

A SERVICE OF LESSONS AND CAROLS



Mother Seton Catholic Church
Germantown, Maryland
December 5, 2025 – 7:00 p.m.

Welcome

Our prayer for you is that, after having participated in this service, your hearts and minds will be more receptive to the wonder of the coming Christmas season. To facilitate this end, we ask that all cell phones and other electronic devices be switched off before the program and that you remain in place for the duration of the service. All are invited to heartily join in the singing of the carols found in the program.

The Origins of the Festival of Lessons and Carols

The concept of this service developed from the Festival of Nine Lessons and Carols made famous by the Christmas Eve service at Kings College, Cambridge. The service was conceived by F. W. Benson, the Bishop of Truro Cathedral who later became the Archbishop of Canterbury. The service was used for the first time on Christmas Eve in 1880 and as its popularity grew, it was formally adapted at Kings College in 1918 by Eric Milner-White, the Dean of Kings College. In 1934, sixteen years after the adaptation of the Nine Lessons and Carols, Eric Milner-White composed another order of service, a Procession with Carols on Advent Sunday. In the same format as the original Nine Lessons and Carols, the purpose of this service was to “not celebrate Christmas, but to expect it.” The Festival of Nine Lessons and Carols and the Procession with Carols on Advent Sunday both combine scripture and music in an intimate way to tell the story of the expectation and birth of Christ. It was Milner-White’s belief that the scripture lessons were the backbone of the service and the “handmaid of the liturgy.” Today we adapt these two liturgies for this time, this space, and this community. May your hearts and minds find openness to the coming of the Savior through these Lessons and Carols.

Thank You

Lessons and Carols would not be possible without the contribution of many people. First, thank you to our pastor, Fr. Kevin Regan, for his support and for serving as our presider. We are fortunate to have such wonderful readers who generously agreed to share their gifts with us this evening. Special thanks to the choir and organist who spent many hours preparing and rehearsing the music. Finally, we are grateful to all who took the time during a busy season to attend and be a part of this service.

ORDER OF SERVICE

PROCESSIONAL CAROL

Once in Royal David's City

All join in singing verses two through six.



1. Once in roy - al Da - vid's cit - y Stood a low - ly
2. He came down to earth from heav - en Who is God and
3. And through all his won - drous child-hood He would hon - or
4. For he is our child-hood's pat - tern, Day by day like
5. And our eyes at last shall see him, Through his own re -



1. cat - tle shed, Where a moth - er laid her ba - by
2. Lord of all, And his shel - ter was a sta - ble,
3. and o - bey, Love and watch the low - ly maid - en
4. us he grew; He was lit - tle, weak, and help - less,
5. deem - ing love; For that child so dear and gen - tle



1. In a man - ger for his bed. Mar - y was that
2. And his cra - dle was a stall. With the poor and
3. In whose gen - tle arms he lay. Chris - tian chil - dren
4. Tears and smiles like us he knew: And he feels for
5. Is our Lord in heav'n a - bove: And he leads his



1. moth - er mild, Je - sus Christ her lit - tle Child.
2. mean and low - ly Lived on earth our Sav - ior ho - ly.
3. all should be Kind, o - be - dient, good as he.
4. all our sad - ness, And he shares in all our glad - ness.
5. chil - dren on To the place where he has gone.

6. 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;
When like stars his children crowned all in white shall wait around.

GREETING

OPENING PRAYER

The Fall and the Promise of a Redeemer

FIRST LESSON

GENESIS 3:1-15

CAROL

This is the Truth Sent from Above

sung by choir

This is the truth sent from above, the truth of God, the God of love;
Therefore don't turn me from your door, but hearken all both rich and poor.

The first thing which I do relate is that God did man create,
The next thing which to you I'll tell, woman was made with man to dwell.

Then after this 'twas God's own choice, to place them both in Paradise,
There to remain from evil free, except they ate of such a tree.

And they did eat, which was a sin, and thus their ruin did begin;
Ruined themselves, both you and me, and all of their posterity.

Thus we were heirs to endless woes, 'till God the Lord did interpose,
And so a promise soon did run, that He would redeem us by His Son.

PRAYER

The Lord promises to send his people a righteous King

SECOND LESSON

JEREMIAH 23:5-8

CAROL

Come, O Long-Expected Jesus

All join in singing



1. Come, O long - ex - pect - ed Je - sus, Born to
2. Is - rael's strength and con - so - la - tion, Hope to
3. Born your peo - ple to de - liv - er, Born a
4. By your own e - ter - nal Spir - it Rule in



1. set your peo - ple free! From our fears and
 2. all the earth im - part; Dear de - sire of
 3. child and yet a king: Born to reign in
 4. all our hearts a - lone; By your all - suf -

1. sins re - lease us, You in whom our rest shall be.
 2. ev - 'ry na - tion, Joy of ev - 'ry long - ing heart.
 3. us for - ev - er, Now your gra - cious king - dom bring.
 4. fi - cient mer - it Raise us to your glo - rious throne.

PRAYER

The peace that Christ will bring is foreshadowed

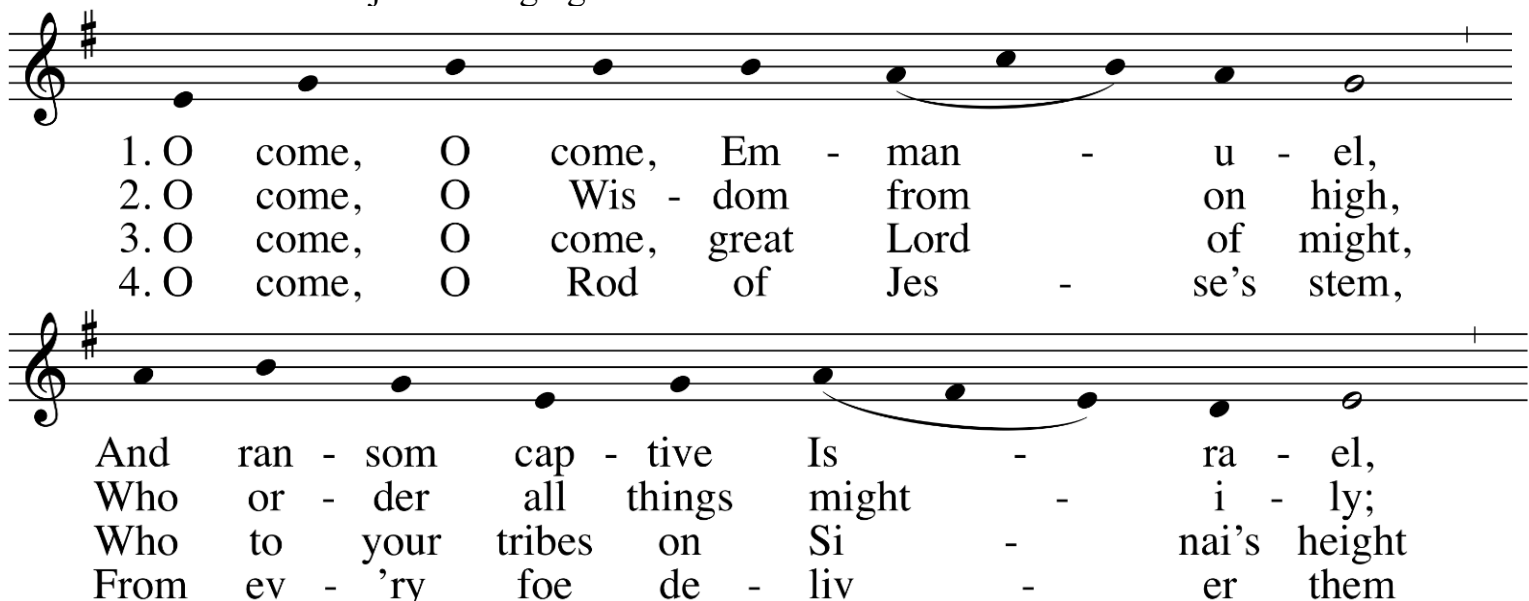
THIRD LESSON

ISAIAH 11:1-10

CAROL

O Come, O Come Emmanuel

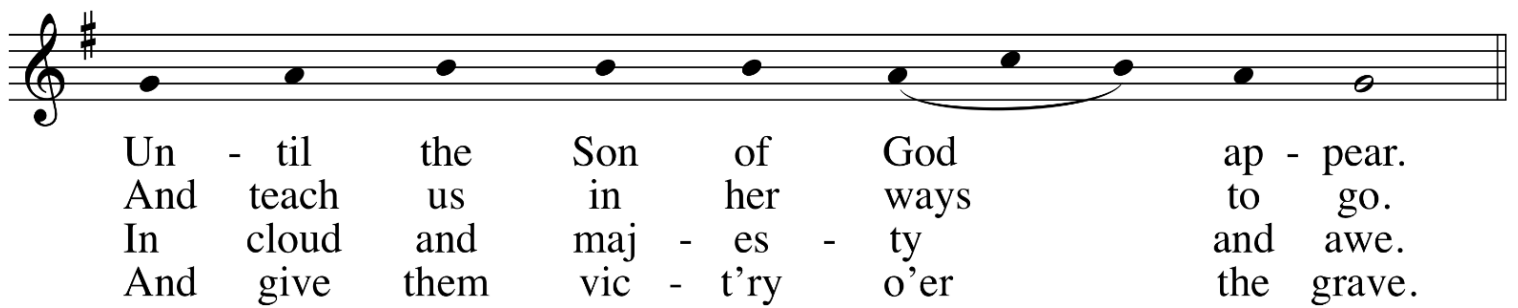
All join in singing verse 1 and the refrain after each verse.



1. O come, O come, Em - man - u - el,
 2. O come, O Wis - dom from on high,
 3. O come, O come, great Lord of might,
 4. O come, O Rod of Jes - se's stem,

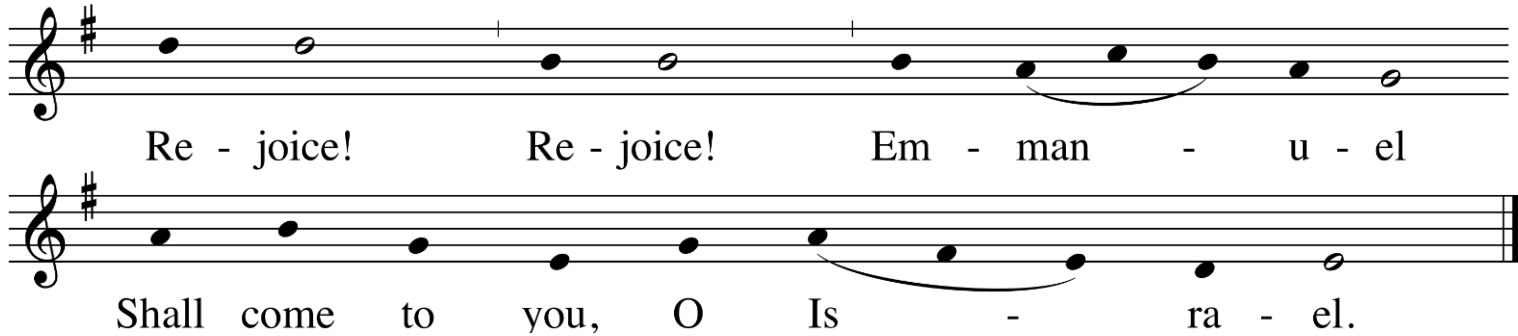
And ran - som cap - tive Is - ra - el,
 Who or - der all things might - i - ly;
 Who to your tribes on Si - nai's height
 From ev - 'ry foe de - liv - er them

That mourns in lone - ly ex - ile here
 To us the path of knowl - edge show,
 In an - cient times once gave the Law
 That trust your might - y power to save,



Un - til the Son of God ap - pear.
 And teach us in her ways to go.
 In cloud and maj - es - ty and awe.
 And give them vic - t'ry o'er the grave.

Refrain:



Re - jice! Re - jice! Em - man - u - el
 Shall come to you, O Is - ra - el.

7. O come, Desire of nations, bind
 In one the hearts of humankind;
 O bid our sad divisions cease,
 And be for us our King of Peace.

PRAYER

Christ's birth and kingdom are foretold by Isaiah

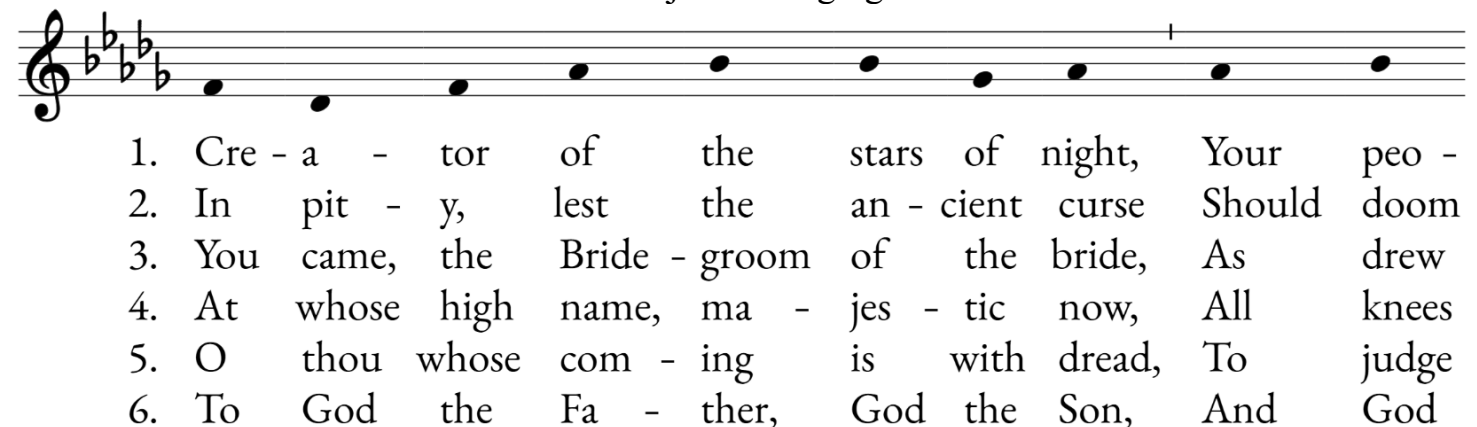
FOURTH LESSON

ISAIAH 9:1-6

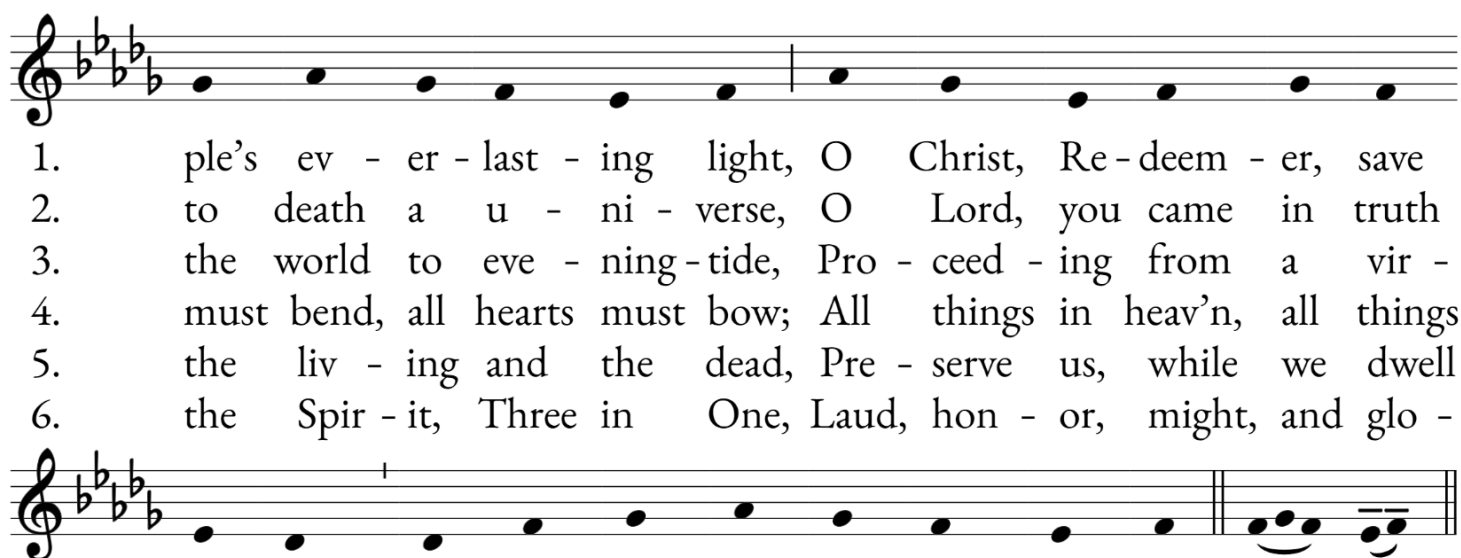
CAROL

Creator of the Stars of Night

All join in singing



1. Cre - a - tor of the stars of night, Your peo -
 2. In pit - y, lest the an - cient curse Should doom
 3. You came, the Bride - groom of the bride, As drew
 4. At whose high name, ma - jes - tic now, All knees
 5. O thou whose com - ing is with dread, To judge
 6. To God the Fa - ther, God the Son, And God



1. ple's ev - er - last - ing light, O Christ, Re - deem - er, save
 2. to death a u - ni - verse, O Lord, you came in truth
 3. the world to eve - ning - tide, Pro - ceed - ing from a vir -
 4. must bend, all hearts must bow; All things in heav'n, all things
 5. the liv - ing and the dead, Pre - serve us, while we dwell
 6. the Spir - it, Three in One, Laud, hon - or, might, and glo -

1. us all, And hear your serv - ants when they call.
 2. and grace To save and heal a ru - ined race.
 3. gin shrine, The spot - less Vic - tim all di - vine.
 4. be - low Shall call you Lord and God a - lone.
 5. be - low, From eve - ry in - sult of the foe.
 6. ry be From age to age e - ter - nal - ly. A - men.

PRAYER

Behold, I am the handmaid of the Lord

FIFTH LESSON

LUKE 1:26-38

CAROL

The Angel Gabriel from Heaven Came

Sung by choir

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 folk throughout the world shall ever say – “Most highly favored
lady.” Gloria!

PRAYER

Joseph's encounter with an angel

SIXTH LESSON

MATTHEW 1:18-25

CAROL

Song of Joseph

Sung by choir

Before I knew her, I came to know that angels visit us with news. They came
announcing – I'd never dreamed – we were the ones that God would choose!

The breach had injured our covenant, yet I could never bring her shame.
So, born of spirit, I would, one day, in faithful joy bestow his name.

Our God among us, Emmanuel, has blessed each moment of my life.
I joined her saying: “Let it be done!” In love embracing, Son and wife.

PRAYER

The Nativity of the Lord according to Saint Luke

SEVENTH LESSON

LUKE 2:1-20

CAROL

Of the Father's Love Begotten

All join in singing



1. Of the Fa - ther's love be - got - ten, Ere the worlds be -
2. Bless - ed was the day for ev - er When the Vir - gin,
3. This is he whom seers in old time Chant - ed of with
4. O ye heights of heav'n, a - dore him; An - gel hosts, his
5. Glo - ry be to God the Fa - ther, Glo - ry be to

1. gan to be, He is Al - pha and O - me - ga,
 2. full of grace, By the Ho - ly Ghost con - ceiv - ing,
 3. one ac - cord, Whom the voic - es of the proph - ets
 4. prais - es sing; All do - min - ions, bow be - fore him,
 5. God the Son, Glo - ry to the Ho - ly Spir - it,

1. He the source, the end - ing he, Of the things that
 2. Bore the Sav - ior of our race, And the child, the
 3. Prom - ised in their faith - ful word; Now he shines, the
 4. And ex - tol our God and King; Let no tongue on
 5. Per - sons three, yet God - head one. Glo - ry be from

1. are, that have been, And that fu - ture years shall see,
 2. world's Re - deem - er, First re - vealed his sa - cred face,
 3. long - ex - pect - ed; Let cre - a - tion praise the Lord,
 4. earth be si - lent, Ev - 'ry voice in con - cert ring,
 5. all cre - a - tion While e - ter - nal a - ges run,

Final
 1-5. Ev - er - more and ev - er - more. 5. A - men.

PRAYER

The great mystery of the Incarnation

EIGHTH LESSON

from "THE WORD MADE FLESH"

by Fr. Rich Veras

CAROL

Lo, How a Rose E'er Blooming

Sung by choir

Lo, How a Rose E'er Blooming from tender stem hath sprung
 From 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.

PRAYER

The twofold coming of Christ

NINTH LESSON

from "THE INSTRUCTIONS TO THE CATECHUMENS"
by St. Cyril of Jerusalem

CAROL

The King Shall Come When Morning Dawns

All join in singing



1. The King shall come when morn - ing dawns And
2. Not, as of old, a lit - tle child, To
3. O bright - er than the ris - ing morn When
4. O bright - er than that glo - rious morn Shall
5. The King shall come when morn - ing dawns And



1. light tri - um - phant breaks, When beau - ty gilds the
2. bear, and fight, and die, But crowned with glo - ry
3. he, vic - to - rious, rose And left the lone - some
4. this fair morn - ing be, When Christ, our King, in
5. light and beau - ty brings. Hail, Christ, the Lord! Thy



1. east - ern hills And life to joy a - wakes.
2. like the sun That lights the morn - ing sky.
3. place of death, De - spite the rage of foes.
4. beau - ty comes, And we his face shall see!
5. peo - ple pray: Come quick - ly King of kings.

PRAYER

CLOSING PRAYER

SOLEMN BLESSING

RECESSIONAL HYMN

People, Look East

All join in singing



1. Peo - ple, look East. The time is near Of the
2. Fur - rows, be glad, though earth is bare. One more
3. Birds, though you long have ceased to build, Guard the
4. Stars, keep the watch when night is dim. One more
5. An - gels, an - nounce on this great feast: Him who



1. crown - ing of the year. Make your house fair as you are
2. seed is plant - ed there; Give up your strength the seed to
3. nest that must be filled. E - ven the hour when wings are
4. light the bowl shall brim. Shin - ing be - yond the frost - y
5. com - eth from the East. Set ev - 'ry peak and val - ley



1. a - ble. Trim the hearth and set the ta - ble. Peo - ple, look
2. nour - ish, That in course the flow'r may flour - ish. Peo - ple, look
3. fro - zen He for fledg - ing time has chos - en. Peo - ple, look
4. weath - er, Bright as sun and moon to - geth - er. Peo - ple, look
5. hum - ming With the word, the Lord is com - ing. Peo - ple, look



1. East, and sing to - day: Love, the Guest, is on the way.
2. East, and sing to - day: Love, the Rose, is on the way.
3. East, and sing to - day: Love, the Bird, is on the way.
4. East, and sing to - day: Love, the Star, is on the way.
5. East, and sing to - day: Love, the Lord, is on the way.

All are invited to a reception in the parish center.

Thank you to Dorrette Paulin, Martha's Ministry, the Liturgical Environment Committee, the Sodality of Mary, Knights of Columbus, the Seton Seniors and the Parish Council for organizing and hosting the reception!

What is the most important thing in my life? It is this man, born from the womb of a young woman, who grew up like everyone else, and died; He decided to die in order to save those for whom He so often expressed his feeling of pity, “And he had pity on them because they were like sheep without a shepherd.” If God became man, this man is the supreme object of love. There is nothing more concrete than this, because it leads to a change of the present time, it leads to a change of my gaze upon you.

~Luigi Giussani

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