

A Service of NINE LESSONS AND CAROLS

Christmas Eve

GOOD SHEPHERD EV. LUTHERAN CHURCH

Kearney, Nebraska Saturday, December 24, 2016

WELCOME TO GOOD SHEPHERD!

We are so happy you could join us today! If you're interested in membership, or just want to talk about our congregation, please don't hesitate to speak to an usher or Pastor Seelow.

For your convenience, **Listening Devices** are available for those who need assistance in hearing the service. Please speak with an usher if you need one. A **Nursery** is also available and is equipped with a speaker so that a minimal amount of the service is missed. The nursery is located in the hallway just off the entryway (first door on left).

ABOUT CHRISTMAS EVE



Within the Church Year, the Festival of Christmas is actually celebrated on Christmas Day (as we will do tomorrow morning). The Festival of Christmas, like the festival of Easter, is celebrated with a vigil. The word "vigil" is from the Latin word meaning, "watchfulness." Our English word "vigilant," is a derivative of this word. As we have heard during the season of Advent, we were encouraged to prepare our hearts for the coming of Christ and to keep watch—to be vigilant for the coming of Christ. Tonight, we see the culmination of the Advent season as we "keep watch" for Christmas Day.

In modern times, vigils have been used to commemorate or observe an important or tragic event or the death of a notable or significant person. They are usually celebrated in a muted and calm way, and often involve the use of candles.

In the Christian Church vigils have been used in very much the same way. However, the focus has always been and will always be on Christ. Traditionally the Christmas Vigil has been celebrated late in the evening in order that the end of the service coincides with the changing from December 24th to December 25th at midnight. Tonight, with Christians around the world, we gather once again at the Christmas Vigil, waiting and watching for the coming of Christ as a child in Bethlehem.

ABOUT THE SERVICE OF NINE LESSONS AND CAROLS

Our worship this evening is an adaptation of *The Festival of Lessons and Carols* service traditionally held at King's College, Cambridge, England, on December 24th every year. The Festival was first held on Christmas Eve, 1918. It was planned by Eric Milner-White, who at the age of thirty-four had just been appointed Dean of King's College after experience as an army chaplain. A revision of the Order of Service was made in 1919, involving rearrangement of the lessons. In almost every year some carols have been changed and some new ones introduced by successive organists. However, the backbone of the service, the lessons and the prayers, has remained virtually unchanged for nearly 100 years.

SERVING THIS EVENING

| Presiding Minister | Pr. Nathanael P. Seelow |
|--------------------|-------------------------|
| Keyboardist | Michelle Reinsch |
| Trumpet | Logan Hansen |

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A SERVICE OF NINE LESSONS AND CAROLS

OPENING HYMN A Once in Royal David's City



INVOCATION

Please stand.

- M In the name of the Father and of the ♥ Son and of the Holy Spirit.
- C Amen.

LIGHTING OF THE ADVENT CANDLES

- We light four Advent candles and the Christ candle remembering Jesus, the Son of God and Son of Mary. He came to share our humanity.
- We remember Jesus, whose name means Savior. He came to save his people from their sins.
- M We hear his call to give him a place in our hearts.
- We light these candles as a sign of our joy and hope.
- M Come, Lord Jesus, be our guest.
- Through your Word and Spirit may our souls be blessed.

HYMN "Oh, Come, Oh, Come, Emmanuel"

* During the hymn, four Advent candles and the Christ candle are lit.

Oh, come, oh, come, Emmanuel, And ransom captive Israel That mourns in lonely exile here Until the Son of God appear. Rejoice! Rejoice! Emmanuel Shall come to you, O Israel!

EXHORTATION AND PRAYER

Dear people of God, as we gather for this Vigil on the eve of the Incarnation of our Lord, it is our duty and delight to hear again the message of the angels and, in heart and mind, to go to Bethlehem and see this thing which has come to pass, which the Lord has made known to us—the Christ Child lying in a manger.

Let us read and learn in Holy Scripture the story of the loving purposes of God from the first days after our fall into sin to the glorious redemption brought to us by this holy child.

But first, let us pray for people all over the world who would delight with us to know the good news of Jesus Christ and who would join with us in singing his praises:

We pray for the people of Kearney and for all those in our own congregation.

And, because this would please our Lord, we remember in his name the poor and helpless, the cold, the hungry and the oppressed, the sick and those who are sad, the lonely and the unloved, and the elderly and the little children. We especially remember all those who do not know the Lord Jesus, those who do not love him, and those who by sin have grieved his heart of love.

Finally, we remember before God all those who rejoice with us in heaven, who live in greater light than we, that multitude which no one can number, whose hope was in the Word made flesh, who died in faith, and who live before the throne of God and praise him each day in his temple. We confess that we are united with them as we are united with one another.

Now hear us as we pray in the name of Christ, and as he has taught us:

LORD'S PRAYER A Pater Noster

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.
Lead us not into temptation,

but deliver \(\tilde{\pi} \) us from evil. For the kingdom, the power, and the glory are yours now and forever. Amen.

Be seated.

FIRSTLESSON & Genesis 3:8-15



HEY HEARD THE VOICE OF THE LORD GOD, who was walking around in the garden during the cooler part of the day, and the man and his wife hid themselves from the presence of the LORD God among the trees of the garden.

- 9 The LORD God called to the man and said to him, "Where are you?"
- ¹⁰ The man said, "I heard your voice in the garden, and I was afraid, because I was naked, so I hid myself."
- $^{\text{II}}$ God said, "Who told you that you were naked? Have you eaten from the tree from which I commanded you not to eat?"
- The man said, "The woman you gave to be with me—she gave me fruit from the tree, and I ate it."
- 13 The LORD God said to the woman, "What have you done?"

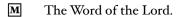
The woman said, "The serpent deceived me, and I ate."

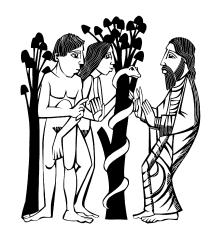
¹⁴ The LORD God said to the serpent:

Because you have done this,
you are cursed more than all the livestock,
and more than every wild animal.
You shall crayl on your helly

You shall crawl on your belly, and you shall eat dust all the days of your life.

 I will put hostility between you and the woman, and between your seed and her seed.
 He will crush your head, and you will crush his heel.





- Let the earth now praise the Lord,
 Who has truly kept his word
 And at last to us did send
 Christ, the sinner's help and friend.
- 2 What the fathers most desired, What the prophets' heart inspired, What they longed for many a year Stands fulfilled in glory here.
- 3 Abram's promised great reward, Zion's helper, Jacob's Lord— Him of twofold race behold— Truly came, as long foretold.

- 4 Welcome, O my Savior, now! Joyful, Lord, to you I bow. Come into my heart, I pray; Oh, prepare yourself a way.
- 5 Crush for me the serpent's headThat, set free from doubt and dread,I may cling to you in faith,Safely kept through life and death,
- 6 And, when you shall come again As a glorious king to reign, I with joy may see your face, Freely ransomed by your grace.

SECOND LESSON Genesis 22:15-18



HE ANGEL OF THE LORD CALLED TO ABRAHAM a second time from heaven ¹⁶ and said, "I have sworn by myself, declares the LORD, because you have done this thing and have not withheld your son, your only son, ¹⁷ I will bless you greatly, and I will multiply your descendants greatly,

like the stars of the sky and like the sand on the seashore. Your descendants will take possession of the city gates of their enemies. ¹⁸ In your seed all the nations of the earth will be blessed, because you have obeyed my voice."

M The Word of the Lord.

CAROL & Let All Together Praise Our God

 Let all together praise our God Before his highest throne;
 Today he opens heav'n again And gives us his own Son,
 And gives us his own Son. He leaves his heav'nly Father's throne,
 Is born an infant small,
 And in a manger, poor and lone,
 Lies in a humble stall,
 Lies in a humble stall.

- 3 He veils in flesh his pow'r divine A servant's form to take; In want and lowliness must die Who heav'n and earth did make, Who heav'n and earth did make.
- 4 A wondrous change which he does make: He takes our flesh and blood, And he conceals for sinners' sake His majesty as God, His majesty as God.
- 5 He serves that I a lord may be— A great exchange indeed! Could Jesus' love do more for me To help me in my need, To help me in my need?
- 6 For us he opens wide the door Of paradise today. The angel guards the gate no more; To God our thanks we pay, To God our thanks we pay.

THIRD LESSON & Isaiah 9:2,6,7





HE PEOPLE WALKING IN DARKNESS have seen a great light. On those living in the land of the shadow of death, the light has dawned...

⁶ For to us a child is born.

To us a son is given.

The authority to rule will rest on his shoulders.

His name will be called:

Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace.

⁷ There will be no limit to his authority and no end to his peace.

He will rule on David's throne

and over his kingdom to establish it and to uphold it with justice and with righteousness from now on and forever.

The zeal of the LORD of Armies will accomplish this.

M The Word of the Lord.

- 1 Hark! The herald angels sing, "Glory to the newborn King; Peace on earth and mercy mild, God and sinners reconciled!" Joyful, all you nations rise, Join the triumph of the skies; With th' angelic host proclaim, "Christ is born in Bethlehem!" Refrain: Hark! The herald angels sing, "Glory to the newborn King!"
 - 2 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 th' incarnate Deity! Pleased as man with us to dwell, Jesus, our Immanuel! Refrain
- 3 Hail, the heav'nly Prince of Peace! Hail, the Sun of Righteousness! Light and life to all he brings, Ris'n with healing in his wings. 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. *Refrain*

FOURTH LESSON & Micah 5:2-4



UT YOU, BETHLEHEM EPHRATHAH,

though you are small among the clans of Judah, out of you will come the one to be ruler in Israel. His goings forth are from ancient times, from eternity."

- ³ Therefore he will surrender them until the time she who is in labor gives birth to a child. Then the remainder of his brothers will return to the children of Israel.
- ⁴ He will stand and shepherd with the strength of the Lord, in the majesty of the name of the LORD his God. They will dwell securely, for at that time he will be great to the ends of the earth.
- M The Word of the Lord.

- 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 wond'ring love.
 O morning stars, together Proclaim the holy birth,
 And praises sing To God the King And peace to all the earth.
- 3 How silently, how silently The wondrous gift is giv'n! So God imparts To human hearts The blessings of his heav'n. No ear may hear his coming, But in this world of sin Where meek souls will Receive him still, The dear Christ enters in.
- 4 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; Oh, come to us, Abide with us, Our Lord Immanuel!

FIFTH LESSON & Luke 1:26-35,38





N THE SIXTH MONTH, THE ANGEL Gabriel was sent from God to a town of Galilee named Nazareth, ²⁷ to a virgin pledged in marriage to a man whose name was Joseph, of the

house of David. The virgin's name was Mary. 28 The angel went to her and said, "Greetings, you who are highly favored! The Lord is with you. Blessed are you among women."

²⁹ But she was greatly troubled by the statement and was wondering what kind of greeting this could be. ³⁰ The angel

said to her, "Do not be afraid, Mary, because you have found favor with God. ³¹ Listen, you will conceive and give birth to a son, and you are to name him Jesus. ³² He will be great and will be called the Son of the Most High. The Lord God will give him the throne

- of his father David. ³³ He will reign over the house of Jacob forever, and his kingdom will never end."
- 34 Mary said to the angel, "How will this be, since I am a virgin?"
- ³⁵ The angel answered her, "The Holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the Most High will overshadow you. So the holy one to be born will be called the Son of God.
- ³⁸ Then Mary said, "See, I am the Lord's servant. May it happen to me as you have said." Then the angel left her.
- M The Word of the Lord.

CAROL The Angel Gabriel from Heaven Came

- The angel Gabriel from heaven came,
 His wings as drifted snow, his eyes as flame;
 "All hail," said he to meek and lowly Mary,
 "Most highly favored maiden." Gloria!
- 2 "I come from heav'n to tell the Lord's decree: A blessed virgin mother you shall be. Your Son shall be Immanuel, by seers foretold, Most highly favored maiden." Gloria!
- Then gentle Mary meekly bowed her head; "To me be as it pleases God," she said. "My soul shall praise and magnify his holy name." Most highly favored maiden, Gloria!
- 4 Of her Immanuel, the Christ, was born In Bethlehem, all on a Christmas morn, And Christian folk throughout the world will ever say, "Most highly favored maiden." Gloria!





HIS IS HOW THE BIRTH OF

Jesus Christ took place. His mother, Mary, was pledged in marriage to Joseph. Before they came together,

she was found to be with child by the Holy Spirit. ¹⁹ Joseph, her husband, was a righteous man and did not want to disgrace her. So he decided to divorce her privately. ²⁰ But as he was considering these things, an angel of the Lord suddenly appeared to him in a dream and said,

"Joseph, son of David, do not be afraid to take Mary home as your wife, because the child conceived in her is from the Holy Spirit. ²¹ She will give birth to a son, and you are to give him the name Jesus, because he will save his people from their sins."

- ²² All this happened to fulfill what was spoken by the Lord through the prophet:
- ²³ "Look, the virgin will be with child and will give birth to a son. And they will name him Immanuel," which means, "God with us."
- ²⁴ When Joseph woke up from his sleep, he did as the angel of the Lord had commanded him. He took Mary home as his wife, ²⁵ but he was not intimate with her until she gave birth to her firstborn son. And he named him Jesus.



The Word of the Lord.

CAROL & Away in a Manger

- Away in a manger, no crib for a bed,
 The little Lord Jesus laid down his sweet head.
 The stars in the bright sky looked down where he lay,
 The little Lord Jesus asleep on the hay.
 - 2 The cattle are lowing, the baby awakes, But little Lord Jesus, no crying he makes. I love you, Lord Jesus; look down from the sky, And stay by my cradle until morning is nigh.

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

SEVENTH LESSON Luke 2:8-20



HERE WERE IN THE SAME COUNTRY shepherds staying out in the fields, keeping watch over their flock at night. ⁹ An angel of the Lord appeared to them, and the glory of the Lord

shone around them, and they were terrified! ¹⁰ But the angel said to them, "Do not be afraid. For behold, I bring you good news of great joy, which will be for all people: ¹¹ Today in the town of David, a Savior was born for you. He is Christ the



Lord. ¹² And this will be a sign for you: You will find a baby wrapped in swaddling cloths and lying in a manger." ¹³ Suddenly, there was with the angel a multitude from the heavenly army, praising God and saying,

¹⁴ "Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good will toward mankind."

¹⁵ When the angels went away from them into heaven, the shepherds said to one another, "Now let's go to Bethlehem and see this thing that has happened, which the Lord has made known to us." ¹⁶ So they hurried off and found Mary and Joseph, and the baby, who was lying in the manger. ¹⁷ When they had seen him, they told others the message they had been told about this child. ¹⁸ And all who heard it were amazed by what the shepherds said to them. ¹⁹ But Mary treasured up all these things, pondering them in her heart. ²⁰ And the shepherds returned, glorifying and praising God for all the things that they had heard and seen, which were just as they had been told.

M The Word of the Lord.

- To shepherds as they watched by night Appeared a host of angels bright;
 "Behold the tender babe," they said,
 "In yonder lowly manger laid,
- 2 "At Bethlehem, in David's town, As Micah did of old make known. It is the Christ, your Lord and King, Who will to all salvation bring."
- 3 Oh, then rejoice that through his Son God is with sinners now at one; Made like yourselves of flesh and blood, Your brother is th' eternal God.

- 4 What harm can sin and death then do?
 The true God now abides with you.
 Let hell and Satan storm and rave,
 Christ is your brother—you are safe.
- 5 Not one he will or can forsake; His cov'nant he will never break. Let ev'ry scheme the tempter try, You may his utmost pow'rs defy.
- You shall and must at last prevail.
 God's own you are; you cannot fail.
 To God forever sing your praise
 With joy and patience all your days.



FTER JESUS WAS BORN IN BETHLEHEM OF JUDEA, when Herod was king, Wise Men from the east came to Jerusalem. They asked, ² "Where is he who has been born King of the Jews? We saw his star when it rose and have come to worship him." ³ When King Herod heard this, he

was alarmed, and all Jerusalem with him. ⁴ He gathered together all the people's chief priests and experts in the law. He asked them where the Christ was to be born. ⁵ They said to him, "In Bethlehem of Judea, because this was written through the prophet:

- You, Bethlehem, in the land of Judah, are certainly not least among the rulers of Judah: because out of you will come a ruler, who will shepherd my people, Israel."
- ⁷ Then Herod secretly summoned the Wise Men and found out from them exactly when the star had appeared. ⁸ He sent them to Bethlehem and said, "Go and search carefully for the child. When you find him, report to me, so that I may also go and worship him."



⁹ After listening to the king, they went on their way. Then the star they had seen when it rose went ahead of them, until it stood still over the place where the child was. ¹⁰ When they saw the star, they rejoiced with overwhelming joy. ¹¹ After they went into the house and saw the child with Mary, his mother, they bowed down and worshipped him. Then they opened their treasures and offered him gifts: gold, frankincense, and myrrh. ¹² Since they had been warned in a dream not to return to Herod, they went back to their own country by another route.

M The Word of the Lord.

CAROL As with Gladness Men of Old

- As with gladness men of old Did the guiding star behold, As with joy they hailed its light, Leading onward, beaming bright, So, most gracious Lord, may we Evermore your followers be.
 - 2 As with joyful steps they sped, Savior, to your lowly bed, There to bend the knee before You whom heav'n and earth adore, So may we with willing feet Ever seek your mercy seat.
- 3 As they offered gifts most rare At your cradle, rude and bare, So may we with holy joy, Pure and free from sin's alloy, All our costliest treasures bring, Christ, to you, our heav'nly King.
 - 4 Holy Jesus, ev'ry day Keep us in the narrow way; And, when earthly things are past, Bring our ransomed souls at last Where they need no star to guide, Where no clouds your glory hide.
- 5 In the heav'nly country bright Need they no created light; You its light, its joy, its crown, You its sun which goes not down. There forever may we sing Alleluias to our King!

Please stand.



N THE BEGINNING WAS THE WORD, AND the Word was with God, and the Word was God.

He was with God in the beginning. ³ Through

him everything was made, and without him not

one thing was made that has been made. 4 In him was life, and the life was the light of mankind. 5 The light is shining in the darkness, and the darkness has not overcome it.



- ⁶ There was a man, sent from God, whose name was John.
- ⁷ He came as an eyewitness to testify about the light so that everyone would believe through him. ⁸ He was not the light, but he came to testify about the light.
- ⁹ The real light that shines on everyone was coming into the world. ¹⁰ He was in the world, and the world was made through him, yet the world did not recognize him. ¹¹ He came to what was his own, yet his own people did not receive him. ¹² But to all who did receive him, to those who believe in his name, he gave the right to become children of God. ¹³ They were born, not of blood, or of the desire of the flesh, or of a husband's will, but born of God.
- ¹⁴ The Word became flesh and dwelled among us. We have seen his glory, the glory he has as the only-begotten from the Father, full of grace and truth.

M The Word of the Lord.

e Be seated.

CAROL A Great and Mighty Wonder

A great and mighty wonder,
 A glorious mystery:
 A virgin bears an infant
 Who veils his deity.
 Refrain:

Repeat the hymn again:
"To God on high be glory
And peace on earth to men."

2 The Word becomes incarnate And yet remains on high, And cherubim sing anthems To shepherds from the sky. Refrain

3 While thus they sing your monarch, Those bright angelic bands, Rejoice, O vales and mountains, And oceans, clap your hands. Refrain:

Repeat the hymn again:
"To God on high be glory
And peace on earth to men."

- 4 Since all he comes to ransom, By all be he adored, The infant born in Bethl'em, The Savior and the Lord. Refrain
- All idols then shall perish
 And Satan's lying cease,
 And Christ shall raise his scepter,
 Decreeing endless peace.
 Refrain

OFFERING

Moved by God's love in Christ, we offer him our first and best gifts, purely out of thanks to him. If you are visiting with us today, please do not feel obligated to give an offering.

PRAYER

Please stand.

- When all was still and it was midnight, your eternal Word, O Lord, descended from the almighty throne to dwell among us. May we receive him in the peace of forgiven hearts and proclaim your gracious goodwill to all people on earth, for he is God with us, Emmanuel, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.
- C Amen.

BLESSING

May he who by his incarnation gathered things earthly and heavenly into one, fill us with such joy that comes with the knowledge of the forgiveness of sins and the hope of eternal life.

May the blessing of God Almighty—the Father, the Son, ₱ and the Holy Spirit—be upon you and remain with you always.

C Amen.

¥ Be seated.

CLOSING HYMN & Silent Night! Holy Night

Ushers will come to the end of each pew with a lit candle. Please bring the unlit candle to the flame to light your candle. When blowing the candle out, please cup your hand around the candle to avoid wax being spilled. Please do not allow small children to hold or handle a candle as severe burns from the flame or hot wax may occur.

- 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,
 Sleep in heavenly peace.
- 2 Silent night! Holy night! Shepherds quake at the sight. Glories stream from heaven afar; Heav'nly hosts sing, Alleluia; Christ, the Savior, is born! Christ, the Savior, is born!
- 3 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.

Please join us tomorrow morning to celebrate the

Divine Service with Holy Communion — 10a



www.goodshepherdkearney.org