grace and truth came through Jesus Christ. No one has ever seen God. It is God the only Son, who is close to the Father's heart, who has made him known.

Nativity Carol

Anne Buchanan and Andrew Miller, soloists

Silent, in the chill of midnight, starlight shines upon a lowly manger.
Wonder, wonder of the ages; heaven breaks forth on the earth.

*For a child is born, the world rejoices! Shepherds and angels proclaim his birth.
This is Jesus the Lord, our Savior and brother, bearing God's peace to the earth.*

'Fear not,' said angelic voices; 'tidings of a wondrous love we bring you.
Go now, find him in a manger; visit God's home on the earth.'

For a child is born...

Jesus, Lord of all creation, sleep now close beside your mother, Mary.
Bring us light amid the darkness, promise of life without end.

For a child is born...

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Officiant The Lord be with you.

People **And also with you.**

Let us pray.

O God, you make us glad by the yearly festival of the birth of your only Son Jesus Christ. Grant that we who joyfully receive Him as our Redeemer, may with sure confidence behold Him when He comes to be our Judge; who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.

People **Amen.**

Officiant May the Sun of righteousness shine upon you and scatter the darkness from before your path; and the blessing of God Almighty, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit be among you, and remain with you always.

People **Amen.**

Hark! the herald angels sing *from Diocesan Lessons and Carols*

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 the angelic host proclaim Christ is born in Bethlehem!
Hark! the herald angels sing glory to the newborn King!

Christ, by highest heaven adored; Christ, the everlasting Lord;
 late in time behold him come, offspring of the Virgin's womb.
Veiled in flesh the Godhead see; hail the incarnate Deity.
 Pleased as man with man to dwell; Jesus, our Emmanuel!
Hark! the herald angels sing glory to the newborn King!

Mild he lays his glory by, born that we no more may die,
 born to raise us from the earth, born to give us second birth.
Risen with healing in his wings, light and life to all he brings,
 hail, the Sun of Righteousness! hail, the heaven-born Prince of Peace!
Hark! the herald angels sing glory to the newborn King!

Postlude *In dulci jubilo* J.S.Bach

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