

WELCOME

Thank you for joining us for Christmas Eve today. If you're visiting, we hope you experience Jesus' hospitality. Would you consider being a regular part of what God is doing in and through this church? To indicate your presence with us, please visit the welcome table and fill out an information card.

VISITORS WITH CHILDREN IN THE SERVICE

Children of all ages are welcome during this service.

We don't mind a little noise or commotion!

For information about our Children's Ministry, reach out to Caroline Huxell at families@gracepasadena.org.

UPCOMING DATES AND EVENTS

DEC 25 — Christmas Day — No Service

JAN 1 — New Year's Day — No Service

JAN 2 — Rose Parade Party — At the Church Office @ 7AM

Resources for worship at home on 12/25 and 1/1 are available on the Welcome Table and on our website:

WWW.GRACEPASADENA.ORG

Cover Art: "Seeing Shepherds" by Daniel Bonnell

REFLECTIONS

"The whole concept of God taking human shape had never made much sense to me. That was because, I realized one wonderful day, it was so simple. For people with bodies, important things like love have to be embodied. That's all. God had to be embodied, or else people with bodies would never in a trillion years understand about love."

JANE VONNEGUT YARMOLINSKY / ANGELS WITHOUT WINGS

"The Incarnation means a real coming of God to man, in which God gives himself for and to man."

T.F. TORRANCE | THE DOCTRINE OF JESUS CHRIST

"The Lord did not come to make a display. He came to heal and to teach suffering men. For one who wanted to make a display the thing would have been just to appear and dazzle the beholders. But for Him Who came to heal and to teach the way was not merely to dwell here, but to put Himself at the disposal of those who needed Him, and to be manifested according as they could bear it, not vitiating the value of the Divine appearing by exceeding their capacity to receive it."

ST. ATHANASIUS | On the Incarnation

"For me it is the virgin birth, the Incarnation, the resurrection which are the true laws of the flesh and the physical. Death, decay, destruction are the suspension of these laws. I am always astonished at the emphasis the Church puts on the body. It is not the soul she says that will rise but the body, glorified."

FLANNERY O'CONNOR | THE HABIT OF BEING

A SERVICE OF LESSON AND CAROLS*

CALL TO WORSHIP

Leader: All God's people: **All: Come and worship!**

Leader: All who need the Savior, all who long for God's peace:

All: Come and worship, come and worship Christ, the King of kings!

HARK THE HERALD ANGELS SING | C. WESLEY

1. 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 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 with us in flesh to dwell, Jesus our Emmanuel.

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 man no more may die. Born to raise the sons of earth, Born to give them second birth.

^{*}The Festival of Nine Lessons and Carols was first celebrated at King's College, Cambridge on Christmas Eve, 1918. The nine lessons were reordered in 1919, and what follows is an adaptation. The Festival is often observed as a Christmas Eve service, and the lessons move deliberately from the season of Advent into Christmastide.

LESSON #1

Genesis 2:5-8; 3:8-15; 17-19: God creates Adam, Eve and the world; God tells Adam that he has lost the life of Paradise and that his seed will bruise the serpent's head.

^{2:5} When no bush of the field was yet in the land and no small plant of the field had yet sprung up—for the Lord God had not caused it to rain on the land, and there was no man to work the ground, ⁶ and a mist was going up from the land and was watering the whole face of the ground— ⁷ then the Lord God formed the man of dust from the ground and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life, and the man became a living creature. ⁸ And the Lord God planted a garden in Eden, in the east, and there he put the man whom he had formed.

^{3:8} And they heard the sound of the Lord God walking in the garden in the cool 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 But the Lord God called to the man and said to him, "Where are you?" ¹⁰ And he said, "I heard the sound of you in the garden, and I was afraid, because I was naked, and I hid myself."

¹¹ He said, "Who told you that you were naked? Have you eaten of the tree of which I commanded you not to eat?" ¹² The man said, "The woman whom you gave to be with me, she gave me fruit of the tree, and I ate." ¹³ Then the Lord God said to the woman, "What is this that you have done?" The woman said, "The serpent deceived me, and I ate." ¹⁴ The Lord God said to the serpent, "Because you have done this, cursed are you above all livestock and above all beasts of the field; on your belly you shall go, and dust you shall eat all the days of your life. ¹⁵ I will put enmity between you and the woman, and between your offspring and her offspring; he shall bruise your head, and you shall bruise his heel.

¹⁷ And to Adam he said, "Because you have listened to the voice of your wife and have eaten of the tree of which I commanded you, 'You shall not eat of it,' cursed is the ground because of you; in pain you shall eat of it all the days of your life; ¹⁸ thorns and thistles it shall bring forth for you; and you shall eat the plants of the field. ¹⁹ By the sweat of your face you shall eat bread, till you return to the ground, for out of it you were taken; for you are dust, and to dust you shall return."

CAROL #2: THE FIRST NOEL

1. The first noel the angel did say Was to certain poor shepherds in fields as they lay; In fields where they lay tending their sheep, on a cold winter's night that was so deep.

REFRAIN

Noel, Noel, Noel, Noel, born is the King of Israel.

2. They looked up and saw a star shining in the east, beyond them far; and to the earth it gave great light, and so it continued both day and night.

Anon

- 3. And by the light of that same star three wise men came from country far; to seek for a King was their intent, and to follow the star wherever it went.
- 4. Then let us all with one accord sing praises to our heavenly Lord; that hath made heaven and earth of naught, and with His blood mankind hath bought.

LESSONS #2-3

Genesis 22:15-18; Isaiah 9:2; 6: God promises to Abraham that in his seed shall all the nations of the earth be blessed, and the prophet foretells the coming of the Savior.

Genesis 22:15 And the angel of the Lord called to Abraham a second time from heaven 16 and said, "By myself I have sworn, declares the Lord, because you have done this and have not withheld your son, your only son, 17 I will surely bless you, and I will surely multiply your offspring as the stars of heaven and as the sand that is on the seashore. And your offspring shall possess the gate of his enemies, 18 and in your offspring shall all the nations of the earth be blessed, because you have obeyed my voice."

lsaiah 9:2 The people who walked in darkness have seen a great light; those who dwelt in a land of deep darkness, on them has light shone. ⁶ For to us a child is born, to us a son is given; and the government shall be upon his shoulder, and his name shall be called Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace.

LESSONS #4-5

ISAIAH 7:14; LUKE 1:26–35: THE ANGEL GABRIEL SALUTES THE BLESSED VIRGIN MARY, FULFILLING THE WORDS OF ISAIAH.

lsaiah 7:14 14 Therefore the Lord himself will give you a sign. Behold, the virgin shall conceive and bear a son, and shall call his name Emmanuel.

Luke 1:26 In the sixth month the angel Gabriel was sent from God to a city of Galilee named Nazareth, ²⁷ to a virgin betrothed to a man whose name was Joseph, of the house of David. And the virgin's name was Mary. ²⁸ And he came to her and said, "Greetings, O favored one, the Lord is with you!" ²⁹ But she was greatly troubled at the saying, and tried to discern what sort of greeting this might be.

³⁰ And the angel said to her, "Do not be afraid, Mary, for you have found favor with God. ³¹ And behold, you will conceive in your womb and bear a son, and you shall call his name Jesus. ³² He will be great and will be called the Son of the Most High. And the Lord God will give to him the throne of his father David, ³³ and he will reign over the house of Jacob forever, and of his kingdom there will be no end." ³⁴ And Mary said to the angel, "How will this be, since I am a virgin?"

³⁵ And the angel answered her, "The Holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the Most High will overshadow you; therefore the child to be born will be called holy—the Son of God.

CAROL #3: WHAT CHILD IS THIS | W. DIX

1. What Child is this who, laid to rest on Mary's lap is sleeping? Whom Angels greet with anthems sweet, While shepherds watch are keeping?

This, this is Christ the King, whom shepherds guard and Angels sing; haste, haste, to bring Him laud, the Babe, the Son of Mary.

2. Why lies He in such mean estate, where ox and ass are feeding? Good Christians, fear, for sinners here the silent Word is pleading.

Nails, spear shall pierce Him through, the cross be borne for me, for you; hail, hail the Word made flesh, the Babe, the Son of Mary. 4. So bring Him incense, gold and myrrh; come peasant, king to own Him; the King of kings salvation brings, let loving hearts enthrone Him.

Raise, raise a song on high, the virgin sings her lullaby. Joy, joy for Christ is born, the Babe, the Son of Mary.

Lessons #6-7

MICAH 5:2; LUKE 2:1; 3-7: JOSEPH AND MARY TRAVEL TO BETHLEHEM, FULFILLING THE WORDS OF MICAH; MARY GIVES BIRTH TO JESUS.

Micah 5: 2 But thou, Bethlehem Ephratah, 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.

Luke 2:1 In those days a decree went out from Caesar Augustus that all the world should be registered. ³ And all went to be registered, each to his own town. ⁴ And Joseph also went up from Galilee, from the town of Nazareth, to Judea, to the city of David, which is called Bethlehem, because he was of the house and lineage of David, ⁵ to be registered with Mary, his betrothed, who was with child. ⁶ And while they were there, the time came for her to give birth. ⁷ And she gave birth to her firstborn son and wrapped him in swaddling cloths and laid him in a manger, because there was no place for them in the inn.

CAROL #4: OH LITTLE TOWN OF BETHLEHEM | P. Brooks

- 1. 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.
- 2. 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 men on 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.

LESSON #8 | LIGHTING OF THE CHRISTMAS CANDLE

LUKE 2:8-20: THE GOOD NEWS OF CHRIST'S BIRTH IS FIRST PROCLAIMED TO THE UNEXPECTED SHEPHERDS IN THE FIELDS.

- ⁸ And in the same region there were shepherds out in the field, keeping watch over their flock by night. ⁹ And an angel of the Lord appeared to them, and the glory of the Lord shone around them, and they were filled with great fear. ¹⁰ And the angel said to them, "Fear not, for behold, I bring you good news of great joy that will be for all the people. ¹¹ For unto you is born this day in the city of David a Savior, who 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 And suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host praising God and saying,
- ¹⁴ "Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace among those with whom he is pleased!"
- ¹⁵ When the angels went away from them into heaven, the shepherds said to one another, "Let us go over to Bethlehem and see this thing that has happened, which the Lord has made known to us." ¹⁶ And they went with haste and found Mary and Joseph, and the baby lying in a manger. ¹⁷ And when they saw it, they made known the saying that had been told them concerning this child. ¹⁸ And all who heard it wondered at what the shepherds told 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 they had heard and seen, as it had been told them.

"Shepherds and the Good News"

Lesson #9

JOHN 1:1-5; 14: St. John unfolds the great mystery of the Incarnation.

¹ In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. ² He was in the beginning with God. ³ All things were made through him, and without him was not any thing made that was made. ⁴ In him was life, and the life was the light of men. ⁵ The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness has not overcome it.

¹⁴ And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, and we have seen his glory, glory as of the only Son from the Father, full of grace and truth.

Communion

CAROL #5: O HOLY NIGHT / P. CAPPEAU

- 1. 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, Till He appeared and the soul felt its worth. A thrill of hope, the weary soul rejoices, For yonder breaks a new and glorious morn. Fall on your knees, oh, hear the angel voices! O night divine, O night when Christ was born O night Divine! O night when Christ was born.
- 2. 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 pow'r and glory evermore proclaim! His pow'r and glory evermore proclaim

CAROL #6: SILENT NIGHT

- 1. Silent night, holy night, all is calm, all is bright; round you virgin mother and Child; Holy Infant, so tender and mild, sleep in heavenly peace.
- 2. Silent night, holy night, shepherds quake at the sight; glories stream from heaven afar, heavenly hosts sing Alleluia! 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,

CHRISTMAS BENEDICTION

Leader

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.

All

Glory to God in the highest! Thanks be to God! Amen.