A Service of Lessons & Carols

at

First United Methodist Church

December 28<sup>th</sup>, 2025

10:30 am

Welcome to our Service of Lessons and Carols. This cherished form of worship weaves together Scripture and song to tell the story of God's redeeming love—from humanity's first longing for salvation to the birth of Jesus Christ. Through nine readings and the carols that accompany them, we are invited to listen, to sing, and to enter once again into the mystery and joy of the Christmas story.

The tradition of Lessons and Carols began in 1880 in Truro, England, as a way to offer hope and spiritual renewal during a difficult season for the community. It was later shaped into the service we know today by King's College, Cambridge, where it has been offered every Christmas Eve since 1918. Over the years, churches around the world have embraced this model of worship for its beauty, simplicity, and ability to draw people of all ages into the story of God's grace.

As we hear these ancient words and beloved melodies, may they open our hearts to the presence of Christ, who continues to bring light into every darkness.

We are grateful you are here. May this time of worship be a blessing to you and to all who gather.

### **Serving in Worship Today**

Reverend Casey Bradley, Pastor

Leslie Bauer, Organist

Carolyn McMaster, Choir Director

Randall Wilson, Worship Technology

Gathering

Processional Hymn

"Once in Royal David's City"

Words: Cecil Frances Alexander Music: Henry J Gauntlett

**United Methodist** Hymnal #250

Rev. Casey Bradley

Rev. Casey Bradley

The Bidding Prayer

The Lord's Prayer

Our Creator, Redeemer, Sustainer, 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.

The 1st Lesson **Genesis 3:8-15**  During that day's cool evening breeze, they heard the sound of the Lord God walking in the garden; and the man and his wife hid themselves from the Lord God in the middle of the garden's trees. The Lord God called to the man and said to him, "Where are you?"

The man replied, "I heard your sound in the garden; I was afraid because I was naked, and I hid myself."

He said, "Who told you that you were naked? Did you eat from the tree, which I commanded you not to eat?"

The man said, "The woman you gave me, she gave me some fruit from the tree, and I ate."

The Lord God said to the woman, "What have you done?!" And the woman said, "The snake tricked me, and I ate."

The Lord God said to the snake, "Because you did this, you are the one cursed out of all the farm animals, out of all the wild animals. On your belly you will crawl, and dust you will eat every day of your life. I will put contempt between you and the woman, between your offspring and hers. Common English Bible

Read By: Rev. Casey Bradley They will strike your head, but you will strike at their heels."

Carol

# "Come, Thou Long Expected Jesus"

Words: Charles Wesley
Music: Rowland H. Prichard (harmony from *The English Hymnal*)

United Methodist Hymnal #196

The 2<sup>nd</sup> Lesson Genesis 22:1-5, 9-18

After these things God tested Abraham. He said to him, "Abraham!" And he said, "Here I am." He said, "Take your son, your only son Isaac, whom you love, and go to the land of Moriah and offer him there as a burnt offering on one of the mountains that I shall show you." So Abraham rose early in the morning, saddled his donkey, and took two of his young men with him and his son Isaac; he cut the wood for the burnt offering and set out and went to the place in the distance that God had shown him. On the third day Abraham looked up and saw the place far away. Then Abraham said to his young men, "Stay here with the donkey; the boy and I will go over there; we will worship, and then we will come back to you."

New Revised Standard Version, Updated Edition

Read By: Dick Miller

When they came to the place that God had shown him, Abraham built an altar there and laid the wood in order. He bound his son Isaac and laid him on the altar on top of the wood. Then Abraham reached out his hand and took the knife to kill his son. But the angel of the Lord called to him from heaven and said, "Abraham, Abraham!" And he said, "Here I am." He said, "Do not lay your hand on the boy or do anything to him, for now I know that you fear God, since you have not withheld your son, your only son, from me." And Abraham looked up and saw a ram, caught in a thicket by its horns. Abraham went and took the ram and offered it up as a burnt offering instead of his son. So Abraham called that place "The Lord will provide," as it is said to this day, "On the mount of the Lord it shall be provided."

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

## "O Come, O Come, Emmanuel"

Words: Stanzas 1 & 3 – 9<sup>th</sup> Century Latin Translation, Stanza 2 – Henry Sloane Coffin, Stanza 4 – Laurence Hull Stookey

Music: 15<sup>th</sup> Century French; arrangement and harmony by Thomas Helmore

United Methodist Hymnal #211 Stanzas 1-4

Version, Updated

Read By: Dick Miller

Edition

New Revised Standard

The 3<sup>rd</sup> Lesson Isaiah 40:1-8

Comfort, O comfort my people,

says your God.

Speak tenderly to Jerusalem,

and cry to her

that she has served her term,

that her penalty is paid,

that she has received from the Lord's hand

double for all her sins.

A voice cries out:

"In the wilderness prepare the way of the Lord;

make straight in the desert a highway for our God.

Every valley shall be lifted up,

and every mountain and hill be made low;

the uneven ground shall become level,

and the rough places a plain.

Then the glory of the Lord shall be revealed,

and all flesh shall see it together,

for the mouth of the Lord has spoken."

A voice says, "Cry out!"

And I said, "What shall I cry?"

All flesh is grass;

their constancy is like the flower of the field.

The grass withers; the flower fades,

when the breath of the Lord blows upon it;

surely the people are grass.

The grass withers; the flower fades,

but the word of our God will stand forever.

Carol

Comfort All Ye My People

Words and Music: Gabriel Fauré Arrangement: Hal H. Hopson

The 4th Lesson Micah 5:2-4

As for you, Bethlehem of Ephrathah,

though you are the least significant of Judah's forces,

one who is to be a ruler in Israel on my behalf will come

out from you.

His origin is from remote times, from ancient days.

Therefore, he will give them up

until the time when she who is in labor gives birth.

The rest of his kin will return to the people of Israel.

He will stand and shepherd his flock in the strength of the

Lord,

Sanctuary Choir

Common English Bible

Read By: Alan Franks

in the majesty of the name of the Lord his God.

They will dwell secure,

because he will surely become great throughout the earth.

Carol

#### "O Little Town of Bethlehem"

Words: Phillips Brooks Music: Lewis H. Redner United Methodist Hymnal #230

The Message

The 5<sup>th</sup> Lesson Zechariah 9:9-10 "Shout and cheer, Daughter Zion! Raise your voice, Daughter Jerusalem!

Read By: Alan Franks

Your king is coming!

a good king who makes all things right,

a humble king riding a donkey,

a mere colt of a donkey.

I've had it with war—no more chariots in Ephraim,

no more war horses in Jerusalem,

no more swords and spears, bows and arrows.

He will offer peace to the nations,

a peaceful rule worldwide,

from the four winds to the seven seas.

Carol

#### "Blessed Be the God of Israel"

Words: Michael Perry Music: Hal H. Hopson United Methodist Hymnal # 209

The 6<sup>th</sup> Lesson Luke 1:26-38 When Elizabeth was six months pregnant, God sent the angel Gabriel to Nazareth, a city in Galilee, to a virgin who was engaged to a man named Joseph, a descendant of David's house. The virgin's name was Mary. When the angel came to her, he said, "Rejoice, favored one! The Lord is with you!" She was confused by these words and wondered what kind of greeting this might be. The angel said, "Don't be afraid, Mary. God is honoring you. Look! You will conceive and give birth to a son, and you will name him Jesus. He will be great and he will be called the Son of the Most High. The Lord God will give him the throne of David his father. He will rule over Jacob's house forever, and there will be no end to his kingdom."

Common English Bible

Read By: Charles Sherrard

Then Mary said to the angel, "How will this happen since I haven't had sexual relations with a man?"

The angel replied, "The Holy Spirit will come over you and the power of the Most High will overshadow you. Therefore, the one who is to be born will be holy. He will be called God's Son. Look, even in her old age, your relative Elizabeth has conceived a son. This woman who was labeled 'unable to conceive' is now six months pregnant. Nothing is impossible for God."

Then Mary said, "I am the Lord's servant. Let it be with me just as you have said." Then the angel left her.

Carol

### "My Soul Gives Glory to My God"

Words: Miriam Therese Winter

Music: Wyeth's Repository of Sacred Music, Part Second (harmony by Charles H. Webb)

United Methodist Hymnal #198

The 7<sup>th</sup> Lesson Matthew 1:18-23 Now the birth of Jesus the Messiah took place in this way. When his mother Mary had been engaged to Joseph, but before they lived together, she was found to be pregnant from the Holy Spirit. Her husband Joseph, being a righteous man and unwilling to expose her to public disgrace, planned to divorce her quietly. But just when he had resolved to do this, an angel of the Lord appeared to him in a dream and said, "Joseph, son of David, do not be afraid to take Mary as your wife, for the child conceived in her is from the Holy Spirit. She will bear a son, and you are to name him Jesus, for he will save his people from their sins." All this took place to fulfill what had been spoken by the Lord through the prophet:

New Revised Standard Version, Updated Edition

> Read By: Charles Sherrard

"Look, the virgin shall become pregnant and give birth to a son,

and they shall name him Emmanuel," which means, "God is with us."

Carol

# "God Rest You Merry, Gentlemen"

Words: Traditional English Carol Music: Traditional English Melody Music on Last Page of Worship Order

The 8<sup>th</sup> Lesson Luke 2:8-16

Nearby shepherds were living in the fields, guarding their sheep at night. The Lord's angel stood before them, the Lord's glory shone around them, and they were terrified. The angel said, "Don't be afraid! Look! I bring good news to you—wonderful, joyous news for all people. Your savior is born today in David's city. He is Christ the Lord. This is a sign for you: you will find a newborn baby wrapped snugly and lying in a manger." Suddenly a great assembly of the heavenly forces was with the angel praising God. They said, "Glory to God in heaven, and on earth peace among those whom he favors."

Common English Bible

Read By: Rev. Casey Bradley When the angels returned to heaven, the shepherds said to each other, "Let's go right now to Bethlehem and see what's happened. Let's confirm what the Lord has revealed to us." They went quickly and found Mary and Joseph, and the baby lying in the manger.

Carol

Good Christian Men, Rejoice
Arrangement: Larry Sue

Leslie Bauer and Rachel Hansen

The 9<sup>th</sup> Lesson Matthew 2:1-11 In the time of King Herod, after Jesus was born in Bethlehem of Judea, magi from the east came to Jerusalem, asking, "Where is the child who has been born king of the Jews? For we observed his star in the east 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:

New Revised Standard Version, Updated Edition

Read By: Rev. Casey Bradley

'And you, Bethlehem, in the land of Judah, are by no means least among the rulers of Judah, for from you shall come a ruler who is to shepherd my people Israel.'"

Then Herod secretly called for the magi 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 in the east, 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 down and paid him homage. Then, opening their treasure chests, they offered him gifts of gold, frankincense, and myrrh.

Carol

"We Three Kings"
Words and Music: John H. Hopkins

United Methodist Hymnal #254

The Offering

"Away in a Manger"

Music: William J. Kirkpatrick

Setting: Wilbur Held

Postlude

## "God Rest You Merry"

Arrangement: Wilbur Held



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# God Rest You Merry, Gentlemen 305



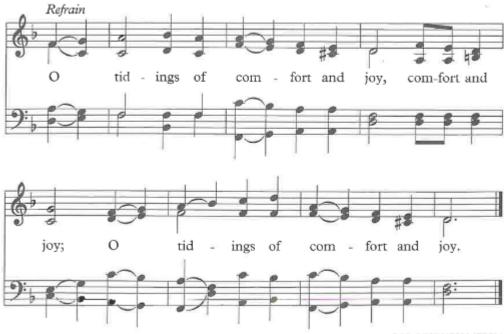
- 1. God rest you mer ry, gen-tle-men, let noth-ing you dis may,
- 2. In Beth le hem in Ju dah this bless-ed babe was born,
- 3. From God our heaven-ly Fa ther a bless-ed an gel came,
- 4. The shep-herds at those tid ings re joic ed much in mind,
- 5. Now to the Lord sing prais es, all you with in this place,



for Je - sus Christ our Sav - ior was born up - on this day, and laid with - in a man - ger up - on this bless - ed morn: and un - to cer - tain shep - herds brought tid - ings of the same, and left their flocks a - feed - ing in tem-pest, storm, and wind, and with true love and broth-er-hood each oth - er now em-brace;



to save us all from Sa - tan's power when we were gone a - stray. for which his moth-er Ma - ry did noth-ing take in scorn. how that in Beth-le - hem was born the Son of God by name. and went to Beth-le - hem straight-way, the bless-ed babe to find. this ho - ly tide of Christ - mas all oth-ers doth de - face.



WORDS: Traditional English carol, 18th cent. MUSIC: Traditional English melody GOD REST YOU MERRY Jrr. with Refrain