

# A FESTIVAL OF NINE LESSONS AND CAROLS

Christmas Eve 2020

## THE BIDDING PRAYER

Rev. Dr. Rob Bruce  
Lead Pastor, McEver Road UMC

## THE LORD'S PRAYER

Rev. Tyler Flowers  
Pastor, Flowery Branch UMC

## BLESSING

## TYLER'S CHRISTMAS STORY

FIRST LESSON            Genesis 3:8 -15, 17-19

God announces in the Garden of Eden  
Adam and Eve's punishment for their rebellion  
and that the seed of woman shall bruise the serpent's head.

CAROL                    Come, Thou Long-Expected Jesus

SECOND LESSON        Genesis 22:15 -18

God promises to Abraham that by his descendants  
all the nations of the earth shall obtain blessing.

CAROL                    O Come, O Come, Emmanuel

THIRD LESSON         Isaiah 9:2, 6-7

The prophet announces the birth of a king to a people in darkness.

CAROL                    Lo, How a Rose E'er Blooming

FOURTH LESSON        Isaiah 11:1 -4a, 6-9 or Micah 5:2 -5a

The king is coming and will usher in a reign of justice for the poor  
and peace for all of God's creation.

CAROL                    O Come, All Ye Faithful

FIFTH LESSON         Luke 1:26 -35, 38

The angel Gabriel announces to the virgin Mary  
that she will give birth to God's promised Son  
whose kingdom shall never end.

CAROL                    Ave Maria

SIXTH LESSON            Luke 2:1 -7

Against a backdrop of emperors and taxes,  
Jesus is born.

CAROL                    O Holy Night

SEVENTH LESSON       Luke 2:8 -16

The shepherds go to see the Savior of the world, lying in a manger.

CAROL                    The First Noel

EIGHTH LESSON        Matthew 2:1 -11

The wise men follow a star to find the child Jesus, the King of the Jews.

CAROL                    We Three Kings

NINTH LESSON         John 1:1 -14

John unfolds the great mystery of the Incarnation.

CAROL                    Joy to the World

## Christmas Eve Communion

*(Please read aloud in unison the text printed in bold.)*

### **INVITATION AND CONFESSION**

We are experiencing Holy Communion in a new way today. Though physically separated from one another, we are still bound together as family through our baptism. As members of the household of God we now join together virtually, yet still present to one another as we gather from across the miles. This presence is marked by our shared praises and prayers, our shared hearing and affirming of God's word, and now our shared eating.

Paul's letter to the Hebrews includes a wonderful word: "Do not neglect to show hospitality to strangers, for by doing that some have entertained angels without knowing it." As we enter this Holy Season of Christmas, it is right and good that we gather at the table of Jesus Christ, whose ministry was centered in showing hospitality—inviting us all, no matter whether we feel at home in our faith or at times feel like strangers, to know the grace of God that is already and always awaiting us if we will but open to it. Let us set aside any hesitation, any obstacle to the invitation. In this silence, we offer to God our confession of the ways we turn away from the fullness of love.

***Silence***

## **ABSOLUTION**

Know this: The things you have confessed before God, and even those things you have no words for at this moment, are all being lifted away on the wings of God's love.

Be assured of your freedom as forgiven and beloved children of the Most Gracious God,  
And all God's people say, "**Amen!**"

The Lord be with you.

**And also with you.**

Lift up your hearts.

**We lift them up to the Lord.**

Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.

**It is right to give our thanks and praise.**

It is right, and a good and joyful thing, always and everywhere to give thanks to you, Almighty God, creator of heaven and earth. You created light out of darkness and brought forth life on the earth. You formed us in your image and breathed into us the breath of life. When we turned away, and our love failed, your love remained steadfast. You delivered us from captivity, made covenant to be our sovereign God, and spoke to us through your prophets.

In the fullness of time, you gave your only Son Jesus Christ to be our Savior, and at his birth the angels sang glory to you in the highest and peace to your people on earth. And so, with your people on earth and all the company of heaven, we praise your name and join their unending hymn:

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

Holy are you, and blessed is your Son Jesus Christ. As Mary and Joseph went from Galilee to Bethlehem and there found no room, so Jesus went from Galilee to Jerusalem and was despised and rejected. As in the poverty of a stable Jesus was born, so by the baptism of his suffering, death, and resurrection you gave birth to your Church, delivered us from slavery to sin and death, and made with us a new covenant by water and the Spirit.

As your Word became flesh, born of woman, on that night long ago, so, on the night in which he gave himself up for us, he took bread, gave thanks to you, broke the bread, gave it to his disciples, and said: "Take, eat; this is my body which is given for you. Do this in remembrance of me." When the supper was over, he took the cup, gave thanks to you, gave it to his disciples, and said: "Drink from this, all of you; this is my blood of the new covenant, poured out for you and for many for the forgiveness of sins. Do this, as often as you drink it, in remembrance of me."

And so, in remembrance of these your mighty acts in Jesus Christ, we offer ourselves in praise and thanksgiving as a holy and living sacrifice, in union with Christ's offering for us, as we proclaim the mystery of faith.

**Christ has died; Christ is risen; Christ will come again.**

We are one bread, one body, one cup of blessing. Though we are many throughout the earth, and this church community is scattered, in your many kitchens, and living rooms, rest your hands lightly upon these elements which we set aside today to be a sacrament. Let us ask God's blessing upon them.

Pour out your Holy Spirit on us gathered here, and on these gifts of bread and wine. Make them be for us the body and blood of Christ, that we may be for the world the body of Christ, redeemed by his blood. By your Spirit make us one with Christ, one with each other, and one in ministry to all the world, until Christ comes in final victory, and we feast at his heavenly banquet. Through your Son Jesus Christ, with the Holy Spirit in your holy Church, all honor and glory is yours, almighty Father, now and forever. **Amen.**

### **SHARING OF THE ELEMENTS**

Let us in our many places receive the gift of God, the Bread of Heaven. We are one in Christ in the bread we share. Let us in our many places receive the gift of God, the Cup of Blessing. We are One in Christ in the cup we share.

## Sending Forth

HYMN

SILENT NIGHT (*light candles as you sing*)

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!

Silent night, holy night, wondrous star, lend thy light;  
With the angels let us sing, Alleluia to our King;  
Christ the Savior is born, Christ the savior is born!

### **DISMISSAL WITH BLESSING**