

A Celebration of Christmas

St. Christopher-by-the-Sea

Gibson Island, Maryland

December 24, 2024

Introduction – The Reverend Charles Rowins

Hymn 83 – O come, all ye faithful – stanzas 1 and 3

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.

Sing, choirs of angels, sing in exultation,
Sing, all ye citizens of heaven above;
Glory to God, glory in the highest;
O come, let us adore him, O come let us adore him,
O come, let us adore him, Christ, the Lord.

The Christmas Collect and Blessing of the Creche

O God, who hast caused this holy night to shine with the illumination of the true Light: Grant us, we beseech thee, that as we have known the mystery of that Light upon earth, so may we also perfectly enjoy him in heaven; where with thee and the Holy Spirit he lives and reigns, one God, in glory everlasting. *Amen.*

Dear Lord, we ask your blessing on this crèche, and we thank you deeply for the gift of your Son. Grant that the crèche and its figures continue to remind us of the sacrifices that parents make, the joy and hope that newborns bring to family and friends, and the love you, O god, have for you Creation. We offer our presence tonight in the Name of your Son and our Savior, Jesus Christ. *Amen.*

The Christmas Story in Lessons and Carols

Lesson 1 – Luke 1:26-33 – The birth of Jesus foretold

In the sixth month, God sent the angel Gabriel to Nazareth, a town in Galilee, to a virgin pledged to be married to a man named Joseph, a descendant of David. The virgin's name was Mary. The angels went to her and said, "Greeting, you who are highly favored! The Lord is with you. Mary was greatly troubled at his word and wondered what kind of greeting this might be. But the angel said to her, "Do not be afraid, Mary, you have found favor with God. You will be with child and give birth to a son. And you are to give him the name Jesus. He will be great and will be called the Son of the Most High. The Lord God will give him the throne of his father David, and he will reign over the house of Jacob forever; his kingdom will never end.

Hymn 89 – It came upon a midnight clear – stanzas 1 and 4

It came upon a midnight clear, that glorious song of old,
From angels bending near the earth to touch their harps of gold:
“Peace on the earth, good will to men, from heaven’s all gracious King.”
The world in solemn stillness lay to hear the angels sing.

For lo! The days are hastening on, by prophets seen of old,
When with the ever circling years shall come the time foretold,
When peace shall over all the earth its ancient splendors fling,
And all the world give back the song which now the angels sing.

Lesson 2 – Luke 2:1-7 – The birth of Jesus

In those days Caesar Augustus issued a decree that a census should be taken of the entire Roman world. This was the first census that took place while Quirinius was governor of Syria. And everyone went to his own town to register. So Joseph also went up from the town of Nazareth in Galilee to Judea, to Bethlehem the town of David, because he belonged to the house and line of David. He went there to register with Mary, who was pledged to be married to him and was expecting a child. While they were there, the time came for the baby to be born, and she gave birth to her firstborn, a son. She wrapped him in cloths and placed him in a manger, because there was not room for them in the inn.

Hymn 79 – O little town of Bethlehem – stanzas 1 and 5

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 tonight.

O Holy Child of Bethlehem, descend to us, we pray;
Cast out our sin and enter in, be born in us today.
We hear the Christmas angels the great glad tidings tell;
O come to us, abide with us, our Lord Emmanuel!

Lesson 3 – Luke 2:8-14 – The angel and the shepherds

And there were shepherds living out in the fields nearby, keeping watch over their flocks at night. An angel of the Lord appeared to them, and the glory of the Lord shone around them, and they were terrified. But the angel said to them, “Do not be afraid. I bring you good news of great joy that will be for all the people. Today in the town of David a Savior has been born to you; he is Christ the Lord. This will be a sign to you: You will find a baby wrapped in cloths and lying in a manger.” Suddenly a great company of the heavenly host appeared with the angel, praising God and saying, “Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace to men on whom his favor rests.”

Hymn 87 – Hark! the herald angels sing – stanzas 1 and 3

Hark! the herald angels sing glory to the newborn King!
Peace on earth and mercy mild, God and sinner reconciled!
Joyful, all ye nations, rise, join the triumph of the skies;
With the angelic host proclaim Christ is born in Bethlehem!
Hark! the herald angels sing glory to the new born King!

Mild he lays his glory by, born that we no more may die,
Born to raise us from the earth, born to give us second birth.
Risen with healing in his wings, light and life to all he brings,
Hail, the Sun of Righteousness! hail, the heaven-born Prince of Peace!
Hark! the herald angels sing glory to the newborn King!

Lesson 4 – Luke 2:15-20 – The shepherds visit Bethlehem

When the angels had left them and gone to heaven, the shepherds said to one another, “Let us go to Bethlehem and see this thing that has happened, which the Lord has told us about.” So they hurried off and found Mary and Joseph, and the baby, who was lying in the manger. When they had seen him, they spread the word concerning what had been told them about this child, and all who heard it were amazed at what the shepherd said to them. But Mary treasured up all these things and pondered them in her heart. The shepherds returned, glorifying and praising God for all these things they had heard and seen, which were just as they had been told.

Hymn 101 – Away in a manger – stanzas 1 and 3

Away in a manger, no crib for his bed,
the little Lord Jesus laid down his sweet head.
The stars in the bright sky looked down where he lay,
the little Lord Jesus asleep in the hay.

Be near me, Lord Jesus; I ask thee to stay
close by me for ever. And love me I pray.
Bless all the dear children in thy tender care,
And fit us for heaven to live with thee there.

Lesson 5 – Matthew 2:1-6 – The Wise Men see a star

After Jesus was born in Bethlehem in Judea, during the time of King Herod, Magi from the east came to Jerusalem and asked, “Where is the one who has been born King of the Jews? We saw his star in the east and have come to worship him. When King Herod heard this he was disturbed, and Jerusalem with him. When he had called together all the people’s chief priests and teachers of the law, he asked them where the Christ was to be born. “In Bethlehem in Judea,” they replied, “for this is what the prophet has written: “But you, Bethlehem, in the land of Judah, are by no means least among the rulers of Judah; for out of you will come a ruler who will be the shepherd of my people Israel.”

Hymn 109 – The First Nowell – stanzas 1 and 2

The first Nowell the angel did say
was to certain poor shepherds in fields as they lay;
in fields as they lay, keeping their sheep,
on a cold winter's night that was so deep.
Nowell, Nowell, Nowell, Nowell, born is the King of Israel.

They looked up and saw a star
shining in the east beyond them far,
and to the earth it gave great light,
and so it continued both day and night
Nowell, Nowell, Nowell, Nowell, born is the King of Israel.

Lesson 6 – Matthew 2:7-12 – The Wise Men visit the stable

Then Herod called the Magi secretly and found out from them the exact time the star had appeared. He sent them to Bethlehem and said, "Go and make a careful search for the child. As soon as you find him, report to me, so that I too may go and worship him." After they had heard the king, they went on their way, and the star they had seen in the east went ahead of them until it stopped over the place where the child was. When they saw the star, they were overjoyed. On coming to the house, they saw the child with his other Mary. And they bowed down and worshipped him. Then they opened their treasures and presented him with gifts of gold and of incense and of myrrh. And having been warned in a dream not to go back to Herod, they returned to their country by another route.

Hymn 115 – What child is this? – stanzas 1 and 3

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 Mary.

So bring him incense, gold and myrrh, come peasant, King, to own him;
The King of kings salvation brings, let loving hearts enthrone him;
This, this is Christ the King, whom shepherds guard and angels sing;
haste, haste to bring him laud, the babe, the son of Mary.

The Lord's Prayer

*Our Father, who art in heaven,
hallowed by 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.*

Hymn 111 – Silent Night – stanzas 1 and 2

*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!*

Dismissal

Alleluia! Alleluia! On this Holy Night, go in peace to love and serve the Lord.
Thanks be to God. Alleluia! Alleluia!

Lessons and Carols

December 24, 2024

St. Christopher-by-the-Sea

Gibson Island, Maryland