

C18 Lessons and Carols Service

Scripture Selections from the Evangelical Heritage Version®
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First Lesson

Genesis 1:1-5, 26-28, 3:1-7

In the beginning, God created the heavens and the earth. ²The earth was undeveloped and empty. Darkness covered the surface of the deep, and the Spirit of God was hovering over the surface of the waters.

³God said, “Let there be light,” and there was light. ⁴God saw that the light was good. He separated the light from the darkness. ⁵God called the light “day,” and the darkness he called “night.” There was evening and there was morning—the first day.

²⁶God said, “Let us make man in our image, according to our likeness, and let them have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the birds of the sky, and over the livestock, and over all the earth, and over every creeping thing that crawls on the earth.”

²⁷God created the man in his own image.

In the image of God he created him.

Male and female he created them.

²⁸God blessed them and said to them, “Be fruitful, multiply, fill the earth, and subdue it. Have dominion over the fish of the sea, over the birds of the sky, and over every living thing that moves on the earth.”

^{3:1}Now the serpent was more clever than any wild animal which the LORD God had made. He said to the woman, “Has God really said, ‘You shall not eat from any tree in the garden?’”

²The woman said to the serpent, “We may eat fruit from the trees of the garden, ³but not from the fruit of the tree that is in the middle of the garden. God has said, ‘You shall not eat from it. You shall not touch it, or else you will die.’”

⁴The serpent said to the woman, “You certainly will not die. ⁵In fact, God knows that the day you eat from it, your eyes will be opened, and you will be like God, knowing good and evil.”

⁶When the woman saw that the tree was good for food, and that it was appealing to the eyes, and that the tree was desirable to make one wise, she took some of its fruit and ate. She gave some also to her husband, who was with her, and he ate it. ⁷The eyes of both of them were opened, and they realized that they were naked. They sewed fig leaves together and made coverings for their waists.

Second Lesson

John 3:16–21

¹⁶“For God so loved the world that he gave his only-begotten Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish, but have eternal life. ¹⁷For God did not send his Son into the world to condemn the world, but to save the world through him. ¹⁸The one who believes in him is not condemned, but the one who does not believe is condemned already, because he has not believed in the name of the only-begotten Son of God. ¹⁹This is the basis for the judgment: The light has come into the world, yet

people loved the darkness rather than the light, because their deeds were evil. ²⁰In fact, everyone who practices wicked things hates the light and does not come toward the light, or else his deeds would be exposed. ²¹But the one who does what is true comes toward the light, in order that his deeds may be seen as having been done in connection with God.”

Third Lesson

Joel 2:1-3, 10-13

Blow the ram’s horn in Zion.

Sound the alarm on my holy mountain.

Let all who live in the land tremble with fear,
for the Day of the LORD is coming.

It is close at hand—

²a day of darkness and gloom,
a day of clouds and frightening darkness.

Description of the Locust Army

Like dawn spreading across the mountains,
a large and mighty people is coming.

There has been nothing like it from ancient times,
nor will there ever be again for generations to come.

³In front of them, fire devours.

Behind them, a flame blazes.

In front of them, the land is like the Garden of Eden.

Behind them, it is a desolate wilderness.

There is no escaping them.

¹⁰In front of them the earth quakes.

The sky shudders.

The sun and moon become dark,
and the stars stop shining.

¹¹The LORD shouts at the head of his army.

His forces are very numerous,
and those who obey his command are powerful.

The Day of the LORD is great. It is terrifying.

Who can endure it?

¹²Even now, declares the LORD,
return to me with all your heart,
with fasting and weeping and grief.

¹³Tear your heart and not your clothing.

Return to the LORD your God,
for he is gracious and compassionate,
slow to anger and abounding in mercy,
and he relents from sending disaster.

Fourth Lesson

1 John 1:5–9

⁵This is the message we heard from him and proclaim to you: God is light. In him there is no darkness at all. ⁶If we say we have fellowship with him but still walk in darkness, we are lying and do not put the truth into practice. ⁷But if we walk in the light, just as he is in the light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus Christ, his Son, cleanses us from all sin. ⁸If we say we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us. ⁹If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.

Fifth Lesson

Psalm 27

The LORD is my light and my salvation—
whom shall I fear?

The LORD is the stronghold of my life—
of whom shall I be afraid?

²When evildoers advance against me to eat my flesh,
when my foes and my enemies come against me,
it is they who will stumble and fall.

³If an army lines up against me, my heart will not fear.
If war rises against me, even then I will keep trusting.

⁴One thing I ask from the LORD. This is what I seek:
that I live in the house of the LORD all the days of my life,
to gaze on the beauty of the LORD,
and to seek him in his temple.

⁵Yes, he will hide me in his shelter on the day of trouble.
He will hide me in his tent.

He will set me high on a rock.

⁶Then my head will be lifted up above the enemies who surround me.

I will offer sacrifices at his tent with a joyful shout.

I will sing and make music to the Lord.

⁷Hear me, O Lord. With my voice I call.

Be merciful to me and answer me.

⁸When you say, “Seek my face,” my heart says to you,
“Your face, LORD, I will seek.”

⁹Do not hide your face from me.

Do not turn your servant away in anger. You have been my help.

Do not reject me or forsake me, O God who saves me.

¹⁰If my father and my mother abandoned me,
the LORD would take me in.

¹¹LORD, teach me your way,

and lead me in a straight path because of my oppressors.

¹²Do not give me up to the desire of my foes,
because false witnesses rise up against me,
and so do those who breathe out violence.

¹³Unless I was confident to see the goodness of the LORD
in the land of the living—

¹⁴Wait for the LORD. Be strong and take heart,
and wait for the LORD!

Sixth Lesson

Isaiah 9:2-7

²The people walking in darkness have seen a great light.
For those living in the land of the shadow of death, the light has dawned.

³You have multiplied the nation. You have increased its joy.

They rejoice before you like the joy at harvest time,
like the celebration when people divide the plunder.

⁴For you have shattered the yoke that burdened them.
You have broken the bar on their shoulders and

the rod of their oppressor,
as you did in the day of Midian.

⁵Every boot that marched in battle
and the garments rolled in blood will be burned.
They will be fuel for the fire.

⁶For to us a child is born.

To us a son is given.

The authority to rule will rest on his shoulders.

He will be named:

Wonderful Counselor,
Mighty God,
Everlasting Father,
Prince of Peace.

⁷There will be no limit to his authority
and no end to the peace he brings.

He will rule on David's throne and over his kingdom,
to establish it and to uphold it with justice and righteousness
from now on, into eternity.

The zeal of the LORD of Armies will accomplish this.

Seventh Lesson

Luke 2:1-20

In those days a decree went out from Caesar Augustus that all the world should be registered.

²This was the first census taken while Quirinius was governing Syria. ³And everyone went to register,

each to his own town. ⁴And Joseph also went up from Galilee, out of the town of Nazareth, into Judea, to the town of David, which is called Bethlehem, because he was from the house and family line of David. ⁵He went to be registered with Mary, his wife, who was pledged to him in marriage and was expecting a child.

⁶And so it was that while they were there, the time came for her to give birth. ⁷And she gave birth to her firstborn son, wrapped him in swaddling cloths, and laid him in a manger, because there was no room for them in the inn.

⁸There were in the same country shepherds staying out in the fields, keeping watch over their flock 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. For behold, I bring you good news of great joy, which will be for all people: ¹¹Today in the town of David, a Savior was born for you. He is Christ the Lord. ¹²And this will be a sign for you: You will find a baby wrapped in swaddling cloths and lying in a manger.” ¹³Suddenly, there was with the angel a multitude from the heavenly army, praising God and saying, ¹⁴“Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good will toward mankind.”

¹⁵When the angels went away from them into heaven, the shepherds said to one another, “Now let’s go to Bethlehem and see this thing that has happened, which the Lord has made known to us.” ¹⁶So they hurried off and found Mary and Joseph, and the baby, who was lying in the manger. ¹⁷When they had seen him, they told others the message they had been told about this child. ¹⁸And all who heard it were amazed by what the shepherds said to them. ¹⁹But Mary treasured up all these things, pondering them in her heart. ²⁰And the shepherds returned, glorifying and praising God for all the things that they had heard and seen, which were just as they had been told.

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