

A SERVICE OF LESSONS
AND CAROLS FOR CHRISTMAS
DECEMBER 29, 2024

In-Person Worship: 10:10 AM / Live Streamed & Call-In Worship: 10:10 AM
Live Streaming (video): <https://www.gracedurham.org/graceonline>



Thank you to Scott Gesell-leader; Kent Silvernail-reader; and Erin Hodge at the piano, for assisting in conducting today's service.



Grace Lutheran Church | 824 N. Buchanan Blvd. | Durham, NC 27701

The Lutheran Church - Missouri Synod 

PRELUDE

GATHERING SONG: ***"The Bells of Christmas" (LBW 62)***

*The bells of Christmas chime once more; The heav'nly guest is at the door.
He comes to earthly dwellings still With new year gifts of peace, goodwill.*

*This world, though wide and far outspread, Could scarcely find for you a bed.
Your cradle was a manger stall, No pearl nor silk nor kingly hall.*

*Now let us go with quiet mind, The swaddled babe with shepherds find,
To gaze on Him Who gladdens them, The loveliest flow'r of Jesse's stem.*

*Oh, join with me, in gladness sing, To keep our Christmas with our King,
Until our song, from loving souls, Like rushing mighty water rolls!*

*O patriarchs' Joy, O prophets' Song, O Dayspring bright, awaited long,
O Son of Man, incarnate Word, Great David's Son, great David's Lord:*

*Come, Jesus, glorious heav'nly guest, And keep your Christmas in our breast;
Then David's harpstrings, hushed so long, Shall swell our jubilee of song.*

THE DIALOG:

- L** The people who walked in darkness have seen a great Light.
- C** **The Light shines in the darkness, and the darkness has not overcome it.**
- L** Those who dwelt in the land of deep darkness, on them Light has shined.
- C** **We have beheld Christ's glory, glory as of the only Son from the Father.**
- L** To us a Child is born, to us a Son is given.
- C** **In the Word was Life, and the Life was the Light of all people.**

OPENING PRAYER:

- L** Almighty God, You have filled us with the new Light of the Word Who became flesh and lived among us. Let the light of our faith shine in all we do; through Your Son, Jesus Christ our Lord, Who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.
- C** **Amen.**

LESSONS AND CAROLS

FIRST LESSON: **ISAIAH 9:2-7** *God promises a King.*

The first reading is from the 9th chapter of Isaiah

²The people walking in darkness have seen a great Light; on those living in the land of deep darkness a Light has dawned.

³You have enlarged the nation and increased their joy; they rejoice before You as people rejoice at the harvest, as warriors rejoice when dividing the plunder.

⁴For as in the day of Midian's defeat, You have shattered the yoke that burdens them, the bar across their shoulders, the rod of their oppressor.

⁵Every warrior's boot used in battle and every garment rolled in blood will be

destined for burning, will be fuel for the fire.

⁶For to us a Child is born, to us a Son is given, and the government will be on His shoulders. And he will be called Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace.

⁷Of the greatness of his government and peace there will be no end. He will reign on David's throne and over his kingdom, establishing and upholding it with justice and righteousness from that time on and forever. The zeal of the LORD Almighty will accomplish this.

R This is the Word of the Lord.

C Thanks be to God.

CAROL: ***"Lo, How a Rose is Growing" (LBW 58)***

*Lo, how a Rose is growing, A Bloom of finest grace;
The prophets had foretold it: A Branch of Jesse's race
Would bear one perfect Flow'r Here in the cold of winter
And darkest midnight hour.*

*The Rose of which I'm singing, Isaiah had foretold,
He came to us through Mary Who sheltered Him from cold.
Through God's eternal will This Child to us was given
At midnight calm and still.*

*The shepherds heard the story The angels sang that night:
How Christ was born of Mary; He was the Son of light.
To Bethlehem they ran To find Him in a manger
As angel heralds sang.*

*The Flow'r, so small and tender, With fragrance fills the air;
His brightness ends the darkness That kept the earth in fear.
True God and yet true man, He came to save His people
From earth's dark night of sin.*

*O Savior, Child of Mary, Who felt all human woe;
O Savior, King of glory, Who triumphed o'er our foe:
Bring us at length, we pray, To the bright courts of heaven
And into endless day.*

SECOND LESSON: **MICAH 5:2-5a** *The King will come from Bethlehem.*

The Second Lesson is from the 5th chapter of Micah.

²*"But you, Bethlehem Ephrathah,
though you are small among the clans
of Judah, out of you will come for me
One Who will be ruler over Israel,
Whose origins are from of old, from
ancient times."*

³*Therefore Israel will be abandoned
until the time when she who is in labor
bears a Son, and the rest of His brothers
return to join the Israelites.*

⁴*He will stand and shepherd His flock in
the strength of the LORD, in the majesty
of the Name of the LORD His God. And
they will live securely, for then His
greatness will reach to the ends of the
earth.*

⁵*And He will be our peace when the
Assyrians invade our land and march
through our fortresses.*

R This is the Word of the Lord.

C Thanks be to God.

CAROL: ***“O, Little Town of Bethlehem” (LBW 41)***

*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.*

*For Christ is born of Mary, And gathered all above
While mortals sleep, the angels keep Their watch of wond’ring love.
O morning stars, together Proclaim the holy birth,
And praises sing to God the King, And peace to all the earth!*

*How silently, how silently The wondrous Gift is giv’n!
So God imparts to human hearts The blessings of His heav’n.
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;
Oh, come to us, abide with us, Our Lord Immanuel!*

THIRD LESSON: **LUKE 1:26-35, 38** *The annunciation to Mary.*

The Third Lesson is from the 1st chapter of Luke.

²⁶In the sixth month of Elizabeth’s pregnancy, God sent the angel Gabriel to Nazareth, a town in Galilee, ²⁷to a virgin pledged to be married to a man named Joseph, a descendant of David. The virgin’s name was Mary.

²⁸The angel went to her and said, “Greetings, you who are highly favored! The Lord is with you.”

²⁹Mary was greatly troubled at his words and wondered what kind of greeting this might be.

³⁰But the angel said to her, “Do not be afraid, Mary; you have found favor with God.

³¹You will conceive and give birth to a Son, and you are to call Him Jesus.

³²He will be great and will be called the Son of the Most High. The Lord God will give Him the throne of His father David,

³³and He will reign over Jacob’s descendants forever; His kingdom will never end.”

³⁴*"How will this be," Mary asked the angel, "since I am a virgin?"*

³⁵*The angel answered, "The Holy Spirit will come on you, and the power of the Most High will overshadow you. So the*

holy One to be born will be called the Son of God.

³⁸*"I am the Lord's servant," Mary answered. "May your word to me be fulfilled." Then the angel left her.*

R This is the Word of the Lord.

C Thanks be to God.

CAROL: ***"The Angel Gabriel from Heaven Came" (WOV 632)***

*The angel Gabriel from heaven came,
With wings as drifted snow, with eyes as flame:
"All hail to thee, O lowly maiden Mary,
Most highly favored lady." Gloria!*

*"For known a blessed mother thou shalt be,
All generations laud and honor thee;
Thy Son shall be Emmanuel, by seers foretold,
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 God's 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!*

FOURTH LESSON: **LUKE 2:1-7** *The birth of Jesus.*

The Fourth Lesson is from the 2nd chapter of Luke.

¹In those days Caesar Augustus issued a decree that a census should be taken of the entire Roman world. ²(This was the first census that took place while Quirinius was governor of Syria.)

³And everyone went to their own town to register.

⁴So Joseph also went up from the town of Nazareth in Galilee to Judea, to Bethlehem the town of David, because

he belonged to the house and line of David.

⁵He went there to register with Mary, who was pledged to be married to him and was expecting a child.

⁶While they were there, the time came for the baby to be born, ⁷and she gave birth to her firstborn, a son. She wrapped him in cloths and placed him in a manger, because there was no guest room available for them.

R This is the Word of the Lord.

C Thanks be to God.

CAROL: ***“Infant Holy, Infant Lowly” (LBW 44)***

*Infant holy, Infant lowly, For His bed a cattle stall;
Oxen lowing, little knowing Christ the Child is Lord of all.
Swiftly winging, angels singing, Bells are ringing, tidings bringing:
Christ the Child is Lord of all! Christ the Child is Lord of all!*

*Flocks were sleeping, shepherds keeping Vigil till the morning new
Saw the glory, heard the story, Tidings of the Gospel true.
Thus rejoicing, free from sorrow, Praises voicing, greet the morrow:
Christ the Child was born for you! Christ the Child was born for you!*

FIFTH LESSON: **LUKE 2:8-16** *The shepherds go to see the Savior.*

The Fifth Lesson is from the 2nd chapter of Luke.

⁸And there were shepherds living out in the fields nearby, keeping watch over their flocks at night.

⁹An angel of the Lord appeared to them, and the glory of the Lord shone around them, and they were terrified.

¹⁰But the angel said to them, “Do not be afraid. I bring you good news that will cause great joy for all the people.

¹¹Today in the town of David a Savior has been born to you; He is the Messiah, the Lord.

¹²This will be a sign to you: You will find a Baby wrapped in cloths and lying in a manger.”

¹³Suddenly a great company of the heavenly host appeared with the angel, praising God and saying, ¹⁴“Glory to God in the highest heaven, and on earth peace to those on whom His favor rests.”

¹⁵When the angels had left them and gone into heaven, the shepherds said to one another, “Let’s go to Bethlehem and see this thing that has happened, which the Lord has told us about.”

¹⁶So they hurried off and found Mary and Joseph, and the Baby, Who was lying in the manger.

R This is the Word of the Lord.

C Thanks be to God.

CAROL: ***"Angels, from the Realms of Glory" (LBW 50)***

*Angels, from the realms of glory, Wing your flight o'er all the earth;
Once you sang creation's story; Now proclaim Messiah's birth:
Come and worship, come and worship, Worship Christ, the newborn King.*

*Shepherds, in the fields 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.*

*Sages, leave your contemplations, Brighter visions beam afar;
Seek the great Desire of nations, You have seen His natal star.
Come and worship, come and worship, Worship Christ, the newborn King.*

*All creation, join in praising God, the Father, Spirit, Son,
Evermore your voices raising To the eternal Three in One.
Come and worship, come and worship, Worship Christ, the newborn King.*

SIXTH LESSON: **LUKE 2:21-36.** *Jesus receives His name.*

The Sixth Lesson is from the 2nd chapter of Luke.

²¹On the eighth day, when it was time to circumcise the Child, He was named Jesus, the name the angel had given Him before He was conceived.

²²When the time came for the purification rites required by the Law of Moses, Joseph and Mary took Him to Jerusalem to present Him to the Lord ²³(as it is written in the Law of the Lord, "Every firstborn male is to be consecrated to the Lord"), ²⁴and to offer a sacrifice in keeping with what is said in the Law of the Lord: "a pair of doves or two young pigeons."

²⁵Now there was a man in Jerusalem called Simeon, who was righteous and

devout. He was waiting for the consolation of Israel, and the Holy Spirit was on him.

²⁶It had been revealed to him by the Holy Spirit that he would not die before he had seen the Lord's Messiah.

²⁷Moved by the Spirit, he went into the temple courts. When the parents brought in the Child Jesus to do for Him what the custom of the Law required, ²⁸Simeon took Him in his arms and praised God, saying:

²⁹"Sovereign Lord, as You have promised, You may now dismiss Your servant in peace.

³⁰For my eyes have seen Your Salvation,
³¹which You have prepared in the sight
of all nations: ³²a Light for revelation to
the Gentiles, and the glory of your
people Israel.”

³³The Child’s father and mother
marveled at what was said about Him.

³⁴Then Simeon blessed them and said to
Mary, his mother: “This Child is
destined to cause the falling and rising

of many in Israel, and to be a sign that
will be spoken against, ³⁵so that the
thoughts of many hearts will be
revealed. And a sword will pierce your
own soul too.”

³⁶There was also a prophet, Anna, the
daughter of Penuel, of the tribe of
Asher. She was very old; she had lived
with her husband seven years after her
marriage.

R This is the Word of the Lord.

C Thanks be to God.

CAROL: ***“That Boy-Child of Mary” (TFBF 54)***

Refrain: *That Boy-Child of Mary Was born in a stable,
A manger His cradle in Bethlehem.*

*What shall we call Him, Child of the manger?
What Name is given in Bethlehem? Refrain.*

*His name is Jesus, God ever with us,
God given for us in Bethlehem. Refrain.*

*How can He save us, how can He help us,
Born here among us in Bethlehem? Refrain.*

*Gift of the Father, to human mother,
Makes Him our Brother in Bethlehem. Refrain.*

*One with the Father, He is our Savior,
Heaven-sent Helper in Bethlehem. Refrain.*

*Gladly we praise Him, love and adore Him,
Give ourselves to Him in Bethlehem. Refrain.*

SEVENTH LESSON: **MATTHEW 2:1-11** *The magi follow the star.*

The Seventh Lesson is from the 2nd chapter of Matthew.

¹*After Jesus was born in Bethlehem in Judea, during the time of King Herod, Magi from the east came to Jerusalem*
²*and asked, "Where is the One Who has been born King of the Jews? We saw His star when it rose and have come to worship Him."*

³*When King Herod heard this he was disturbed, and all Jerusalem with him.*
⁴*When he had called together all the people's chief priests and teachers of the law, he asked them where the Messiah was to be born.* ⁵*"In Bethlehem in Judea," they replied, "for this is what the prophet has written: ⁶"But you, Bethlehem, in the land of Judah, are by no means least among the rulers of Judah; for out of you will come a Ruler Who will shepherd my people Israel."*

⁷*Then Herod called the Magi secretly and found out from them the exact time the star had appeared.*

⁸*He sent them to Bethlehem and said, "Go and search carefully for the Child. As soon as you find Him, report to me, so that I too may go and worship Him."*

⁹*After they had heard the king, they went on their way, and the star they had seen when it rose went ahead of them until it stopped over the place where the Child was.*

¹⁰*When they saw the star, they were overjoyed.*

¹¹*On coming to the house, they saw the Child with His mother Mary, and they bowed down and worshiped Him. Then they opened their treasures and presented him with gifts of gold, frankincense and myrrh.*

R This is the Word of the Lord.

C Thanks be to God.

CAROL: ***"What Child Is This" (LBW 40)***

*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!*

*Why lies He in such mean estate. Where ox and ass are feeding?
Good Christian, fear; for sinners here The silent Word is pleading.
Nails, spear shall pierce Him through, The cross be borne for me, for you;
Hail, hail the Word made flesh, The Babe, the Son of Mary!*

*So bring Him incense, gold and myrrh; Come, peasant, king to own Him,
The King of kings salvation brings; Let loving arms enthrone Him.
Raise, raise the song on high, The virgin sings her lullaby;
Joy, joy, for Christ is born, The Babe, the Son of Mary!*

EIGHTH LESSON: MATTHEW 2:13-18 *The slaughter of the holy innocents.*

The Eighth Lesson is from the 2nd chapter of Matthew.

¹³When they had gone, an angel of the Lord appeared to Joseph in a dream. "Get up," he said, "take the child and his mother and escape to Egypt. Stay there until I tell you, for Herod is going to search for the child to kill him."

¹⁴So he got up, took the child and his mother during the night and left for Egypt, ¹⁵where he stayed until the death of Herod. And so was fulfilled what the Lord had said through the prophet: "Out of Egypt I called my son."

¹⁶When Herod realized that he had been outwitted by the Magi, he was furious, and he gave orders to kill all the boys in Bethlehem and its vicinity who were two years old and under, in accordance with the time he had learned from the Magi.

¹⁷Then what was said through the prophet Jeremiah was fulfilled: ¹⁸"A voice is heard in Ramah, weeping and great mourning, Rachel weeping for her children and refusing to be comforted, because they are no more."

R This is the Word of the Lord.

C Thanks be to God.

CAROL: "Oh, Sleep Now, Holy Baby" (WOV 639)

*Oh, sleep now, Holy Baby, With Your head against my breast;
Meanwhile the pangs of my sorrow Are soothed and put to rest.
Refrain: Alaru, alamé, alaru, alamé, Alaru, alamé, alaru, alaru, alamé.*

*You need not fear King Herod, He will bring no harm to You;
So rest in the arms of Your mother Who sings You alaru. **Refrain.***

NINTH LESSON: **JOHN 1:1-14** *The mystery of the incarnation.*

The Ninth Lesson is from the 1st chapter of John.

¹In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.

²He was with God in the beginning.

³Through Him all things were made; without Him nothing was made that has been made.

⁴In Him was life, and that life was the Light of all mankind.

⁵The Light shines in the darkness, and the darkness has not overcome It.

⁶There was a man sent from God whose name was John.

⁷He came as a witness to testify concerning that Light, so that through him all might believe.

⁸He himself was not the Light; he came only as a witness to the Light.

⁹The true Light that gives light to everyone was coming into the world.

¹⁰He was in the world, and though the world was made through Him, the world did not recognize Him.

¹¹He came to that which was His own, but His own did not receive Him.

¹²Yet to all who did receive Him, to those who believed in His Name, He gave the right to become children of God ¹³children born not of natural descent, nor of human decision or a husband's will, but born of God.

¹⁴The Word became flesh and made His dwelling among us. We have seen His glory, the glory of the one and only Son, Who came from the Father, full of grace and truth.

R This is the Word of the Lord.

C Thanks be to God.

CAROL: ***"O Sing of Christ" (LSB 362)***

*O sing of Christ, whose birth made known The kindness of the Lord,
Eternal Word made flesh and bone So we could be restored.
Upon our frail humanity God's finger chose to trace
The fullness of His deity, The icon of His grace.*

*What Adam lost, none could reclaim, And Paradise was barred
Until the second Adam came To mend what sin had marred.
For when the time was full and right God sent His only Son;
He came to us as life and light And our redemption won.*

*He came to that which was His own, But He was not received;
Yet still through Him God's glory shone, And some His name believed.
To these He gave the right to be The heirs of heav'n above,
Born not of human ancestry But born of God in love.*

*Lord Jesus Christ, You deigned to dwell Among us here on earth
As God with us, Emmanuel, To bring this holy birth.
Though rich, You willingly became One with our poverty,
That we might share Your wealth and name For all eternity!*

RESPONSIVE PRAYER:

- L** Glory to God in the highest
- C** And peace to His people on earth.

- L** Blessed are You, Prince of peace. You rule the earth with truth and justice.
- C** Send Your gift of peace to all nations of the world.

- L** Blessed are You, Son of Mary. You share our humanity.
- C** Have mercy on the sick, the dying, and all who suffer this day.

- L** Blessed are You, Son of God. You dwell among us as the Word made flesh.
- C** Reveal Yourself to us in word and sacrament
that we may bear Your light to all the world. Amen.

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 and ever. Amen.

BLESSING:

- L** Let us bless the Lord.
- C** Thanks be to God.

- L** May the Father of glory bless us; May the Son's light shine upon our path;
And may the Spirit of truth hold us in the bonds of love.
- C** Amen.

SENDING SONG: ***“Go Tell It on the Mountain” (LBW 70)***

Refrain: Go tell it on the mountain, Over the hills and everywhere;
Go tell it on the mountain That Jesus Christ is born!

While shepherds kept their watching O’er silent flocks by night,
Behold, throughout the heavens There shone a holy light. ***Refrain.***

The shepherds feared and trembled When, lo, above the earth
Rang out the angel chorus That hailed our Savior’s birth. ***Refrain.***

Down in a lonely manger The humble Christ was born;
And God sent us salvation That blessed Christmas morn. ***Refrain.***

DISMISSAL:

L Go in peace. Serve the Lord.

C Thanks be to God.

POSTLUDE



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