



# REFORMATION COVENANT CHURCH

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*Loving the Triune God, Loving our Neighbors, Transforming the Fallen World*

Lessons & Carols: A Christmas Eve Service  
24 December 2023





# Welcome & The Bidding Prayer

## The Bidding Carol

### Come, Thou Long-Expected Jesus

HYFRYDOL (8 7. 8 7. D.)  
Rowland Hugh Pritchard, 1855

Charles Wesley, 1744

1. Come, Thou long - ex - pect - ed Je - sus, Born to set Thy peo - ple free;  
2. Born Thy peo - ple to de - liv - er, Born a child and yet a King,

From our fears and sins re - lease us; Let us find our rest in Thee.  
Born to reign in us for - ev - er, Now Thy gra - cious king - dom bring.

Is - rael's strength and con - so - la - tion, Hope of all the earth Thou art,  
By Thine own e - ter - nal Spir - it Rule in all our hearts a - lone;

Dear De - sire of ev - 'ry na - tion, Joy of ev - 'ry long - ing heart.  
By Thine all - suf - fi - cient mer - it, Raise us to Thy glo - rious throne.



# First Lesson From Genesis 3:8-19

*God tells sinful Adam that he has lost the life of Paradise, and that the Woman's seed will bruise the serpent's head.*

## Let All Mortal Flesh Keep Silence

PICARDY (8 7. 8 7. 8 7)

French traditional carol, 17th century

arr. Ralph Vaughan Williams, 1906

Unison

*Liturgy of St. James*

tr. Gerard Moultrie, 1864

1. Let all mor - tal flesh keep si - lence, And with fear and  
2. King of kings, yet born of Mar - y, As of old on  
3. Rank on rank the host of heav - en Spreads its van - guard  
4. At His feet the six - winged ser - aph, Cher - u - bim with

trem - bling stand; Pon - der noth - ing earth - ly - mind - ed,  
earth He stood, Lord of lords, in hu - man ves - ture,  
on the way, As the Light of light de - scend - eth  
sleep - less eye, Veil their fac - es to the pres - ence,

For with bless - ing in His hand, Christ our God to  
In the bod - y and the blood, He will give to  
From the realms of end - less day, That the pow'rs of  
As with cease - less voice they cry: Al - le - lu - ia,

earth de - scend - eth, Our full hom - age to de - mand.  
all the faith - ful His own self for heav'n - ly food.  
hell may van - ish As the dark - ness clears a - way.  
Al - le - lu - ia. Al - le - lu - ia, Lord Most High!



## Second Lesson From Genesis 22:15-18

*God promises to faithful Abraham that in his seed shall all the nations of the earth be blessed.*

### God Rest Ye Merry, Gentlemen

GOD REST YE MERRY (8 6. 8 6. 8 6. 8 4 8)

English carol, 18th century

English melody, 18th century

1. God rest ye mer - ry, gen - tle - men, let noth - ing you dis - may,  
2. In Beth - le - hem, in Is - ra - el, this bless - ed Babe was born,  
3. From God our heav'n - ly Fa - ther a bless - ed an - gel came,  
4. "Fear not, then," said the an - gel, "Let noth - ing you a - fright;  
5. The shep - herds at those ti - dings re - joic - ed much in mind,  
6. Now to the Lord sing prais - es all you with - in this place,

Re - mem - ber Christ our Sav - ior was born on Christ - mas Day, morn;  
And laid with - in a man - ger up - on this bless - ed morn;  
And un - to cer - tain shep - herds brought ti - dings of the same;  
This day is born a Sav - ior of a pure vir - gin bright,  
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;

And went to Beth - le - hem straight - way this bless - ed Babe to find.  
This ho - ly tide of Christ - mas all oth - ers doth de - face."/>

To save us all from Sa - tan's pow'r when we were gone a - stray;  
The which His moth - er Mar - y did noth - ing take in scorn.  
How that in Beth - le - hem was born the Son of God by name.  
To free all those who trust in Him from Sa - tan's pow'r and might."  
And went to Beth - le - hem straight - way this bless - ed Babe to find.  
This ho - ly tide of Christ - mas all oth - ers doth de - face."

O ti - dings of com - fort and joy, com - fort and joy;

O ti - dings of com - fort and joy.



## Third Lesson From Isaiah 9:1-7

*The prophet foretells the coming of the Saviour.*

### O Come, All Ye Faithful

ADESTE FIDELIS (Irregular)

John Francis Wade, *Cantus Diversi*, 1751

Latin hymn

John Francis Wade, c. 1743

tr. Frederick Oakeley, 1841

1. O come, all ye faith-ful, joy-ful and tri-um-phant, O come ye, O  
2. God of God, Light of Light; Lo, He ab-  
3. Sing, choirs of an-gels, sing in ex-ul-ta-tion; Sing, all ye  
4. Yea, Lord, we greet Thee, born this hap-py morn-ing; Je-sus, to

come ye to Beth-le-hem. Come and be-hold Him,  
horns not the Vir-gin's womb; Ver-y God, be-  
cit-i-zens of heav'n a-bove! Glo-ry to God,  
Thee be-glo-ry giv'n; Word of the Fa-ther,

born the King of an-gels:  
got-ten, not cre-at-ed: O come, let us a-dore Him, O come, let us a-  
in the high-est:  
now in flesh ap-pear-ing:

dore Him, O come, let us a-dore Him, Christ the Lord!



## Fourth Lesson From Isaiah 11:1-9

*The peace that Christ will bring is fore-shown.*

### Lo, How a Rose E'er Blooming

ES IST EIN ROS ENTSPRUNGEN (7 6. 7 6. 6 7 6)

German melody, 15th century

arr. Michael Praetorius, *Musae Sionae*, 1609

German, 15th century

st. 1-2 tr. Theodore Baker, 1894

st. 3 tr. Harriet R. Spaeth, 1875

st. 5 tr. John C. Mattes, 1914

1. Lo, how a Rose e'er bloom-ing From ten-der stem hath sprung!  
2. I - sa - iah 'twas fore - told it, The Rose I have in mind;  
3. *The* shep - herds heard the sto - ry Pro - claimed by an - gels bright,  
4. This Flow'r, whose fra - grance ten - der With sweet-ness fills the air,  
5. O Sav - ior, child of Mar - y, Who felt our hu - man woe;

Of Jes - se's lin - eage com - ing, As men of old have sung.  
With Mar - y we be - hold it, The vir - gin moth - er kind.  
*How* Christ, the Lord of glo - ry Was born on earth this night.  
Dis - pels with glo - rious splen - dor The dark-ness ev - 'ry - where;  
O Sav - ior, King of glo - ry, Who dost our weak - ness know,

It came, a flower - et bright, A - mid the cold of  
To show God's love a - right, She bore to men a  
*To* Beth - le - hem they sped And in the man - ger  
True Man, yet ver - y God, From sin and death He  
Bring us at length, we pray, To the bright courts of

win - ter, When half - spent was the night.  
Sav - ior, When half - spent was the night.  
*found* Him, As an - gel her - a - lds said.  
saves us, And light - ens ev - 'ry load.  
heav - en And to the end - less day.



# Fifth Lesson From The Gospel of Luke 1:26–38

*The angel Gabriel salutes the virgin Mary.*

## What Child Is This

GREENSLEEVES (8 7. 8 7. 6 8. 6 7)

English melody, 16th century

Traditional English carol, before 1642  
adapted by William Chatterton Dix, c. 1865

1. What Child is this, who laid to rest On Mar - y's lap is sleep - ing?  
2. Why lies He in such mean es - tate, Where ox and ass are feed - ing?  
3. So bring Him in - cense, gold and myrrh; Come, peas - ant, king, to own Him;

Whom an - gels greet with an - thems sweet, While shep - herds watch are keep - ing?  
Good Chris - tian, fear; for sin - ners here The si - lent Word is plead - ing.  
The King of kings sal - va - tion brings, Let lov - ing hearts en - throne Him.

This, this is Christ the King, Whom shep - herds guard and an - gels sing;  
Nails, spear shall pierce Him through, The cross be borne for me, for you.  
Raise, raise a song on high, The vir - gin sings her lul - la - by.

Haste, haste, to bring Him laud, The Babe, the Son of Mar - y!  
Hail, hail, the Word made flesh, The Babe, the Son of Mar - y!  
Joy, joy, for Christ is born, The Babe, the Son of Mar - y!





# Sixth Lesson From The Gospel of Matthew 1:18-23

*Matthew tells of the birth of Jesus.*

## Joy to the World! the Lord Is Come

ANTIOCH (C.M.)  
Lowell Mason, 1836

Isaac Watts, 1719

1. Joy to the world! the Lord is come; Let earth re-ceive her King;  
2. Joy to the earth! the Sav-ior reigns; Let men their songs em-ploy;  
3. No more let sins and sor-rows grow, Nor thorns in-fest the ground;  
4. He rules the world with truth and grace, And makes the na-tions prove

Let ev-'ry heart pre-pare Him room,  
While fields and floods, rocks, hills and plains,  
He comes to make His bless-ings flow  
The glo-ries of His right-eous-ness,

And heav'n and na-ture sing, And heav'n and na-ture  
Re-peat the sound-ing joy, Re-peat the sound-ing  
Far as the curse is found, Far as the curse is  
And won-ders of His love, And won-ders of His

sing, And heav'n, and heav'n and na-ture sing.  
joy, Re-peat, re-peat the sound-ing joy.  
found, Far as, far as the curse is found.  
love, And won-ders, won-ders of His love.



# Seventh Lesson From The Gospel of Luke 2:8-16

*The shepherds go to the manger.*

## Angels We Have Heard on High

GLORIA (7 7. 7. 7. Ref.)

French carol

arr. Edward Shippen Barnes, 1937

From anon French carol, 1843

Trans. James Chadwick, 1862

1. An - gels we have heard on high Sweet - ly sing - ing o'er the plains,  
2. Shep - herds, why this ju - bi - lee? Why your joy - ous strains pro - long?  
3. Come to Beth - le - hem and see Him whose birth the an - gels sing;  
4. See Him in a man - ger laid, Whom the choirs of an - gels praise;

And the moun - tains in re - ply Ech - o - ing their joy - ous strains.  
What the glad - some tid - ings be Which in - spire your heav'n - ly song?  
Come, a - dore on bend - ed knee, Christ the Lord, the new - born King.  
Mar - y, Jo - seph, lend your aid, While our hearts in love we raise.

Glo - - - - - ri - a, in ex-cel-sis De - o!

Glo - - - - - ri - a, in ex-cel-sis De - o!



# Eighth Lesson From The Gospel of Matthew 2:1-11

*The wise men are led by the star to Jesus*

## The First Noel

THE FIRST NOWELL (Irregular)

Traditional English carol

from William Sandys' *Christmas Carols, Ancient and Modern*, 1833

English carol from Davies Gilbert's

*Some Ancient Christmas Carols*, 1823

1. The first No - el the an - gel did say Was to cer - tain poor  
2. They look - ed up and saw a star Shin - ing in the  
3. **And by the light of that same star Three Wise Men**  
4. **This star drew nigh to the north - west, O'er Beth - le -**  
5. Then en - tered in those Wise Men three, Full rev - 'rent -  
6. Then let us all with one ac - cord Sing prais - es

shep - herds in fields as they lay; In fields where they lay, keep - ing their  
east, be - yond them far; And to the earth it gave great  
**came from coun - try far; To seek for a King was their in -**  
**hem it took its rest; And there it did both stop and**  
ly up - on their knee, And of - fered there, in His pres -  
to our heav'n - ly Lord, That hath made heav'n and earth of

sheep, On a cold win - ter's night that was so deep.  
light, And so it con - tin - ued both day and night.  
**tent, And to fol - low the star wher - ev - er it went.**  
**stay, Right o - ver the place where Je - sus lay.**  
ence, Their gold and the myrrh and frank - in - cense.  
naught, And with His blood man - kind hath bought.

No - el, No - el, No - el, No - el, Born is the King of Is - ra - el!



## Ninth Lesson From The Gospel of John 1:1-14

*John unfolds the great mystery of the Incarnation.*

*(Lighting of candles)*

### Silent Night, Holy Night

STILLE NACHT (Irregular)  
Franz Gruber, 1818

Joseph Mohr, 1818  
tr. John Freeman Young, 1863

1. Si - lent night, ho - ly night, All is calm, all is bright Round yon  
2. Si - lent night, ho - ly night, Shep - herds quake at the sight; Glo - ries  
3. Si - lent night, ho - ly night, Son of God, love's pure light Ra - diant  
4. Si - lent night, ho - ly night, Won - drous star, lend thy light; With the

vir - gin moth - er and Child. Ho - ly In - fant, so ten - der and mild,  
stream from heav - en a - far, Heav'n - ly hosts sing Al - le - lu - ia!  
beams from Thy ho - ly face, With the dawn of re - deem - ing grace,  
an - gels let us sing, Al - le - lu - ia to our King;

Sleep in heav - en - ly peace, Sleep in heav - en - ly peace.  
Christ, the Sav - ior is born, Christ, the Sav - ior is born!  
Je - sus, Lord, at Thy birth, Je - sus, Lord, at Thy birth.  
Christ, the Sav - ior is born, Christ, the Sav - ior is born!



## Nativity Prayer of St. Augustine

Let the just rejoice,  
    **For their Justifier is born.**  
Let the sick and infirm rejoice,  
    **For their Saviour is born.**  
Let the captives rejoice,  
    **For their Redeemer is born.**  
Let slaves rejoice,  
    **For their Master is born.**  
Let free men rejoice,  
    **For their Liberator is born.**  
Let all Christians rejoice,  
    **For Jesus Christ is born.**

O God, you make us glad by the yearly festival of the birth of your only Son Jesus Christ: Grant that we, who joyfully receive him as our Redeemer, may with sure confidence behold him when he comes to be our Judge; who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and for ever. **Amen.**

## Benediction

Christ, who by his incarnation gathered into one things earthly and heavenly, grant you the fullness of inward peace and goodwill, and make you partakers of the divine nature; and the blessing of God Almighty, the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit, be upon you and remain with you always.

The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God, and the communion of the Holy Spirit be with you all. **Amen.**





# REFORMATION COVENANT CHURCH

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