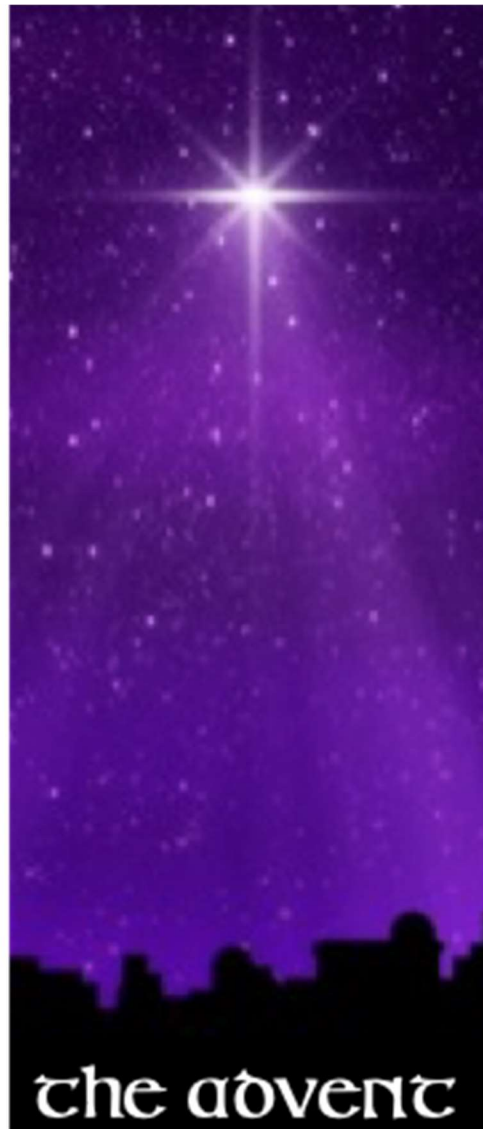


Advent 2- Year A
Dec 4, 2022
Christ Episcopal Church
Towanda, Pa.
Rev. Betsy W. Sentigar

Advent Service of Lessons and Carols



the advent
of the
messiah

Concerning This Service

THE FESTIVAL of Lessons and Carols was first held on Christmas Eve in 1918. A revision of the Order of Service was made in 1919, involving rearrangement of the lessons. In almost every year some carols have been changed and some new ones added. The backbone of the service, the lessons and the prayers, has remained virtually unchanged.

The original service was, in fact, adapted from an Order drawn up by E.W. Benson, later Archbishop of Canterbury, for use in the wooden shed, which then served as his cathedral in Truro, at 10 p.m. on Christmas Eve 1880. A.C. Benson recalled: "My father arranged from ancient sources a little service for Christmas Eve — nine carols and nine tiny lessons, which were read by various officers of the Church, beginning with a chorister, and ending, through the different grades, with the Bishop."

Almost immediately other churches adapted the service for their own use. A wider frame began to grow when the service was first broadcast in 1928. It is estimated that there are millions of listeners worldwide.

Wherever the service is heard and however it is adapted the main theme is the development of the loving purposes of God seen through the windows and words of the Bible. The center of the service is still found by those who consent to follow where the great story of salvation leads. This version is marked by the anticipatory hope of the season of Advent.

Behold, a virgin shall conceive, and bear a son, and shall call his name Immanuel. Isaiah 7:14

Prelude: "Let Us All With Gladsome Voice" Metzgar

Bidding Prayer:

Dear People of God: In the season of Advent, it is our responsibility and joy to prepare ourselves to hear once more the message of the Angels, to go even to Bethlehem and see the Son of God lying in a manger. Let us hear and heed in Holy Scripture the story of the 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 look forward to the yearly remembrance of his birth with hymns and songs of praise. But first, let us pray for the needs of the whole world; for peace and justice on the 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 the unloved; the aged and the little children; as well as 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 whom, in Jesus, we are one for evermore.

Lighting the Advent Wreath

A man John was sent from God. He came as a witness to testify concerning the light, so through him everyone would believe the light. John 1:6-7

As we light the first two candles of the Advent Wreath, we welcome the prophets who shine your light in the world. Help us get ready to welcome Jesus once again.

Opening Hymn 65 Prepare The Way O Zion

1 Prepare the way, O Zion; your Christ is drawing near!
Let every hill and valley a level way appear.
Greet One who comes in glory, foretold in sacred story.
O, blest is Christ that came in God's most holy name.

2 He brings God's rule, O Zion; he comes from heaven above.
His rule is peace and freedom, and justice, truth and love.
Lift high your praise resounding, for grace and joy abounding.
O, blest is Christ that came in God's most holy name.

3 Fling wide your gates, O Zion; your Savior's rule embrace.
His tidings of salvation proclaim in every place.
All lands will bow before him, their voices will adore him.
O, blest is Christ that came in God's most holy name.

The Collect of the Day

Celebrant: The Lord be with you.

People: And also with you.

Celebrant: Let us pray. *The Celebrant says the Collect of the Day,*

Advent 2: Merciful God, who sent your messengers the prophets to preach repentance and prepare the way for our salvation: Give us grace to heed their warnings and forsake our sins, that we may greet with joy the coming of Jesus Christ our Redeemer; who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and fore ever. Amen.

The First Lesson - Zephaniah 3:14-18

God is in our midst and gives us victory

¹⁴Sing aloud, O daughter of Zion; shout, O Israel!

Rejoice and exult with all your heart, O daughter of Jerusalem!

¹⁵The Lord has taken away the judgments against you, he has cast out your enemies.

The King of Israel, the Lord, is in your midst; you shall fear evil no more.

¹⁶On that day it shall be said to Jerusalem: "Do not fear, O Zion; let not your hands grow weak.

¹⁷The Lord your God is in your midst, a warrior who gives victory; he will rejoice over you with gladness, he will renew you in his love; he will exult over you with loud singing

¹⁸as on a day of festival.

"I will remove disaster from you, so that you will not bear reproach for it.

Hymn 66 (verses 1, 2 & 3) *Come Thou Long Expected Jesus*

1 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.

2 Israel's strength and consolation, hope of all the earth thou art; dear desire of every nation, joy of every longing heart.

3 Born thy people to deliver, born a child, and yet a King, born to reign in us forever, now thy gracious kingdom bring.

The Second Lesson - Jeremiah 23:5-8

God will raise up a king who will rule wisely and righteously

⁵“Behold, the days are coming, says the Lord, when I will raise up for David a righteous Branch, and he shall reign as king and deal wisely, and shall execute justice and righteousness in the land. ⁶In his days Judah will be saved, and Israel will dwell securely. And this is the name by which he will be called: ‘The Lord is our righteousness.’ ⁷

“Therefore, behold, the days are coming, says the Lord, when men shall no longer say, ‘As the Lord lives who brought up the people of Israel out of the land of Egypt,’ ⁸ but ‘As the Lord lives who brought up and led the descendants of the house of Israel out of the north country and out of all the countries where he had driven them.’ Then they shall dwell in their own land.”

Hymn 401 The God Of Abraham Praise

1. The God of Abraham Praise who reigns enthroned above; Ancient of everlasting days, and God of love; the Lord the great I AM, by earth and heaven confessed; we bow and bless the sacred Name for ever blest.
2. The God who reigns on high, the great archangels sing, and “Holy, holy, holy” cry “Almighty King! Who was, and is, the same, and evermore shall be; eternal Father great I AM, we worship thee.

Canticle: The Song of Mary The Third Lesson - Isaiah 7:10-15

Promise of a child to be conceived to be known as “God with us”

¹⁰ Again the Lord spoke to Ahaz, ¹¹“Ask a sign of the Lord your God; let it be deep as Sheol or high as heaven.” ¹² But Ahaz said, “I will not ask, and I will not put the Lord to the test.” ¹³ And he said, “Hear then, O house of David! Is it too little for you to weary men, that you weary my God also? ¹⁴ Therefore the Lord himself will give you a sign. Behold, a young woman shall conceive and bear a son, and shall call his name Imman’u-el. ¹⁵ He shall eat curds and honey when he knows how to refuse the evil and choose the good.

Hymn 56 *O Come, O Come, Emmanuel*

3 O come, O come, thou Lord of might, who to thy tribes on Sinai's height in ancient times didst give the law in cloud and majesty and awe.

Refrain: Rejoice! Rejoice! Emmanuel shall come to you, O Israel.

4 O come thou Branch of Jesse's tree, free them from Satan's tyranny! that trust thy mighty power to save, and give them vict'ry o'er the grave.

Refrain: Rejoice! Rejoice! Emmanuel shall come to you, O Israel.

The Fourth Lesson - Micah 5:2-4

The One who is to rule Israel will be born in Bethlehem

² But you, O Bethlehem Eph'rathah, who are little to be among the clans of Judah, from you shall come forth for me one who is to be ruler in Israel, whose origin is from of old, from ancient days. ³ Therefore he shall give them up until the time when she who is in travail has brought forth; then the rest of his brethren shall return to the people of Israel. ⁴ And he shall stand and feed his flock in the strength of the Lord, in the majesty of the name of the Lord his God. And they shall dwell secure, for now he shall be great to the ends of the earth.

Hymn 76 *On Jordan's Bank*

1 On Jordan's bank the Baptist's cry announces that the Lord is nigh; awake and hearken, for he brings glad tidings of the King of kings.

2 Then cleansed be every breast from sin; make straight the way for God within, and let each heart prepare a home where such a mighty guest may come.

3 For thou art our salvation, Lord, our refuge and our great reward; without thy grace we waste away like flowers that wither and decay.

The Fifth Lesson - Jeremiah 31:31-34

A new covenant is promised which will be written in our hearts ³¹“Behold, the days are coming, says the Lord, when I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel and the house of Judah, ³² not like the covenant which I made with their fathers when I took them by the hand to bring them out of the land of Egypt, my covenant which they broke, though I was their husband, says the Lord. ³³ But this is the covenant which I will make with the house of Israel after those days, says the Lord: I will put my law within them, and I will write it upon their hearts; and I will be their God, and they shall be my people. ³⁴ And no longer shall each man teach his neighbor and each his brother, saying, ‘Know the Lord,’ for they shall all know me, from the least of them to the greatest, says the Lord; for I will forgive their iniquity, and I will remember their sin no more.”

Hymn 72 *Hark The Glad Sound*

1 Hark, the glad sound! the Savior comes, the Savior promised long: let every heart prepare a throne, and every voice a song.

2 He comes, the prisoners to release in Satan's bondage held; the gates of brass before him burst, the iron fetters yield.

3 He comes, the broken heart to bind, the bleeding soul to cure; and with the treasures of his grace to enrich the humble poor.

4 Our glad hosannas, Prince of Peace, thy welcome shall proclaim; and heaven's eternal arches ring with thy beloved Name.

The Sixth Lesson - Romans 1:1-7

The Good News of Jesus Christ who was descended from David ¹ Paul, a servant of Jesus Christ, called to be an apostle, set apart for the gospel of God ² which he promised beforehand through his prophets in the holy scriptures, ³ the gospel concerning his Son, who was descended from David according to the flesh ⁴ and designated Son of God in power according to the Spirit of holiness by his resurrection from the dead, Jesus Christ our Lord, ⁵ through whom we have received grace and apostleship to bring about the obedience of faith for the sake of his name among all the nations, ⁶ including yourselves who are called to belong to Jesus Christ; ⁷ To all God's beloved in Rome, who are called to be saints: Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.

Hymn 616 *Hail To The Lord's Anointed*

1. Hail to the Lord's Anointed, great David's greater Son! Hail, in the time appointed, his reign on earth begun! He come to break oppression, to set the captive free; to take away transgressions, and rule in equity.

4. O'er every foe victorious, he on his throne shall rest; from age to age more glorious, all blessing and all blest: the tide of time shall never his covenant remove; his Name shall stand for ever, his changeless Name of Love.

At the Announcement of the Gospel, the People say: "Glory to you, Lord Christ."

✠ The Holy Gospel ✠ *Matthew 3:1-12*

¹ In those days came John the Baptist, preaching in the wilderness of Judea, ² "Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand." ³ For this is he who was spoken of by the prophet Isaiah when he said, "The voice of one crying in the wilderness: Prepare the way of the Lord, make his paths straight." ⁴ Now John wore a garment of

camel's hair, and a leather girdle around his waist; and his food was locusts and wild honey. ⁵ Then went out to him Jerusalem and all Judea and all the region about the Jordan, ⁶ and they were baptized by him in the river Jordan, confessing their sins. ⁷ But when he saw many of the Pharisees and Sadducees coming for baptism, he said to them, "You brood of vipers! Who warned you to flee from the wrath to come? ⁸ Bear fruit that befits repentance, ⁹ and do not presume to say to yourselves, 'We have Abraham as our father'; for I tell you, God is able from these stones to raise up children to Abraham. ¹⁰ Even now the axe is laid to the root of the trees; every tree therefore that does not bear good fruit is cut down and thrown into the fire. ¹¹ "I baptize you with water for repentance, but he who is coming after me is mightier than I, whose sandals I am not worthy to carry; he will baptize you with the Holy Spirit and with fire. ¹² His winnowing fork is in his hand, and he will clear his threshing floor and gather his wheat into the granary, but the chaff he will burn with unquenchable fire."

At the conclusion of the reading, the People say: "Praise to you, Lord Christ."

The Peace *Reach out to someone today to share God's peace.*

THE HOLY COMMUNION

Offertory Sentence

376/377

Offertory – "Carol For Advent" Larry and Maurine

Presentation of the Offering *Hymn 380 verse 3*

The Lord's Prayer (Traditional)

364

The Invitation - *You are welcome to come to God's altar for Holy Communion!*

Communion Music – Organ Meditation "Let All Mortal Flesh Keep Silence" Caston

Post Communion Hymn 54 *Savior Of The Nations Come!*

1 Savior of the nations, come! Virgin's Son, make here your home. Marvel now, both heaven and earth, that the Lord chose such a birth.

4 Come, O Father's saving Son, who o'er sin the victory won. Boundless shall your kingdom be; grant that we its glories see.

The Blessing

Closing Hymn 59 *Hark! A Thrilling Voice Is Sounding*

3 Lo! The Lamb, so long expected, comes with pardon down from heaven; let us haste, with tears of sorrow, one and all to be forgiven.

4 So when next he comes with glory, and the world is wrapped in fear, may he with his mercy shield us, and with words of love draw near.

Dismissal

Postlude “*How Bright Shineth The Day Star*” - Dupré

Altar Guild – Melina Lundy & Hilary Haight

Ushers – Jim & Hilary Haight

Notes

Please join us for coffee hour today following the service.

Be sure to sign up for names to be read at the altar Christmas Eve. The forms are at the usher station. Cash or a check to help offset the purchase of poinsettias may be left in the offering plate. If donating by check, you can write either “Flowers” or “Poinsettias” on the memo line.

**BISHOP KEVIN NICHOLS WILL BE COMING TO CHRIST CHURCH ON
DECEMBER 10, 2022 AT 11:00 AM TO ORDAIN THE REV. BETSY
SENTIGAR TO THE HOLY ORDER OF THE PRIESTHOOD.**

The sign up sheet for the Christmas dinner at Villa Sena on Wednesday December 14 will be on the table in the parish hall.

We are supporting Grace Connection again this year with gift cards for needy families. The tree is in the back of the church - each ornament names a store where a gift card can be purchased. The gift cards need to be at the church no later than next Sunday, December 11. Thank you!

Today at 3pm, the Wyalusing Adult Band will be presenting the 53rd Winter concert in the Wyalusing HS Auditorium. Free and all are invited.

Friday December 9 at 7pm the Troy Town Band will be presenting the Christmas concert in the Troy Memorial Auditorium. Free and all are invited.

Hanging of the Greens December 18th

**One Service Christmas Eve, December 24th
Holy Eucharist - 10:30 pm**