

# CENTRAL UNITED METHODIST CHURCH

801 S Hayne Street | Monroe, NC 28112

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## *Lessons & Carols*



Fourth Sunday of Advent  
December 24, 2023 | 10:00 a.m.



# *Let Us Sing of Our Savior's Birth!*

† Please stand in body or spirit. | UMH - United Methodist Hymnal | Congregational responses in **bold**.

## PRELUDE

*'Es ist ein Ros entsprungen*  
Nathan Clements, organ

Johannes Brahms

## WELCOME

The Lord be with you!  
**And also with you!**

Rev. Sigrid Mottram

## ANNOUNCEMENTS

## CHIMES OF THE HOLY TRINITY

## † OPENING CAROL

*Once in Royal David's City*

UMH 250

1. 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.
2. 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, the scorned, the lowly lived on earth our Savior holy.
3. Jesus 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 feeleth for our sadness, and he shareth in our gladness.
4. 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 is gone.

## LIGHTING OF THE FOURTH ADVENT CANDLE

The Jackson Hargett Family

Isaiah 9.6-7: "For a child has been born for us, a son 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."

**We light this candle as a symbol of the Prince of Peace. May the visitation of your Holy Spirit, O God, make us ready for the coming of Jesus, our hope and joy.**

**O Come, O Come, Emmanuel!**

## THE BIDDING PRAYER

Rev. Lanny Lancaster

## THE LORD'S PRAYER

**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, forever. Amen**



## INVITATION TO OFFERING

### † DOXOLOGY

*Advent Doxology*

**Praise God from whom all blessings flow; Praise God all creatures here below;  
Praise God above ye heavenly hosts; Praise Father, Son, and Holy Ghost!  
Rejoice! Rejoice! Emmanuel, shall come to Thee O Israel.**

## PRAYER OF DEDICATION

### FIRST LESSON

*Genesis 3:8-15, 17-19*

Owen Apple

*God announces in the Garden of Eden Adam and Eve's punishment for their rebellion.*

They heard the sound of the LORD God walking in the garden at the time of the evening breeze, and the man and his wife hid themselves 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 myself." 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, and 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

*O Come, O Come, Emmanuel (stanzas 5-7)*

No. 211

5. O Come, thou Key of David, come, and open wide our heavenly home.  
The Captives from their prison free, and conquer death's deep misery.  
Rejoice! Rejoice! Emmanuel shall come to thee, O Israel.
6. O Come, thou Dayspring, come and cheer our spirits by thy justice here;  
Disperse the gloomy clouds of night, and death's dark shadows put to flight.  
Rejoice! Rejoice! Emmanuel shall come to thee, O Israel.
7. O come, Desire of nations bind all peoples in one heart and mind.  
From dust thou brought us forth in life; deliver us from earthly strife.  
Rejoice! Rejoice! Emmanuel shall come to thee, O Israel.

### SECOND LESSON

*Genesis 22:15-18*

Kayla Stewart

*God promises Abraham that by his descendants all nations of the earth shall obtain blessing.*

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."



1. Blessed be the God of Israel, who comes to set us free,  
who visits and redeems us, and grants us liberty.  
The prophets spoke of mercy, of freedom and release;  
God shall fulfill the promise to bring our people peace.
2. Now from the house of David a child of grace is given;  
a Savior comes among us to raise us up to heaven.  
Before him goes the herald, forerunner in the way,  
the prophet of salvation, the harbinger of day.
3. On prisoners of darkness the sun begins to rise,  
the dawning of forgiveness upon the sinner's eyes,  
to guide the feet of pilgrims along the paths of peace;  
O bless our God and Savior with songs that never cease!

## THIRD LESSON

*Isaiah 9:2, 6-7*

Kenny Brown

*The prophet announces the birth of a king to a people in darkness.*

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 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.

1. 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 men, from heaven's all-gracious King."  
The world in solemn stillness lay, to hear the angels sing.
2. Still through the cloven skies they come with peaceful wings unfurled,  
and still their heavenly music floats o'er all the weary world;  
above its sad and lowly plains, they bend on hovering wing,  
and ever o'er its Babel sounds the blessed angels sing.
3. 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!
4. 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 the whole world send back the song which now the angels sing.



## FOURTH LESSON

*Micah 5:2-5a*

Natalie Gordon

*The prophet Micah foretells the glory of Bethlehem.*

But you, O Bethlehem of Ephrathah, who are one of the little clans of Judah, from you shall come forth for me one who is to rule in Israel, whose origin is from of old, from ancient days. Therefore he shall give them up until the time when she who is in labor has brought forth; then the rest of his kindred shall return to the people of Israel. 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 live secure, for now he shall be great to the ends of the earth; and he shall be the one of peace.

## CAROL

*O Little Town of Bethlehem*

UMH 230

1. 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.
2. For Christ is born of Mary, and gathered all above,  
while mortals sleep, the angels keep their watch of wondering love.  
O morning stars together, proclaim the holy birth,  
and praises sing to God the King, and peace to all on earth!
3. 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.
4. 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!

## FIFTH LESSON

*Luke 1:26-35, 38*

Wils Childers

*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 Most High will overshadow you; therefore the child to be born<sup>ed</sup> will be holy; he will be called 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.

## CAROL

*What Child is This?*

No. 219

1. What child is this who, laid to rest, on Mary's lap is sleeping?  
Whom angels greet with anthems sweet, while shepherds watch are keeping?  
This, this is Christ the King, whom shepherds guard and angels sing;  
haste, haste to bring him laud, the babe, the son of Mary.



2. Why lies he in such mean estate where ox and ass are feeding?  
Good Christians, fear, for sinners here the silent Word is pleading.  
This, this is Christ the King, whom shepherds guard and angels sing;  
haste, haste to bring him laud, the babe, the son of Mary.
3. So bring him incense, gold, and myrrh, come, peasant, king, to own him;  
the King of kings salvation brings, let loving hearts enthrone him.  
This, this is Christ the King, whom shepherds guard and angels sing;  
haste, haste to bring him laud, the babe, the son of Mary.

## SIXTH LESSON

*Luke 2:1-7*

Caroline Hargett

*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. This was the first registration and was taken while Quirinius was governor of Syria. All went to their own towns to be registered. Joseph also went from the town of Nazareth in 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.

## SOLO

*In the Bleak Midwinter*

Lilly Ferguson

In the bleak midwinter, frosty wind made moan, earth stood hard as iron, water like a stone;  
snow had fallen, snow on snow, snow on snow, in the bleak midwinter, long ago. Our God,  
heaven cannot hold him, nor earth sustain; heaven and earth shall flee away when he comes  
to reign. In the bleak midwinter a stable place sufficed the Lord God Almighty, Jesus Christ.  
Angels and archangels may have gathered there, cherubim and seraphim thronged the air;  
but his mother only, in her maiden bliss, worshiped the beloved with a kiss. What can I give  
him, poor as I am? If I were a shepherd, I would bring a lamb; if I were a Wise Man, I would  
do my part; yet what I can I give him: give my heart.

## SEVENTH LESSON

*Luke 2:8-16*

Taylor Apple

*The Shepherds go to the manger.*

In that region there were shepherds living in the fields, keeping watch over 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,<sup>[1]</sup> 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

*Angels from the Realms of Glory*

No. 220

1. Angels from the realms of glory, wing your flight o'er all the earth;  
ye who sang creation's story now proclaim Messiah's birth:  
Come and worship, come and worship, worship Christ, the newborn king.
2. Shepherds, in the field abiding, watching o'er your flocks by night,  
God with us is now residing; yonder shines the infant light:  
Come and worship, come and worship, worship Christ, the newborn king.



3. Sages, leave your contemplations, brighter visions beam afar;  
seek the great Desire of nations; ye have seen his natal star:  
Come and worship, come and worship, worship Christ, the newborn king.
4. Saints, before the altar bending, watching long in hope and fear;  
suddenly the Lord, descending, in his temple shall appear:  
Come and worship, come and worship, worship Christ, the newborn king.

## EIGHTH LESSON

*Matthew 2:1-11*

Anna McGinnis

*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 rulers 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,<sup>[a]</sup> 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

*The First Noel*

UMH 245

1. The first Noel the angel 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.  
Noel, Noel, Noel, Noel, born is the King of Israel.
2. 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.  
Noel, Noel, Noel, Noel, born is the King of Israel.
3. And by the light of that same star three Wise Men came from country far;  
to seek for a king was their intent, and to follow the star wherever it went.  
Noel, Noel, Noel, Noel, born is the King of Israel.
4. This star drew nigh to the northwest, o'er Bethlehem it took its rest;  
and there it did both stop and stay, right over the place where Jesus lay.  
Noel, Noel, Noel, Noel, born is the King of Israel.
5. Then entered in those Wise Men three, full reverently upon the knee,  
and offered there, in his presence, their gold and myrrh and frankincense.  
Noel, Noel, Noel, Noel, born is the King of Israel.

## NINTH LESSON

*John 1:1-14*

Andrew Young

*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 in 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 the 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 himself 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,<sup>[E]</sup> and his own people did not accept him. But to all who received him, who believed in his name, he gave power to become children of God, who were born, not of blood or of the will of the flesh or of the will of man, but of God. And the Word became flesh and lived among us, and we have seen his glory, the glory as of a father's only son, full of grace and truth.

The Word of God for the people of God.  
**Thanks be to God.**

† CAROL

*Hark! the Herald Angels Sing*

UMH 240

1. Hark! the herald angels sing, "Glory to the new-born King;  
peace on earth, and mercy mild, God and sinners reconciled!"  
Joyful, all ye nations, rise, join the triumph of the skies;  
with th'angelic host proclaim, "Christ is born in Bethlehem!"  
Hark! the herald angels sing, "Glory to the new born King!"
2. Christ, by highest heaven adored; Christ, the everlasting Lord;  
late in time behold him come, offspring of a virgin's womb.  
Veiled in flesh the Godhead see; hail th' incarnate Deity,  
pleased with us in flesh to dwell, Jesus, our Emmanuel.  
Hark! the herald angels sing, "Glory to the new-born King!"
3. 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 we no more may die,  
born to raise us from the earth, born to give us second birth.  
Hark! the herald angels sing, "Glory to the new born King!"

† DISMISSAL WITH BLESSING

† POSTLUDE

*Toccata on "Angels We Have Heard on High"*

Richard Elliot

**Serving in Worship Today**

Rev. Lanny Lancaster | Rev. Sigrid Mottram

Music: Sung by Central Chancel Choir; Jamie Bryson, organist/director



*In 1880 E.W. Benson, then Anglican Bishop of Truro, England, composed a Festival of Nine Lessons and Carols, based on ancient sources, for Christmas Eve. In 1918 it was adapted for the chapel of King's College, Cambridge, by its Dean, Eric Milner-White, and was first included in its present form in 1930. The Nine Lessons given here have been customarily used in recent years at King's College. (from The United Methodist Book of Worship)*