

Festival of Seven Lessons and Carols

Bidding Prayer

Dear people of God, on this Christmas Day, it is our duty and delight to hear again the message of the angels and, in heart and mind, to go to Bethlehem and see this thing which has come to pass, which the Lord has made known to us—the Christ Child lying in a manger.

Let us read and learn in Holy Scripture the story of the loving purposes of God from the first days after our fall into sin to the glorious redemption brought to us by this holy child.

But first, let us pray for people all over the world who would delight with us to know the good news of Jesus Christ and who would join with us in singing his praises. Let us pray for the people of Missoula and surrounding area and for all those in our own congregation.

And, because this would please our Lord, let us remember in his name the poor and helpless, the cold, the hungry and the oppressed, the sick and those who are sad, the lonely and the unloved, and the elderly and the little children. We especially remember all those who do not know the Lord Jesus, those who do not love him, and those who by sin have grieved his heart of love.

Finally, let us remember before God all those who rejoice with us in heaven, who live in greater light than we, that multitude which no one can number, whose hope was in the Word made flesh, who died in faith, and who live before the throne of God and praise him each day in his temple. We confess that we are united with them as we are united with one another.

If able, please rise

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 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.**

Be seated

First Lesson

Genesis 3:8–15

The Seed of the woman will crush the serpent's head.

⁸Then the man and his wife heard the sound of the LORD God as he was walking in the garden in the cool of the day, and they hid from the LORD God among the trees of the garden. ⁹But the LORD God called to the man, "Where are you?"

¹⁰He answered, "I heard you in the garden, and I was afraid because I was naked; so I hid."

¹¹And he said, "Who told you that you were naked? Have you eaten from the tree that I commanded you not to eat from?"

¹²The man said, "The woman you put here with me—she gave me some fruit from the tree, and I ate it."

¹³Then the LORD God said to the woman, "What is this you have done?"

The woman said, "The serpent deceived me, and I ate."

¹⁴So the LORD God said to the serpent, "Because you have done this,

"Cursed are you above all livestock
and all wild animals!

You will crawl on your belly
and you will eat dust
all the days of your life.

¹⁵And I will put enmity

between you and the woman,
and between your offspring and hers;
he will crush your head,
and you will strike his heel.”

301 Savior of the Nations, Come

301

- 1 Savior of the nations, come;
Virgin’s Son, make here your home.
Marvel now, O heav’n and earth,
that the Lord chose such a birth.

- 3 Wondrous birth! O wondrous Child
of the virgin undefiled,
though by all the world disowned,
yet to be in heav’n enthroned.

Text: Ambrose of Milan, 340–397, abr.; German version, Martin Luther, 1483–1546, abr.; tr. William M. Reynolds, 1812–1876, alt.
Text: Public domain

Second Lesson

Genesis 22:15–18

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

¹⁵The angel of the LORD called to Abraham from heaven a second time ¹⁶and said, “I swear by myself, declares the LORD, that because you have done this and have not withheld your son, your only son, ¹⁷I will surely bless you and make your descendants as numerous as the stars in the sky and as the sand on the seashore. Your descendants will take possession of the cities of their enemies, ¹⁸and through your offspring all nations on earth will be blessed, because you have obeyed me.”

315 Let the Earth Now Praise the Lord

CW 315 sts. 1–2, 4–5

- 1 Let the earth now praise the Lord,
who has truly kept his word
and at last to us did send
Christ, the sinner’s help and friend.

- 2 What the fathers most desired,
what the prophets' heart inspired,
what they longed for many' a year
stands fulfilled in glory here.
- 4 Savior, hear my welcome cry—
loud hosannas lifted high!
King of glory, enter in;
cleanse my soul of ev'ry sin.
- 5 Crush for me the serpent's head
that, set free from doubt and dread,
I may cling to you in faith,
safely kept through life and death,

Text: Heinrich Held, 1620–1659, abr.; (sts. 1–2, 5): tr. Catherine Winkworth, 1827–1878, alt.; (st. 4): tr. Christian Worship, 2021
Text (sts. 1–2, 5): Public domain
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Third Lesson

Isaiah 9:2, 6, 7

The prophet foretells the coming of the Savior.

²The people walking in darkness
have seen a great light;
on those living in the land of deep darkness
a light has dawned.

⁶For to us a child is born,
to us a son is given,
and the government will be on his shoulders.
And he will be called
Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God,
Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace.

⁷Of the greatness of his government and peace
there will be no end.
He will reign on David's throne

and over his kingdom,
establishing and upholding it
with justice and righteousness
from that time on and forever.
The zeal of the LORD Almighty
will accomplish this.

Anthem

Colleen Mitchell – *The First Song of Isaiah*

[Congregation please join in the Refrain]

Colleen: Surely, it is God who saves me; I will trust in him and not be afraid.
For the Lord is my stronghold and my sure defense,
And he will be my Savior.

Refrain: Surely, it is God who saves me; I will trust in him and not be afraid.
For the Lord is my stronghold and my sure defense,
And he will be my Savior.

Colleen: Therefore you shall draw water with rejoicing from the springs of salvation.
And on that day you shall say, Give thanks to the Lord,
And call upon his Name;

Refrain:

Colleen: Make his deeds known among the peoples; See that they remember that his Name
is exalted – Sing the praises of the Lord, for he has done great things,
And this is known in all the world.

Refrain:

Colleen: Cry aloud, inhabitants of Zion, Ring out your joy,
For the great one in the midst of you is the Holy One of Israel.

Refrain:

Repeat Refrain:

Christmas Message

To Bethlehem ... on Bended Knee

Luke 2:25-32

Offering

Fourth Lesson

Isaiah 11:1–9

A Branch from the stump of Jesse will bear fruit.

¹A shoot will come up from the stump of Jesse;
from his roots a Branch will bear fruit.

²The Spirit of the LORD will rest on him—
the Spirit of wisdom and of understanding,
the Spirit of counsel and of might,
the Spirit of the knowledge and fear of the LORD—

³and he will delight in the fear of the LORD.

He will not judge by what he sees with his eyes,
or decide by what he hears with his ears;

⁴but with righteousness he will judge the needy,
with justice he will give decisions for the poor of the earth.

He will strike the earth with the rod of his mouth;
with the breath of his lips he will slay the wicked.

⁵Righteousness will be his belt
and faithfulness the sash around his waist.

⁶The wolf will live with the lamb,
the leopard will lie down with the goat,
the calf and the lion and the yearling together;
and a little child will lead them.

⁷The cow will feed with the bear,
their young will lie down together,
and the lion will eat straw like the ox.

⁸The infant will play near the cobra's den,
and the young child will put its hand into the viper's nest.

⁹They will neither harm nor destroy
on all my holy mountain,
for the earth will be filled with the knowledge of the LORD
as the waters cover the sea.

360 Behold, a Branch Is Growing

CW 360 sts. 1–2

- 1 Behold, a branch is growing
of loveliest form and grace!
As prophets sang, foreknowing,
it springs from Jesse's race
and now begins to flow'r
in midst of coldest winter,
at deepest midnight hour.

- 2 Isaiah had foretold it
in words of promise sure,
and Mary's arms enfold it,
a virgin meek and pure.
Through God's eternal will
this child to her is given
at midnight calm and still.

Text: tr. Harriet R. K. Spaeth, 1845–1925; German, 16th cent.
Text: Public domain

Fifth Lesson

Luke 1:26–35, 38

The angel Gabriel announces to Mary the birth of a son.

²⁶In the sixth month of Elizabeth's pregnancy, God sent the angel Gabriel to Nazareth, a town in Galilee, ²⁷to a virgin pledged to be married to a man named Joseph, a descendant of David. The virgin's name was Mary. ²⁸The angel went to her and said, "Greetings, you who are highly favored! The Lord is with you."

²⁹Mary was greatly troubled at his words and wondered what kind of greeting this might be. ³⁰But the angel said to her, "Do not be afraid, Mary; you have found favor with God. ³¹You will conceive and give birth to a son, and you are to call him Jesus. ³²He 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, ³³and he will reign over Jacob's descendants forever; his kingdom will never end."

³⁴"How will this be," Mary asked the angel, "since I am a virgin?"

³⁵The angel answered, “The Holy Spirit will come on you, and the power of the Most High will overshadow you. So the holy one to be born will be called the Son of God.

³⁸“I am the Lord’s servant,” Mary answered. “May your word to me be fulfilled.” Then the angel left her.

328 The Angel Gabriel from Heaven Came

CW 328

- 1 The angel Gabriel from heaven came,
his wings as drifted snow, his eyes as flame:
“All hail,” said he to meek and lowly Mary,
“most highly favored maiden.” Gloria!

- 2 “I come from heav’n to tell the Lord’s decree:
a blessèd virgin mother you shall be.
Your son shall be Immanuel, by seers foretold,
most highly favored maiden.” Gloria!

- 3 Then gentle Mary meekly bowed her head;
“To me be as it pleases God,” she said.
“My soul shall praise and magnify his holy name.”
Most highly favored maiden, Gloria!

- 4 Of her Immanuel, the Christ, was born
in Bethlehem, all on a Christmas morn,
and Christian folk throughout the world will ever say,
“Most highly favored maiden.” Gloria!

Text: para. Sabine Baring-Gould, 1834–1924, alt.; Basque, c. 18th cent.
Text: Public domain

Sixth Lesson

Luke 2:1–7

St. Luke tells of the birth of Jesus.

¹In those days Caesar Augustus issued a decree that a census should be taken of the entire Roman world. ²(This was the first census that took place while Quirinius was governor of Syria.) ³And everyone went to their own town to register.

⁴So 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. ⁵He went there to register with Mary, who was pledged to be married to him and was expecting a child. ⁶While they were there, the time came for the baby to be born, ⁷and she gave birth to her firstborn, a son. She wrapped him in cloths and placed him in a manger, because there was no guest room available for them.

340 Away in a Manger

CW 340

- 1 Away in a manger, no crib for a 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 on the hay.
- 2 The cattle are lowing, the baby awakes,
 but little Lord Jesus, no crying he makes.
 I love you, Lord Jesus; look down from the sky,
 and stay by my side until morning is nigh.
- 3 Be near me, Lord Jesus; I ask you to stay
 close by me forever and love me, I pray.
 Bless all the dear children in your tender care,
 and take us to heaven to live with you there.

Text (sts. 1–2): The Myrtle, Boston, 1884; (st. 3): Vineyard Songs, Louisville, 1892, alt.
Text: Public domain

Seventh Lesson

Luke 2:8–20

The shepherds go to the manger.

⁸And there were shepherds living out in the fields nearby, keeping watch over their flocks at night. ⁹An angel of the Lord appeared to them, and the glory of the Lord shone around them, and they were terrified. ¹⁰But the angel said to them, “Do not be afraid. I bring you good news that will cause great joy for all the people. ¹¹Today in the town of David a Savior has been born to you; he is the Messiah, the Lord. ¹²This will be a sign to you: You will find a baby wrapped in cloths and lying in a manger.”

¹³Suddenly a great company of the heavenly host appeared with the angel, praising God and saying,

¹⁴“Glory to God in the highest heaven,
and on earth peace to those on whom his favor rests.”

¹⁵When the angels had left them and gone into heaven, the shepherds said to one another, “Let’s go to Bethlehem and see this thing that has happened, which the Lord has told us about.”

¹⁶So they hurried off and found Mary and Joseph, and the baby, who was lying in the manger. ¹⁷When they had seen him, they spread the word concerning what had been told them about this child, ¹⁸and all who heard it were amazed at what the shepherds said to them. ¹⁹But Mary treasured up all these things and pondered them in her heart. ²⁰The shepherds returned, glorifying and praising God for all the things they had heard and seen, which were just as they had been told.

Stand

The Lord be with you.

And also with you.

May he who by his incarnation gathered into one things earthly and heavenly, fill you with such joy that comes from the forgiveness of sins and the hope of eternal life; and the blessing of God Almighty, the Father, the † Son and the Holy Spirit, be upon you and remain with you always.

Amen.

Be seated

350 Hark! The Herald Angels Sing

CW 350

1 Hark! The herald angels sing,
“Glory to the newborn 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!" (Refrain)

Ref Hark! The herald angels sing,
"Glory to the newborn King!"

2 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 Immanuel! (Refrain)

3 Hail, the heav'nly Prince of Peace!
Hail, the Sun of Righteousness!
Light and life to all he brings,
ris'n 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)

Have a Blessed Christmas and a
safe and prosperous New Year!

The next service at Living Savior
will be held next Sunday at
10:00am – NEW YEAR'S DAY!

We will celebrate Holy
Communion at that service.
What a wonderful way to enter
the New Year!

Pastor Steve and Jean wish to
thank each of you for your warm
Christmas greetings, gifts and
prayers!

May God bless you all!

Welcome to Living Savior! We are glad that you have joined us to worship the Savior.

- Restrooms are located on your right as you exit the sanctuary. There are also restrooms in the NW corner of the fellowship hall.
- Please help us be a friendly church by filling out the Connection Card during the service and placing it in the offering plate.
- Would you like to know more about Jesus, the basic teachings of what it means to be a Christian, or the Bible? Please mark the box on the Connection Card or email Pastor Persons for more information.

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