An Advent Festival of Lessons and Music

The Third Sunday of Advent
December 4, 2022
Welcome to ‘Old Durham’ Church! You are welcome here for worship, service,- and fellowship in the name of our Lord, Jesus Christ. Today we gather in a manner mindful of our responsibility to protect the health and well-being of one another. Please see the current list of our health-protection measures on the announcement sheet. If you have questions, feel free to raise them with Rev. Catharine.

This morning, instead of our usual celebration of Holy Eucharist, we will listen to Scripture and sing songs of the Advent season as we reflect on God’s saving grace as it comes to us in the person of Jesus Christ.

This church is part of the Episcopal Diocese of Washington, and has been feeding souls on this site for over 350 years. It is our prayer that you will encounter God’s love, peace, and hope here.

Our historic church building has no running water. Restrooms are located in the Parish Hall, across the parking lot from the church.

Standing, sitting, and kneeling: All directions to stand, sit, or kneel are to be understood “as able.” In the Episcopal tradition it is most common to stand for praise and prayer, sit to listen and learn, and kneel to express humility and penitence.

MINISTERS IN TODAY’S SERVICE
The Advent Festival of Lessons and Carols has become a beloved tradition in the Anglican tradition. It was first offered in 1934 at King’s College, Cambridge, in England. Its original compiler, Dean Eric Milner-White wrote that the purpose of the service is “not to celebrate Christmas, but to expect it.”

Unlike our usual Sunday morning celebrations of Holy Eucharist, this service does not include either Communion or any discussion of the scriptures. Instead it offers us a more reflective experience, an opportunity to listen as salvation history is recounted from the Garden of Eden to the promised advent of the Savior.

The word ‘Advent’ means ‘arrival’, or ‘coming’, and the church season of Advent focuses on the theme of Christ’s coming(s) to earth. Traditionally this has been understood to be a three-fold ‘coming’: his coming in history as the baby Jesus, his coming in majesty at the end of time to judge the world, and in between, his coming in mystery into the hearts of the faithful. St. Bernard of Clairvaux, who is credited with articulating these three advents as Christ’s coming “in history, mystery, and majesty” wrote this in a sermon in the 12th century:

In his first coming our Lord came in our flesh and in our weakness; in this middle coming he comes in spirit and in power; in the final coming he will be seen in glory and majesty. Because this [middle] coming lies between the other two, it is like a road on which we travel from the first coming to the last. In the first, Christ was our redemption; in the last, he will appear as our life; in this middle coming, he is our rest and consolation.
Advent Festival
of Lessons and Carols

OPENING HYMN
Blue Hymnal #56 O Come, O Come, Emmanuel (vv. 1-4)

BIDDING
Beloved in Christ, as we await the great festival of Christmas, let it be our care and delight to prepare ourselves so that we may be shown its true meaning. Let us read and mark in lessons from Holy Scripture how the prophets of Israel foretold that God would visit and redeem God’s waiting people. Let us rejoice, in our carols and hymns, that the good purpose of God is being mightily fulfilled. Let us celebrate the promise that our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ, will bring all people and all things into the glory of God’s eternal kingdom. The blind receive their sight, and the lame walk, the lepers are cleansed, and the deaf hear, the dead are raised up, and the poor have good news preached to them. But first, let us pray for the world which God so loves, for those who have not heard the good news of God, or who do not believe it; for those who walk in darkness and the shadow of death; and for the Church in this place and everywhere, that it may be freed from all evil and fear, and may in pure joy lift up the light of the love of God. Please add your own prayers of thanksgiving or of concern, either silently or aloud. Pause. These prayers and praises let us humbly offer to God in the words which Christ himself taught us:

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,
forever and ever. Amen.
THE FIRST LESSON: Genesis 2:4b-9,15-25

God creates humanity to live in obedience to God in the Garden of Eden

Gen 2:4 In the day that the LORD God made the earth and the heavens, 5 when no plant of the field was yet in the earth and no herb of the field had yet sprung up—for the LORD God had not caused it to rain upon the earth, and there was no one to till the ground; 6 but a stream would rise from the earth, and water the whole face of the ground—7 then the LORD God formed man from the dust of the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and the man became a living being. 8 And the LORD God planted a garden in Eden, in the east; and there he put the man whom he had formed. 9 Out of the ground the LORD God made to grow every tree that is pleasant to the sight and good for food, the tree of life also in the midst of the garden, and the tree of the knowledge of good and evil.

15 The LORD God took the man and put him in the garden of Eden to till it and keep it. 16 And the LORD God commanded the man, “You may freely eat of every tree of the garden; 17 but of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil you shall not eat, for in the day that you eat of it you shall die.”

18 Then the LORD God said, “It is not good that the man should be alone; I will make him a helper as his partner.” 19 So out of the ground the LORD God formed every animal of the field and every bird of the air, and brought them to the man to see what he would call them; and whatever the man called every living creature, that was its name. 20 The man gave names to all cattle, and to the birds of the air, and to every animal of the field; but for the man there was not found a helper as his partner. 21 So the LORD God caused a deep sleep to fall upon the man, and he slept; then he took one of his ribs and closed up its place with flesh. 22 And the rib that the LORD God had taken from the man he made into a woman and brought her to the man. 23 Then the man said,

“This at last is bone of my bones and flesh of my flesh; this one shall be called Woman, for out of Man this one was taken.”

24 Therefore a man leaves his father and his mother and clings to his wife, and they become one flesh. 25 And the man and his wife were both naked, and were not ashamed.

HYMN

Blue Hymnal # 59 Hark! a thrilling voice is sounding
THE SECOND LESSON: Genesis 3:1-15

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

Gen 3:1  Now the serpent was more crafty than any other wild animal that the LORD God had made. He said to the woman, “Did God say, ‘You shall not eat from any tree in the garden?’” 2 The woman said to the serpent, “We may eat of the fruit of the trees in the garden; 3 but God said, ‘You shall not eat of the fruit of the tree that is in the middle of the garden, nor shall you touch it, or you shall 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, who was with her, 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 loincloths for themselves. 8 They 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. 9 But the LORD God called to the man, and said to him, “Where are you?” 10 He said, “I heard the sound of you 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 from the tree of which I commanded you not to eat?” 12 The man said, “The woman whom you gave to be with me, she gave me fruit from 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 tricked me, and I ate.” 14 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. 15 I will put enmity between you and the woman, and between your offspring and hers; he will strike your head, and you will strike his heel.”

HYMN
Blue Hymnal #60 (verses 1-3) Creator of the stars of night
THE THIRD LESSON: Isaiah 40:1-11
God comforts God’s people and calls on them to prepare for redemption

Isa 40:1   Comfort, O comfort my people, says your God.

2   Speak tenderly to Jerusalem,
and cry to her that she has served her term, that her penalty is paid, that she has received from the LORD’s hand double for all her sins.

3   A voice cries out: “In the wilderness prepare the way of the LORD, make straight in the desert a highway for our God.

4   Every valley shall be lifted up, and every mountain and hill be made low; the uneven ground shall become level, and the rough places a plain.

5   Then the glory of the LORD shall be revealed, and all people shall see it together, for the mouth of the Lord has spoken.”

6   A voice says, “Cry out!” And I said, “What shall I cry?” All people are grass, their constancy is like the flower of the field.

7   The grass withers, the flower fades, when the breath of the LORD blows upon it; surely the people are grass.

8   The grass withers, the flower fades; but the word of our God will stand forever.

9   Get you up to a high mountain, O Zion, herald of good tidings; lift up your voice with strength, O Jerusalem, herald of good tidings, lift it up, do not fear; say to the cities of Judah, “Here is your God!”

10  See, the Lord GOD comes with might, and his arm rules for him; his reward is with him, and his recompense before him.

11  He will feed his flock like a shepherd; he will gather the lambs in his arms, and carry them in his bosom, and gently lead the mother sheep.

HYMN
Blue Hymnal #67 Comfort, comfort ye my people.
Congregation sings verses 1 & 3; choir sings verse 2 alone.
Zeke Busey, tambourine.
THE FOURTH LESSON: Isaiah 35:1-10

The prophet proclaims that God will come and save us

Isa 35:1  The wilderness and the dry land shall be glad, the desert shall rejoice and blossom; like the crocus

2 it shall blossom abundantly, and rejoice with joy and singing. The glory of Lebanon shall be given to it, the majesty of Carmel and Sharon. They shall see the glory of the LORD, the majesty of our God.

3 Strengthen the weak hands, and make firm the feeble knees.

4 Say to those who are of a fearful heart, “Be strong, do not fear! Here is your God. He will come with vengeance, with terrible recompense. He will come and save you.”

5 Then the eyes of the blind shall be opened, and the ears of the deaf unstopped;

6 then the lame shall leap like a deer, and the tongue of the speechless sing for joy. For waters shall break forth in the wilderness, and streams in the desert;

7 the burning sand shall become a pool, and the thirsty ground springs of water; the haunt of jackals shall become a swamp, the grass shall become reeds and rushes.

8 A highway shall be there, and it shall be called the Holy Way; the unclean shall not travel on it, but it shall be for God’s people; no traveler, not even fools, shall go astray.

9 No lion shall be there, nor shall any ravenous beast come up on it; they shall not be found there, but the redeemed shall walk there.

10 And the ransomed of the LORD shall return, and come to Zion with singing; everlasting joy shall be upon their heads; they shall obtain joy and gladness, and sorrow and sighing shall flee away.

ANTHEM

‘Keep your lamps trimmed and burning’

African-American spiritual
Arranged by Lloyd Larson
THE FIFTH LESSON: Baruch 4:36—5:9

The Scribe Baruch urges the people to look East because salvation is at hand

Bar 4:36  Look toward the east, O Jerusalem,
and see the joy that is coming to you from God.

37  Look, your children are coming, whom you sent away;
they are coming, gathered from east and west,
at the word of the Holy One,
rejoicing in the glory of God.

5:1  Take off the garment of your sorrow and affliction, O Jerusalem,
and put on forever the beauty of the glory from God.

2  Put on the robe of the righteousness that comes from God;
put on your head the diadem of the glory of the Everlasting;

3  for God will show your splendor everywhere under heaven.

4  For God will give you evermore the name,
“Righteous Peace, Godly Glory.”

5  Arise, O Jerusalem, stand upon the height;
look toward the east,
and see your children gathered from west and east
at the word of the Holy One,
rejoicing that God has remembered them.

6  For they went out from you on foot,
led away by their enemies;
but God will bring them back to you,
carried in glory, as on a royal throne.

7  For God has ordered that every high mountain and the everlasting hills be made low
and the valleys filled up, to make level ground,
so that Israel may walk safely in the glory of God.

8  The woods and every fragrant tree
have shaded Israel at God’s command.

9  For God will lead Israel with joy,
in the light of his glory,
with the mercy and righteousness that come from him.
HYMN: People, Look East (verses 1, 4, & 5)

1. People, look East. The time is near of the crowning of the
year. Make your house fair as you are able, trim the hearth and set the
1. ta - ble. Peo - ple, look East and sing to - day: Love the guest
1. flour - ish. Peo - ple, look East and sing to - day: Love the rose
1. cho - sen. Peo - ple, look East and sing to - day: Love the bird
1. geth - er. Peo - ple, look East and sing to - day: Love the star
1. com - ing. Peo - ple, look East and sing to - day: Love the Lord

2. Fur - rows, be glad. Though earth is bare, one more seed is planted
there: give up your strength the seed to nour - ish, that in course the flow'r may filled. Even the hour when wings are frozen God for fledgling time has

3. Birds, though you long have ceased to build, guard the nest that must be brim, shin - ing beyond the frosty weather, bright as sun and moon to -

4. Stars, keep the watch. When night is dim one more light the bowl shall earth. Set ev - ery peak and val - ley hum - ming with the word, the Lord is

5. An - gels, an - nounce with shouts of mirth Christ who brings new life to


THE SIXTH LESSON: Isaiah 65:17-25

God promises a new heaven and a new earth

Isa 65:17 For I am about to create new heavens and a new earth; the former things shall not be remembered or come to mind.
18 But be glad and rejoice forever in what I am creating; for I am about to create Jerusalem as a joy, and its people as a delight.
19 I will rejoice in Jerusalem, and delight in my people; no more shall the sound of weeping be heard in it, or the cry of distress.
20 No more shall there be in it an infant that lives but a few days, or an old person who does not live out a lifetime; for one who dies at a hundred years will be considered a youth, and one who falls short of a hundred will be considered accursed.
21 They shall build houses and inhabit them; they shall plant vineyards and eat their fruit.
22 They shall not build and another inhabit; they shall not plant and another eat; for like the days of a tree shall the days of my people be, and my chosen shall long enjoy the work of their hands.
23 They shall not labor in vain, or bear children for calamity; for they shall be offspring blessed by the LORD—and their descendants as well.
24 Before they call I will answer, while they are yet speaking I will hear.
25 The wolf and the lamb shall feed together, the lion shall eat straw like the ox; but the serpent—its food shall be dust!

HYMN

Blue Hymnal #68 Rejoice! rejoice, believers
THE SEVENTH LESSON: Jeremiah 31:31-34

God offers the promise of a new covenant with God’s people

The days are surely coming, says the LORD, when I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel and the house of Judah. It will not be like the covenant that I made with their ancestors when I took them by the hand to bring them out of the land of Egypt—a covenant that they broke, though I was their husband, says the LORD. But this is the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel after those days, says the LORD: I will put my law within them, and I will write it on their hearts; and I will be their God, and they shall be my people. No longer shall they teach one another, or say to each other, “Know the LORD,” for they shall all know me, from the least of them to the greatest, says the LORD; for I will forgive their iniquity, and remember their sin no more.

HYMN

Blue Hymnal #54 Savior of the nations, come!

THE EIGHTH LESSON: Micah 5:2-4

The prophet Micah announces that salvation will arise from the little town of Bethlehem.

But you, O Bethlehem of Ephrathah, who are one of the little clans of Judah, from you shall come forth for me one who is to rule in Israel, whose origin is from of old, from ancient days. Therefore he shall give them up until the time when she who is in labor has brought forth; then the rest of his kindred shall return to the people of Israel. And he shall stand and feed his flock in the strength of the LORD, in the majesty of the name of the LORD his God. And they shall live secure, for now he shall be great o the ends of the earth;

ANTHEM: ‘Celtic Advent Carol’

by David Angerman and Michael Barrett


The Angel Gabriel announces to the Virgin Mary that she will bear the Son of the Most High.

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.” Mary said to the angel, “How can this be, since I am a virgin?” 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 will be holy; he will be called Son of God. And now, your relative Elizabeth in her old age has also conceived a son; and this is the sixth month for her who was said to be barren. For nothing will be impossible with God.” 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. And Mary said, “My soul magnifies the Lord, and my spirit rejoices in God my Savior, for he has looked with favor on the lowliness of his servant. Surely, from now on all generations will call me blessed; for the Mighty One has done great things for me, and holy is his name. His mercy is for those who fear him from generation to generation. He has shown strength with his arm; he has scattered the proud in the thoughts of their hearts. He has brought down the powerful from their thrones, and lifted up the lowly; he has filled the hungry with good things, and sent the rich away empty. He has helped his servant Israel, in remembrance of his mercy, according to the promise he made to our ancestors, to Abraham and to his descendants forever.”

HOMILY
COLLECTS
Almighty God, give us grace that we may cast away the works of darkness, and put upon us the armor of light, now in the time of this mortal life in which thy Son Jesus Christ came to visit us in great humility; that in the last day, when he shall come again in his glorious majesty to judge both the quick and the dead, we may rise to the life immortal; through him who liveth and reigneth with thee and the Holy Ghost, one God, now and for ever. Amen.

Stir up thy power, O Lord, and with great might come among us; and, because we are sorely hindered by our sins, let thy bountiful grace and mercy speedily help and deliver us; through Jesus Christ our Lord, to whom, with thee and the Holy Ghost, be honor and glory, world without end. Amen.

BLESSING
CLOSING HYMN
Hymnal 56 (verses 5 – 8) O Come, O Come, Emmanuel

DISMISSAL
A NOTE ON THE COVER IMAGE

“Shower, O heavens, from above, and let the skies rain down righteousness; let the earth open, that salvation may spring up, and let it cause righteousness to sprout up also.”—Isaiah 45:8

This Bible verse has traditionally been part of the early morning prayers of the church during Advent. It expresses the longing and hope we feel in Advent for God to come and set things right in our world. This verse has been sung for centuries by Christians watching for the dawn of a new era. Many beautiful musical settings of it have been written, and can be found online. What might it look like if the skies rained down righteousness and salvation sprang up from the ground right here in Charles County?
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