



St Nicolas Church Cranleigh

*A Community Growing in Faith, Hope and Love
Reaching into the heart of the local community
Leading all to the liberating truth of Christ*

A SERVICE OF NINE LESSONS AND CAROLS



**Sunday 20th December 2020
From 3pm on-line**

ABOUT THE SERVICE

This Service follows the traditional pattern used in Kings College, Cambridge each year on Christmas Eve, although some of the words have been modernised. The Festival of Nine Lessons and Carols was first held on Christmas Eve 1918. It was planned by Eric Milner-White, who, at the age of thirty-four, had just been appointed Dean of King's after experience as an army chaplain which had convinced him that the Church of England needed more imaginative worship. The backbone of the service, the lessons and the prayers, has remained virtually unchanged. The original service was, in fact, adapted from an Order drawn up by E. W. Benson, later Archbishop of Canterbury, for use in the wooden shed, which then served as his cathedral in Truro, at 10 p.m. on Christmas Eve 1880. A. C. Benson recalled: 'My father arranged from Ancient sources a little service for Christmas Eve – nine carols and nine tiny lessons, which were read by various officers of the Church. Wherever the service is heard and however it is adapted, whether the music is provided by choir or congregation, the pattern and strength of the service, as Dean Milner-White pointed out, derive from the lessons and not the music. 'The main theme is the development of the loving purposes of God' seen 'through the windows and the words of the Bible'. Local interests appear, as they do here, in the Bidding Prayer; and personal circumstances give point to different parts of the service. Many of those who took part in the first service must have recalled those killed in the Great War when it came to the famous passage 'all those who rejoice with us, but on another shore and in a greater light'. The centre of the service is still found by those who 'go in heart and mind' and who consent to follow where the story leads.

ORGAN VOLUNTARY: ‘Der Tag der ist so Freudenreich’ (‘This Day, the Gloriest Day of Days’) (*JS Bach*)

CAROL: Once in Royal David’s City

BIDDING PRAYER

Brothers and Sisters in Christ, be it this Christmas time our care and delight to prepare ourselves to hear again the message of the angels; in heart and mind to go even to Bethlehem and see this thing which is come to pass, and the child lying in a manger. Let us read and mark in Holy Scripture the tale of the loving purposes of God from the first days of the prophets, to the glorious Redemption brought us by this Holy Child; and let us make this Church, dedicated to St Nicolas of Myra, glad with our carols of praise: But first let us pray for the needs of His whole world; for peace and goodwill over all the earth; for unity and concord within the Church he came to build, and especially in the dominions of our sovereign lady Queen Elizabeth, our Diocese of Guildford, and within this Village of Cranleigh: And because this of all things would rejoice his heart, let us at this time remember in his name the poor and the helpless, the cold, the hungry and the oppressed; the sick in body and in mind and them that mourn; the lonely and the unloved; the elderly and the little children; all who know not the Lord Jesus, or who love him not. 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 one can number, whose hope was in the Word made flesh, and with whom, in this Lord Jesus, we for evermore are one. These prayers and praises let us humbly offer up to the throne of heaven, in the words which Christ himself has taught us:

**OUR Father, which art in heaven,
Hallowed be thy name,
Thy kingdom come, Thy will be done,
in earth as it is in heaven.
Give us this day our daily bread.
And forgive us our trespasses,
As we forgive them that trespass against us.
And lead us not into temptation;
But deliver us from evil. Amen.**

The Almighty God bless us with his grace: Christ give us the joys of everlasting life: and finally, to the fellowship of the citizens above may the King of Angels bring us all. **Amen.**

FIRST LESSON: *Christ's birth and Kingdom are foretold by Isaiah (Isaiah 9: 2, 6, 7)*

CAROL: *Of The Father's Heart Begotten*

SECOND LESSON: *The Prophet foretells the glory of the Kingdom of God (Isaiah 35:1-10)*

CHOIR: *Long, Long Ago (Richard Shephard)*

THIRD LESSON: *The Saviour who was to come from the city of David would be the shepherd and deliverer of God's people (Micah 5:2-4)*

CAROL: *It came upon the midnight clear*

FOURTH LESSON: *St Luke foretells the birth of John the Baptist
(Luke 1: 5-17)*

CHOIR: *Ding! Dong! Merrily on high (French, arr. Charles Wood)*

FIFTH LESSON: *The angel Gabriel salutes the Blessed Virgin
Mary (Luke 1:26-35, 38)*

CAROL: *The Angel Gabriel*

SIXTH LESSON: *St. Luke tells of the birth of Jesus (Luke 2: 1-7)*

CHOIR: *The Nativity Carol (John Rutter)*

SEVENTH LESSON: *The shepherds go to the manger
(Luke 2:8-16)*

CAROL: *O Little Town of Bethlehem*

EIGHTH LESSON: *The wise men are led by the star to Jesus
(Matthew 2:1-12)*

CHOIR: *The Sussex Carol (Traditional, arr. David Willcocks)*

NINTH LESSON *St. John unfolds the great mystery of the
Incarnation (John 1:1-14)*

CAROL: *O Come, All Ye Faithful*

COLLECT:

O God, who makes us glad
with the yearly remembrance
of the birth of your only son, Jesus Christ:
Grant that as we joyfully
receive him as our redeemer,
so we may with sure confidence
meet him face to face,
when he comes to be our judge;
who lives and reigns with you
and the Holy Spirit,
one God, now and for ever.
Amen.

CAROL: Hark! The Herald Angels Sing

BLESSING:

May Christ, who by his incarnation
gathered into one things earthly and heavenly,
grant us the fullness of inward peace and goodwill,
and make us partakers of the divine nature;
and may the blessing of God Almighty,
the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit,
be with us this Christmas time, and always. **Amen.**

ORGAN VOLUNTARY: Grande Choeur No 1 in C (based on two
French Noels) (*Cesar Franck*)