

# Lessons and Carols



*Westminster Presbyterian Church*

December 5, AD2021

6:00 PM

# Service of Lesson and Carols

**Prelude**

*Barbara Tracy*

**The Processional Hymn**     *O Come All Ye Faithful*

**Hymn #208**

**The Responsive Reading**

*Charlie Lutz*

*Leader:* In the beginning was the Word

***Congregation:* And the Word was with God, and the Word was God.**

*Leader:* He was with God in the beginning.

***Congregation:* Through Him all things were made; without Him nothing was made that has been made.**

*Leader:* In Him was life, and that life was the light of men.

***Congregation:* The light shines in darkness, but the darkness has not understood it.**

*Leader:* He was in the world, and though the world was made through Him, the world did not recognize Him.

***Congregation:* He came to that which was His own, but His own did not receive Him.**

*Leader:* Yet to all who received Him,

***Congregation:* To those who believed in His name,**

*Leader:* He gave the right to become children of God.

***All:* The Word became flesh and made His dwelling among us. We have seen his glory, the glory of the One and Only, who came from the Father, full of grace and truth.**

**The Bidding to Prayer**

**The Bidding Carol:** *Masters in the Hall*

English Carol arr. Martin

**THE FIRST LESSON:** *God tells sinful Adam that he has lost the life of Paradise and that his seed will bruise the serpent's head.*

Genesis 3:8-15; 17-19

**CAROL:** *Let All Mortal Flesh Keep Silence*

English Carol using French Folk Tune, arr. Alonso

**THE SECOND LESSON:** *God promises believing Abraham that in his seed shall all the nations of the earth be blessed.*

Genesis 22:15-18

**CAROL:** *O Come, Redeemer of the Earth*

Getty, Getty/arr. Nichols

**THE THIRD LESSON:** *The prophet foretells the coming of the Saviour.*

Isaiah 9:2, 6-7

**CAROL:** *Lo, How a Rose*

15<sup>th</sup> Century German Carol, Praetorius/arr. Govenor

**THE FOURTH LESSON:** *The peace that Christ will bring is foreshown.*

Isaiah 11:1-4, 6-9; Micah 5:2-4

**CAROL:** *It Came Upon a Midnight Clear*

American Carol, Hymn #200

*With Congregation*

**THE FIFTH LESSON:** *The birth of the Son of the Highest is announced by the angel, Gabriel, to the virgin Mary.*

Luke 1:26-35,38

**CAROL:** *A Celtic Noel (The First Noel)*

**American Carol, arr. Tierney**

**THE SIXTH LESSON:** *Matthew tells of the birth of Jesus.*

Matthew 1:18-23

**CAROL:** *Away in the Manger*

**arr. Lund**

**THE SEVENTH LESSON:** *The good tidings of great joy of the birth of the Savior, Christ the Lord are announced to the shepherds.*

Luke 2:8-16

**CAROL:** *Angels We Have Heard on High*

**Traditional French Carol, Hymn #214**

*With Congregation*

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

**Refrain: Gloria in excelsis Deo, Gloria in excelsis Deo.**

Shepherds, why this jubilee? Why your joyous strains prolong? Say what may the tidings be, which inspire your heav'nly song?

Come to Bethlehem and see him whose birth the angels sing; come, adore on bended knee Christ the Lord, the newborn King.

**CAROL:** *Infant Lowly, Infant Holy*

**arr. Christopher**

**THE EIGHTH LESSON:** *The wise men are led by the star to Jesus, born King of the Jews.*

Matthew:2:1-11

**ANTHEM:** *Creation Sings*

**Townend, Getty, and Getty**

**THE NINTH LESSON:** *John unfolds the great mystery of the Incarnation.*

**John 1:1-14**

**ANTHEM:** *All Praise to Thee*

**Hagenberg**

**The Prayer and Blessing  
Postlude**

*Pastor Scott Reiber  
Ms. Tracy*

### ***A Brief History of Lessons and Carols***

The original service of lessons and carols was drawn up by E.W. Benson, later Archbishop of Canterbury, for use in the wooden shed, which then served as his cathedral in Truro, at 10 p.m. on Christmas Eve 1880. A.C. Benson recalled: "My father arranged from ancient sources a little service for Christmas Eve – nine carols and nine tiny lessons, which were read by various officers of the Church, beginning with a chorister, and ending, through the different grades, with the Bishop." The suggestion had come from G.H.S. Walpole, later Bishop of Edinburgh. King's College (Cambridge) began the tradition in 1918. This service became an annual tradition. Westminster Presbyterian Church began the tradition of Lessons and Carols a decade ago in Vicksburg, Mississippi.

### ***Historical Notes***

**Let All Mortal Flesh Keep Silence** also known as *Let all mortal flesh keep silent*, is an ancient chant of Eucharistic devotion based on words from Habakkuk 2:20, "Let all the earth keep silence before him." The original was composed in Greek as a Cherubic Hymn for the Offertory of the Divine Liturgy of St James; it probably antedates the rest of the liturgy and goes back at least to AD 275, with local churches adopting arrangements in Syriac. In modern times, the Ralph Vaughan Williams arrangement of a translation from the Greek by Gerard Moultrie to the tune of "Picardy," a French medieval folk melody, popularized the hymn among other Christian congregations.

**Lo, How a Rose** text is thought to be penned by an anonymous author, and the piece first appeared in print in the late 16th century. The tune most familiar today appears in 1599, and the familiar harmonization was written by German composer Michael Praetorius in 1609. The English translation "Lo, How a Rose E'er Blooming" was written by Theodore Baker in 1894.

**It Came Upon the Midnight Clear** Edmund Sears composed the five-stanza poem in common metre doubled during 1849. It first appeared on December 29, 1849, in the *Christian Register* in Boston, Massachusetts. Sears served the Unitarian congregation in Wayland, Massachusetts, before moving on to a larger congregation in Lancaster. After seven years of hard work, he suffered a breakdown and returned to Wayland. He wrote *It Came Upon the Midnight Clear* while serving as a part-time preacher in Wayland. Writing during a period of personal melancholy, and with news of revolution in Europe and the United States' war with Mexico fresh in his mind, Sears portrayed the world as dark, full of "sin and strife", and not hearing the Christmas message.

**The First Noel** is a traditional classical English Christmas carol, most likely from the early modern period, although possibly earlier.<sup>[2][3]</sup> *Noel* is an Early Modern English synonym of "Christmas". *The First Noel* is of Cornish origin. Its current form was first published in *Carols Ancient and Modern* (1823) and *Gilbert and Sandys Carols* (1833), both of which were edited by William Sandys and arranged, edited and with extra lyrics written by Davies Gilbert for *Hymns and Carols of God*. Today, it is usually performed in a four-part hymn arrangement by the English composer John Stainer, first published in his *Carols, New and Old* in 1871.

**Angels We Have Heard on High** The words of the song are based on a traditional French carol known as *Les Anges dans nos campagnes* (literally, "Angels in our countryside") composed by an unknown author in Languedoc, France. Its most common English version was translated in 1862 by James Chadwick, the Roman Catholic Bishop of Hexham and Newcastle, northeast England. It is most commonly sung to the hymn tune "Gloria", as arranged by Edward Shippen Barnes.

### ***Acknowledgements***

*We wish to give a special thank you to the members of our Sanctuary Choir who volunteer their time and talents in service to God and His church. Appreciation is also extended to Charlie Lutz for leading our service. A special thank you to Barbara Tracy for sharing her music with us this evening.*