

Presents

9 Lessons and Carols



**A traditional service broadcast online on 17th
December 2020 at 7.30pm**

*Available on both the Mothers Union Facebook and
YouTube Channel*

Carol One – Once in Royal David's City

Performed by Alex and Katie Hilton

**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 that 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 and mean and lowly,
Lived on earth our Saviour Holy.**

**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,
When, like stars, His children crowned
All in white, shall wait around.**

Cecil Frances Alexander (1848)



Welcome

The Right Reverend Rose Hudson-Wilkin, Bishop of Dover and the Bishop in Canterbury

It is my pleasure to welcome you all watching as we join together this evening, virtually, to celebrate this special service of Nine Lessons and Carols. This service has its origins at Truro Cathedral on Christmas Eve 1880, when the then Bishop of Truro F.W Benson developed the service of scripture readings and supporting carols. Some years later this was adapted for Kings College Chapel in Cambridge and this was then taken up by many cathedrals and churches around the world.

Of course, this year has been different and so this service is different. We have no grand choirs and mighty organs, no high-tech recordings and readings from a pulpit. This simply has not been possible as lockdowns were enforced and singing in public has been restricted. But what we have here tonight is a service, beautiful in its simplicity, with members of Mothers' Union around the world re-telling the Christian faith through Bible readings and song.

And tonight we also have each other – joined together in spirit and love. You may be watching by yourself, with your partner or with your family, rather than all being able to meet and sit together in a church pew. But the love we share knows no boundaries, the love of God means you are never alone. As we listen and join in singing our festive favourites may you feel the love and connection of all who are watching along with us now.

Bidding Prayer

People of God,

In the season of Advent, we prepare ourselves to hear once more the message of the Angels, to go to Bethlehem and see the Son of God lying in a manger.

Let us hear the story of God's loving purpose from the time of our sin against him until the redemption brought to us by his son Jesus Christ.

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Let us look forward to the early remembrance of his birth with hymns and songs of praise. But first, let us pray, especially after this unprecedented year, for the needs of his whole world, for peace and justice on earth, for the unity and mission of the Church for which he died, and especially for his Church in the countries and cities of every person watching this now.

Let us remember in his name the poor and helpless, the cold, the hungry and the oppressed, the sick and those who mourn, the lonely and those who feel unloved, the old and the young, those who know him and those who are yet to know him as their Saviour.

Let us remember before God his pure and lowly Mother, and that whole multitude which no one can number, whose hope was in the Word made flesh, and with whom, in Jesus, we are one for evermore.

Amen

The Lord's Prayer

The Very Reverend Andrew Nunn, Dean of Southwark

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, for ever and ever. Amen.

Blessing

The Almighty God bless us with his grace; Christ give us the joys of everlasting life; and to the fellowship of the citizens above may the King of Angels bring us all. Amen.

Lesson One - Genesis 3 vs 8-19 (KJV)

Read by Enfy's Thomas

And they heard the voice of the Lord God walking in the garden in the cool of the day: and Adam and his wife hid themselves from the presence of the Lord God amongst the trees of the garden. And the Lord God called unto Adam, and said unto him, Where art thou? And he said, I heard thy voice in the garden, and I was afraid, because I was naked; and I hid myself. And he said, Who told thee that thou wast naked? Hast thou eaten of the tree, whereof I commanded thee that thou shouldest not eat? And the man said, The woman whom thou gavest to be with me, she gave me of the tree, and I did eat. And the Lord God said unto the woman, What is this that thou hast done? And the woman said, The serpent beguiled me, and I did eat. And the Lord God said unto the serpent, Because thou hast done this, thou art cursed above all cattle, and above every beast of the field; upon thy belly shalt thou go, and dust shalt thou eat all the days of thy life: and I will put enmity between thee and the woman, and between thy seed and her seed; it shall bruise thy head, and thou shalt bruise his heel. And unto Adam he said, Because thou hast hearkened unto the voice of thy wife, and hast eaten of the tree, of which I commanded thee, saying, Thou shalt not eat of it: cursed is the ground for thy sake; in sorrow shalt thou eat of it all the days of thy life; thorns also and thistles shall it bring forth to thee; and thou shalt eat the herb of the field; in the sweat of thy face shalt thou eat bread, till thou return unto the ground; for out of it wast thou taken; for dust thou art, and unto dust shalt thou return.

Carol Two – Hark! the Herald Angels Sing

Performed by Lizzy Humphries and Robbie

**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 angelic hosts proclaim:
"Christ is born in Bethlehem"
Hark! the herald angels sing:
"Glory to the newborn King!"**

**Christ by highest Heav'n adored
Christ the everlasting Lord!
Late in time behold Him come
Offspring of a 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!"**

**Hail the Heav'n-born Prince of Peace!
Hail the Son of Righteousness!
Light and life to all He brings
Ris'n with healing in His wings
Mild He lays His glory by
Born that man no more may die
Born to raise the sons of earth
Born to give them second birth
Hark! the herald angels sing:
"Glory to the newborn King!"**

George Whitefield; Author: Charles Wesley (1739)

Lesson Two - Genesis 22 vs 15–18 (NIV)

Read by Canon Barbara Taylor

The angel of the Lord called to Abraham from heaven a second time and said, "I swear by myself, declares the Lord, that because you have done this and have not withheld your son, your only son, I will surely bless you and make your descendants as numerous as the stars in the sky and as the sand on the seashore. Your descendants will take possession of

the cities of their enemies, and through your offspring all nations on earth will be blessed, because you have obeyed me.”

Carol Three - O Come, O Come Emmanuel

Performed by Alex and Katie Hilton

**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 Dayspring, from on high,
And cheer us by Thy drawing nigh;
Disperse the gloomy clouds of night,
And death's dark shadows put to flight.
Rejoice! Rejoice! Emmanuel
Shall come to thee, O Israel.**

**O come, Thou Key of David, come
And open wide our heav'nly home;
Make safe the way that leads on high,
And close the path to misery.
Rejoice! Rejoice! Emmanuel
Shall come to thee, O Israel.**

Translator: J. M. Neale

Lesson Three - Isaiah 9 vs 2, 6-7 (NIV)

Read by Georgina Anstee

The people walking in darkness
have seen a great light;
on those living in the land of deep darkness
a light has dawned.
For to us a child is born,

to us a son is given,
and the government will be on his shoulders.
And he will be called
Wonderful Counsellor, Mighty God,
Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace.
Of the greatness of his government and peace
there will be no end.
He will reign on David's throne
and over his kingdom,
establishing and upholding it
with justice and righteousness
from that time on and forever.
The zeal of the Lord Almighty
will accomplish this.

Carol Four - O Holy Night

Performed by Sarah Logue

**O Holy night! The stars are brightly shining
It is the night of our dear Savior's birth
Long lay the world in sin and error pining
'Til He appears and the soul felt its worth
A thrill of hope the weary world rejoices
For yonder breaks a new and glorious morn
Fall on your knees; O hear the Angel voices!
O night divine, O night when Christ was born
O night, O Holy night, O night divine!**

**Led by the light of Faith serenely beaming
With glowing hearts by His cradle we stand
So led by light of a star sweetly gleaming
Here come the Wise Men from Orient land
The King of kings lay thus in lowly manger
In all our trials born to be our friend
He knows our need, to our weakness is no stranger
Behold your King; before Him lowly bend**

Behold your King; before Him lowly bend

**Truly He taught us to love one another;
His law is love and His Gospel is Peace
Chains shall He break, for the slave is our brother
And in His name, all oppression shall cease
Sweet hymns of joy in grateful chorus raise we
Let all within us Praise His Holy name
Christ is the Lord; O praise His name forever!
His power and glory evermore proclaim
His power and glory evermore proclaim**

Translator: John S. Dwight; Author: Placide Cappeau (1847)

Lesson Four - Micah 5 vs 2-5 (KJV)

Read by Julia Jamieson

But thou, Bethlehem Ephrathah, though thou be little among the thousands of Judah, yet out of thee shall he come forth unto me that is to be ruler in Israel; whose goings forth have been from of old, from everlasting.

Therefore will he give them up, until the time that she which travaileth hath brought forth: then the remnant of his brethren shall return unto the children of Israel.

And he shall stand and feed in the strength of the Lord, in the majesty of the name of the Lord his God; and they shall abide: for now shall he be great unto the ends of the earth.

Carol Five - O Little Town of Bethlehem

Performed by Naomi Besanson and Tania Hanan

**O little town of Bethlehem
How still we see Thee lie
Above Thy deep and dreamless sleep
The silent stars go by
Yet in thy dark streets shineth
The everlasting light**

**The hopes and fears of all the years
Are met in Thee tonight**

**For Christ is born of Mary
And, gathered all above
While mortals sleep, the angels keep
Their watch of wondering love
O morning stars, together
Proclaim the Holy birth
And praises sing to God the King
And peace to men on earth**

**How silently, how silently
The wondrous gift is given
So God imparts to human hearts
The blessings of His heaven
No ear may hear His coming
But in this world of sin
Where meek souls will receive Him
Still the dear Christ enters in**

**O Holy Child of Bethlehem
Descend to us, we pray
Cast out our sin and enter in
Be born in us today
We hear the Christmas angels
The great glad tidings tell
O come to us, abide with us
Our Lord Emmanuel**
Phillips Brooks (1868)

Lesson Five - Luke 1 vs 26-35, 38 (The Message)
The Very Reverend Robert Key

In the sixth month of Elizabeth's pregnancy, God sent the angel Gabriel to the Galilean village of Nazareth to a virgin engaged to be married to

a man descended from David. His name was Joseph, and the virgin's name, Mary. Upon entering, Gabriel greeted her:

Good morning!
You're beautiful with God's beauty,
Beautiful inside and out!
God be with you.

She was thoroughly shaken, wondering what was behind a greeting like that. But the angel assured her, "Mary, you have nothing to fear. God has a surprise for you: You will become pregnant and give birth to a son and call his name Jesus.

He will be great,
be called 'Son of the Highest.'
The Lord God will give him
the throne of his father David;
He will rule Jacob's house forever—
no end, ever, to his kingdom."

Mary said to the angel, "But how? I've never slept with a man."

The angel answered,

The Holy Spirit will come upon you,
the power of the Highest hover over you;
Therefore, the child you bring to birth
will be called Holy, Son of God.

Carol Six - Silent Night

Performed by Lizzie Humphries and Robbie

**Silent night, Holy night
All is calm, all is bright
Round yon virgin, mother and child
Holy infant, tender and mild**

**Sleep in heavenly peace,
Sleep in heavenly peace.**

**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
Jesus, Lord at thy birth.**

**Silent night, Holy night
Shepherds quake, at the sight
Glories stream from heaven above
Heavenly, hosts sing Hallelujah.
Christ the Saviour is born,
Christ the Saviour is born.**

Joseph Mohr

Lesson Six - Luke 2 vs 1-7 (NIV)

Read by Canon Claire Laland

In those days Caesar Augustus issued a decree that a census should be taken of the entire Roman world. (This was the first census that took place while Quirinius was governor of Syria.) And everyone went to their own town to register.

So Joseph also went up from the town of Nazareth in Galilee to Judea, to Bethlehem the town of David, because he belonged to the house and line of David. He went there to register with Mary, who was pledged to be married to him and was expecting a child. While they were there, the time came for the baby to be born, and she gave birth to her firstborn, a son. She wrapped him in cloths and placed him in a manger, because there was no guest room available for them.

Carol Seven - Away in a Manger

Performed by Christine and Jeanette

**Away in a manger, no crib for a bed,
The little Lord Jesus laid down his sweet head.
The stars in the sky looked down where he lay,
The little Lord Jesus asleep in the hay.**

**The cattle are lowing, the baby awakes,
But little Lord Jesus no crying he makes.
I love Thee, Lord Jesus, look down from the sky
And stay by my cradle til morning is nigh.**

**Be near me, Lord Jesus, I ask Thee to stay
Close by me forever, and love me, I pray.
Bless all the dear children in thy tender care,
And take us to heaven, to live with Thee there.**

Message from Mothers' Union

Bev Jullien, CEO of Mothers' Union

Reading Seven - Luke 2 vs 8-16 (KJV)

Read by Reverend Andrew Dotchin

And there were in the same country shepherds abiding in the field, keeping watch over their flock by night. And, lo, the angel of the Lord came upon them, and the glory of the Lord shone round about them: and they were sore afraid. And the angel said unto them, Fear not: for, behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy, which shall be to all people. For unto you is born this day in the city of David a Saviour, which is Christ the Lord. And this shall be a sign unto you; Ye shall find the babe wrapped in swaddling clothes, 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, and on earth peace, good will toward men. And it came to pass, as the angels were gone away from them into heaven, the shepherds said one to another, Let us now go even unto

Bethlehem, and see this thing which is come to pass, which the Lord hath made known unto us. And they came with haste, and found Mary, and Joseph, and the babe lying in a manger.

Carol Eight - While Shepherds Watched

Performed by Jeanette Appleton

**While shepherds watched their flocks by night,
all seated on the ground,
the angel of the Lord came down,
and glory shone around.**

**"Fear not," said he, for mighty dread
had seized their troubled mind;
"Glad tidings of great joy I bring
to you and all mankind.**

**"To you, in David's town, this day
is born of David's line
a Saviour, who is Christ the Lord;
and this shall be the sign:**

**"The heavenly Babe you there shall find
to human view displayed,
all meanly wrapped in swathing bands,
and in a manger laid."**

**Thus spake the seraph, and forthwith
appeared a shining throng
of angels praising God, who thus
addressed their joyful song:**

**"All glory be to God on high
and on earth be peace;
good will henceforth from heaven to me
begin and never cease."**

Reading Eight - Matthew 2 vs 1-12 (The Message)

Read by Lucy Bubb

After Jesus was born in Bethlehem village, Judah territory— this was during Herod's kingship—a band of scholars arrived in Jerusalem from the East. They asked around, "Where can we find and pay homage to the newborn King of the Jews? We observed a star in the eastern sky that signalled his birth. We're on pilgrimage to worship him."

When word of their inquiry got to Herod, he was terrified—and not Herod alone, but most of Jerusalem as well. Herod lost no time. He gathered all the high priests and religion scholars in the city together and asked, "Where is the Messiah supposed to be born?"

They told him, "Bethlehem, Judah territory. The prophet Micah wrote it plainly:

It's you, Bethlehem, in Judah's land,
no longer bringing up the rear.
From you will come the leader
who will shepherd-rule my people, my Israel."

Herod then arranged a secret meeting with the scholars from the East. Pretending to be as devout as they were, he got them to tell him exactly when the birth-announcement star appeared. Then he told them the prophecy about Bethlehem, and said, "Go find this child. Leave no stone unturned. As soon as you find him, send word and I'll join you at once in your worship."

Instructed by the king, they set off. Then the star appeared again, the same star they had seen in the eastern skies. It led them on until it hovered over the place of the child. They could hardly contain themselves: They were in the right place! They had arrived at the right time!



They entered the house and saw the child in the arms of Mary, his mother. Overcome, they kneeled and worshiped him. Then they opened their luggage and presented gifts: gold, frankincense, myrrh.

In a dream, they were warned not to report back to Herod. So they worked out another route, left the territory without being seen, and returned to their own country.

Reading Nine - John 1 vs 1-14 (NIV)

Read by Sheran Harper. Worldwide President of Mothers' Union

In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was with God in the beginning. Through him all things were made; without him nothing was made that has been made. In him was life, and that life was the light of all mankind. The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness has not overcome it.

There was a man sent from God whose name was John. He came as a witness to testify concerning that light, so that through him all might believe. He himself was not the light; he came only as a witness to the light.

The true light that gives light to everyone was coming into the world. He was in the world, and though the world was made through him, the world did not recognize him. 11 He came to that which was his own, but his own did not receive him. Yet to all who did receive him, to those who believed in his name, he gave the right to become children of God—children born not of natural descent, nor of human decision or a husband's will, but born of God.

The Word became flesh and made his dwelling among us. We have seen his glory, the glory of the one and only Son, who came from the Father, full of grace and truth.

Carol 9 - O Come All Ye Faithful

Performed by Alex and Katie Hilton

**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, (3×)
Christ the Lord.**

**God of God, light of light,
Lo, he abhors not the Virgin's womb;
True God, begotten, not created:
O come, let us adore Him, (3×)
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, (3×)
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, (3×)
Christ the Lord.**

Author (attributed to): John Francis Wade; Translator: Frederick Oakeley

Final Blessing

May the joy of the angels, the eagerness of the shepherds, the perseverance of the wise men, the obedience of Joseph and Mary and the peace of the Christ-child be yours this Christmas; and the blessing



of God Almighty, the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit, be among you and remain with you always. **Amen.**

Mothers' Union wish to thank all who were contributed to this service both on and off screen.

If you have enjoyed this service and would like to make a donation to our work you can do so here: www.mothersunion.org/donate

May we take this opportunity to thank you for your support throughout the year and wish you, and your family, a very peaceful and blessed Christmas and New Year.