

A CHRISTMAS SEASON FESTIVAL OF NINE LESSONS AND CAROLS

PRELUDE *Once in Royal David's City* **250**
THE BIDDING PRAYER *

Beloved in Christ, this Christmas Season it is our duty and delight
to prepare ourselves to hear again the message of the angels,
and to go in heart and mind to Bethlehem,
and see this thing which is come to pass,
and the Babe lying in a manger.

Therefore let us hear again from Holy Scripture the tale of
the loving purposes of God from the first days of our sin
until the glorious redemption brought us by this holy Child; and
let us make this house of prayer glad with our carols of praise.

But first, because this of all things would rejoice Jesus' heart,
let us pray to him for the needs of the whole world,
and all his people; for peace upon the earth he came to save;
for love and unity within the one Church he did build;
for goodwill among all peoples.

And particularly at this time let us remember
the poor, the cold, the hungry, the oppressed;
the sick and them that mourn; the lonely and the unloved;
the aged and the little children;
and all who know not the Lord Jesus, or who love him not,
or who by sin have grieved his heart of love.

Lastly let us remember all those who rejoice with us,
but upon another shore and in a greater light,
that multitude which no one can number,
whose hope was in the Word made flesh,
and with whom, in this Lord Jesus, we for evermore are one.

These prayers and praises let us humbly offer up to the throne of heaven,
in the words that Christ himself has taught us.

THE LORD'S PRAYER * **895**

BLESSING *

The almighty God bless us with divine grace,
Christ give us the joys of everlasting life,
and unto the fellowship of the citizens above
may the King of Angels bring us all. **Amen.**

CAROL *Of the Father's Love Begotten* (UMH 184)

FIRST LESSON Genesis 3:8 –15, 17–19
*God announces in the Garden of Eden Adam and Eve's
punishment for their rebellion and that the seed of woman
shall bruise the serpent's head.*

CAROL *Come, Thou Long-Expected Jesus* (UMH 196)

SECOND LESSON Genesis 22:15 –18
*God promises to Abraham that by his descendants
all the nations of the earth shall obtain blessing.*

CAROL *The God of Abraham Praise* (stanzas 1–3) **116**

THIRD LESSON Isaiah 9:2, 6–7
*The prophet announces the birth of a king
to a people in darkness.*

CAROL Canticle of Light and Darkness **205**
Use RESPONSE 3 to start, and at each "R"

FOURTH LESSON Micah 5:2 –5a
*The king is coming and will usher in a reign of
justice for the poor and peace for all of God's creation.*

CAROL *O Little Town of Bethlehem* **230**

FIFTH LESSON Luke 1:26 –35, 38
*The angel Gabriel announces to the virgin Mary
that she will give birth to God's promised Son
whose kingdom shall never end.*

CAROL *To a Maid Engaged to Joseph* **215**

SIXTH LESSON Luke 2:1 –7
*Against a backdrop of emperors and taxes,
Jesus is born.*

CHOIR	<i>There's a Song in the Air</i>	
SEVENTH LESSON	Luke 2:8 –16 <i>The shepherds go to see the Savior of the world, lying in a manger.</i>	
CAROL	<i>Infant Holy, Infant Lowly</i>	229
EIGHTH LESSON	Matthew 2:1 –11 <i>The wise men follow a star to find the child Jesus, the King of the Jews.</i>	
CAROL	<i>We Three Kings</i>	254
NINTH LESSON	John 1:1 –14 <i>John unfolds the great mystery of the Incarnation.</i>	
CAROL	<i>O Come, All Ye Faithful</i>	234
COLLECT (unison prayer)	Christmas	231

DISMISSAL WITH BLESSING

*May the Christ who by his Incarnation
gathered into One things earthly and heavenly,
fill you with the sweetness of inward peace and goodwill;
and the blessing of God Almighty,
the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit,
be upon you and remain with you always. Amen.
Go forth in peace and joy.*

Thanks be to God. Alleluia!

POSTLUDE

*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, who also
wrote The Bidding Prayer. The Blessing after The Lord's Prayer,
added by Milner-White, 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.
The service has been edited for United Methodist congregations.*



December 31, 2023



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Reflecting on and Praying with Scriptures

*As suggested by the Revised Common Lectionary
Year B – Christmas Season; December 31, 2023*

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Scriptures

Isaiah 61:10–62:3

Psalm 148

Galatians 4:4–7

Luke 2:22–40

Questions for Reflection

Consider what it means to be a child of God by adoption.

What does it mean to you to think of yourself as a brother or sister of
Jesus, who is the Son of God?

Morning Prayers:

In you, O God, I will greatly rejoice:

in speaking, I will greatly rejoice;

in silence, I will greatly rejoice;

in travels, I will greatly rejoice;

in resting, I will greatly rejoice;

in working, I will greatly rejoice;

in leisure, I will greatly rejoice;

in duties, I will greatly rejoice;

in freedom, I will greatly rejoice.

O God, my whole being exults in you,

and my life shall evermore declare your praise,

my light, my love, my joy. Amen.

Evening Prayers:

Lord, let your servant sleep in peace this night

and fulfill your gracious word.

Reveal to me the salvation that you have prepared for all people.

With Jesus Christ, help me be a light to the nations

and a sign of your glorious promise to Israel. Amen.