

# What child

## is this?

*December 24, 2021*

### **SERVICE OF LESSONS AND CAROLS**

Our worship this evening is an adaptation of the *Lessons and Carols* service traditionally held at King's College, Cambridge, England, on December 24<sup>th</sup> every year. *Lessons and Carols* 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.

### **WORSHIP THEME**

Welcome to worship this Christmas Eve. We pray that God will bless you in this service of lessons and carols. This evening we ask the question: "What Child is this?" The progression of lessons and songs gradually reveals more and more about this child. Imagine yourself as someone who over centuries is trying to figure out the answer to that question. Or, if the readings are not familiar to you, let the answer become clearer and clearer to you as you hear each lesson and sing each song.

Tonight we see this child "in that poor, lowly stable, with the oxen standing by." By trusting that this child is God's greatest gift to the world, his Son Jesus, we look forward to seeing Jesus in heaven where God's "praise will sound" for all eternity!

### **CANDLES**

One of the great joys of our Christmas Eve service is that we close with the singing of Silent Night by candlelight. We have provided battery operated candles for everyone to use and enjoy.

### **CAROL**

***O COME, ALL YE FAITHFUL***

### **EXHORTATION AND PRAYER**

Pastor:

In this Christmas season it is our duty and delight to hear again the message of the angels and, in heart and mind, to go even unto 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, and into the birth and glorious redemption brought to us by this Holy Child. Let us hear how peace was lost, and how peace is restored.

But first, let us pray.

Heavenly Father, we pray for ourselves and all people who worship you and your Son this holy night. By your holy Word, lead us to say with the angels,

**All: Glory to God in the highest!**

P: We pray for your blessing upon the people of our city, our state, our nation, and our world.

**All: Glory to God in the highest!**

P: We pray for the poor and helpless, the cold and hungry, the sick and sad, that through us you would give them the joy of your salvation and the comfort of your presence.

**All: Glory to God in the highest!**

P: We pray for unbelievers and enemies of the Church, that through your Law and Gospel you would lead them to recognize your Son as their only hope for eternal life.

**All: Glory to God in the highest!**

P: Finally, we remember before you all those who rejoice with us in heaven, who live in greater light and beauty than we, that multitude which no one can number, who died in faith, and now praise you in your heavenly temple. We confess that we are united with them and with one another.

**All: Glory to God in the highest!**

P: We humbly offer up these prayers and praises in the words that Christ himself taught us.

**All: 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 us from evil. For the kingdom, the power, and the glory are yours now and forever. Amen.**

## FIRST LESSON

## Genesis 3:8-15

<sup>8</sup>Then the man and his wife heard the sound of the LORD God as he was walking in the garden in the cool of the day, and they hid from the LORD God among the trees of the garden. <sup>9</sup>But the LORD God called to the man, "Where are you?"

<sup>10</sup>He answered, "I heard you in the garden, and I was afraid because I was naked; so I hid."

<sup>11</sup>And he said, "Who told you that you were naked? Have you eaten from the tree that I commanded you not to eat from?"

<sup>12</sup>The man said, "The woman you put here with me—she gave me some fruit from the tree, and I ate it."

<sup>13</sup>Then the LORD God said to the woman, "What is this you have done?"

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

<sup>14</sup>So the LORD God said to the serpent, "Because you have done this,

"Cursed are you above all livestock

and all wild animals!  
You will crawl on your belly  
and you will eat dust  
all the days of your life.  
<sup>15</sup>And I will put enmity  
between you and the woman,  
and between your offspring and hers;  
he will crush your head,  
and you will strike his heel."

## CAROL

## O COME, ALL YOU UNFAITHFUL

*Come, see what your God has done*

*O come you unfaithful  
come, weak and unstable  
Come, know you are not alone*

*O come, barren and waiting ones,  
weary of praying  
Come, see what your God has done*

*Christ is born, Christ is born,  
Christ is born for you  
O come, bitter and broken,  
come with fears unspoken  
Come, taste of His perfect love*

*O come, guilty and hiding ones,  
there is no need to run  
See what your God has done  
Christ is born, Christ is born,  
Christ is born for you*

*He's the Lamb who was given,  
slain for our pardon  
His promise is peace for those who believe  
He's the Lamb who was given,  
slain for our pardon  
His promise is peace for those who believe*

*So come, though you have nothing,  
come, He is the offering  
Come, see what your God has done*

**11** A shoot will come up from the stump of Jesse;  
from his roots a Branch will bear fruit.  
<sup>2</sup>The Spirit of the LORD will rest on him—  
the Spirit of wisdom and of understanding,  
the Spirit of counsel and of might,  
the Spirit of the knowledge and fear of the LORD—  
<sup>3</sup>and he will delight in the fear of the LORD.  
He will not judge by what he sees with his eyes,  
or decide by what he hears with his ears;  
<sup>4</sup>but with righteousness he will judge the needy,  
with justice he will give decisions for the poor of the earth.  
He will strike the earth with the rod of his mouth;  
with the breath of his lips he will slay the wicked.  
<sup>5</sup>Righteousness will be his belt  
and faithfulness the sash around his waist.  
<sup>6</sup>The wolf will live with the lamb,  
the leopard will lie down with the goat,  
the calf and the lion and the yearling together;  
and a little child will lead them.  
<sup>7</sup>The cow will feed with the bear,  
their young will lie down together,  
and the lion will eat straw like the ox.  
<sup>8</sup>The infant will play near the cobra's den,  
the young child will put its hand into the viper's nest.  
<sup>9</sup>They will neither harm nor destroy  
on all my holy mountain,  
for the earth will be filled with the knowledge of the LORD  
as the waters cover the sea.

**CAROL**

**JOY TO THE WORLD**

### **THIRD LESSON**

**MICAH 5:2-4**

<sup>2</sup>"But you, Bethlehem Ephrathah,  
though you are small among the clans of Judah,  
out of you will come for me  
one who will be ruler over Israel,  
whose origins are from of old,  
from ancient times."  
<sup>3</sup>Therefore Israel will be abandoned  
until the time when she who is in labor bears a son,  
and the rest of his brothers return

to join the Israelites.  
<sup>4</sup>He will stand and shepherd his flock  
in the strength of the LORD,  
in the majesty of the name of the LORD his God.  
And they will live securely, for then his greatness  
will reach to the ends of the earth.

## CAROL

## O LITTLE TOWN OF BETHLEHEM

### FOURTH LESSON

### LUKE 1:26-38

<sup>26</sup>In the sixth month of Elizabeth's pregnancy, God sent the angel Gabriel to Nazareth, a town in Galilee, <sup>27</sup>to a virgin pledged to be married to a man named Joseph, a descendant of David. The virgin's name was Mary. <sup>28</sup>The angel went to her and said, "Greetings, you who are highly favored! The Lord is with you."

<sup>29</sup>Mary was greatly troubled at his words and wondered what kind of greeting this might be. <sup>30</sup>But the angel said to her, "Do not be afraid, Mary; you have found favor with God. <sup>31</sup>You will conceive and give birth to a son, and you are to call him Jesus. <sup>32</sup>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, <sup>33</sup>and he will reign over Jacob's descendants forever; his kingdom will never end."

<sup>34</sup>"How will this be," Mary asked the angel, "since I am a virgin?"

<sup>35</sup>The angel answered, "The Holy Spirit will come on 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. <sup>36</sup>Even Elizabeth your relative is going to have a child in her old age, and she who was said to be unable to conceive is in her sixth month. <sup>37</sup>For no word from God will ever fail."

<sup>38</sup>"I am the Lord's servant," Mary answered. "May your word to me be fulfilled." Then the angel left her.

## CAROL

## SLEEP, JESUS, SLEEP

*Sleep, Jesus, sleep, we've come to see  
You who never closed your eyes  
Watching over earth and skies  
Now in frail humanity must sleep*

*Sleep, newborn King, we'll gently sing  
You who reigns forevermore  
Ruling as the Lord of lords  
You who never had a need must sleep*

*Sovereign One, born as Mary's son  
Prince of Peace  
One day You'll deliver me*

*But now sleep, Son of God, we'll watch in awe*

*You'll fulfil the Father's plan  
Reconciling God and man  
Now Your promises to keep must sleep*

## **FIFTH LESSON**

## **MATTHEW 1:18-25**

<sup>18</sup>This is how the birth of Jesus the Messiah came about: His mother Mary was pledged to be married to Joseph, but before they came together, she was found to be pregnant through the Holy Spirit. <sup>19</sup>Because Joseph her husband was faithful to the law, and yet did not want to expose her to public disgrace, he had in mind to divorce her quietly.

<sup>20</sup>But after he had considered this, an angel of the Lord appeared to him in a dream and said, "Joseph son of David, do not be afraid to take Mary home as your wife, because what is conceived in her is from the Holy Spirit. <sup>21</sup>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."

<sup>22</sup>All this took place to fulfill what the Lord had said through the prophet: <sup>23</sup>"The virgin will conceive and give birth to a son, and they will call him Immanuel" (which means "God with us").

<sup>24</sup>When Joseph woke up, he did what the angel of the Lord had commanded him and took Mary home as his wife. <sup>25</sup>But he did not consummate their marriage until she gave birth to a son. And he gave him the name Jesus.

## **CAROL**

## **AWAY IN A MANGER**

## **SIXTH LESSON**

## **LUKE 2:1-20**

**2** In those days Caesar Augustus issued a decree that a census should be taken of the entire Roman world. <sup>2</sup>(This was the first census that took place while Quirinius was governor of Syria.) <sup>3</sup>And everyone went to their own town to register.

<sup>4</sup>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. <sup>5</sup>He went there to register with Mary, who was pledged to be married to him and was expecting a child. <sup>6</sup>While they were there, the time came for the baby to be born, <sup>7</sup>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.

<sup>8</sup>And there were shepherds living out in the fields nearby, keeping watch over their flocks at night. <sup>9</sup>An angel of the Lord appeared to them, and the glory of the Lord shone around them, and they were terrified. <sup>10</sup>But the angel said to them, "Do not be afraid. I bring you good news that will cause great joy for all the people. <sup>11</sup>Today in the town of David a Savior has been born to you; he is the Messiah, the Lord. <sup>12</sup>This will be a sign to you: You will find a baby wrapped in cloths and lying in a manger."

<sup>13</sup>Suddenly a great company of the heavenly host appeared with the angel, praising God and saying,

<sup>14</sup>"Glory to God in the highest heaven,

and on earth peace to those on whom his favor rests."

<sup>15</sup>When the angels had left them and gone into heaven, the shepherds said to one another, "Let's go to Bethlehem and see this thing that has happened, which the Lord has told us about."

<sup>16</sup>So they hurried off and found Mary and Joseph, and the baby, who was lying in the manger. <sup>17</sup>When they had seen him, they spread the word concerning what had been told them about this child, <sup>18</sup>and all who heard it were amazed at what the shepherds said to them. <sup>19</sup>But Mary treasured up all these things and pondered them in her heart. <sup>20</sup>The shepherds returned, glorifying and praising God for all the things they had heard and seen, which were just as they had been told.

**CAROL**

**GO TELL IT ON THE MOUNTAIN**

**MESSAGE**

*What child*

**is this?**

**OUR SAVIOR!**

**PRAYER**

Pastor: O God, who makes us glad with the yearly remembrance of the birth of your only Son, Jesus Christ; grant that, as we joyfully receive him as our Redeemer, so may we also behold him with sure confidence when he shall come to be our judge; through Jesus Christ, our newborn Lord and King.

**All: Amen.**

**THANK OFFERING**

*The members of Christ the Rock give an offering  
in honor of all God has done for us,*

*and to support God's mission within our congregation and beyond.*

*If you have an offering, you can drop it in the plate on the table in the back of church as you leave. If you are a visitor, please don't feel obligated to support this ministry. You are our guest. Welcome!*

*We would love to make a meaningful connection with you. Please fill out the connection card you received when you came in and drop it in the plate as you leave.*

**BLESSING**

Pastor: 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. And the

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

**All: Amen.**

**HYMN**

**SILENT NIGHT**

*What child*

**is this?**

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**Christmas Day 10:30 am**

**The Real Story of the 12 Days of Christmas**

**The Second Day of Christmas 10:30 am**

**Sunday, December 26th—Born to Save Us!**

**New Year's Eve 6:30 pm**

Christ the Rock Lutheran Church

5401 Hood Mesa Trail Farmington, NM 87401

Pastor Jon Brohn (651) 246-6856

[pastorjonctr@gmail.com](mailto:pastorjonctr@gmail.com)

Christ the Rock's Mission:

To grow in faith and boldly proclaim Christ crucified and risen to all  
people of the Four Corners