

A Festival of Nine Lessons and Carols



Christmas Eve 2020
four o'clock in the afternoon

PRELUDE

Prelude on "Greensleeves"..... Richard Purvis

*HYMN - "O Come, All Ye Faithful" ADESTE FIDELES

O come, all ye faithful, Joyful and triumphant,
O come ye, O come ye to Bethlehem;
Come and behold him, Born the King of angels;
*O come, let us adore him, O come, let us adore him,
O come, let us adore him, Christ the Lord.*

God of God, Light of Light,
Lo! he abhors not the Virgin's womb:
Very God, Begotten, not created;

Refrain

Sing, choirs of angels, Sing in exultation,
Sing, all ye citizens of heaven above;
Glory to God In the highest;

Refrain

Yea, Lord, we greet thee, Born this happy morning,
Jesu, to thee be glory given;
Word of the Father, Now in flesh appearing:

Refrain

Eighteenth Century Latin

THE BIDDING PRAYER AND LORD'S PRAYER Dr. Goyer

FIRST LESSON - Genesis 3:8-15 Rev. Clayton

God announces in the Garden of Eden that the seed of woman shall bruise the serpent's head.

CAROL - "Jesus Christ the Apple Tree" Elizabeth Poston

Janet Ort, *Soprano*

The tree of life my soul hath seen, Laden with fruit, and always green: The trees of nature fruitless be Compared with Christ the apple tree. His beauty doth all things excel: By faith I know, but ne'er can tell The glory which I now can see In Jesus Christ the apple tree. For happiness I long have sought, And pleasure dearly I have bought: I missed of all; but now I see 'Tis found in Christ the apple tree. I'm weary with my former toil, Here I will sit and rest awhile: Under the shadow I will be, Of Jesus Christ the apple tree. This fruit doth make my soul to thrive, It keeps my dying faith alive; Which makes my soul in haste to be With Jesus Christ the apple tree.

Anonymous

SECOND LESSON - Genesis 22:15-18 Dr. Goyer
God promises to faithful Abraham that in his seed shall the nations of the earth be blessed.

CAROL - "In the Bleak Mid-winter" Harold Darke
Beth Middleton, *soprano*; Nick Mathes, *tenor*

In the bleak mid-winter, 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 mid-winter 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 mid-winter A stable place sufficed The Lord God Almighty Jesus Christ. Enough for him, whom Cherubim, Worship night and day, A breastful of milk And a mangerful of hay; Enough for him, whom Angels Fall down before, The ox and ass and camel Which adore. 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.
Christina G. Rossetti

THIRD LESSON - Isaiah 9:2, 6, 7..... Rev. Seamon
Christ's birth and kingdom are foretold by Isaiah.

* HYMN - "What Child Is This" GREENSLEEVES
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.
Refrain

So bring Him incense, gold, and myrrh; Come, one and all, to own Him.
The King of kings salvation brings; Let loving hearts enthrone Him.
Refrain
William Chatterton Dix

FOURTH LESSON - Isaiah 11:1-9..... Dr. Wilkins
The peace that Christ will bring is foreshown.

CAROL - "And the Glory of the Lord" from *Messiah*..... George Frideric Handel
And the glory of the Lord shall be revealed, and all flesh shall see it together: for the mouth of the Lord hath spoken it.
Isaiah 40:5

FIFTH LESSON - St. Luke 1:26-35, 38 Rev. Clayton
The angel Gabriel salutes the Blessed Virgin Mary.

CAROL - "Bogoróditse Ďevo" ("Rejoice, O Virgin").....Sergei Rachmaninoff
Богородице дѣво, радуйся, Благодатная Маріе, Господь съ тобою: благословена Ты въ женахъ, и благословенъ плодь чрева Твоегѡ; якѡ Спаса родила еси доушъ нашихъ.
Rejoice, O Virgin Theotokos, Mary full of grace, the Lord is with You. Blessed are You among women, and blessed is the Fruit of Your womb, for You have borne the Savior of our souls.
1656 Russian Orthodox version of the Hail Mary prayer

SIXTH LESSON - St. Matthew 1:18-23.....Dr. Goyer
St. Luke tells of the birth of Jesus.

* HYMN - "O Little Town of Bethlehem".....ST. LOUIS

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 to-night

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 men on earth.

O holy Child of Bethlehem! Descend to us, we pray;
Cast out our sin, and enter in, Be born in us to-day.
We hear the Christmas angels The great glad tidings tell;
O come to us, abide with us, Our Lord Emmanuel!

Phillips Brooks

SEVENTH LESSON - St. Luke 2:8-16.....Rev. Seamon
The shepherds go to the manger.

CAROL - "Glory to God" from *Messiah*.....George Frideric Handel
Glory to God in the highest, and peace on earth, goodwill toward men. *Luke 2:14*

EIGHTH LESSON - St. Matthew 2:1-11.....Dr. Wilkins
The Wise Men are led by the star to Jesus.

CAROL - "This Endris Night" Kevin Robison
This endris night I saw a sight, a star as bright as day; and e'er among, a maiden sung,
"Lullay, by by, lullay." This lovely lady sat and sung, and to her child did say: "My son, my
brother, father, dear, why liest thou thus in hay?" The child, the king in his speaking then
to his mother said: "Of me you sing as heaven king in crib though I be laid." Lullu, lulla,
thou little child; By by, lully, lullay. *15th century English*

* NINTH LESSON - St. John 1:1-14.....Rev. Clayton
St. John unfolds the great mystery of the Incarnation.

HOMILY - St. Luke 2:1-7.....Dr. Goyer

THE CHRISTMAS COLLECT.....Rev. Seamon

Pastor: The Lord be with you.

People: And also with you.

Pastor: Let us pray.

CEREMONY OF LIGHTS

CAROL - "Still, Still, Still"Austrian Carol

HYMN - "Silent Night" STILLE NACHT

Silent night, Holy night! All is calm, all is bright,
Round yon virgin mother and child! Holy Infant so tender and mild,
Sleep in heavenly peace, Sleep in heavenly peace.

Silent night, Holy night! Shepherds quake at the sight,
Glories stream from heaven afar, Heavenly hosts sing: "Alleluia;
Christ the Savior is born, Christ the Savior is born."

Silent night, Holy night! Son of God, love's pure light
Radiant beams from Thy holy face, With the dawn of redeeming grace,
Jesus, Lord at Thy birth, Jesus, Lord, at Thy birth. *Joseph Mohr*

THE BENEDICTION Dr. Goyer

May he 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 Ghost, be upon you and remain with
you always. **Amen.**

* HYMN - "Joy to the World!" ANTIOCH

Joy to the world! the Lord is come: Let earth receive her King;
Let every heart prepare Him room, And heaven and nature sing,
And heaven and nature sing, And heaven, and heaven and nature sing.

Joy to the world! the Savior reigns: Let us our songs employ;
While fields and floods, rocks, hills, and plains Repeat the sounding joy,
Repeat the sounding joy, Repeat, repeat the sounding joy.

No more let sins and sorrows grow, Nor thorns infest the ground;
He comes to make His blessings flow Far as the curse is found,
Far as the curse is found, Far as, far as the curse is found.

He rules the world with truth and grace, And makes the nations prove
The glories of his righteousness, And wonders of His love,
And wonders of His love, And wonders, wonders, of His love. *Isaac Watts*

* VOLUNTARY

"In Thee Is Gladness," BWV 615 Johann Sebastian Bach

* *Congregation standing*

CHRISTMAS/ADVENT FLOWERS 2020

THE FLOWERS AND GREENERY during the Advent Season have been made possible by gifts. Below are names of loved ones for whom the gifts were given to the glory of God and in loving memory and honor.

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Mrs. Betsy Faucette
Mr. & Mrs. Andrew Foust
Dr. W. Stephen Goyer
Dr. Edward H. Laughlin

ANNOUNCEMENTS

THE FLOWERS on the War Memorial are given to the Glory of God and in honor of all past and present military personnel.

CONCERNING THE CEREMONY OF LIGHTS - Traditionally, worshippers receive candles with paper wax-guards upon entering the nave of the church before the Christmas Eve service each year. These are used only during the Ceremony of Lights, to take place near the end of the service. This year we invite you to participate at home by turning down the lights after the Christmas Collect and lighting your own candles or candle substitutes, as you are able. Designate someone as your "acolyte" to light the first candle. Have that person share their light by lighting the candle of the person next to them, and then that person shares their light with the next person, one by one, until all are lit. At the same time, the acolytes in the sanctuary light the first candle of each row of choir members, and each choir member will then share the light, representing the presence of Christ in the world, with their neighbor. Please note, however, that whether at home or in the sanctuary, *in no case should a lit candle be tilted*; rather, the unlit candle should be tilted over the lit one. This is to help keep the live flame stable and upright and to prevent hot wax from dripping and causing burns. Worshippers remain seated during the ceremony and are invited to sing "Silent Night" with the choir. When the ministers have extinguished their candles, the worshippers will do likewise. If using real flames at home, please handle your extinguished candles with care and follow fire and safety recommendations for your household. We hope sharing this ceremony physically apart but spiritually together brings you and your loved ones comfort, connection, and peace.

PLEASE CONSIDER MAKING A SPECIAL CHRISTMAS EVE OFFERING to benefit IPC's Community Ministries. Gifts can be made online at ipc-usa.org (click or tap on "Give Online"), or they can be mailed to the church at 3100 Highland Ave S, Birmingham, AL 35205 (Attention: Beth Grauel). We appreciate your gifts that enable us to help others in our local community.

THE ENTIRE STAFF of Independent Presbyterian Church would like to wish each and every member of the Church a blessed Christmas and a New Year filled with joy and peace.



Participants in this Service

Dr. W. Stephen Goyer, Pastor
The Rev. Susan A. Clayton, Associate Pastor of Adult & Comm. Ministries
The Rev. David J. Seamon, Associate Pastor, Faith Formation
The Rev. Dr. Jay Wilkins, Interim Associate Pastor, Pastoral Care
Dr. Jeff R. McLelland, Director of Music and Fine Arts
The Independent Presbyterian Church Choir