

First Presbyterian Church

AUGUSTA, GEORGIA



CHRISTMAS EVENSONG

FESTIVAL OF LESSONS AND CAROLS

December 10, 2023

4:30 & 6:30 p.m.

The First Lesson Isaiah 40:1-5
Jesse Tant

Comfort, comfort my people, says your God. Speak tenderly to Jerusalem,
and cry to her that her warfare is ended, that her iniquity is pardoned, that
she has received from the Lord's hand double for all her sins.

A voice cries: "In the wilderness prepare the way of the Lord; make straight in the
desert a highway for our God. 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. And the glory of the Lord shall be revealed, and all flesh shall see it
together, for the mouth of the Lord has spoken."

All: Thanks be to God.

The Opening Carol

O Come, O Come, Emmanuelarr. Shaw/Parker
Chancel Choir

O come, O come, Emmanuel, and ransom captive Israel,
That mourns in lonely exile here, until the Son of God appear.
Rejoice! Rejoice! Emmanuel shall come to thee, O Israel.

O come, thou Dayspring come and cheer our spirits by thine advent here;
Disperse the gloomy clouds of night, and death's dark shadows put to flight.
Rejoice! Rejoice! Emmanuel shall come to thee, O Israel.

O come, thou Key of David come, and open wide our heav'nly home;
Make safe the way that leads on high, and close the path to misery.
Rejoice! Rejoice! Emmanuel shall come to thee, O Israel.

The Processional

Hark! The Herald Angels Singarr. T. Ricketts
Orchestra

†*The Call to Worship*

Beloved in Christ, at 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 unto Bethlehem and see this thing which is come to pass, and the Babe lying in the manger.

Therefore 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.

But first, let us pray for the needs of the whole world: for peace on earth and goodwill among all his people, for unity and brotherhood within the Church he came to build, and especially in our own community.

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

Lastly, let us remember before God all those who rejoice with us, but upon another shore and in a greater light, that multitude which no man can number, whose hope was in the Word made flesh, and with whom in the Lord Jesus we are one forevermore.

These prayers and praises let us humbly offer up to the throne of heaven in the words which Christ himself has taught us:

†*The Lord's Prayer*

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 debts, as we forgive our debtors.

And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil.

For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory forever. Amen.

†*The Carol*

O Come, All Ye FaithfulADESTE FIDELIS, HYMN #208

Choirs and Congregation

The Second Lesson..... Micah 5:2-5

Dolly Jones

But you, O Bethlehem Ephrathah, who are too little to be among the clans of Judah, from you shall come forth for me one who is to be ruler in Israel, whose coming forth is from of old, from ancient days. Therefore he shall give them up until the time when she who is in labor has given birth; then the rest of his brothers shall return to the people of Israel. And he shall stand and shepherd his flock in the strength of the Lord, in the majesty of the name of the Lord his God. And they shall dwell secure, for now he shall be great to the ends of the earth. And he shall be their peace.

All: Thanks be to God.

The Carol

Once in Royal David's City..... arr. C. Kirkland

Combined Choirs and Congregation (on 4th Stanza)

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.

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 Savior holy.

Jesus 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.

(Congregation Sings)

**†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.**

Alleluia, alleluia, amen!

The Third Lesson.....Isaiah 9:1-2, 6-7

Chip Fisher

But there will be no gloom for her who was in anguish. In the former time he brought into contempt the land of Zebulun and the land of Naphtali, but in the latter time he has made glorious the way of the sea, the land beyond the Jordan, Galilee of the nations.

The people who walked in darkness have seen a great light;
those who dwelt in a land of deep darkness, on them has light shone.

For to us a child is born, to us a son is given; and the government shall be upon his shoulder, and his name shall be called Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace.

Of the increase of his government and of peace there will be no end,
on 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 forevermore.
The zeal of the Lord of hosts will do this.

All: Thanks be to God.

The Carol

Sing We Now of Christmasarr. M. Hayes

Youth Choir

Sing we now of Christmas, Noel sing we here. Hear our joyful praises, echoing
bright and clear. Lift up your voice, O let the world rejoice!
Sing we now of Christmas, Noel sing we here.

Sing we now of Christmas, Noel sing we here. Spread the yuletide spirit, comfort,
and good cheer. Sing out with gladness, banish any sadness.
Sing we now of Christmas, Noel sing we here.

Sing we now of Christmas, join the glad refrain, all the earth rejoices, hope is born
again. Peace, good will to all, resounds the welcome call.
Sing we now of Christmas, Noel sing we here.

Sing we all Noel, sing we all Noel. Gladsome are the tidings that we tell. Sing we all
Noel, sing we all Noel. Joyfully we sing to you Noel, sing we all Noel.
O sing Noel, sing Noel!

Sing we now of Christmas, let the anthem ring. Glory in the highest, hear the
angels sing. Join with all creation, songs of jubilation.
Sing we now of Christmas, Noel sing we here.

The Fourth Lesson Luke 2:1-7

Liz Reid

In those days a decree went out from Caesar Augustus that all the world should be registered. This was the first registration when Quirinius was governor of Syria. And all went to be registered, each to his own town. And Joseph also went up from Galilee, from the town of Nazareth, to Judea, to the city of David, which is called Bethlehem, because he was of the house and lineage of David, to be registered with Mary, his betrothed, who was with child. And while they were there, the time came for her to give birth. And she gave birth to her firstborn son and wrapped him in swaddling cloths and laid him in a manger, because there was no place for them in the inn.

All: Thanks be to God.

The Carol

See Amid the Winter's Snow arr. D. Forrest

Chancel Choir

Alleluia. See amid the winter's snow, born for us on earth below,
See the tender lamb appears, promised from eternal years.
Hail, that ever blessed morn, hail redemption's happy dawn,
Sing through all Jerusalem: "Christ is born in Bethlehem."

Alleluia, alleluia. Lo, within a manger lies he who built the lofty skies,
He, who throned in light sublime, sits amid the cherubim.
Hail, that ever blessed morn, hail redemption's happy dawn,
Sing through all Jerusalem: "Christ is born in Bethlehem."

Alleluia, alleluia, alleluia. Sacred infant, all divine, what a tender love was thine.
Thus to come from highest bliss, down to such a world as this.
Hail, that ever blessed morn, hail redemption's happy dawn,
Sing through all Jerusalem: "Christ is born in Bethlehem."
Alleluia.

The Fifth LessonLuke 2:8-14

Gideon Mills

And in the same region there were shepherds out in the field, keeping watch over their flock by night. And an angel of the Lord appeared to them, and the glory of the Lord shone around them, and they were filled with great fear. And the angel said to them, “Fear not, for behold, I bring you good news of great joy that will be for all the people. For unto you is born this day in the city of David a Savior, who is Christ the Lord. And this will be a sign for you: you will find a baby wrapped in swaddling cloths and lying in a manger.” And suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host praising God and saying, “Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace among those with whom he is pleased!”

All: Thanks be to God.

The Carol

Gloria.....A. Vivaldi

Chancel Choir

Gloria, gloria, gloria in excelsis Deo! (Glory to God in the Highest!)

The Sixth Lesson..... John 1:1-18

Charis McHeard

In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was in the beginning with God. All things were made through him, and without him was not any thing made that was made. In him was life, and the life was the light of men. The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness has not overcome it.

There was a man sent from God, whose name was John. He came as a witness, to bear witness about the light, that all might believe through him. He was not the light, but came to bear witness about the light.

The true light, which gives light to everyone, was coming into the world. He was in the world, and the world was made through him, yet the world did not know him. He came to his own, and his own people did not receive him. But to all who did receive him, who believed in his name, he gave the right to become children of God, who were born, not of blood nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God.

And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, and we have seen his glory, glory as of the only Son from the Father, full of grace and truth. (John bore witness about him, and cried out, "This was he of whom I said, 'He who comes after me ranks before me, because he was before me.'") For from his fullness we have all received, grace upon grace. For the law was given through Moses; grace and truth came through Jesus Christ. No one has ever seen God; the only God, who is at the Father's side, he has made him known.

All: Thanks be to God.

The Carol

All on a Silent Night..... B. Mayo

Canterbury Choir

On a silent, holy night, a bright shining star will lend heaven's light.
Voices of angels joyfully sing a sweet alleluia to the King;
all on this silent, holy night, all on this silent, holy night.

Silent night, holy night, all is calm and all is bright.
Round yon virgin mother and child, holy infant so tender and mild,
Sleep in heavenly peace, sleep in heavenly peace.

The Seventh Lesson Matthew 2:1-11

John Steketee

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

“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 shepherd my people Israel.”

Then Herod summoned the wise men secretly and ascertained from them what time the star had appeared. And 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.” After listening to the king, they went on their way. And behold, the star that they had seen when it rose went before them until it came to rest over the place where the child was. When they saw the star, they rejoiced exceedingly with great joy. And 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.

All: Thanks be to God.

The Carol

Carol of the Drum K. Davis

Chancel Choir

Come, they told me, a newborn king to see.
Our finest gifts we bring to lay before the king,
So to honor him when we come.

Little baby, I am a poor boy too.
I have no gifts to bring that's fit to give a king.
Shall I play for you on my drum?

Mary nodded. The ox and lamb kept time.
I played my drum for him. I played my best for him.
Then, he smiled at me. Me and my drum.

The Eighth Lesson Luke 2:15-20

Ella Ayers

When 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.” And they went with haste and found Mary and Joseph, and the baby lying in a manger. And when they saw it, they made known the saying that had been told them concerning this child. And all who heard it wondered at what the shepherds told them. But Mary treasured up all these things, pondering them in her heart. And the shepherds returned, glorifying and praising God for all they had heard and seen, as it had been told them.

All: Thanks be to God.

The Carol

Rise Up, Shepherd, and Follow!arr. M. Hayes

Chancel Choir

Rise up, shepherd, rise up, shepherd, rise up, shepherd, and follow!
There's a star in the East on Christmas morn; rise up, shepherd, and follow!
It will lead to the place where the Savior's born; rise up, shepherd, and follow!
Leave your sheep and leave your lambs; rise up, shepherd, and follow!
Leave your ewes and leave your rams; rise up, shepherd, and follow!

Follow, follow! Rise up, shepherd, and follow!
Follow the star of Bethlehem; rise up, shepherd, and follow, follow!
Follow, follow that star!

Pastoral Prayer and Evening Offering

Ways to Give

- Online via the First Presbyterian Augusta app
- Text “Give \$” followed by the gift amount to 706.550.6813
- Mail checks to 615 Telfair Street, Augusta, Georgia, 30901

†*The Carol*

Hark! The Herald Angels Sing MENDELSSOHN, HYMN #203
Combined Choirs and Congregation

The Ninth Lesson Luke 2:25–35

4:30 – Dr. Michael Hearon, 6:30 – Dr. Ken McHeard

Now there was a man in Jerusalem, whose name was Simeon, and this man was righteous and devout, waiting for the consolation of Israel, and the Holy Spirit was upon him. And it had been revealed to him by the Holy Spirit that he would not see death before he had seen the Lord's Christ. And he came in the Spirit into the temple, and when the parents brought in the child Jesus, to do for him according to the custom of the Law, he took him up in his arms and blessed God and said,

“Lord, now you are letting your servant depart in peace,
according to your word;
for my eyes have seen your salvation
that you have prepared in the presence of all peoples,
a light for revelation to the Gentiles,
and for glory to your people Israel.”

And his father and his mother marveled at what was said about him. And Simeon blessed them and said to Mary his mother, “Behold, this child is appointed for the fall and rising of many in Israel, and for a sign that is opposed (and a sword will pierce through your own soul also), so that thoughts from many hearts may be revealed.”

All: Thanks be to God.

The Carol

Nunc Dimitis..... R. Scholz
Chancel Choir

Lord, now lettest thou thy servant depart in peace,
Lord, now lettest thou thy servant depart in peace, according to thy word;
for mine eyes have seen thy salvation, which thou has prepared before the face of all people. A light to lighten the Gentiles, and to be the glory of thy people Israel.
Lord, now lettest thou thy servant depart in peace, depart in peace.

†*The Benediction*

May he, who by his incarnation gathered into one thing earthly and heavenly, fill you with the sweetness of inward peace and goodwill; and the blessing of God Almighty, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit be upon you and remain with you always. Amen.

The Postlude

Joy to the Worldarr. A. Harris
Orchestra

Dr. W. Leigh Fleury, Director, Chancel and Youth Choirs, Orchestra
Melissa Schultz, Director, Canterbury Choir

The Orchestra

Ryan Kho, violin 1, concertmaster	Jay Rising, clarinet
Damir Horvat, violin 1	Joy Hoffman, bassoon
Jonathan Aceto, violin 2	Joseph Workman, trumpet 1
Michelle Mills, violin 2	Doug Gerhart, trumpet 2
Carl Purdy, viola	Rachel Misner, horn
Arthur Ross, viola	Matt Henderson, trombone
Christine Crookall, cello	Rudy Volkmann, tuba
Sara Neal Lokey, contrabass	Joel Haywood, piano
Erin Montgomery, flute 1	Kent Hannibal, percussion
Lara Brinson, flute 2	Jonathan Harper, percussion
Joshua Mello, oboe	

Throughout this service we have heard about Jesus Christ, God's Messiah, the Prince of Peace. Advent is the Christian celebration that declares eternal peace has arrived to us from God. All those who place their faith in his son, Jesus, receive both the promise of eternal life and the peace of mind in this life as they trust and follow Jesus.

If you would like to know more about what it means to follow Jesus, contact the church office at 706.262.8900 or churchoffice@firstpresaugusta.org, and a pastor will reach out to you.