

All Yea, Lord, we greet thee,
Born on Christmas morning,
Jesu, to thee be glory giv'n;
Word of the Father,
Now in flesh appearing:
Refrain

*Words translated by F. Oakeley and W. T. Brooke
Music (composer unknown) arranged by David Willcocks*

Collect and Blessing

Hymn: Hark! The Herald Angels Sing

All Hark! The herald-angels sing
Glory to the new-born King;
Peace on earth and mercy mild,
God and sinners reconciled:
Joyful all ye nations rise,
Join the triumph of the skies,
With th'angelic host proclaim,
Christ is born in Bethlehem.
*Hark! The herald-angels sing
Glory to the new-born King.*

All Christ, by highest heav'n adored,
Christ, the everlasting Lord,
Late in time behold him come
Offspring of a virgin's womb:
Veiled in flesh the Godhead see,
Hail th'incarnate Deity!
Pleased as man with man to dwell,
Jesus, our Emmanuel.
Refrain

All Hail the heav'n-born Prince of Peace!
Hail the Sun of Righteousness!
Light and life to all he brings,
Risen with healing in his wings;
Mild he lays his glory by,
Born that man no more may die,
Born to raise the sons of earth,
Born to give them second birth.
Refrain

*Words by C. Wesley, T. Whitefield, M. Madan and others
Music by Mendelssohn with descant by David Willcocks*

Organ Voluntary

Choral Fantasia on *In Dulci Jubilo* (BWV 729)

Johann Sebastian Bach (1685–1750)



If you enjoyed this year's Festival of Nine Lessons and Carols, please write to us at hello@voxcapetown.com or connect with us on social media @VOXCapeTown. We would love to hear from you!

Since 2016, Fine Music Radio has broadcast our Festival of Nine Lessons and Carols on Christmas Eve, bringing this unique celebration to a much wider audience. This year, the broadcast will commence at 7 PM and an order of service may be downloaded from our website, www.voxcapetown.com.

If you would like to take a souvenir home with you (a perfect stocking-filler!), our CDs are available afterwards. VOX Cape Town's recordings may also be found on all major streaming platforms.

We wish you and your family a safe, happy and music-filled festive season!

A Festival of Nine Lessons and Carols

with VOX Cape Town



Sunday 10 December 2023 at 10:30 AM

St Andrew's Presbyterian Church,
De Waterkant

Soprano: Suzanne Buchanan, Lia Hall, Fran Laenen, Maryanne McLachlan, Anthea van Wieringen, Vera Vuković
Alto: Tessa Gawith, Karen Hahne, Lesley Jennings, Sarah McArthur, Esma Pretorius, Jean Westwood, Karin-Marie Wilson
Tenor: Dane Bezuidenhout, Dirk Binneman, Peter Borchers, Casey Driver, Jennifer Matlock
Bass: Chris Arnold, Simon Hartley, Aaron Juritz, Kyle Paulssen, John Rennie, Stefan van der Westhuizen
Founder and Director: John Woodland
Organ: Mikyle Adams

The Festival of Nine Lessons and Carols tells the story of the fall of humanity, the promise of the Messiah and the birth of Jesus. It is told through nine short Bible readings interspersed with the singing of Christmas hymns and carols. The format was based on an order of service drawn up in 1880 which has since been adapted by churches all over the world. The best-known version is broadcast annually on Christmas Eve by the BBC from King's College, Cambridge.

Every December, VOX Cape Town presents a local adaptation of the Festival of Nine Lessons and Carols at St Andrew's Presbyterian Church, De Waterkant, continuing the tradition led for many years by Barry Smith and the St George's Singers.

About this year's music

This is VOX's eighth presentation of the Festival of Nine Lessons of Carols. It begins with the first of two traditional German tunes (*Come, Thou Redeemer Of The Earth*), setting an atmosphere of anticipation for the mystery that is to be presented before us. The second tune, better known in its original language ('Es ist ein Ros entsprungen'), is a much-loved Advent hymn from the late 16th century. The origin of the image of the rose has been the subject of much speculation; one apocryphal legend, for instance, tells of a monk who, on Christmas Eve, found a blooming rose while walking in the woods. He placed the rose in a vase on an altar to the Virgin Mary.

Also paying homage to the story of Mary is a musical setting of *Ave Generosa*, words attributed to Hildegard of Bingen (1098–1179), a German abbess and polymath from the High Middle Ages. The music was composed by Norwegian Ola Gjeilo as recently as 2017 and features a hauntingly joyful tonality and a beautiful modal middle section.

Two musical items are a nod to *Eternal Echoes*, one of the signature immersive performances presented by VOX earlier this year. The *Kontakion and Ikhos*, based on a Ukrainian Orthodox rite, includes a reference to the First Lesson ('Dust thou art, and unto dust shalt thou return'), providing a solemn *memento mori* and encouraging us to spare a thought for those caught up in the continuing conflicts in the world today. The famous setting of *Bogoroditse Djevo*, a hymn of earnest adoration from the *Vespers* section of the *All-Night Vigil* by Rachmaninoff, begins with careful restraint and eventually gives way to an unleashing of emotion and energy with the words: "Blessed is the fruit of thy womb, for thou hast brought forth the Saviour who redeemed our souls."

The heart of the service, the birth of Jesus in the manger, is celebrated with a lilting tune from Catalonia (*Sant Josep I La Mare De Déu*). As the news of Jesus's birth starts to spread, the music picks up in tempo and mood. Both the words and the tune of the *Sussex Carol* were discovered and written down by Cecil Sharp and Ralph Vaughan Williams who heard it being sung in a hamlet in Sussex (hence its name). Finally, in yet another diverse musical offering, the story of the journey of the Three Kings as they *Follow That Star* is related through an upbeat barbershop setting that will be sure to get your toes tapping!

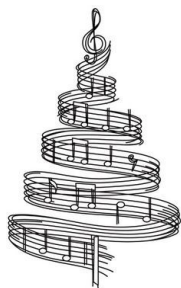


Organ Preludes

Fantasia on Veni Emmanuel

Siciliana on The Holly and the Ivy

Alec Rowley (1892–1958)



When sin departs before his grace,
Then life and health come in its place;
Angels and men with joy may sing,
All for to see the newborn King.

All out of darkness we have light,
Which made the angels sing this night:
'Glory to God and peace to men,
Now and for evermore. Amen.'

English traditional carol arranged by D. Willcocks

Eighth Lesson

The wise men are led by the star to Jesus.

St Matthew 2:1–12

Read by Anthea van Wieringen

Carol: Follow That Star

One dark and stormy evening,
Through the wind and rain,
There came a sight worth seeing,
'Cause it wasn't gonna happen again.

They'd seen a bright light in the sky,
Without knowing who, what, when, why,
They grabbed their gifts and off they went,
Three Kings!

They had to find the little town,
It was not easy to be found!
They don't know what they do,
They just follow that star!

Words and music by Peter Gritton (b. 1963, England)

PLEASE STAND

Ninth Lesson

St John unfolds the great mystery of the Incarnation.

St John 1:1–14

Read by Reverend Natalie Gordon

Hymn: O Come, All Ye Faithful

All 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!

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

All Sing, choirs of angels,
Sing in exultation,
Sing, all ye citizens of heav'n above;
Glory to God
In the highest:
Refrain

Carol: Sant Josep I La Mare De Déu

Mary, Mother of God's dear child,
With Saint Joseph made a journey.
'Twas from Nazareth they came;
It was as the sun was rising.
Mary is singing her baby to sleep.

All the day they travel far.
In the evening, faint and weary
They seek rest in Bethlehem;
But all folk their doors are closing.
Mary is singing her baby to sleep.

They have found no lodging there,
Far too poor they seem for pity.
They must seek a shelter mean
All of reeds and rushes woven.
Mary is singing her baby to sleep.

Now Saint Joseph finds wood for a fire,
Though the wood is far to carry.
In the cave, so dark, so cold,
Jesus Christ is born to Mary.
Mary is singing her baby to sleep.

*Words by J. Woodhouse
Traditional Catalan carol arranged by Pere Jorda*

Hymn: Stille Nag, Heilige Nag!

All Stille nag, heilige nag!
Jesus kind, lank verwag,
Lig uit lig, uit die Vader se ryk,
word uit liefde aan mense gelyk.
Loof die hemelse Kind!
Loof die hemelse Kind!

All Stille nag, heilige nag!
Hemelvors, ons gee ag
op die lied van die engelekoor.
Herders het dit die eerste gehoor:
Juig, die Redder is daar!
Juig, die Redder is daar!

All Stille nag, heilige nag!
Jesus, Heer, voor u mag,
voor u ryk moet die duisternis swig;
tot in ewigheid bly U die lig –
Heer, gebore vir ons!
Heer, gebore vir ons!

*Words by Joseph Mohr
Music by Franz Xavier Gruber
Afrikaans translation from Psalms en Gesange (1978)*

Seventh Lesson

The shepherds go to the manger.

St Luke 2:8–16

Read by Kyle Paulssen

Carol: Sussex Carol

On Christmas night all Christians sing,
To hear the news the angels bring,
News of great joy, news of great mirth,
News of our merciful King's birth.

Then why should men on earth be so sad,
Since our Redeemer made us glad,
When from our sin he set us free,
All for to gain our liberty?

PLEASE STAND

Hymn: Once In Royal David's City

Solo Once in royal David's city
Stood a lowly cattle shed,
Where a mother laid her baby
In a manger for his bed:
Mary was that mother mild,
Jesus Christ her little child.

Choir He came down to earth from heaven
Who is God and Lord of all,
And his shelter was a stable,
And his cradle was a stall;
With the poor and mean and lowly
Lived on earth our Saviour holy.

All And through all his wondrous childhood
He would honour and obey,
Love and watch the lowly maiden,
In whose gentle arms he lay:
Christian children all must be
Mild, obedient, good as he.

All For he is our childhood's pattern,
Day by day like us he grew,
He was little, weak and helpless,
Tears and smiles like us he knew:
And he feeleth for our sadness,
And he shareth in our gladness.

All And our eyes at last shall see him,
Through his own redeeming love,
For that child so dear and gentle
Is our Lord in heaven above;
And he leads his children on
To the place where he is gone.

All Not in that poor lowly stable,
With the oxen standing by,
We shall see him; but in heaven,
Set at God's right hand on high;
When like stars his children crowned
All in white shall wait around.

*Words by C. F. Alexander
Music by H. J. Gauntlett arranged by A. H. Mann/D. Willcocks*

The Bidding Prayer

PLEASE SIT

Carol: Come, Thou Redeemer Of The Earth

Come, thou Redeemer of the earth,
And manifest thy virgin-birth:
Let ev'ry age adoring fall;
Such birth befits the God of all.

Begotten of no human will,
But of the Spirit, thou art still
The Word of God in flesh arrayed,
The promised fruit to man displayed.

The virgin womb that burden gained
With virgin honour all unstained;
The banners there of virtue glow;
God in his temple dwells below.

Thy cradle here shall glitter bright,
And darkness glow with newer light,
Where endless faith shall shine serene,
And twilight never intervene.

All laud, eternal Son, to thee
Whose advent sets thy people free,
Whom with the Father we adore,
And Holy Ghost for evermore. Amen.

*Words by St Ambrose (340–397) translated by J. M. Neale
Traditional melody adapted by M. Praetorius and D. Willcocks*

First Lesson

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

Genesis 3:8–15, 17–19

Read by Aaron Juritz

Carol: Kontakion and Ikhos

Give rest, O Christ,
to thy servant with thy saints,
where sorrow and pain are no more;
neither sighing, but life everlasting.

Thou only are immortal,
the creator and maker of man;
and we are mortal, formed of the earth,
and unto earth shall we return;
for so thou didst ordain
when thou createdst me, saying:

'Dust thou art, and unto dust shalt thou return.'
All we go down to the dust,
and weeping o'er the grave we make our song:
Alleluia, alleluia, alleluia.

*Words from the Ukrainian Orthodox funeral rite
Melody from the Kyiv tradition transcribed by W. J. Birkbeck*

Second Lesson

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

Genesis 22:15–18

Read by Sarah McArthur

Carol: Ave Generosa

Hail, nobly born, hail, honoured and inviolate,
you, Maiden, are the piercing gaze of chastity,
you, the material of holiness –
the one who pleased God.

*Words by Hildegard von Bingen (c. 1098–1179)
Music by Ola Gjeilo (b. 1978, Norway)*

Third Lesson

The prophet foretells the coming of the Saviour.

Isaiah 9:2, 6–7

Read by Dirk Binneman

Hymn: Unto Us Is Born A Son

All Unto us is born a Son,
King of quires supernal:
See on earth his life begun,
Of lords the Lord eternal.

Choir Christ, from heav'n descending low,
Comes on earth a stranger;
Ox and ass their owner know,
Becradled in the manger.

Men This did Herod sore affray,
And grievously bewilder,
So he gave the word to slay,
And slew the little childer.

Ladies Of his love and mercy mild
This the Christmas story;
And O that Mary's gentle Child
Might lead us up to glory!

All O and A, and A and O,
Cum cantibus in choro,
Let our merry organ go,
Benedicamus Domino.

*Words translated by G. R. Woodward
Tune from Piae Cantiones (1582) arranged by D. Willcocks*

Fourth Lesson

The peace that Christ will bring is foreshown.

Isaiah 11:1–4, 6–9

Read by Suzanne Buchanan

Carol: Lo, How A Rose E'er Blooming

Lo, how a Rose e'er blooming
from tender stem hath sprung!
Of Jesse's lineage coming
as seers of old have sung.
It came, a blossom bright,
amid the cold of winter,
when half-spent was the night.

Isaiah 'twas foretold it,
the Rose I have in mind,
With Mary we behold it,
the Virgin Mother kind.
To show God's love aright,
she bore to us a Saviour,
when half-spent was the night.

O Flow'r, whose fragrance tender
with sweetness fills the air,
Dispel in glorious splendour
the darkness ev'rywhere.
True man, yet very God,
from sin and death now save us,
and share our ev'ry load.

*Words from 15th-century Germany translated by T. Baker
Traditional German carol harmonised by M. Praetorius (1571–1621)*

Fifth Lesson

The angel Gabriel salutes the Blessed Virgin Mary.

St Luke 1:26–35, 38

Read by Mikyle Adams

Carol: Bogoroditse Dïevo (from All-Night Vigil)

Virgin mother of God, hail, Mary, full of grace,
the Lord is with thee:
Blessed art thou among women,
and blessed is the fruit of thy womb,
For thou hast brought forth the Saviour
who redeemed our souls.

Music by Sergei Rachmaninoff (1873–1943)

Sixth Lesson

St Matthew tells of the birth of Jesus.

St Matthew 1:18–25

Read by Lesley Jennings