

Program

WELCOME FROM ST. JOHN’S

WELCOME & INTRODUCTION (7:00 PM)

PRELUDE *Once in Royal David’s City* Henry J. Gauntlett
Byron Johns, horn

CAROL *The Long, Low Moan of Midnight* Philip Biedenbender
World Premiere
Ali Harlan, solo; Alex Wilborn, trumpet

LESSON The Creation of Light and Humanity in God’s Own Image
Genesis 1:1–5, 26–27

READING Nothing Is Ordinary Now Laurie F. Gauger
Written for WDAV Lessons and Carols 2025

“*And she gave birth to her firstborn, a son.*”
(Luke the Evangelist)

At that midnight moment
heaven entered earth
and under a strange star
holiness invaded—
overwhelmed—
humanity.

From that moment on
everything ordinary
is tinged
with the extraordinary.

One day
the wood of this manger
will be transformed
into a rude cross
but tonight we will not
dwell on death.

We will revel in life
in the birth of a child
in the sparkle of stars
in the echo of angel-song
in the mystical tug of a new hope.

It is this:
that our lives can be—will be—
different
because now we know
that beneath the surface
every tree is green.

ASSEMBLY STAND AND SING

CONGREGATIONAL CAROL *O Come, All Ye Faithful* attr. John Francis Wade
arr. David Willcocks

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!

Highest, most holy, Light of light eternal,
Born of a virgin, a mortal He comes;

Son of the Father now in flesh appearing!
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 heav’n above; Glory to God in the highest:
O come, let us adore Him, O come, let us adore Him,
O come, let us adore Him, Christ the Lord!

Yea, Lord, we greet Thee, born this happy morning,
Jesus, to thee be glory giv’n;
Word of the Father, now in flesh appearing:
O come, let us adore Him, O come, let us adore Him,
O come, let us adore Him, Christ the Lord!

ASSEMBLY SIT

LESSON Light Overcomes Darkness and Sin 1 John 1:5–6, 8–10

CAROL *O Nata Lux* (from *Lux Aeterna*) Morten Lauridsen

O born light of light,
Jesus redeemer of the world,
mercifully deem worthy and accept
praises and prayers from your supplicants.
Who once was clothed in the flesh
for those who are lost.
Allow us to become members of
your holy body.

LESSON The Prophecy of the End of War Isaiah 2:1–5

CAROL *It Came Upon a Midnight Clear* Richard S. Willis
arr. Jantz Black

LESSON The Birth of Jesus Foretold to Mary Luke 1:26–31

READING Magnificat Laurie F. Gauger
Written for WDAV Lessons and Carols 2025

“*The Mighty One has done great things for me.*”
(The Virgin Mary, as recorded by Luke the Evangelist)

She stands still as a statue in that infinite space
between question and answer,
between said and unsaid.

She slowly shakes her head—
How can it be?—
but she knows in her bones that it’s true.

She senses the sudden tilt of the cosmos,
sees the rulers and the rich tossed aside,
the peasants welcomed and fed.

She’s a girl—just a girl—
but her womb is alive
and her name is now a talisman.

She reaches back to Hannah, Rachel, Sarah,
and, warmed by what the Mighty One can do,
she sings the song of mothers.

CAROL *Light of a Clear Blue Morning* Dolly Parton
Claire Murphy, solo arr. Craig Hella Johnson

LESSON The Birth of Jesus Luke 2:1–7

CAROL *In Silent Night* Mitchell Southall

LESSON The Angels Luke 2:8–12

ASSEMBLY STAND AND SING

CONGREGATIONAL CAROL *Angels from the Realms of Glory* Henry T. Smart
arr. John Ferguson

Angels, from the realms of glory,
wing your flight o'er all the earth;
once you sang creation's story,
now proclaim Messiah's birth:
Come and worship, come and worship,
worship Christ, the new-born king.

Shepherds, in the fields abiding,
watching o'er your flocks by night,
God with us is now residing,
yonder shines the infant light.
Come and worship, come and worship,
worship Christ, the new-born king.

Sages, leave your contemplations,
brighter visions beam afar;
seek the great Desire of nations,
you have seen his natal star.
Come and worship, come and worship,
worship Christ, the new-born king.

All creation, join in praising
God, the Father, Spirit, Son,
evermore your voices raising
to the eternal Three in One.
Come and worship, come and worship,
worship Christ, the new-born king.

ASSEMBLY SIT

CAROL *Angels Visit When We Sing* Tom Trenney

LESSON The Shepherds Luke 2:15–20

CAROL *Silent Night* Pentatonix
arr. Roger Emerson

LESSON The Visit of the Magi Matthew 2:1–10

CAROL *Children, Go Where I Send Thee* Traditional spiritual
Zion Morgan, rap artist; Bonnie Autry, solo; arr. Kevin Phillip Johnson
Rick Dior, djembe Rap crafted by Ayana Davis

LESSON The Eternal Light of the Word Became Flesh John 1:1–5

READING One Thing Laurie F. Gauger
Written for WDAV Lessons and Carols 2025

“*But Mary pondered all these things in her heart.*”
(Luke the Evangelist)

If there is one thing about the birth of this child to hold onto,
it is not the doctrine of the incarnation nor the fulfillment of prophecy
nor the symbolism behind the gifts of the Magi.

It is not some lesson we painstakingly glean from the slaughter of the innocents
or the immigration story of the holy family or the if-how-when of “peace on earth.”

I will ponder those thoughts. There is great value there.

But I want to go home with a truth that is neither well-scrubbed theology nor sentimental anthropology, a truth like a potion that turns hearts of stone to flesh, a truth like a blue thread that, once I pull on it, I will never find the end of it.

I want to go home with this:
The transcendent ineffable omnipotent God knows who I am.
He finds me so valuable
he sent his Son to shiver in the cold in pursuit of me.
This God likes me—my sass, My inscrutable silences,
my too-much-ness—
and he'd like to spend some time with me—maybe an hour at a coffee shop
tomorrow morning or
maybe eternity.

ASSEMBLY STAND AND SING

CONGREGATIONAL CAROL

Joy to the World

George F. Handel
arr. Robert Hobby

Joy to the world, the Lord is come!
Let earth receive its King;
Let ev'ry heart prepare Him room
And heav'n and nature sing . . .

Joy to the earth, the Savior reigns!
Let all their songs employ,
While fields and floods, rocks, hills, and plains
Repeat the sounding joy . . .

No more let sin and sorrow grow
Nor thorns infest the ground;
He comes to make His blessings flow
Far as the curse is found . . .

He rules the world with truth and grace
And makes the nations prove
The glories of His righteousness
And wonders of His love . . .

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*This evening's service will be broadcast live on  
WDAV 89.9 FM, HD-1 and [www.wdav.org](http://www.wdav.org).*

*The program will be rebroadcast on WDAV  
Saturday, December 20th at 6 p.m.  
Christmas Eve at 5 p.m.  
Christmas Day at 1 p.m.*

**Performers:**

Phil Vavra, reader  
Sara Vavra, reader

Charlotte Master Chorale Chamber Singers

Alex Wilborn & Jon Kaplan, trumpet

Byron Johns, horn

Tom Burge, trombone

Colin Benton, tuba

Rick Dior, timpani

Will Young, organ and piano

Philip Biedenbender, conductor



*Charlotte Lessons & Carols  
from St. John's*

Presented by the Charlotte Master Chorale  
and 89.9 WDAV Classical Public Radio  
Tuesday, December 2, 2025, at 7:00 PM  
St. John's Baptist Church

