

The Festival of Lessons and Carols

December 21, 2025, at 10:00 am

Whoever you are and wherever you are on your journey of faith, welcome to Advent Episcopal Church. Our worship service follows the Book of Common Prayer and includes Holy Communion in which all may receive the bread and wine of Christ's Body and Blood. Hymn numbers preceded by the letter "H" are found in the blue Hymnal 1982. The hymn numbers preceded by the letter "L" are found in the red and black hymnal Lift Every Voice and Sing II. Thank you for joining us for worship today.

Acknowledging the people of the land, the Hohokam, and other indigenous people as the original stewards of this land, we give thanks for our ancestors, our elders, and for all indigenous people who pray for unity and peace today.

Prelude

Processional Hymn H 68

THE BIDDING PRAYER

Celebrant:

Beloved in Christ, be it in this holy season our care and delight to prepare ourselves to hear again the message of the angels; in heart and mind to go even unto Bethlehem and see this thing which is come to pass, and with the shepherds and the wise men adore the Child lying in his Mother's arms.

Let us read and mark in Holy Scripture the tale of the loving purposes of God from the days of our disobedience unto the glorious Redemption brought us by this Holy Child; and in company with the whole Church let us make this place glad with our carols of praise.

But first let us pray for the needs of the whole world; for peace and goodwill over all the earth, and especially in the United States, the state of Arizona, and for all First Nations in our diocese and country.

And let us at this time remember in his name the poor and helpless, the cold, the hungry and the oppressed; the sick in body and mind and them that mourn; the lonely and the unloved; the aged and little children; and all who know not the loving kindness of the Lord.

Let us also remember before God all those who rejoice with us, but upon another shore and in a greater light, that multitude which none can number, whose hope was in the Word made flesh; and let us pray that we may be counted among the communion of saints, receiving grace to offer unto God reasonable service, living in unity and fellowship with all his people and giving reverence for all that he has made. We offer up our prayers and humbly beseech you, O Lord:

Stir up your power, O Lord, and with great might come among us; and, because we are sorely hindered by our sins, let your bountiful grace and mercy speedily help and deliver us; through Jesus Christ our Lord, to whom, with you and the Holy Spirit, be honor and glory, now and forever. **Amen.**

Celebrant The Almighty God bless us with his 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.**

Please be seated.

THE LESSONS AND CAROLS

The First Lesson: Genesis 3:8-15 “Paradise Lost”

Adam and Eve 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 me to be with me, she gave me the 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; and he will strike your head, and you will strike his heel.”

Here ends the first lesson.

Thanks be to God.

Hymn H 58

The Second Lesson: Isaiah 7:10-15 “God with Us”

Again the Lord spoke to Ahaz, saying, “Ask a sign of the Lord your God; let it be deep as Sheol or high as heaven. But Ahaz said, “I will not ask, and I will not put the Lord to the test.” Then Isaiah said: Hear then, O house of David! Is it too little for you to weary mortals, that you weary my God also? Therefore the Lord himself will give you a sign. Look, the young woman is with child and shall bear a son, and shall name him Immanuel.”

Here ends the second lesson.

Thanks be to God.

Hymn H 56 (vs. 1, 4 & 7)

The Third Lesson: Luke 1:26-33,38 “Gabriel’s Message of 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.” 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.

Here ends the third lesson.

Thanks be to God.

Hymn H 265

The Fourth Lesson: Matthew 1: 18-25 “The Virgin Birth”

Now the birth of Jesus the Messiah took place in this way. When his mother Mary had been engaged to Joseph, but before they lived together, she was found to be with child from the Holy Spirit. Her husband Joseph, being a righteous man and unwilling to expose her to public disgrace, planned to dismiss her quietly. But just when he had resolved to do this, an angel of the Lord appeared to him in a dream and

said, “Joseph, son of David, do not be afraid to take Mary as your wife, for the child conceived in her is from the Holy Spirit. She will bear a son, and you are to name him Jesus, for he will save his people from their sins. All this took place to fulfill what had been spoken by the Lord through the prophet: “Look, the virgin shall conceive and bear a son, and they shall name him Emmanuel,” which means, “God is with us.” When Joseph awoke from sleep, he did as the angel of the Lord commanded him; he took her as his wife, but had no marital relations with her until she had borne a son, and he named him Jesus.

Here ends the fourth lesson.

Thanks be to God.

Hymn H 101

The Fifth Lesson: Luke 2:1-7 “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 of the 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 room for them in the inn.

Here end the fifth lesson.

Thanks be to God.

Hymn H 115

The Sixth Lesson: Luke 2: 8-14 “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, praising God and saying, “Glory to God in the highest heaven, and on earth peace among those whom he favors.”

Here ends the sixth lesson.

Thanks be to God.

Hymn H 96

All who are able, please stand.

The Seventh Lesson: John 1:1-14 “The Mystery of the Incarnation”

Celebrant The Holy Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ according to John

People Glory to you, Lord Christ.

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 overtake 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, 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.

Celebrant The Gospel of the Lord.
People **Praise to you, Lord Christ.**

Sermon **The Rev. Dr. Beverley Rader**

Celebrant The peace of the Lord be always with you.
People **And also with you.**

Birthdays, Anniversaries and Travelers

Offertory Sentence

Offertory Music

All **Let there be peace on earth and let it begin with me.**
 Let there be peace on earth, the peace that was meant to be.
 With God as our Father, brothers and sisters are we,
 Let us walk with each other in perfect harmony.

Let peace begin with me; let this be the moment now.
 With every step I take, let this be my solemn vow;
 To take each moment and live each moment in peace eternally,
 Let there be peace on earth and let it begin with me.

Eucharistic Prayer Form 1

Celebrant *The Lord be with you.*
People **And also with you.**
Celebrant *Lift up your hearts.*
People **We lift them to the Lord.**
Celebrant Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.
People **It is right to give God thanks and praise.**

The Celebrant proceeds:

It is right, and a good, and joyful thing, always and everywhere to give thanks to you, Father Almighty, Creator of heaven and earth. Therefore, we praise you, joining our voices with Angels and Archangels and with all the company of heaven, who forever sing this hymn to proclaim the glory of your Name:

All **Holy, holy, holy Lord God of power and might,**
 Holy, holy, holy Lord God of power and might,
 heaven and earth are full, full of your glory.
 Hosanna in the highest.
 Hosanna in the highest.
 Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord.
 Hosanna in the highest.
 Hosanna in the highest.

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The Celebrant continues:

And so, Father, we bring you these gifts. Sanctify them by your Holy Spirit to be for your people the Body and Blood of Jesus Christ our Lord.

On the night he was betrayed he took bread, said the blessing, broke the bread, and gave it to his friends, and said, "Take, eat: This is my Body, which is given for you. Do this for the remembrance of me."

After supper, he took the cup of wine, gave thanks, and said, "Drink this, all of you: This is my Blood of the new Covenant, which is shed for you and for many for the forgiveness of sins. Whenever you drink it, do this for the remembrance of me."

Father, we now celebrate the memorial of your Son. By means of this holy bread and cup, we show forth the sacrifice of his death, and proclaim his resurrection, until he comes again.

Gather us by this Holy Communion into one body in your Son Jesus Christ. Make us a living sacrifice of praise.

By him, and with him, and in him, in the unity of the Holy Spirit, all honor and glory is yours, Almighty Father, now and forever. **Amen.**

Celebrant And now, as our Savior Christ has taught us, we are bold to say:

All 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, for ever and ever. Amen.

Celebrant Alleluia. Christ our Passover is sacrificed for us.

People **Therefore let us keep the feast. Alleluia.**

Venite adoremus, Dominum

Venite adoremus, Dominum

Celebrant The gifts of God for the people of God. Take them in remembrance that Christ died for you, and feed on him in your hearts, by faith, with thanksgiving.

COMMUNION OF THE PEOPLE

All are welcome to receive the bread and wine of Christ's Body and Blood. The wine will be offered by intinction, which means that you may dip the wafer into the small cup of wine offered by the Lay Assistant. Please do not put your fingers into the wine. If you do not wish to receive the wine, just receive the wafer and return to your seat. The Church teaches that you receive the full Christ in either the bread or wine. There is no requirement to receive both. Gluten free wafers are available upon request.

Communion Hymns H 79 & H 89

THE CLOSING PRAYER

Celebrant Let us pray.
All **O God, you make us glad with 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 forever. Amen.**

THE CHRISTMAS BLESSING

May Almighty God, who sent his Son to take our nature upon him, bless you in this holy season, scatter the darkness of sin, and brighten your heart with the light of holiness.

Amen.

May God, who sent his angels to proclaim glad news of the Savior's birth, fill you with joy, and make you heralds of the Gospel.

Amen.

May God, who in the Word made flesh, joined heaven to earth and earth to heaven, give you his peace and favor.

Amen.

The blessing of God Almighty, the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit, be upon you and remain with you always.

Amen.

Recessional Hymn H 100

Deacon Alleluia. Let us go forth in the name of Christ.
People **Thanks be to God. Alleluia!**

Postlude