

# Lessons and Carols Service

Celebrating the Birth of Our Savior

December 22, 2024

Durham Mennonite Church

Welcome

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Processional Hymn

**O Come, All Ye Faithful** (*Voices Together #241*)

**Lyrics:**

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.

Refrain:

O come let us adore him,  
O come let us adore him,  
O come let us adore him,  
Christ the Lord.

True God of true God, Light of light eternal,  
our lowly nature he hath not abhorred;  
born of a woman, here in flesh appearing. [Refrain]

Sing, choirs of angels, sing in exultation,  
sing, all ye citizens of heav'n above:  
"Glory to God, all glory in the highest!" [Refrain]

Yea, Lord, we greet thee, born this happy morning,  
Jesus, to thee be all glory giv'n;  
Word of the Father, begotten, not created. [Refrain]

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## **Bidding Prayer**

Dear friends in Christ,  
on this Christmas Eve, let us take joy and care  
to prepare our hearts and minds  
to hear once again the message of the angels,  
and to journey in spirit to Bethlehem  
to see the child lying in a manger.

Let us listen to the story of God's love and purposes,  
as told in Holy Scripture,  
from humanity's first disobedience  
to the glorious redemption brought to us  
through this Holy Child.  
Let us fill this house of prayer with songs of praise.

But first, let us pray for the needs of the world:  
for peace on earth and goodwill among all people;  
for unity and fellowship within the Church He came to build,  
and especially for our own community.

Let us remember, in His name,  
those who are poor, helpless,  
cold, hungry, or oppressed;  
those who are sick in body or mind,  
and those who grieve;  
the lonely and unloved;  
the elderly and little children;  
and all who do not yet know or love the Lord Jesus,  
or who have turned away from Him.

Let us also remember before God  
all those who rejoice with us  
but are now in His eternal presence,  
that great multitude beyond counting,  
whose hope was in the Word made flesh,  
and with whom, through Jesus, we are forever one.

Let us offer these prayers and praises  
humbly to God's heavenly throne,  
using the words our Savior taught us:

**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, forever. Amen.

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## First Lesson

### **Genesis 3:8–19**

God announces the punishment for human disobedience and the promise of redemption.

**8** 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.

**9** But the Lord God called to the man, “Where are you?”

**10** He answered, “I heard you in the garden, and I was afraid because I was naked; so I hid.”

**11** And he said, “Who told you that you were naked? Have you eaten from the tree that I commanded you not to eat from?”

**12** The man said, “The woman you put here with me—she gave me some fruit from the tree, and I ate it.”

**13** Then the Lord God said to the woman, “What is this you have done?”  
The woman said, “The serpent deceived me, and I ate.”

**14** 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.

**15** 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.”

**16** To the woman he said,  
“I will make your pains in childbearing very severe;  
with painful labor you will give birth to children.  
Your desire will be for your husband,  
and he will rule over you.”

**17** To Adam he said, “Because you listened to your wife and ate fruit from the tree

about which I commanded you, 'You must not eat from it,'  
"Cursed is the ground because of you;  
through painful toil you will eat food from it  
all the days of your life.

**18** It will produce thorns and thistles for you,  
and you will eat the plants of the field.

**19** By the sweat of your brow  
you will eat your food  
until you return to the ground,  
since from it you were taken;  
for dust you are  
and to dust you will return."

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## Hymn

**Come, Thou Long-Expected Jesus** (*Voices Together #218*)

### Lyrics:

Come, Thou long-expected Jesus,  
Born to set Thy people free;  
From our fears and sins release us,  
Let us find our rest in Thee.

Israel's Strength and Consolation,  
Hope of all the earth Thou art;  
Dear Desire of every nation,  
Joy of every longing heart.

Born Thy people to deliver,  
Born a child and yet a King,  
Born to reign in us forever,  
Now Thy gracious kingdom bring.

By Thine own eternal Spirit,  
Rule in all our hearts alone;  
By Thine all-sufficient merit,  
Raise us to Thy glorious throne.

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## Second Lesson

### **Genesis 22:15–18**

God promises Abraham that through his descendants, all nations of the earth will be blessed.

**15** The angel of the Lord called to Abraham from heaven a second time  
**16** and said, "I swear by myself, declares the Lord, that because you have done this and have not withheld your son, your only son,  
**17** 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,  
**18** and through your offspring all nations on earth will be blessed, because you have obeyed me."

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## Hymn

### **Bless'd Be the God of Israel** (*Voices Together #223*)

#### **Lyrics:**

1 Bless'd be the God of Israel, who comes to set us free,  
who visits and redeems us, and grants us liberty!  
The prophets spoke of mercy, of freedom and release,  
God shall fulfill the promise to bring our people peace.

2 Now from the house of David a child of grace is giv'n,  
a Savior comes among us to raise us up to heav'n.  
Before him goes the herald, forerunner in the way,  
the prophet of salvation, the harbinger of day.

3 On all by death imprisoned the sun begins to rise,  
the dawning of forgiveness upon the sinner's eyes,  
to guide the feet of pilgrims along the paths of peace.  
Oh, bless our God and Savior with songs that never cease!

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## Third Lesson

### **Isaiah 9:2–7**

The prophet foretells the coming of the Savior.

**2** The people walking in darkness have seen a great light;  
on those living in the land of deep darkness a light has dawned.

**3** You have enlarged the nation and increased their joy;  
they rejoice before you as people rejoice at the harvest,  
as warriors rejoice when dividing the plunder.

**4** For as in the day of Midian's defeat,  
you have shattered the yoke that burdens them,  
the bar across their shoulders,  
the rod of their oppressor.

**5** Every warrior's boot used in battle  
and every garment rolled in blood  
will be destined for burning,  
will be fuel for the fire.

**6** 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 Counselor, Mighty God,  
Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace.

**7** 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.

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## Hymn

**O Come, O Come, Emmanuel** (*Voices Together* #210)

### Lyrics:

O come, O come, Immanuel,  
and ransom captive Israel,  
that mourns in lonely exile here,  
until the Son of God appear.

Refrain: Rejoice! Rejoice! Immanuel shall come to thee, O Israel.

O come, O come, thou God of law,  
in cloud and majesty and awe.  
Thy precepts, taught on Sinai's height,  
call us to lives both just and right. [Refrain]

O come, thou Rod of Jesse,  
free thine own from Satan's tyranny.  
From depths of hell thy people save,  
and give them vict'ry o'er the grave. [Refrain]

O come, thou Dayspring, come and cheer  
our spirits by thine advent here.  
Disperse the gloomy clouds of night,  
and death's dark shadow put to flight. [Refrain]

O come, thou Key of David, come  
and open wide our heav'nly home.  
Make safe the way that leads to thee  
and close the path to misery. [Refrain]

O come, thou Wisdom from on high,  
and order all things far and nigh.  
To us the path of knowledge show,  
and cause us in thy ways to go. [Refrain]

O come, Desire of nations, bind  
all peoples in one heart and mind.  
Bid envy, strife, and quarrels cease,  
and fill the world with heaven's peace. [Refrain]

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## Fourth Lesson

### **Isaiah 11:1–9**

A prophecy of the peace that Christ will bring to the earth.

**1** A shoot will come up from the stump of Jesse;  
from his roots a Branch will bear fruit.

**2** 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—

**3** 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;

**4** 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.

**5** Righteousness will be his belt  
and faithfulness the sash around his waist.

**6** 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.

**7** The cow will feed with the bear,  
their young will lie down together,  
and the lion will eat straw like the ox.

**8** The infant will play near the cobra's den,  
and the young child will put its hand into the viper's nest.

**9** 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.

## Fifth Lesson

### **Luke 1:26–38**

The angel Gabriel announces to Mary that she will give birth to Jesus.

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

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

"How will this be," Mary asked the angel, "since I am a virgin?"

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. 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. For no word from God will ever fail."

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



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Hymn: He Came Down (*Voices Together* #239)

**Refrain:**

He came down that we may have love;  
He came down that we may have love;  
He came down that we may have love;  
Hallelujah forevermore.

**Verses (sung in sequence):**

He came down that we may have peace...  
He came down that we may have joy...  
He came down that we may have life...

**Refrain after each verse:**

Hallelujah forevermore.

Sixth Lesson

**Luke 2:1–7**

St. Luke tells of the birth of Jesus.

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.

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Hymn: O Little Town of Bethlehem (*Voices Together* #245)

**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—let "Glory!" ring  
with peace to all on earth!

**3.**

How silently, how silently,  
the wondrous gift is giv'n!  
So God imparts to human hearts  
the blessings of the heav'ns.  
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.  
O come to us, abide with us,  
our Lord Emmanuel.

## Seventh Lesson

### **Luke 2:8–16**

The shepherds go to the manger.

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

Suddenly a great company of the heavenly host appeared with the angel, praising God and saying,  
“Glory to God in the highest heaven,  
and on earth peace to those on whom his favor rests.”

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.” So they hurried off and found Mary and Joseph, and the baby, who was lying in the manger.

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## Hymn: Angels We Have Heard on High (*Voices Together* #249)

**1.**

Angels we have heard on high,  
singing sweetly through the night,  
and the mountains in reply  
echoing their brave delight.

### **Refrain:**

Gloria in excelsis Deo,  
gloria in excelsis Deo.

**2.**

Shepherds, why this jubilee?  
Why these songs of happy cheer?  
What great brightness did you see?  
What glad tidings did you hear?

### **[Refrain]**

**3.**

Come to Bethlehem and see  
him whose birth the angels sing.  
Come, adore on bended knee  
Christ the Lord, the newborn King.

### **[Refrain]**

**4.**

See him in a manger laid  
whom the angels praise above.  
Mary, Joseph, lend your aid,  
while we raise our hearts in love.

### **[Refrain]**

## Eighth Lesson

### **Matthew 2:1–12**

The Magi are led by the star to Jesus.

After Jesus was born in Bethlehem in Judea, during the time of King Herod, Magi from the east came to Jerusalem and asked, “Where is the one who has been born king of the Jews? We saw his star when it rose and have come to worship him.”

When King Herod heard this he was disturbed, and all Jerusalem with him. When he had called together all the people’s chief priests and teachers of the law, he asked them where the Messiah was to be born. “In Bethlehem in Judea,” they replied, “for this is what the prophet has written:

‘But you, Bethlehem, in the land of Judah,  
are by no means least among the rulers of Judah;  
for out of you will come a ruler  
who will shepherd my people Israel.’”

Then Herod called the Magi secretly and found out from them the exact time the star had appeared. He sent them to Bethlehem and said, “Go and search carefully for the child. As soon as you find him, report to me, so that I too may go and worship him.”

After they had heard the king, they went on their way, and the star they had seen when it rose went ahead of them until it stopped over the place where the child was. When they saw the star, they were overjoyed. On coming to the house, they saw the child with his mother Mary, and they bowed down and worshiped him. Then they opened their treasures and presented him with gifts of gold, frankincense, and myrrh. And having been warned in a dream not to go back to Herod, they returned to their country by another route.

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### Hymn: *We Three Kings (Voices Together #254)*

#### **1.**

We three kings of Orient are,  
bearing gifts we traverse afar,  
field and fountain, moor and mountain,  
following yonder star.

#### **Refrain:**

O star of wonder, star of night,  
star with royal beauty bright,  
westward leading, still proceeding,  
guide us to thy perfect light.

**2.**

Born a King on Bethlehem's plain,  
gold I bring to crown him again,  
King forever, ceasing never,  
over us all to reign.

**[Refrain]**

**3.**

Frankincense to offer have I;  
incense owns a Deity nigh;  
prayer and praising, all men raising,  
worship him, God most high.

**[Refrain]**

**4.**

Myrrh is mine; its bitter perfume  
breathes a life of gathering gloom—  
sorrowing, sighing, bleeding, dying,  
sealed in the stone-cold tomb.

**[Refrain]**

**5.**

Glorious now behold him arise,  
King and God and Sacrifice;  
alleluia, alleluia!  
Sounds through the earth and skies.

**[Refrain]**

## Ninth Lesson

### **John 1:1–14**

St. John unfolds the great mystery of the Incarnation.

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. 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.

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## Hymn: Hark! The Herald Angels Sing (*Voices Together #247*)

### 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 the angelic host proclaim,  
“Christ is born in Bethlehem!”  
Hark! The herald angels sing,  
“Glory to the newborn King!”

### 2.

Christ, by highest heaven 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 Emmanuel.  
Hark! The herald angels sing,  
“Glory to the newborn King!”

### 3.

Hail the heaven-born Prince of Peace!  
Hail the Sun of Righteousness!  
Light and life to all he brings,  
risen 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.  
Hark! The herald angels sing,  
“Glory to the newborn King!”

## Closing Hymn

### **Joy to the World** (*Voices Together #240*)

The congregation stands and sings.

#### **1.**

Joy to the world, the Lord is come!  
Let earth receive her King;  
let every heart prepare him room,  
and heaven and nature sing,  
and heaven and nature sing,  
and heaven, and heaven and nature sing.

#### **2.**

Joy to the earth, the Savior reigns!  
Let all their songs employ;  
while fields and floods, rocks, hills, and plains  
repeat the sounding joy,  
repeat the sounding joy,  
repeat, repeat the sounding joy.

#### **3.**

No more let sins and sorrows grow,  
nor thorns infest the ground;  
he comes to make his blessings flow  
far as the curse is found,  
far as the curse is found,  
far as, far as the curse is found.

#### **4.**

He rules the world with truth and grace,  
and makes the nations prove  
the glories of his righteousness,  
and wonders of his love,  
and wonders of his love,  
and wonders, wonders of his love.

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## **Benediction**

Go forth with joy, for the Lord has come!  
Let every heart prepare Him room,  
let every life proclaim His truth and grace.

May His blessings flow through you.

May the glories of His righteousness  
and the wonders of His love  
fill your hearts this Christmas and always.

Amen.