The Greeting

Hymn 102, stanzas 1-2 & 5-6, “Once in royal David’s city”

music: Irby, melody Henry John Gauntlett (1805-1876); harm. Arthur Henry Mann (1850-1929)
text: Cecil Frances Alexander (1818-1895), alt.

1. Once in royal David’s city stood a
2. He came down to earth from heaven, who is
5. And our eyes at last shall see him, through his
6. Not in that poor lowly stable, with the

lowly cattle shed, where a mother laid her
own redeeming love; for that child who seemed so

baby in a manager for his bed: Mary
stable, and his cradle was a stall; with the
helpless is our Lord in heaven above; and he

was that mother mild, Jesus Christ her little child.
poor, the scorned, the lowly, lived on earth our Saviour holy.
leads his children on to the place where he is gone.
veiled to faithful eye, set at God’s right hand on high.
The Bidding Prayer

Dear People of God: In this Christmas Season, let it be our duty and delight to hear once more the message of the Angels, to go to Bethlehem and see the Son of God lying in a manger.

Let us hear and heed in Holy Scripture the story of God’s loving purpose from the time of our rebellion against him until the glorious redemption brought to us by his holy Child Jesus, and let us make this place glad with our carols of praise.

But first, let us pray for the needs of his whole world, for peace and justice on earth, for the unity and mission of the Church for which he died, and especially for his Church in our country and in this city.

And because he particularly loves them, let us remember in his name the poor and helpless, the cold, the hungry and the oppressed, the sick and those who mourn, the lonely and unloved, the aged and little children, as well as all those who do not know and love the Lord Jesus Christ.

Finally, let us remember before God his pure and lowly Mother, and that whole multitude which no one can number, whose hope was in the Word made flesh, and with whom, in Jesus, we are one for evermore.

And now, to sum up all these petitions, let us pray in the words which Christ himself has taught us, saying:

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, for ever and ever. Amen.

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

FIRST LESSON

GENESIS 3:1-15

read by Sandra Ireland

Adam and Eve rebel against God and are cast out of the Garden of Eden.

Carol, “JESUS CHRIST THE APPLE TREE”

The tree of life my soul hath seen, I’m weary with my former toil,  
Laden with fruit, and always green: Here I will sit and rest awhile:  
The trees of nature fruitless be Under the shadow I will be,  
Compared with Christ the apple tree Of Jesus Christ the apple tree.

His beauty doth all things excel: This fruit doth make my soul to thrive,  
By faith I know, but ne’er can tell, It keeps my dying faith alive;  
The glory which I now can see Which makes my soul in haste to be  
In Jesus Christ the apple tree With Jesus Christ the apple tree.

For happiness I long have sought, ‘Tis found in Christ the apple tree.  
And pleasure dearly I have bought: I missed of all; but now I see  
I’m weary with my former toil,  
Here I will sit and rest awhile:  
Under the shadow I will be,  
Of Jesus Christ the apple tree.

music: Elizabeth Poston (1905-1987)  
text: anonymous

1:1-15
The prophet foretells the coming of the Savior.

Carol, “Unto Us Is Born A Son”

music: Tune from Piae Cantiones, 1582, arr. David Willcocks (1919-2015)

Unto us is born a Son.
Of his love and mercy mild
King of quires supernal:
This the Christmas story;
See on earth his life begun,
And O that Mary’s gentle Child
Of lords the Lord eternal.
Might lead us up to glory.

Christ, from heav’n descending low,
O and A, and A and O,
Comes on earth a stranger;
Cum cantibus in chora,
Ox and ass their owner know,
Let our merry organ go,
Be cradled in the manger.
Benedicamus Domino.

This did Herod sore affray,
This the Christmas story;
And grievously bewilder,
And O that Mary’s gentle Child
So he gave the word to slay,
Might lead us up to glory.
And slew the little childer.

St. John the Forerunner prepares the way of the Lord.

Hymn 65, “Prepare the Way, O Zion”

music: Bereden väg för Herran, melody from Then Swenska Psalmboken, 1697;
harm. Koralbok för Svenska Kyrkan, 1939, alt.
text: Frans Mikael Franzen (1772-1847); tr. Composite; adapt. Charles P. Price (1920-1999)

1 Prepare the way, O Zion, your Christ is drawing near!
2 He brings God’s rule, O Zion; he comes from heaven above.
3 Fling wide your gates, O Zion; your Savior’s rule embrace.

Let every hill and valley a level way appear.
His rule is peace and freedom, and justice, truth, and love.
His tidings of salvation proclaim in every place.

Greet One who comes in glory, foretold in sacred story.
Lift high your praise resounding, for grace and joy abound.
All lands will bow before him, their voices will adore him.

Refrain

Oh, blest is Christ that came in God’s most holy name.
FOURTH LESSON

LUKE 1:26-38
read by Jennifer Gibbs

The Angel Gabriel announces to the Virgin Mary that she will bear the Son of the Most High.

Carol, “The angel Gabriel from heaven came”

music: Gabriel’s Message, Basque carol; harm. Edgar Pettman (1865-1943)
text: Basque carol; para. Sabine Baring-Gould (1834-1924)

The angel Gabriel from heaven came, his wings as drifted snow, his eyes as flame; ‘All hail,’ said he, ‘thou lowly maiden Mary, most highly favored lady,’ Gloria!

Then gentle Mary meekly bowed her head, ‘To me be as it pleaseth God,’ she said, ‘my soul shall laud and magnify his holy Name.’ Most highly favored lady, Gloria!

Of her, Emmanuel, the Christ, was born in Bethlehem, all on a Christmas morn, and Christian folk throughout the world will ever say— ‘Most highly favored lady,’ Gloria!

FIFTH LESSON

LUKE 2:8-16
read by Dr. Patrick A. Scott

The Shepherds go to the manger.

Carol, “Away in a manger”

text: Traditional Carol

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.

The cattle are lowing, the baby awakes, but little Lord Jesus no crying he makes. I love thee, Lord Jesus! Look down from the sky, and stay by my side until morning is nigh.

Be near me, Lord Jesus; I ask thee to stay close by me for ever, and love me I pray. Bless all the dear children in thy tender care, and fit us for heaven to live with thee there.
SIXTH LESSON

MATTHEW 2:1-11
read by Bronwyn Saatkamp

The wise men are led by a star to Jesus.

Carol, “Three Great Kings”
text: Traditional French Carol

Three great Kings I met at early morn,
With all their retinue were slowly marching;
Three great Kings I met at early morn,
Were on their way to meet the newly-born.

And valiant warriors to guard the royal treasure,
With gifts of gold brought from far away,
Their shields all shining in their bright array.

SEVENTH LESSON

JOHN 1:1-14
read by The Rev. Ollie V. Rencher

St. John unfolds the great mystery of the Incarnation.

Carol, “Of the Father’s heart begotten”
music: Divinum mysterium, Sanctus trope, 11th cent; adapt. Piae Cantiones, 1582;
arr. David Willcocks (1919-2015)
text: Prudentius, b. 348; tr. R.F.D.

Of the Father’s heart begotten,  This is he, whom seer and sybil
Ere the world from chaos rose,  Sang in ages long gone by;
He is Alpha: from that Fountain  This is he of old revealed
All that is and hath been flows;  In the page of prophecy;
He is Omega, of all things  Lo! He comes, the promised Saviour;
Yet to come the mystic Close,  Let the world his praises cry!
Evermore and evermore.  refrain

By his word was all created;  Sing, ye heights of heav’n, his praises;
He commanded and ’twas done;  Angels and Archangels, sing!
Earth and sky and boundless ocean,  Wheresoe’er ye be, ye faithful,
Universe of three in one,  Let your joyous anthems ring,
All that sees the moon’s soft radiance,  Ev’ry tongue his name confessing,
All that breathes beneath the sun,  Countless voices answering,
refrain  refrain
The Final Prayers and Blessing

Almighty God, you make us glad with the yearly festival of the birth of your Son, Jesus Christ, the light of the world; grant that we, who have known the revelation of that light on earth, may see the radiance of your heavenly glory; through Jesus Christ our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God now and forever. Amen.

Welcome Jesus, our humble gentle Savior, welcome to Bethlehem, where we have loved and fought and longed for the peace the world can never give. We ask your peace, your love, your gentleness, and the courage to live that way. Amen.

May Christ, who by his Incarnation gathered into one things earthly and heavenly, fill you with his joy and peace; and the blessing of God Almighty, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit, be among you, and remain with you always. Amen.

Hymn 96, stanzas 1 & 3-4, “ANGELS WE HAVE HEARD ON HIGH”

music: Gloria, French carol; arr. Edward Shippen Barnes (1887-1958)
text: French carol; tr. Joanes Chadwick (1813-1882), alt.

The Rev. Ollie V. Rencher, Rector
The Rev. Laura F. Gettys, Associate Rector
The Rev. Anne S. Carriere, Priest Associate

Members of the Grace-St. Luke’s Choir
Canterbury Choir
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