

Church of the Epiphany

The First Sunday after the Nativity of Our Lord
December 31, 2023, 10:30 a.m.

Christmas Lessons and Carols

according to

THE BOOK OF OCCASIONAL SERVICES, 2018

and The Hymnal, 1982

Welcome to the Church of the Epiphany. The Anglican tradition values common prayer. Praying together shapes our faith, binds us together, and helps us grow closer to God. We invite you to pray with us today.

*The half-hour before the Mass is a time of quiet prayer and preparation.
Please wait quietly for the service to begin.*

Please silence or turn off your electronic devices.

Prelude: It Came Upon the Midnight Clear – R. Dinda

Welcome and Announcements

All stand.

Hymn 89 It came upon the midnight clear

Carol

BIDDING PRAYER

All remain standing.

The Presider says

Beloved in Christ, in this Christmastide, let it be our care and delight to hear again the message of the Angels, and in heart and mind to go even to Bethlehem, and see this thing which is come to pass, and the Baby lying in a manger.

Let us read and mark in Holy Scripture the tale of the loving purposes of God from the first days of our disobedience until the glorious Redemption brought us by this holy Child, and let us make this place glad with our carols or praise.

But first, let us pray for the needs of his whole world; for peace and goodwill over all the earth; for the mission and unity of the Church for which he died, and especially for his Church in our country and in this county.

And because this of all things would rejoice his heart, let us at this time remember in his name the poor and the helpless, the hungry and the oppressed; the sick and those who mourn; the lonely and the unloved; the aged and the little children and all those who do not know the Lord Jesus, or who do not love him, or who by sin have grieved his heart of love.

Lastly let us remember before God his pure and lowly Mother, and 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 the Lord Jesus, we are one for evermore.

And now, to gather up all these prayers and praises, let us humbly offer up to the throne of heaven, in the words which Christ himself has taught us:

People and Celebrant

**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.***

Presider The Almighty God bless us with his grace; Christ give us the joys of everlasting life; and to the fellowship of the citizens above may the King of Angels bring us all.
Amen.

All sit.

Nine Lessons are customary selected, interspersed with appropriate carols, hymns, canticles, and anthems. When possible, each lesson is read by a different lector. The lesson from the third chapter of Genesis is never omitted. The Lessons may be read without announcement or conclusion, or in the manner prescribed in the Daily Office.

FIRST LESSON

Adam and Eve rebel against God and are cast out of the Garden of Eden.

3 Now the serpent was more subtle than any other wild creature that the Lord God had made. He said to the woman, “Did God say, ‘You shall not eat of any tree of the garden?’”² And the woman said to the serpent, “We may eat of the fruit of the trees of the garden;³ but God said, ‘You shall not eat of the fruit of the tree which is in the midst of the garden, neither shall you touch it, lest you die.’”⁴ But the serpent said to the woman, “You will not die.⁵ For God knows that when you eat of it your eyes will be opened, and you will be like God, knowing good and evil.”⁶ So when the woman saw that the tree was good for food, and that it was a delight to the eyes, and that the tree was to be desired to make one wise, she took of its fruit and ate; and she also gave some to her husband, and he ate.⁷ Then the eyes of both were opened, and they knew that they were naked; and they sewed fig leaves together and made themselves aprons.

⁸ And they heard the sound of the Lord God walking in the garden in the cool of the day, and the man and his wife hid themselves from the presence of the Lord God among the trees of the garden.⁹ But the Lord God called to the man, and said to him, “Where are you?”¹⁰ And he said, “I heard the sound of thee in the garden, and I was afraid, because I was naked; and I hid myself.”¹¹ He said, “Who told you that you were naked? Have you eaten of the tree of which I commanded you not to eat?”¹² The man said, “The woman whom thou gavest to be

with me, she gave me fruit of the tree, and I ate.”¹³ Then the Lord God said to the woman, “What is this that you have done?” The woman said, “The serpent beguiled me, and I ate.”¹⁴ The Lord God said to the serpent,

“Because you have done this,
cursed are you above all cattle,
and above all wild animals;
upon your belly you shall go,
and dust you shall eat
all the days of your life.

¹⁵ I will put enmity between you and the woman,
and between your seed and her seed;
he shall bruise your head,
and you shall bruise his heel.”

¹⁶ To the woman he said,
“I will greatly multiply your pain in childbearing;
in pain you shall bring forth children,
yet your desire shall be for your husband,
and he shall rule over you.”

¹⁷ And to Adam he said,
“Because you have listened to the voice of your wife,
and have eaten of the tree
of which I commanded you,
‘You shall not eat of it,’
cursed is the ground because of you;
in toil you shall eat of it all the days of your life;
¹⁸ thorns and thistles it shall bring forth to you;
and you shall eat the plants of the field.
¹⁹ In the sweat of your face
you shall eat bread
till you return to the ground,
for out of it you were taken;
you are dust,
and to dust you shall return.”

²⁰The man called his wife's name Eve, because she was the mother of all living. ²¹And the Lord God made for Adam and for his wife garments of skins, and clothed them.

²²Then the Lord God said, "Behold, the man has become like one of us, knowing good and evil; and now, lest he put forth his hand and take also of the tree of life, and eat, and live for ever"— ²³therefore the Lord God sent him forth from the garden of Eden, to till the ground from which he was taken. ²⁴He drove out the man; and at the east of the garden of Eden he placed the cherubim, and a flaming sword which turned every way, to guard the way to the tree of life.

Genesis 3:1-24

Silence.

Hymn 82 Of the Father's love begotten

Divinum mysterium

SECOND LESSON

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

¹⁵And the angel of the Lord called to Abraham a second time from heaven, ¹⁶and said, "By myself I have sworn, says the Lord, because you have done this, and have not withheld your son, your only son, ¹⁷I will indeed bless you, and I will multiply your descendants as the stars of heaven and as the sand which is on the seashore. And your descendants shall possess the gate of their enemies, ¹⁸and by your descendants shall all the nations of the earth bless themselves, because you have obeyed my voice."

Genesis 22:15-18

Silence.

Hymn 707 Take my life, and let it be

Hollingside

THIRD LESSON

The prophet foretells the coming of the Saviour.

² The people who walked in darkness
have seen a great light;

those who dwelt in a land of deep darkness,
on them has light shined.

⁶For to us a child is born,
to us a son is given;
and the government will be upon his shoulder,
and his name will be called

“Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God,
Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace.”

⁷Of the increase of his government and of peace
there will be no end,
upon the throne of David, and over his kingdom,
to establish it, and to uphold it
with justice and with righteousness
from this time forth and for evermore.

The zeal of the Lord of hosts will do this.

Isaiah 9:2, 6-7

Silence.

Hymn 597 O day of peace that dimly shines

Jerusalem

FOURTH LESSON

The Prophet Isaiah foreshows the peace that Christ will bring.

11 There shall come forth a shoot from the stump of Jesse,
and a branch shall grow out of his roots.

²And the Spirit of the Lord shall rest upon him,
the spirit of wisdom and understanding,
the spirit of counsel and might,
the spirit of knowledge and the fear of the Lord.

³And his delight shall be in the fear of the Lord.
He shall not judge by what his eyes see,
or decide by what his ears hear;

⁴but with righteousness he shall judge the poor,
and decide with equity for the meek of the earth;

⁶The wolf shall dwell with the lamb,
and the leopard shall lie down with the kid,
and the calf and the lion and the fatling together,
and a little child shall lead them.

⁷The cow and the bear shall feed;

their young shall lie down together;
and the lion shall eat straw like the ox.

⁸The sucking child shall play over the hole of the asp,
and the weaned child shall put his hand on the adder's den.

⁹They shall not hurt or destroy
in all my holy mountain;
for the earth shall be full of the knowledge of the Lord
as the waters cover the sea.

Isaiah 11:1-4a, 6-9

Silence.

Hymn 497 How bright appears the Morning Star *Wie schön leuchtet*

FIFTH LESSON

The angel Gabriel salutes the Blessed Virgin Mary.

²⁶In the sixth month the angel Gabriel was sent from God to a city of Galilee named Nazareth, ²⁷to a virgin betrothed to a man whose name was Joseph, of the house of David; and the virgin's name was Mary. ²⁸And he came to her and said, "Hail, O favored one, the Lord is with you!"^[a] ²⁹But she was greatly troubled at the saying, and considered in her mind what sort of greeting this might be. ³⁰And the angel said to her, "Do not be afraid, Mary, for you have found favor with God. ³¹And behold, you will conceive in your womb and bear a son, and you shall call his name Jesus.

³²He 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 father David,
³³and he will reign over the house of Jacob for ever;
and of his kingdom there will be no end."

³⁴And Mary said to the angel, "How shall this be, since I have no husband?" ³⁵And the angel said to her,

"The Holy Spirit will come upon you,
and the power of the Most High will overshadow you;

therefore the child to be born^[b] will be called holy,
the Son of God.

³⁸ And Mary said, “Behold, I am the handmaid of the Lord; let it be to me according to your word.” And the angel departed from her.

Luke 1:26-35, 38.

Silence

Hymn 265 The angel Gabriel

Gabriel’s Message

SIXTH LESSON

St. Luke tells of the birth of Jesus.

2 In those days a decree went out from Caesar Augustus that all the world should be enrolled. ²This was the first enrollment, when Quirin’i-us was governor of Syria. ³And all went to be enrolled, each to his own city. ⁴And Joseph also went up from Galilee, from the city of Nazareth, to Judea, to the city of David, which is called Bethlehem, because he was of the house and lineage of David, ⁵to be enrolled with Mary, his betrothed, who was with child. ⁶And while they were there, the time came for her to be delivered. ⁷And she gave birth to her first-born son and wrapped him in swaddling cloths, and laid him in a manger, because there was no place for them in the inn.

Luke 2:1-7

Silence

Hymn 115 What child is this, who, laid to rest

Greensleeves

SEVENTH LESSON

The shepherds go to the manger.

⁸ And in that region there were shepherds out in the field, keeping watch over their flock by night. ⁹And an angel of the Lord appeared to them, and the glory of the Lord shone around them, and they were filled with fear. ¹⁰And the angel said to them, “Be not afraid; for behold, I bring you good news of a great joy which will come to all the people; ¹¹for to you is born

this day in the city of David a Savior, who is Christ the Lord. ¹²And this will be a sign for you: you will find a babe wrapped in swaddling cloths and lying in a manger.” ¹³And suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host praising God and saying,

¹⁴“Glory to God in the highest,
and on earth peace among men with whom he is
pleased!”

¹⁵When the angels went away from them into heaven, the shepherds said to one another, “Let us go over to Bethlehem and see this thing that has happened, which the Lord has made known to us.” ¹⁶And they went with haste, and found Mary and Joseph, and the babe lying in a manger.

Luke 2:8-16

Silence

Hymn 93 Angels from the realms of glory

Regent Square

EIGHTH LESSON

The wise men follow the star to Jesus

2 Now when Jesus was born in Bethlehem of Judea in the days of Herod the king, behold, wise men from the East came to Jerusalem, saying, ²“Where is he who has been born king of the Jews? For we have seen his star in the East, and have come to worship him.” ³When Herod the king heard this, he was troubled, and all Jerusalem with him; ⁴and assembling all the chief priests and scribes of the people, he inquired of them where the Christ was to be born. ⁵They told him, “In Bethlehem of Judea; for so it is written by the prophet:

⁶“And you, O Bethlehem, in the land of Judah,
are by no means least among the rulers of Judah;
for from you shall come a ruler
who will govern my people Israel.””

⁷Then Herod summoned the wise men secretly and ascertained from them what time the star appeared; ⁸and he sent them to Bethlehem, saying, “Go and search diligently for the child, and when you have found him bring me word, that I too may come and worship him.” ⁹When they had heard the king they went their way; and lo, the star which they had seen in the East went before them, till it came to rest over the place where the child was. ¹⁰When they saw the star, they rejoiced exceedingly with great joy; ¹¹and going into the house they saw the child with Mary his mother, and they fell down and worshiped him. Then, opening their treasures, they offered him gifts, gold and frankincense and myrrh. ¹²And being warned in a dream not to return to Herod, they departed to their own country by another way.

Matthew 2:1-12

Silence

Hymn 119 As with gladness men of old

Dix

All stand.

The Priest-in-Charge reads the lesson

NINTH LESSON

St. John unfolds the great mystery of the Incarnation

1 In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. **2** He was in the beginning with God; **3** all things were made through him, and without him was not anything made that was made. **4** In him was life,^[a] and the life was the light of men. **5** The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness has not overcome it.

6 There was a man sent from God, whose name was John. **7** He came for testimony, to bear witness to the light, that all might believe through him. **8** He was not the light, but came to bear witness to the light.

9 The true light that enlightens every man was coming into the world. **10** He was in the world, and the world was made through

him, yet the world knew him not. ¹¹ He came to his own home, and his own people received him not. ¹² But to all who received him, who believed in his name, he gave power to become children of God; ¹³ who were born, not of blood nor of the will of the flesh nor of the will of man, but of God.

¹⁴ And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, full of grace and truth; we have beheld his glory, glory as of the only Son from the Father.

John 1:1-14

Silence

Hymn 83 O come, all ye faithful

Adeste fideles

COLLECT & BLESSING

The Celebrant says to the people

The Lord be with you.

People **And also with you.**

The Celebrant faces the altar and says the Collects.

Celebrant Let us pray.

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.*

The people remain standing for the blessing.

The Bishop when present, or the Priest, may bless the people

May Christ, who by his Incarnation gathered into one things earthly and heavenly,
fill you with his joy and peace,
and the blessing of God Almighty,

The Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit,
be among you, and remain with you always. *Amen.*

Let us bless the Lord

People **Thanks be to God.**

Hymn 87 Hark! the herald angels sing

Mendelssohn

Postlude – God Rest You Merry – W. Held

Church of the Epiphany

An Episcopal Parish in the Diocese of Virginia
and part of the worldwide Anglican Communion

8000 Hermitage Road
Richmond, Virginia 23228
(804) 266-2503

Office Hours:

Tuesday, Wednesday, and Thursday 9:00 a.m. – 1:00
p.m.

Clergy and Staff

The Rt. Rev'd E. Mark Stevenson, D. Min. *h.c.*, Bishop Diocesan
The Rev'd Kristin P. R. Wickersham, Priest-in-Charge
The Rev'd Canon John F. Rice, D. Min., Retired Priest in Residence
Mr. Florian Jones-Stamm, Deacon Intern
Mrs. Anita Williams, Director of Music Ministries
Mrs. Lucy Whitlock, Parish Administrator
Mrs. Crystal Sarvay, R.N., Parish Nurse
Mr. Timon Kenyi, Sexton
Marty Shephard, Treasurer

Vestry

John Sarvay (Sr. Warden)
Randy Holden (Jr. Warden)
Jeri Townley (Register)
Scott Blackwell, Gray Corbett, John Norris,
Mirendy Smith, Billy Tucker

Ministers

The ministers of the Church are all lay people, bishops, priests, and
deacons.