

First Christian Reformed Church
Lynden, Washington
December 17, 2023 ~ 6:00 PM Worship Service
A Traditional Festival of Nine Lessons with Carols

CALL TO WORSHIP: Psalm 96

*Sing to the Lord a new song;
sing to the Lord, all the earth!
Sing to the Lord and bless God's name;
tell the good news of salvation from day to day.
Declare God's glory among the nations, God's marvelous works among all the peoples.
For great is the Lord, and greatly to be praised.
Let the heavens be glad, and let the earth rejoice.
Let the sea roar, and all that fills it; the world, and those who live in it.
Let the whole creation sing for joy at the presence of God, who is coming.
God is coming indeed, to judge the earth with righteousness, and the peoples with equity and truth.
Praise the Lord!*

OPENING HYMN: Once in Royal David's City

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

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 meek and lowly lived on earth our Savior holy.

For he is our childhood's pattern; day by day like us he grew;
He was little, weak, and helpless; tears and smiles like us he knew:
And he feels for all our sadness, and he shares in all our gladness.

And our eyes at last shall see Him, through His own redeeming love,
For that child, so dear and gentle, is our Lord in heaven above:
And He leads His children on to the place where He has gone.

Not in that poor lowly stable with the oxen standing by
We shall see him, but in heaven, set at God's right hand on high:
There his children gather round bright like stars, with glory crowned.

("Once in Royal David's City" words by Cecil F. Alexander (1848), tune by Henry J. Gauntlett (1849), descant by permission of Oxford University Press, Public Domain CCL1 #358926 Streaming License #2031793)

FIRST LESSON: Genesis 3:8-15, 17-19

Adam and Eve disobey God's command and disrupt the order and goodness of creation.

O Little Town of Bethlehem

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.

How silently, how silently, the wondrous gift is given!
So God imparts to human hearts the blessings of His heaven.
No ear may hear His coming, but in this world of sin,
Where meek souls will receive Him still, the dear Christ enters in.

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!

("O Little Town of Bethlehem" words by Margaret Clarkson, tune by Lewis H. Redner, Public Domain, CCL1# 358926 Streaming License #20317932)

SECOND LESSON: Genesis 22:15-18

God promises that, through Abraham, all the peoples of the world will be blessed.

O Come, O Come, Emmanuel

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

Refrain: Rejoice! Rejoice! Emmanuel, shall come to thee, O Israel!

O come, O come, great Lord of might, who to your tribes on Sinai's height
In ancient times did give the law in cloud and majesty and awe. *Refrain*

O come, O Branch of Jesse's stem, unto your own and rescue them!
From depths of hell your people save, and give them victory o'er the grave. *Refrain*

O come, O Key of David, come and open wide our heavenly home.
Make safe for us the heavenward road and bar the way to death's abode. *Refrain*

("O Come, O Come, Emmanuel" words Latin, 12th cent.; tr. composite, tune 15th century, adapted by Thomas Helmore (1854), Public Domain CCLI #358926 Streaming License #2031793)

THIRD LESSON: Isaiah 9:2, 6-7

The people who walk in darkness receive the promise of the Messiah.

It Came Upon the Midnight Clear

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, goodwill to men, from heaven's all gracious King."
The world in solemn stillness lay to hear the angels sing.

For lo, the days are hastening on, by prophets seen of old,
When, with the ever circling years, shall come the time foretold,
When the new heaven and earth shall own the Prince of Peace their King,
And the whole world send back the song which now the angels sing.

("It Came Upon a Midnight Clear" words by Edmund H. Sears, tune by Richard S. Willis, Public Domain CCLI #358926 Streaming License #2031793)

FOURTH LESSON: Isaiah 11:1-4a, 6-9

The Messiah will come from the root of Jesse to restore the peace of creation.

Lo, How a Rose E'er Blooming

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 flower bright, amid the cold of winter, when half-gone 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 to men a Savior, when half-gone was the night.

This flower, whose fragrance tender with sweetness fills the air,
Dispels with glorious splendor the darkness everywhere.
True man, yet very God, from sin and death He saves us and lightens every load.

("Lo, How a Rose E'er Blooming" words 15th century, st. 1-2 translated by Theodore Baker (1894), st. 3 translated by Gracia Grindal © 1978, Lutheran Book of Worship, Used by permission of Augsburg Publishing House, tune ES IST EIN ROS, harmony by Michael Praetorius (1609), Public Domain, CCLI #358926 Streaming License #2031793)

FIFTH LESSON: Luke 1:26-35, 38

An angel appears to Mary and announces that she will bear a holy child.

Hark! The Herald Angels Sing

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 angelic hosts proclaim, "Christ is born in Bethlehem."
Hark! the herald angels sing, "Glory to the newborn King."

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

Hark! the herald angels sing, "Glory to the newborn King."

("Hark! The Herald Angels Sing" words by Charles Wesley, tune by Felix Mendelssohn, © Public Domain, descant by descant by Paul Liljestrand © 1976 Paragon Associates, Inc., CCLI #358926, Streaming License #20317932)

SIXTH LESSON: *Luke 2:1-7*

Joseph and Mary travel to Bethlehem, where Mary gives birth to her child.

Away in a Manger

Away in a manger no crib for a bed;
The little Lord Jesus lay down His sweet head.
The stars in the sky looked down where He lay;
The little Lord Jesus asleep on the hay.

The cattle are lowing, the baby awakes,
The 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 forever, and love me, I pray.
Bless all the dear children in Thy tender care;
And fit us for heaven, to live with Thee there.

("Away in Manger" stanza 3 words by John Thomas McFarland music by William J. Kirkpatrick, Public Domain CCLI #358926 Streaming License #20317932)

SEVENTH LESSON: *Luke 2:8-16*

Angels appear to shepherds in the fields and announce the birth of the Messiah.

God Rest Ye Merry, Gentlemen

God rest ye merry, gentlemen, let nothing you dismay,
Remember Christ our Savior was born on Christmas Day
To save us all from Satan's power when we were gone astray.

Refrain: O tidings of comfort and joy, comfort and joy;
O tidings of comfort and joy.

From God our heavenly Father a blessed angel came;
And unto certain shepherds brought tidings of the same;
How that in Bethlehem was born the Son of God by name. *Refrain*

The shepherds at those tidings rejoiced much in mind,
And left their flocks a-feeding in tempest, storm and wind,
And went to Bethl'em straightaway this blessed Babe to find. *Refrain*

But when to Bethlehem they came where our dear Savior lay,
They found Him in a manger where oxen feed on hay;
His mother Mary kneeling unto the Lord did pray. *Refrain*

("God Rest Ye Merry, Gentlemen" English carol, 18th cent., tune Traditional English melody, Public Domain CCLI #358926 Streaming License #2031793)

EIGHTH LESSON: *Matthew 2:1-11*

Magi from the East come seeking the Messiah and offer gifts to the baby Jesus.

We Three Kings of Orient Are

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.

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

Frankincense to offer have I, incense owns a Deity nigh;
Prayer and praising all men raising, worship Him, God on high. *Refrain*

Myrrh is mine, its bitter perfume breathes a life of gathering gloom:
Sorrowing, sighing, bleeding, dying, sealed in the stonecold tomb. *Refrain*

("We Three Kings of Orient Are" words and tune by John H. Hopkins, Jr., ©Public Domain CCLI #358926 Streaming License #2031793)

Offering: ThereforeGo Ministries

NINTH LESSON: *John 1:1-14*

The Word of God becomes flesh and lives among us, full of grace and truth.

Silent Night, Holy Night

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, shepherds quake at the sight.
Glories stream from heaven afar, heavenly hosts sing alleluia;
Christ, the Savior, is born! Christ, the Savior, is born!

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, 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!

("Silent Night" words st. 1, 3-4, Joseph Mohr (1818) trans. John F. Young (1863), st. 2 Henrietta Ten Hornel (1984), tune by Franz Gruber (1818), Public Domain CCLI #358926 Streaming License #2031793)

GOD'S BLESSING

CLOSING HYMN

Joy to the World!

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.

Joy to the world! The Savior reigns; let men their songs employ.
While fields and floods, rocks, hills and plains, repeat the sounding joy,
Repeat the sounding joy, repeat, repeat the sounding joy.

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.

("Joy to the World" words by Isaac Watts (1719), tune by Lowell Mason (1848), Public Domain CCLI #358926 Streaming License #2031793)

Pastor and Readers: Robert W and First CRC Elders

Music: Lee VB

Offering will be received for ThereforeGo Ministries, a Christ-centered ministry that supports local churches in their youth ministry efforts across the United States and Canada. For more information, visit thereforego.com
An assistive listening system is available in the sanctuary; to use this system, switch hearing aids to "T".

*First Christian Reformed Church - 1010 Front St. Lynden, WA 98264
360.354.4560 info@firstcrclinden.org www.firstcrclinden.org*