

Huntsville First

United Methodist Church
Huntsville, Alabama



A SERVICE OF NINE LESSONS AND CAROLS

Sunday, December 8, 2024

11 AM



Nine Lessons and Carols, also known as the Festival of Nine Lessons and Carols and Service of Nine Lessons and Carols, is a service of Christian worship traditionally celebrated on or near Christmas Eve. The story of the fall of humanity, the promise of the Messiah, and the birth of Jesus are told in nine short Bible readings or lessons from Genesis, the prophetic books, and the Gospels, interspersed with the singing of Christmas carols, hymns, and choir anthems.

*Although the tradition of Nine Lessons and Carols is popularly associated with King's College, Cambridge, its origins are attributed to Truro Cathedral in Cornwall. Up to the late 19th century, the singing of Christmas carols was normally performed by singers visiting people's houses, and carols had been excluded from Christian worship. In the Victorian era, the rising popularity of hymnody encouraged church musicians to introduce carols into worship. At around this time, the composer and organist John Stainer was compiling a collection, *Christmas Carols New and Old*, and during Christmas 1878, he introduced carols into the service of Choral Evensong at St. Paul's Cathedral in London. Other cathedrals also began to adopt carols at Christmastide that year, and the Royal Cornwall Gazette reported that the choir of Truro Cathedral would sing a service of carols at 10 PM on Christmas Eve.*

Two years later, the Bishop of Truro conducted the first formal service of "Nine Lessons and Carols" on Christmas Eve 1880. Concerned about the excessive consumption of alcohol in Cornish pubs during the festive season, they sought a means of attracting revelers out of the pubs and into the church by offering a religious celebration of Christmas.

In 1883, the Nine Lessons service began to gain popularity across the Church of England and the wider Anglican Community, as well as the Roman Catholic Church in England and Wales. The original liturgy has since been adapted and used by other churches all over the world, particularly in English-speaking countries. Lessons and Carols most often occurs in Anglican churches. However, numerous Christian denominations have adopted the service as part of their Christmas celebrations. In North America, the Lessons and Carols tradition spread to other US and Canadian institutions.

This is our 28th service of Nine Lessons and Carols at Huntsville First, first celebrated on December 14, 1997. We ask that you please turn off all cell phones and audible devices and enjoy this introduction to the Christmas season.

CHIMING OF THE HOUR

All stand

PROCESSIONAL HYMN AND LIGHTING OF THE ADVENT CANDLE

HYMN

Once in Royal David's City

WORDS: C.F. Alexander (1818-1895)

MUSIC: H.J. Gauntlett (1805-1876)

Vs. 1-3 harmonized by A.H. Mann (1850-1929)

Vs. 4 arranged by David Willcocks (1919-2015)

Vs. 1: Solo- Faylee Crawford

Once in royal David's city,
 Stood a lowly cattle shed,
 Where a mother laid her baby
 In a manger for his bed:
 Mary loving mother mild,
 Jesus Christ her little child.

Vs. 2: Choir only

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 scorned, and lowly,
 Lived on earth our Saviour holy.

Verse 3: All

Verse 4: All



3. Je - sus is our child - hood's pat - tern, Day by day like
 4. And our eyes at last shall see him, Through his own re -



us_ he_ grew, He was litt - le weak and help - less, Tears and smiles like
 dee - ming love, For that child so dear and gen - tle Is our Lord in



us_ he_ knew; And he feel - eth for our sad - ness,
 hea - ven a - bove; And he leads his chil - dren on_



And he share - eth in_ our_ glad - ness.
 To the place where he_ is_ gone._

BIDDING PRAYER

Beloved in Christ, at this Christmastide, let it be our care 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 is come to pass, and the babe lying in a manger.

Therefore, let us read and mark in the Holy Scripture the tale of the loving purposes of God from the first days of our disobedience unto the glorious redemption brought us by this Holy Child.

But first, let us pray for the needs of the whole world; for peace on earth and goodwill among all his people; for unity and brotherhood within the Church he came to build, and especially in this conference.

And because this would rejoice his heart, let us remember, in his name, the poor and helpless, the cold, the hungry, and the oppressed; the sick and them that mourn, the lonely and the unloved, the aged and the little children; all those who know not the Lord Jesus, or who love him not, or who by sin have grieved his heart of love.

Lastly, let us remember before God all those who rejoice with us, but upon another shore, and in a greater light, that multitude which no man can number, whose hope was in the Word made flesh, and with whom in the Lord Jesus we are one for evermore.

These prayers and praises let us humbly offer up to the Throne of Heaven, in the words which Christ himself hath taught us:

**Our Father, which 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, the power, and the glory, forever and ever,
Amen.**

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

Amen.

All be seated

THE FIRST LESSON

Genesis 3:8-19

*God tells sinful Adam that he has lost his life in Paradise
and that his seed will bruise the serpent's head.*

The man and his wife heard the sound of the Lord God walking in the garden at the time of the evening breeze, and they hid from the presence of the Lord God among the trees of the garden. But the Lord God called to the man, and said to him, "Where are you?" He said, "I heard the sound of you in the garden, and I was afraid because I was naked, and I hid." He said, "Who told you that you were naked? Have you eaten from the tree of which I commanded you not to eat?" The man said, "The woman whom you gave to be with me, she gave me fruit from the tree, and I ate." Then the Lord God said to the woman, "What is this that you have done?" The woman said, "The serpent tricked me, and I ate." The Lord God said to the serpent:

"Because you have done this,
Cursed are you among all animals
And among all wild creatures;
Upon your belly, you shall go,
And dust you shall eat all the days of your life.
I will put enmity between you and the woman,
And between your offspring and hers;
He will strike your head,
And you will strike his heel."

And to the man, he said:

"Because you have listened to the voice of your wife,
You have eaten of the tree
About which I commanded you, You shall not eat of it".
Cursed is the ground because of you;
In toil you shall eat of it all the days of your life;
Thorns and thistles it shall bring forth for you;
And you shall eat the plants of the field.
By the sweat of your face
You shall eat bread
Until you return to the ground,
For out of it you were taken;
You are dust, And to dust, you shall return."

CAROL It Came Upon the Midnight Clear

CAROL
arranged by Jantz A. Black

It came upon the midnight clear, that glorious song of old,
From angels bending near the earth to touch their harps of gold.
"Peace on the earth, good will to all, from heavens all gracious King."
The word in solemn stillness lay, to hear the angels sing.

And ye, beneath life's crushing load, whose forms are bending low,
Who toil along the climbing way with painful steps and slow.
Look now! For glad and golden hours come swiftly on the wing.
O rest beside the weary road, and hear the angels sing!
Sing, sing, angels sing, sing, sing!
For lo! The days are hastening on, by prophet seen of old,
When with the ever circling years shall come the time foretold
When peace shall over all the earth its ancient splendors fling,
And all the world send back the song which now the angels sing.

THE SECOND LESSON

Genesis 22:15-18

*God promises to faithful Abraham that in his seed
shall all the nations of the earth be blessed.*

The angel of the Lord called to Abraham a second time from heaven, and said, "By myself, I have sworn, says the Lord: Because you have done this, and have not withheld your son, your only son, I will indeed bless you, and I will make your offspring as numerous as the stars of heaven and as the sand that is on the seashore. And your offspring shall possess the gate of their enemies, and by your offspring shall all the nations of the earth gain blessing for themselves because you have obeyed my voice."

CAROL Lo, How a Rose E'er Blooming

ES IST EIN' ROS'
Howard Helvey (b. 1968)

Lo, how a rose e'er blooming, from tender stem hath sprung,
Of Jesse's lineage coming, as men of old have sung.
It came, a blossom bright, amid the cold of winter, when half spent was the night.
Isaiah 'twas foretold it, the rose I have in mind;
With Mary we behold it, the virgin mother kind.
To show God's love aright, she bore for us a Savior, when half spent was the night.
O flower, whose fragrance tender with sweetness fills the air,
Dispel in glorious splendor the darkness everywhere.
True man yet very God, from sin and death now save us and share our every load.

THE THIRD LESSON

Isaiah 9:2, 6-7

The prophet foretells the coming of the Saviour.

The people who walked in darkness
Have seen a great light;
Those who lived in a land of deep darkness —

On them, light has shined.
 For a child has been born for us,
 A son is given to us;
 Authority rests upon his shoulders;
 And he is named
 Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God,
 Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace.
 His authority shall grow continually,
 And there shall be endless peace
 For the throne of David and his kingdom.
 He will establish and uphold it
 With justice and with righteousness
 From this time onward and forevermore.
 The zeal of the Lord of hosts will do this.

All stand

CAROL God Rest You Merry, Gentlemen

English traditional carol

MUSIC: David Willcocks (1919-2015)

Verse 1-3: All

1. God rest you mer - ry, gen - tle - men Let no - thing you dis - may, For
 2. From God our heav'n - ly Fa - ther A bless - ed an - gel came, And
 3. Now to the Lord sing prai - ses, All you with - in this place, And

Je - sus Christ our Sa - viour Was born up - on this day, To
 un - to cer - tain shep - herds Brought ti - dings of the same, How
 with true love and bro - ther - hood Each o - ther now em - brace; This

save us all from Sa - tan's power When we were gone a - stray: O
 that in Beth - le - hem was born The Son of God by name:
 ho - ly tide of Christ - mas All o - thers doth de - face:

ti - dings of com - fort and joy, com - fort and

joy, O ti - dings of com - fort and joy.

The peace that Christ will bring is foreshown.

A shoot shall come out from the stump of Jesse,
And a branch shall grow out of his roots.
The spirit of the Lord shall rest on him,
The spirit of wisdom and understanding,
The spirit of counsel and might,
The spirit of knowledge and the fear of the Lord.
His delight shall be in the fear of the Lord.
With righteousness, he shall judge the poor,
And decide with equity for the meek of the earth;

The wolf shall live with the lamb,
The leopard shall lie down with the kid,
The calf and the lion and the fatling together,
And the little child shall lead them.
The cow and bear shall graze,
Their young shall lie down together;
And the lion shall eat straw like the ox.
The nursing child shall play over the hold of the asp,
And the weaned child shall put its hand on the adder's den.
They will not hurt or destroy
On all my holy mountains;
For the earth will be full of the knowledge of the Lord
And the water covers the sea.

CAROL E'en So, Lord Jesus, Quickly Come

Paul Manz (1919-2009)

Peace be to you and grace from Him who freed us from our sins,
Who loved us all and shed His blood that we might saved be.
Sing Holy, Holy to our Lord, the Lord, almighty God,
Who was and is and is to come; Sing Holy, Holy, Lord!
Rejoice in heaven, all ye that dwell therein,
Rejoice on earth, ye saints below,
For Christ is coming, is coming soon, for Christ is coming soon!
E'en so, Lord Jesus, quickly come, and night shall be no more;
They need no light nor lamp nor sun, for Christ will be their all!

The angel Gabriel salutes the Blessed Virgin Mary.

In the sixth month, the angel Gabriel was sent by God to a town in Galilee called Nazareth, to a virgin engaged to a man whose name was Joseph, of the house of David. The virgin's name was Mary. And he came to her and said, "Greetings, favored one! The Lord is with you." But she was much perplexed by his words and pondered what sort of greeting this might be. The angel said to her, "Do not be afraid, Mary, for you have found favor with God. And now, you will conceive in your womb and bear a son, and you will name him Jesus. 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 ancestor David. He will reign over the house of Jacob forever, and of his kingdom, there will be no end." Mary said to the angel, "How can this be since I am a virgin?" The angel said to her, "The Holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the Highest will overshadow you; therefore the child to be born will be holy; he will be called the Son of God." Then Mary said, "Here am I, the servant of the Lord; let it be with me according to your word." Then the angel departed from her.

OFFERTORY CAROL Sussex Carol

TRADITIONAL ENGLISH
Mack Wilberg (b. 1955)

On Christmas Night all Christians sing, to hear the news the angels bring.
 On Christmas night all Christians sing, to hear the news the angels bring.
 News of great joy, news of great mirth, news of our merciful King's birth.
 Then why should men on earth be so sad, since our Redeemer made us glad,
 then why should men on earth be so sad, since our Redeemer made us glad,
 when from our sin he set us free, all for to gain our liberty?
 When sin departs before his grace, then life and health come in its place,
 when sin departs before his grace, then life and health come in its place;
 Angels and men with joy may sing, all for to see the newborn King.
 All out of darkness we have light, which made the angels sing the night,
 all out of darkness we have light, which made the angels sing this night.
 "Glory to God and peace to men, now and forevermore. Amen.
 Now and forever, Amen, forevermore Amen, now and forever, Amen,
 forevermore, Amen, now and forever, Amen, forevermore, Amen,
 Amen, Amen, Amen."

DOXOLOGY

WORDS: Traditional French carol

MUSIC: French carol melody; arranged by Edward Shippen Barnes, 1937
harmonization by Austin C. Lovelace, 1964

Glo - - - - - ri - a, in ex - cel - sis

De - o! Glo - - - - -

- ri - a, in ex - cel - sis De - - - o!

PRAYER OF DEDICATION AND BLESSING OF THE CHILDREN

Children ages 4 through second grade are invited to come to the back of the sanctuary and go with a “Shepherd” to Children’s Church (Wesley Center, Room 208/210). After the service, parents should pick up their children at the bottom of the Wesley Center main staircase.

THE SIXTH LESSON

Luke 2:1; 3-7

St. Luke tells of the birth of Jesus.

In those days a decree went out from Emperor Augustus that all the world should be registered. All went to their towns to be registered. Joseph also went from the town of Nazareth to Galilee to Judea, to the city of David called Bethlehem, because he was descended from the house and family of David. He went to be registered with Mary, to whom he was engaged and who was expecting a child. While they were there, the time came for her to deliver her child. And she gave birth to her firstborn son and wrapped him in bands of cloth, and laid him in a manger because there was no place for them in the inn.

CAROL Silent Night

STILLE NACHT
arranged by Dan Forrest (b. 1978)

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.
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, Jesus, Lord at thy birth,
Silent night, holy night, wondrous star, lend thy light;
With the angels let us sing "Alleluia" to our king,
"Christ the Savior is born! Christ the Savior is born."

THE SEVENTH LESSON

Luke 2:8-16

The shepherds go to the manger.

In that region, shepherds lived in the fields, watching their flock by night. Then an angel of the Lord stood before them, and the glory of the Lord shone around them, and they were terrified. But the angel said to them, "Do not be afraid; for see — I am bringing you good news of great joy for all the people: to you is born this day in the city of David a Savior, who is the Messiah, the Lord. This will be a sign for you: you will find a child wrapped in bands of cloth and 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 heaven,
And on earth peace among those whom he favors!"
When the angels had left them and gone into heaven, the shepherds said to one another, "Let us go now to Bethlehem and see this thing that has taken place, which the Lord has made known to us." So they went with haste and found Mary and Joseph, and the child lying in the manger.

CAROL "And the Glory of the Lord"

THE MESSIAH
George Frideric Handel (1685-1759)

And the glory, the glory of the Lord shall be revealed,
And all flesh shall see it together; For the mouth of the Lord hath spoken it.

THE EIGHTH LESSON

Matthew 2:1-12

The wise men are led by the star to Jesus.

In the time of King Herod, after Jesus was born in Bethlehem of Judea, wise men from the East came to Jerusalem, asking, "Where is the child who has been born king of the Jews? For we observed his star at its rising, and have come to pay him

homage.” When King Herod heard this, he was frightened, and all Jerusalem with him; and calling together all the chief priests and scribes of the people, he inquired of them where the Messiah was to be born. They told him, “In Bethlehem of Judea; for so it has been written by the prophet:

‘And you, Bethlehem, in the land of Judah,
Are by no means least among the rules of Judah;
For from you shall come a ruler
Who is to shepherd my people Israel.’ ”

Then Herod secretly called for the wise men and learned from them the exact time when the star had appeared. Then he sent them to Bethlehem, saying, “Go and search diligently for the child; and when you have found him, bring me word so that I may also go and pay him homage.” When they had heard the king, they set out; and there, ahead of them, went the star that they had seen at its rising, until it stopped over the place where the child was. When they saw that the star had stopped, they were overwhelmed with joy. On entering the house, they saw the child with Mary his mother; and they knelt and paid him homage. Then, opening their treasure chests, they offered him gifts of gold, frankincense, and myrrh. And having been warned in a dream not to return to Herod, they left for their own country on another road.

CAROL Festival First Nowell

THE FIRST NOWELL
arranged by Dan Forrest (b. 1978)

The first Nowell the angels did say was to certain poor shepherds in fields as they lay;
In fields where they lay keeping their sheep, on a cold winter’s night that was so deep.

Nowell, nowell, nowell, nowell, born is the King of Israel.

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.

Nowell, nowell, nowell nowell, born is the King of Israel.

Congregation stands and joins in singing:

**Then let us all with one accord sing praises to our heavenly Lord
that hath made heaven and earth of nought,
and with his blood mankind hath bought.**

Nowell, nowell, nowell, nowell, born is the king of Israel.

THE 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 at the beginning with God. All things came into being through him,

and without him, not one thing came into being. What has come into being in him was life, and life was the light of all people. The light shines in the darkness and the darkness did not overcome it.

There was a man sent from God, whose name was John. He came as a witness to testify to the light so that all might believe through him. He was not the light, but he came to testify to the light. The true light, which enlightens everyone, was coming into the world.

He was in the world, and the world came into being through him, yet the world did not know him. He came to what was his own home, and his people did not accept him. But to all who received him, who believed in his name, he gave the power to become children of God, who were born, not of blood or the will of the flesh or the will of man, but of God.

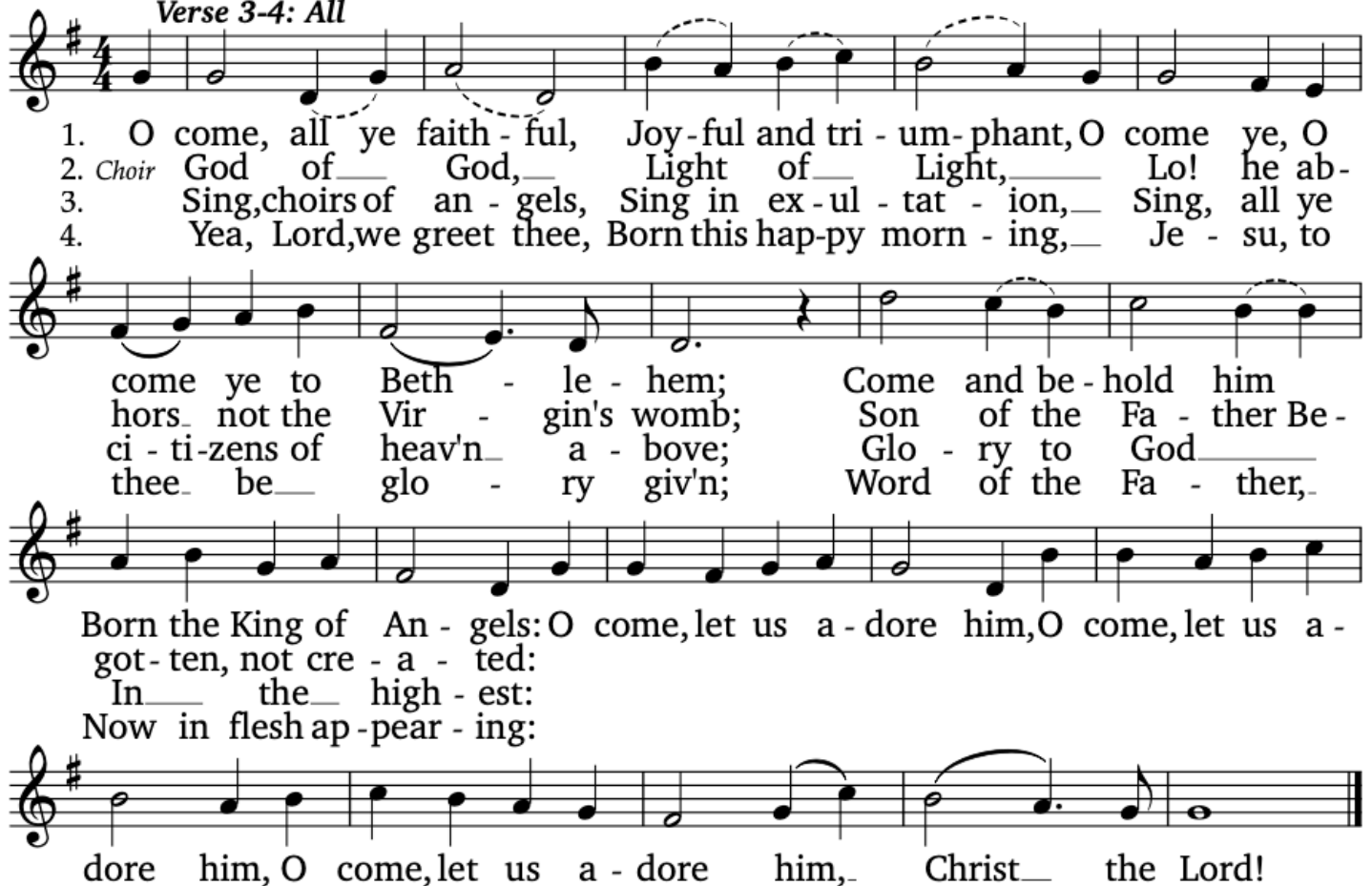
And the Word became flesh and lives among us, and we have seen his glory as a father's only son, full of grace and truth.

CAROL O Come, All Ye Faithful WORDS AND MELODY: J.F. Wade (c. 1711-1786)
 arranged by David Willcocks (1919-2015)

Verse 1: All

Verse 2: Choir only

Verse 3-4: All



1. O come, all ye faith - ful, Joy - ful and tri - um - phant, O come ye, O
 2. *Choir* God of God, Light of Light, Lo! he ab -
 3. Sing, choirs of an - gels, Sing in ex - ul - tat - ion, Sing, all ye
 4. Yea, Lord, we greet thee, Born this hap - py morn - ing, Je - su, to

come ye to Beth - le - hem; Come and be - hold him
 hors - not the Vir - gin's womb; Son of the Fa - ther Be -
 ci - ti - zens of heav'n - a - bove; Glo - ry to God
 thee - be - glo - ry giv'n; Word of the Fa - ther,

Born the King of An - gels: O come, let us a - dore him, O come, let us a -
 got - ten, not cre - a - ted:
 In the high - est:
 Now in flesh ap - pear - ing:

dore him, O come, let us a - dore him, Christ the Lord!

BLESSING

O God, who makes us glad with the yearly remembrance of the birth of the only Son, Jesus Christ: Grant that as we joyfully receive him for our redeemer, so we may with sure confidence behold him when he shall come to be our judge; who lives and reigns with thee and the Holy Ghost, one God, world without end.

Amen.

May he who by his Incarnation gathered into one thing earthly and heavenly, fill you with the sweetness of inward peace and goodwill; and the blessing of God Almighty, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost, be upon you and remain with you always.

Amen.

RESPONSE Hark! The Herald Angels Sing WORDS: Charles Wesley (1707-1788)
MUSIC: Felix Mendelssohn (1809-1847)
Vs. 3 arranged by David Willcocks (1919-2015)

Verse 1-3: All



1. Hark! the he - rald an - gels sing_ Glo - ry to the new-born King;
2. Christ, by high - est heav'n a - dored, Christ, the ev - er - last - ing Lord,
3. Hail the heav'n born Prince of Peace! Hail the Sun of Righteous-ness!

Peace on earth and mer - cy mild, God and sin - ners re - con - ciled:
Late in time be - hold him come Offspring of a vir - gin's womb:
Light and life to all he brings, Ris'n with heal - ing in his wings;

Joy - ful all ye na - tions rise, _ Join the triumph of the skies,
Veiled in flesh the Godhead see, _ Hail th'in - car - nate De - i - ty! _
Mild he lays his glo - ry by, _ Born that we no more may die, _

With th'an - gel - ic host pro claim, Christ is _ born in Beth - le - hem.
Please with us in flesh to dwell, Je - sus, _ our Em - ma - nu - el.
Born to raise us from the earth, Born to _ give us se - cond birth.

Hark! the her - ald an - gels sing Glo - ry _ to the new born King.

All be seated

THE PEALING OF THE BELLS

CLOSING VOLUNTARY I Saw Three Ships Richard Elliott (b. 1957)

THE CARILLON



MUSICIANS

Jillian Gardner, *Director of Music and Organist*

The Sanctuary Choir

Lisa Wiggins and Jeffrey Dortch, *violin*

Luke Hubbard, *viola*

Veneta Billmeyer, *cello*

Greg Lucero, *flute*

Matthew Scarcelli, *oboe*

Delia Henderson and Barry Sublett, *piano*

CLERGY

Rev. Bill Crosby, *Associate Pastor*

Rev. Joe Vonderheide, *Associate Pastor*

Rev. Coy Hallmark, *Associate Pastor*

Rev. June Wilson, *Associate Pastor*

USHERS

Gene Bowman, Lise Wilson

Jim Green, John Bellis

ACOLYTES

Nora Braden and Atkins Keith



Join Us This Christmas Season!

Saturday, December 21: Blue Christmas
6 PM in the Chapel

Sunday, December 22: 57th Annual Boars Head and Yule Log Festival
4 PM in the Historic Sanctuary

Tuesday, December 24: Christmas Eve Communion
3, 5, and 11 PM Traditional Worship in the Historic Sanctuary
4 PM in the Wesley Worship Center

Sunday, December 29: The 1st Sunday after Christmas
10 AM one combined service in the Historic Sanctuary



Huntsville First
United Methodist Church