



An Advent Devotional Using the Traditional Texts of Lessons and Carols

The Festival of Nine Lessons and Carols began in the late 19th century in England and traditionally celebrates Christmas through the reading of nine scriptures paired with hymns and carols. The scriptures follow the story of the fall of humanity, the promise of the Messiah, and the birth of Jesus as told through Genesis, the prophetic books, and the Gospels.

Through time, other formats for Lessons and Carols have emerged, all following the pattern of scripture paired with hymns and carols. In some versions, the scriptures remain within the context of Advent (a season of waiting); in others, scripture is paired between the Old Testament prophecies and the New Testament stories of Christ.

For this devotional, we invite you to follow the larger arc of the story of the promised Messiah. The nine traditional texts for Lessons and Carols are augmented by additional Old Testament and New Testament prophets – like the voices of Micah, John the Baptist, Mary, and Zechariah – and additional stories of creation and Christ's birth. Each scripture passage is paired with a hymn from our *Glory to God* hymnal.

For each day's devotional, we invite you to take some or all of the following steps:

1. Light a candle to symbolize the coming light of Christ.

2. Say a short Advent Prayer for Illumination:

God of all hope and joy, open our hearts in welcome, that your Son, Jesus Christ, at his coming may find in us a dwelling prepared for him, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God now and forever. Amen.

3. Read the scripture verses.

4. Read, sing, or watch the Hymn from *Glory to God*. Consider the words to this hymn as a reflection on the scripture passage. *A video recording of the hymns sung by members of Lakeside's choirs is online: <https://youtu.be/MPplOeKvzUY>. Starting times for each hymn are marked through the devotional.*

5. Close with a short Advent Prayer:

O God, our beginning and end, by whose command time runs its course: bless our impatience, perfect our faith, and, while we await the fulfillment of your promises, grant us hope in your Word. Amen.

Genesis 1:1-5

Sunday, December 3

1 In the beginning when God created the heavens and the earth, ²the earth was a formless void and darkness covered the face of the deep, while a wind from God swept over the face of the waters. ³Then God said, “Let there be light”; and there was

light. ⁴And God saw that the light was good; and God separated the light from the darkness. ⁵God called the light Day, and the darkness he called Night. And there was evening and there was morning, the first day.

#12 IMMORTAL, INVISIBLE, GOD ONLY WISE

(00:13)

Genesis 3:8-15

Monday, December 4

⁸They heard the sound of the LORD God walking in the garden at the time of the evening breeze, and the man and his wife hid themselves from the presence of the LORD God among the trees of the garden. ⁹But the LORD God called to the man, and said to him, “Where are you?” ¹⁰He said, “I heard the sound of you in the garden, and I was afraid, because I was naked; and I hid myself.” ¹¹He said, “Who told you that you were naked? Have you eaten from the tree of which I commanded you not to eat?” ¹²The man said, “The woman whom you gave to be with me, she gave me fruit from the tree, and I ate.” ¹³Then the LORD God said to the woman, “What is this that you have done?” The woman said, “The serpent

(First Traditional Lessons and Carols Text)
tricked me, and I ate.” ¹⁴The LORD God said to the serpent,

“Because you have done this,
cursed are you among all animals
and among all wild creatures;
upon your belly you shall go,
and dust you shall eat
all the days of your life.

¹⁵I will put enmity between you and the woman,
and between your offspring and hers;
he will strike your head,
and you will strike his heel.”

#13 THE MIGHTY GOD WITH POWER SPEAKS

(2:22)

Genesis 22:15-18

Tuesday, December 5

¹⁵The angel of the LORD called to Abraham a second time from heaven, ¹⁶and said, “By myself I have sworn, says the LORD: Because you have done this, and have not withheld your son, your only son, ¹⁷I will indeed bless you, and I will make your offspring as numerous as the stars of

(Second Traditional Lessons and Carols Text)
heaven and as the sand that is on the seashore. And your offspring shall possess the gate of their enemies, ¹⁸and by your offspring shall all the nations of the earth gain blessing for themselves, because you have obeyed my voice.”

#49 THE GOD OF ABRAHAM PRAISE

(4:38)

Micah 4:1-5

Wednesday, December 6

In days to come
the mountain of the LORD’s house
shall be established as the highest of the mountains,
and shall be raised up above the hills.
Peoples shall stream to it,
² and many nations shall come and say:
“Come, let us go up to the mountain of the LORD,
to the house of the God of Jacob;
that he may teach us his ways
and that we may walk in his paths.”
For out of Zion shall go forth instruction,

and the word of the LORD from Jerusalem.
³He shall judge between many peoples,
and shall arbitrate between strong nations far away;
they shall beat their swords into plowshares,
and their spears into pruning hooks;
nation shall not lift up sword against nation,
neither shall they learn war any more;
⁴but they shall all sit under their own vines and under
their own fig trees,
and no one shall make them afraid;
for the mouth of the LORD of hosts has spoken.

⁵For all the peoples walk,
each in the name of its god,

but we will walk in the name of the LORD our God
forever and ever.

#756 O GOD OF EVERY NATION

(7:33)

Isaiah 35:1-6

Thursday, December 7

The wilderness and the dry land shall be glad,
the desert shall rejoice and blossom;
like the crocus ²it shall blossom abundantly,
and rejoice with joy and singing.

The glory of Lebanon shall be given to it,
the majesty of Carmel and Sharon.

They shall see the glory of the LORD,
the majesty of our God.

³Strengthen the weak hands,
and make firm the feeble knees.

⁴Say to those who are of a fearful heart,

“Be strong, do not fear!

Here is your God.

He will come with vengeance,
with terrible recompense.

He will come and save you.”

⁵Then the eyes of the blind shall be opened,
and the ears of the deaf unstopped;

⁶then the lame shall leap like a deer,
and the tongue of the speechless sing for joy.

For waters shall break forth in the wilderness,
and streams in the desert;

#107 AWAKE! AWAKE, AND GREET THE NEW MORN

(10:33)

Isaiah 40:1-8

Friday, December 8

Comfort, O comfort my people,
says your God.

²Speak tenderly to Jerusalem,
and cry to her

that she has served her term,

that her penalty is paid,

that she has received from the LORD’s hand
double for all her sins.

³A voice cries out:

“In the wilderness prepare the way of the LORD,
make straight in the desert a highway for our God.

⁴Every 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.

⁵Then the glory of the LORD shall be revealed,
and all people shall see it together,
for the mouth of the LORD has spoken.”

⁶A voice says, “Cry out!”

And I said, “What shall I cry?”

All people are grass,

their constancy is like the flower of the field.

⁷The grass withers, the flower fades,

when the breath of the LORD blows upon it;
surely the people are grass.

⁸The grass withers, the flower fades;

but the word of our God will stand forever.

#87 COMFORT, COMFORT NOW MY PEOPLE

(13:09)

Matthew 3:1-11

Saturday, December 9

In those days John the Baptist appeared in the
wilderness of Judea, proclaiming, ²“Repent, for the
kingdom of heaven has come near.” ³This is the one
of whom the prophet Isaiah spoke when he said,

“The voice of one crying out in the wilderness:

‘Prepare the way of the Lord,
make his paths straight.’”

⁴Now John wore clothing of camel’s hair with a
leather belt around his waist, and his food was locusts

and wild honey. ⁵Then the people of Jerusalem and all
Judea were going out to him, and all the region along
the Jordan, ⁶and they were baptized by him in the
river Jordan, confessing their sins.

⁷But when he saw many Pharisees and Sadducees
coming for baptism, he said to them, “You brood of
vipers! Who warned you to flee from the wrath to
come? ⁸Bear fruit worthy of repentance. ⁹Do not
presume to say to yourselves, ‘We have Abraham as

our ancestor?; for I tell you, God is able from these stones to raise up children to Abraham. ¹⁰Even now the ax is lying at the root of the trees; every tree therefore that does not bear good fruit is cut down and thrown into the fire.

¹¹“I baptize you with water for repentance, but one who is more powerful than I is coming after me; I am not worthy to carry his sandals. He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit and fire.

#163 WILD AND LONE THE PROPHET'S VOICE

(15:05)

Isaiah 61:1-3

Sunday, December 10

The spirit of the Lord GOD is upon me,
because the LORD has anointed me;
he has sent me to bring good news to the oppressed,
to bind up the brokenhearted,
to proclaim liberty to the captives,
and release to the prisoners;
²to proclaim the year of the LORD's favor,
and the day of vengeance of our God;

to comfort all who mourn;
³to provide for those who mourn in Zion—
to give them a garland instead of ashes,
the oil of gladness instead of mourning,
the mantle of praise instead of a faint spirit.
They will be called oaks of righteousness,
the planting of the LORD, to display his glory.

#772 LIVE INTO HOPE

(17:20)

Luke 1:46-55

Monday, December 11

⁴⁶And Mary said,
“My soul magnifies the Lord,
⁴⁷ and my spirit rejoices in God my Savior,
⁴⁸ for he has looked with favor on the lowliness of his servant.
Surely, from now on all generations will call me blessed;
⁴⁹ for the Mighty One has done great things for me,
and holy is his name.
⁵⁰ His mercy is for those who fear him
from generation to generation.

⁵¹ He has shown strength with his arm;
he has scattered the proud in the thoughts of their hearts.
⁵² He has brought down the powerful from their thrones,
and lifted up the lowly;
⁵³ he has filled the hungry with good things,
and sent the rich away empty.
⁵⁴ He has helped his servant Israel,
in remembrance of his mercy,
⁵⁵ according to the promise he made to our ancestors,
to Abraham and to his descendants forever.”

#100 MY SOUL CRIES OUT WITH A JOYFUL SHOUT

(19:13)

Revelation 22:12-20

Tuesday, December 12

¹²“See, I am coming soon; my reward is with me, to repay according to everyone's work. ¹³I am the Alpha and the Omega, the first and the last, the beginning and the end.”

¹⁴Blessed are those who wash their robes, so that they will have the right to the tree of life and may enter the city by the gates. ¹⁵Outside are the dogs and sorcerers and fornicators and murderers and idolaters, and everyone who loves and practices falsehood.

¹⁶“It is I, Jesus, who sent my angel to you with this testimony for the churches. I am the root and the descendant of David, the bright morning star.”

¹⁷The Spirit and the bride say, “Come.”
And let everyone who hears say, “Come.”
And let everyone who is thirsty come.
Let anyone who wishes take the water of life as a gift.

¹⁸I warn everyone who hears the words of the prophecy of this book: if anyone adds to them, God will add to that person the plagues described in this book; ¹⁹if anyone takes away from the words of the book of this prophecy, God will take away that person's share in the tree of life and in the holy city, which are described in this book.

²⁰The one who testifies to these things says, “Surely I am coming soon.”

Amen. Come, Lord Jesus!

#103 COME NOW, O PRINCE OF PEACE

(23:08)

Haggai 2:6-9

Wednesday, December 13

⁶For thus says the LORD of hosts: Once again, in a little while, I will shake the heavens and the earth and the sea and the dry land; ⁷and I will shake all the nations, so that the treasure of all nations shall come, and I will fill this house with splendor, says

the LORD of hosts. ⁸The silver is mine, and the gold is mine, says the LORD of hosts. ⁹The latter splendor of this house shall be greater than the former, says the LORD of hosts; and in this place I will give prosperity, says the LORD of hosts.

#88 O COME, O COME, EMMANUEL

(24:45)

Luke 1:67-79

Thursday, December 14

⁶⁷Then his father Zechariah was filled with the Holy Spirit and spoke this prophecy:

⁶⁸“Blessed be the Lord God of Israel,
for he has looked favorably on his people and redeemed them.

⁶⁹He has raised up a mighty savior for us
in the house of his servant David,

⁷⁰as he spoke through the mouth of his holy prophets
from of old,

⁷¹that we would be saved from our enemies and
from the hand of all who hate us.

⁷²Thus he has shown the mercy promised to our
ancestors,

and has remembered his holy covenant,

⁷³the oath that he swore to our ancestor Abraham,

to grant us ⁷⁴that we, being rescued from the hands of our enemies,
might serve him without fear, ⁷⁵in holiness and righteousness

before him all our days.

⁷⁶And you, child, will be called the prophet of the Most High;

for you will go before the Lord to prepare his ways,

⁷⁷to give knowledge of salvation to his people
by the forgiveness of their sins.

⁷⁸By the tender mercy of our God,

the dawn from on high will break upon us,

⁷⁹to give light to those who sit in darkness and in the shadow of death,

to guide our feet into the way of peace.”

#149 ALL HAIL TO GOD'S ANOINTED

(29:34)

Isaiah 9:2-7

Friday, December 15

²The people who walked in darkness
have seen a great light;
those who lived in a land of deep darkness—
on them light has shined.

³You have multiplied the nation,
you have increased its joy;
they rejoice before you
as with joy at the harvest,
as people exult when dividing plunder.

⁴For the yoke of their burden,
and the bar across their shoulders,
the rod of their oppressor,
you have broken as on the day of Midian.

⁵For all the boots of the tramping warriors

(Third Traditional Lessons and Carols Text)

and all the garments rolled in blood
shall be burned as fuel for the fire.

⁶For a child has been born for us,
a son given to us;

authority rests upon his shoulders;
and he is named

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

⁷His authority shall grow continually,
and there shall be endless peace
for the throne of David and his kingdom.

He will establish and uphold it
with justice and with righteousness

from this time onward and forevermore.
The zeal of the LORD of hosts will do this.

#86 THE PEOPLE WHO WALKED IN DARKNESS

(32:24)

Matthew 1:20-23

Saturday, December 16

²⁰But just when he had resolved to do this, an angel of the Lord appeared to him in a dream and said, “Joseph, son of David, do not be afraid to take Mary as your wife, for the child conceived in her is from the Holy Spirit. ²¹She will bear a son, and you are to name him Jesus, for he will save his people from their sins.” ²²All this took place to

fulfill what had been spoken by the Lord through the prophet:

²³“Look, the virgin shall conceive and bear a son, and they shall name him Emmanuel,”

which means, “God is with us.”

#92 WHILE WE ARE WAITING, COME

(35:09)

Isaiah 11:1-9

Sunday, December 17

11 A shoot shall come out from the stump of Jesse, and a branch shall grow out of his roots.
²The spirit of the LORD shall rest on him, the spirit of wisdom and understanding, the spirit of counsel and might, the spirit of knowledge and the fear of the LORD.
³His delight shall be in the fear of the LORD.
He shall not judge by what his eyes see, or decide by what his ears hear;
⁴but with righteousness he shall judge the poor, and decide with equity for the meek of the earth; he shall strike the earth with the rod of his mouth, and with the breath of his lips he shall kill the wicked.
⁵Righteousness shall be the belt around his waist, and faithfulness the belt around his loins.

(Fourth Traditional Lessons and Carols Text)

⁶The wolf shall live with the lamb, the leopard shall lie down with the kid, the calf and the lion and the fatling together, and a little child shall lead them.
⁷The cow and the bear shall graze, their young shall lie down together; and the lion shall eat straw like the ox.
⁸The nursing child shall play over the hole of the asp, and the weaned child shall put its hand on the adder’s den.
⁹They will not hurt or destroy on all my holy mountain; for the earth will be full of the knowledge of the LORD as the waters cover the sea.

#94 NOW THE HEAVENS START TO WHISPER

(36:43)

Jeremiah 23:5-6

Monday, December 18

⁵The days are surely coming, says the LORD, when I will raise up for David a righteous Branch, and he shall reign as king and deal wisely, and shall execute justice and righteousness in the land. ⁶In his days

Judah will be saved and Israel will live in safety. And this is the name by which he will be called: “The LORD is our righteousness.”

#79 LIGHT DAWNS ON A WEARY WORLD

(39:08)

Isaiah 7:10-14

Tuesday, December 19

¹⁰Again the LORD spoke to Ahaz, saying, ¹¹Ask a sign of the LORD your God; let it be deep as Sheol or high

as heaven. ¹²But Ahaz said, I will not ask, and I will not put the LORD to the test. ¹³Then Isaiah said:

“Hear then, O house of David! Is it too little for you to weary mortals, that you weary my God also? ¹⁴Therefore the Lord himself will give you a

sign. Look, the young woman is with child and shall bear a son, and shall name him Immanuel.

#102 SAVIOR OF THE NATIONS, COME

(41:55)

Luke 1:26-38

Wednesday, December 20

²⁶In the sixth month the angel Gabriel was sent by God to a town in Galilee called Nazareth, ²⁷to a virgin engaged to a man whose name was Joseph, of the house of David. The virgin’s name was Mary. ²⁸And he came to her and said, “Greetings, favored one! The Lord is with you.”²⁹But she was much perplexed by his words and pondered what sort of greeting this might be. ³⁰The angel said to her, “Do not be afraid, Mary, for you have found favor with God. ³¹And now, you will conceive in your womb and bear a son, and you will name him Jesus. ³²He will be great, and will be called the Son of the Most High, and the Lord God will give to him the throne of his ancestor David. ³³He will reign over the house

(Fifth Traditional Lessons and Carols Text)
of Jacob forever, and of his kingdom there will be no end.” ³⁴Mary said to the angel, “How can this be, since I am a virgin?” ³⁵The angel said to her, “The Holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the Most High will overshadow you; therefore the child to be born will be holy; he will be called Son of God. ³⁶And now, your relative Elizabeth in her old age has also conceived a son; and this is the sixth month for her who was said to be barren. ³⁷For nothing will be impossible with God.” ³⁸Then Mary said, “Here am I, the servant of the Lord; let it be with me according to your word.” Then the angel departed from her.

#101 NO WIND AT THE WINDOW

(43:50)

Luke 2:1-7

Thursday, December 21

²In those days a decree went out from Emperor Augustus that all the world should be registered. ²This was the first registration and was taken while Quirinius was governor of Syria. ³All went to their own towns to be registered. ⁴Joseph also went from the town of Nazareth in Galilee to Judea, to the city of David called Bethlehem, because he was descended from the house and family of

(Sixth Traditional Lessons and Carols Text)
David. ⁵He went to be registered with Mary, to whom he was engaged and who was expecting a child. ⁶While they were there, the time came for her to deliver her child. ⁷And she gave birth to her firstborn son and wrapped him in bands of cloth, and laid him in a manger, because there was no place for them in the inn.

#110 LOVE HAS COME

(46:33)

Luke 2:8-16

Friday, December 22

⁸In that region there were shepherds living in the fields, keeping watch over their flock by night. ⁹Then an angel of the Lord stood before 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 see—I am bringing you good news of great joy for all the people: ¹¹to you is born this day in the city of David a Savior, who is the Messiah, the Lord. ¹²This will be a sign for you: you will find a

(Seventh Traditional Lessons and Carols Text)
child wrapped in bands of cloth and lying in a manger.” ¹³And suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host, praising God and saying,
¹⁴“Glory to God in the highest heaven,
and on earth peace among those whom he favors!”
¹⁵When the angels had left them and gone into heaven, the shepherds said to one another, “Let us go

now to Bethlehem and see this thing that has taken place, which the Lord has made known to us.”¹⁶ So

they went with haste and found Mary and Joseph, and the child lying in the manger.

#113 ANGELS WE HAVE HEARD ON HIGH

(48:22)

Matthew 2:1-11

Saturday, December 23

2 In the time of King Herod, after Jesus was born in Bethlehem of Judea, wise men from the East came to Jerusalem, ²asking, “Where is the child who has been born king of the Jews? For we observed his star at its rising, and have come to pay him homage.” ³When King Herod heard this, he was frightened, and all Jerusalem with him; ⁴and calling together all the chief priests and scribes of the people, he inquired of them where the Messiah was to be born. ⁵They told him, “In Bethlehem of Judea; for so it has been written by the prophet:

⁶“And you, Bethlehem, in the land of Judah, are by no means least among the rulers of Judah; for from you shall come a ruler who is to shepherd my people Israel.””

(Eighth Traditional Lessons and Carols Text)
⁷Then Herod secretly called for the wise men and learned from them the exact time when the star had appeared. ⁸Then he sent them to Bethlehem, saying, “Go and search diligently for the child; and when you have found him, bring me word so that I may also go and pay him homage.” ⁹When they had heard the king, they set out; and there, ahead of them, went the star that they had seen at its rising, until it stopped over the place where the child was. ¹⁰When they saw that the star had stopped, they were overwhelmed with joy. ¹¹On entering the house, they saw the child with Mary his mother; and they knelt down and paid him homage. Then, opening their treasure chests, they offered him gifts of gold, frankincense, and myrrh.

#151 WE THREE KINGS OF ORIENT ARE

(50:51)

John 1:1-14

Sunday, December 24, Christmas Eve

1 In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. ²He was in the beginning with God. ³All things came into being through him, and without him not one thing came into being. What has come into being ⁴in him was life, and the life was the light of all people. ⁵The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness did not overcome it.

⁶There was a man sent from God, whose name was John. ⁷He came as a witness to testify to the light, so that all might believe through him. ⁸He himself was not the light, but he came to testify to the light. ⁹The

(Ninth Traditional Lessons and Carols Text)
true light, which enlightens everyone, was coming into the world.

¹⁰He was in the world, and the world came into being through him; yet the world did not know him. ¹¹He came to what was his own, and his own people did not accept him. ¹²But to all who received him, who believed in his name, he gave power to become children of God, ¹³who were born, not of blood or of the will of the flesh or of the will of man, but of God.

¹⁴And the Word became flesh and lived among us, and we have seen his glory, the glory as of a father’s only son, full of grace and truth.

#133 O COME, ALL YE FAITHFUL

(54:22)

Merry Christmas!