

THE CATHEDRAL OF THE INCARNATION
Garden City, New York



A FESTIVAL OF
LESSONS & CAROLS

December 14, 2025 at 4:00 PM
The Third Sunday of Advent

NOTES ABOUT SOME OF TODAY'S MUSIC

The carols the entire congregation sings today are mostly ones *traditionally* associated with Lessons & Carols. Some remain unfamiliar to us in the United States, as our carol tradition has diverged from that of most other English-speaking countries. The service always begins with *Once in Royal David's City*, sung by a solo treble, with the choir and then congregation joining in. Most of the descants (the high part that appears above a hymn melody) used today were written by Sir David Willcocks, the Director of Music at King's College from 1957–1974.

Louis-Claude Daquin's (1694-1772) tenth Noël, or Christmas song, is based on the French text "Quand Dieu Naquit à Noël." It is one of the most famous pieces of this genre in all the repertoire. The carol, which hails from the time of Louis XV, tells how different characters respond to the birth of Christ by bringing gifts of fresh milk, incense, and bread. The melody is accompanied by various figures, including dazzling runs, bagpipe-like drones, and even simple hymn-like textures.

The choir carols sung today reflect our usual wide-range of musical styles, and we include several new carols this year.

The invitational carol, *Who Comes*, was written by Leo Nestor, long-time professor of choral music at the Catholic University of America. Here the composer combines a text by the British hymn-writer Brian Wren with music of great beauty, setting the tone for the readings which follow.

Adam lay ybounden was written by Boris Ord, who preceded Willcocks as Director of Music at King's, combining an old text and a beautifully-crafted setting.

The music of John Rutter is often a prominent part of many Christmas programs, owing to his long role in both composing and editing music for the season. His setting of the Robert Herrick text *What Sweeter* Music was written for the Choir of King's College, Cambridge in 1986, and is perhaps one of his finest works.

The legend about sailing into landlocked Bethlehem can be traced back to the 12th century when three ships brought the relics of the purported Wise Men to Cologne, Germany. From this story evolved the English folk carol *I Saw Three Ships*, which, it is thought, comes from the 15th century and whose "three ships" refer to the Three Kings. The setting sung today is by Simon Preston, former director of music and organist at Westminster Abbey.

The carol Щедрик, (Schedryk) written by Mykola Leontovych, is one of the best-loved carols coming out of rich choral tradition of Ukraine. Written in 1916, Щедрик uses an ancient Ukrainian melody in a new arrangement, something for which Leontovych was famous. Known in this country as *Carol of the Bells*, the original Ukrainian text heard today actually has *nothing whatever* to do with bells – it's a carol welcoming the arrival of Spring. This year is the 101st anniversary of

the US premiere of Schedryk, in Carnegie Hall. By the time of its American debut, Leontovich had been murdered by the Soviet secret police for his activity on behalf of the Ukrainian state, and it was many decades before he received proper recognition for his composition of this popular carol.

Cecilia McDowall (b.1951) is one of the UK's leading composers of sacred and secular choral music and has won many awards including, in 2014, the British Composer Award in the Choral category. McDowall's distinctive style fuses fluent melodic lines with occasional dissonant harmonies and rhythmic exuberance. The setting heard today features a Middle English text of great charm, with a refrain that repeats after each verse. The ingenious construction of the work sees the tune for the verses move to different groups of voices.

For over thirty years Simon Lole worked as a professional church musician, culminating in the positions of Organist and Director of Music at both Sheffield and then Salisbury Cathedrals. He now leads a varied freelance career, and is very active both as a composer and as a choral director. He has been a regular Musical Director and organist for BBC, and is one of BBC TV's "Songs of Praise" main conductors and arrangers. Simon is also the Music Producer for BBC 2's "*Carols from King's* and *Easter from King's*". A long-time friend of the Cathedral, Simon wrote the *Garden City Missa Brevis* in honor of Canon Tremsky's retirement, which was premiered on All Saints' Sunday last month. His carol *The Journey* sets a lovely text by Christina Rossetti in a lyric, flowing way, culminating with a soaring descant at the conclusion.

Conrad Susa was an American composer was on the faculty of the San Francisco Conservatory of Music for much of his life. In addition to writing several operas, he was well known for his many choral works. *The Shepherds Sing* features the refrain "nova, nova" sung repeatedly through. In this refrain, Gabriel's salutation (Ave) to Mary brings the news (nova) that she will be the second Eve (Eva), who will redeem humanity from the errors of the first Eve. This refrain was popular throughout the Middle Ages and is found as early as the ninth century in a Hymn from the St. Gall Manuscript. The verses are a text by George Herbert.



COVER ART

Icon *Angels with Child*, by Olya Kravchenko, 2024, Lviv, Ukraine. Used courtesy of Iconart Gallery, L'viv, Ukraine.

A FESTIVAL OF LESSONS AND CAROLS

The Third Sunday of Advent
December 14, 2025, at Four o'clock

This year marks the 107th anniversary of the origin of the service of Lessons & Carols as we now know it. The Festival of Nine Lessons and Carols was first held in King's College Chapel, Cambridge, on Christmas Eve 1918. It was planned by Eric Milner-White, who at the age of thirty-four had just been appointed as the Dean of King's. We welcome you today to this very special Service, first celebrated here in 1953.

VOLUNTARY

Noel X (*Quand le sauveur Jésus Christ*)

Louis-Claude Daquin
(1694 – 1772)

The Congregation stands at the sound of the bell while the Choir alone sings the first two stanzas of the following hymn. The remaining stanzas are sung by ALL.

PROCESSIONAL HYMN 102

Irby

THE BIDDING PRAYER

The Very Reverend Canon Michael Sniffen, PhD.,
Dean of the Cathedral and The Mercer School of Theology

Beloved in Christ, in this season of Advent, let it be our care and delight to prepare ourselves to hear again the message of the Angels, and in heart and mind to go even unto Bethlehem, to see the Babe 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 our disobedience unto the glorious Redemption brought us by this holy Child; and let us look forward to the yearly remembrance of his birth with carols of praise.

But first, let us pray for the needs of his whole world; for peace and goodwill over all the earth; for the mission and unity of the Church for which he died, and especially in this our diocese and village.

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 hungry and the oppressed; the sick and those who mourn; the lonely and the unloved; the aged and the little children; and all those who know not the Lord Jesus, or who love him not, or who by sin have grieved his heart of love.

Lastly, let us remember before God his pure and lowly Mother, and 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 hath taught us:

**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,
for ever and ever. Amen.**

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

The Congregation is seated.

INVITATORY CAROL: *Who comes?*

Leo Nestor
(1948 – 2019)

Who comes? A child, delivered on a stable floor.
His mewling, newborn cry is all that God can say
of hunger, thirst and aching need
where Jesus lives today.

Come, singing fire of truth, compassion and right,
and scorch our hardened apathy
till love is new and bright.

Who comes? a Jew declaiming from a prophet's scroll.
His messianic cry is all that God can say
of freedom, health and saving hope
where Jesus lives today.

Come, singing breeze from worlds already, new.
Blow in and out of weary minds
till faith is singing too.

Who comes? a man, in dying moments upon the cross.
his God-forsaken cry is all that God can say
of searching, scarred, redeeming love
where Jesus lives today.

Come, singing light from new creation's dawn,
where trees of healing deck the streets
and joy is newly born.

• text: Brian Wren, 1983

FIRST LESSON

Genesis 3:8-15,17-19

*God announces in the Garden of Eden
that the seed of woman shall bruise the serpent's head.*

READER: Lucianna-Marie Singh, A Cathedral Chorister

The Congregation shall say after each lesson: Thanks be to God.

CAROL: *Adam lay ybounden*

Boris Ord
(1897 - 1961)

Adam lay ybounden,
Bounden in a bond,
Four thousand winter
Thought he not too long;

And all was for an apple,
An apple that he took,
As clerkes finden
Written in their book.
Ne had the apple taken been,
The apple taken been,
Ne had never Our Lady
A been Heaven's Queen.
Blessed be the time
That apple taken was.
Therefore we moun singen:
Deo gratias!

· text: anonymous 15th Century from the Sloane Manuscript

SECOND LESSON

Isaiah 9:2,6-7

Christ's birth and kingdom are foretold by Isaiah.

READER: Mr. David Woodward

HYMN 81 (*vs. 1 & 3 sung by ALL; vs. 2 by Choir alone*) *Es ist ein Ros*

Following the Hymn, all are seated for the following Carol.

CAROL: *In dulci jubilo*

German tune, arr. Robert Pearsall
Adapted by Reginald Jacques, 1961

In dulci jubilo Let us our homage shew;
Our heart's joy reclineth *In praeseptio*
And like a bright star shineth, *Matris in gremio.*
Alpha es et O.

O Jesu parvule! I yearn for thee always!
Hear me, I beseech thee, *O Puer optime!*
My prayer let it reach thee, *O Princeps gloriae!*
Trahe me post te!

O Patris caritas, O Nati lenitas!
Deeply were we stained *Per nostra crimina;*
But thou hast for us gained *Coelorum gaudia.*
O that we were there!

Ubi sunt gaudia, where, If that they be not there?

There are angels singing *Nova cantica*,
There the bells are ringing *In regis curia*:
O that we were there!

THIRD LESSON

Isaiah 11:1-4, 6-9

The peace that Christ will bring is foreshown.

READER: Ms. Beverly James, *Cathedral Lector*

CAROL: *I saw three ships*

English Carol, arr. Simon Preston
(1938 – 2022)

I saw three ships come sailing in,
On Christmas Day in the morning.
And what was in those ships all three?
On Christmas Day in the morning.
Our Saviour Christ and his lady,
On Christmas Day in the morning.
Pray, whither sailed those ships all three?
On Christmas Day in the morning.
O, they sailed into Bethlehem,
On Christmas Day in the morning.
And all the bells on earth shall ring,
On Christmas Day in the morning.
And all the angels in heaven shall sing,
On Christmas Day in the morning.
And all the souls on earth shall sing,
On Christmas Day in the morning.
Then let us all rejoice amain!
On Christmas Day in the morning.

FOURTH LESSON

Zephaniah 3:14-18

The Lord will be among us; we are summoned to rejoice and sing.

READER: Ms. Jeanne Provenzano

HYMN 99 (*sung by all in UNISON*)

Go Tell It on the Mountain

CAROL

trad. Ukrainian Carol

*В Вифлеємі днесь Марія пречиста * Today in Bethlehem the Virgin Mary*

Today in Bethlehem the Virgin Mary gave birth to Christ in a stable.

Glory to God in the highest, and peace to all on earth.

An angel from heaven showed himself to the shepherds, and all rejoiced at the news. *Glory to God..*

The shepherds come running to the manger and brought with themselves offerings. *Glory to God..*

From the East came the Kings following the star, three most glorious, most wise astrologers. *Glory to God..*

We also will bow down to Christ and sing together with the heavenly choir. *Glory to God..*

CAROL: Щедрик

Mykola Dmytrovych Leontovych
(1877 – 1921)

Щедрик, щедрик,
щедрівочка,
Прилетіла ластівочка,
Стала собі щебетати,
Господаря викликати:
“Вийди, вийди,
господарю,
Подивися на кошару,
Там овечки покотились,
А ягнички народились,
В тебе товар весь хороший,
Будеш мати мірку
грошей,
Хоч не гроші,
то полова —
В тебе жінка чорноброва“.
Щедрик, щедрик,
щедрівочка,
Прилетіла ластівочка. •

Shchedryk, shchedryk,
a shchedrivka [New Year's carol];
A little swallow flew [into the household]
and started to twitter,
to summon the master:
"Come out, come out, O master [*of the household*],
look at the sheep pen,
there the ewes have stumbled
and the lambkins have been born
Your goods are great,
you will have a lot of money,
[by selling them].
If not money, then chaff:
[from all your grain]
you have a beautiful wife."
Shchedryk, shchedryk,
a shchedrivka,
A little swallow flew.

FIFTH LESSON

Luke 1:26-35, 38

The Angel Gabriel salutes the Blessed Virgin Mary.

READER: The Reverend Dr. Lisa DeBenedittis, *Deacon*

CAROL: *Angelus ad Virginem*

Andrew Carter
(b. 1939)

*Angelus ad virginem Subintrans in
conclave, Virginis formidinem
Demulcens, inquit, "Ave! Ave,
regina virginum; Coeli terraeque
Dominum Concipies Et paries
Intacta Salutem hominum; Tu
porta coeli facta, Medela
criminum."*

*"Quomodo conciperem Quae
virum non cognovi? Qualiter
infrigerem Quod firma mente
vovi?" Spiritus Sancti gratia
Perficiet haec omnia; Ne timeas,
Sed gaudeas, Secura Quod
castimonia Manebit in te pura Dei
potentia."*

*Ad haec virgo nobilis Respondens
inquit ei "Ancilla sum humilis
Omnipotentis Dei. Tibi coelesti
nuntio, Tanti secreti conscio,
Consentiens, Et cupiens Videre
Factum quod audio; Parata sum
parere, Dei consilio."*

*Eia mater Domini, Quae pacem
reddidisti Angelis et homini, Cum
Christum genuisti; Tuum exora
filium Ut se nobis propitium
Exhibeat, Et deleat Peccata:
Præstans auxilium Vita frui beata
Post hoc exilium. Deo Gracias!*

*English Medieval Carol, 1200

The angel to the Virgin came, and
entered her dwelling, and with his
salutation calmed her fear. "Hail!
Queen of Virgins! You shall conceive
the Lord of Heaven and Earth and
give birth, while still a virgin, to the
salvation of humanity; you, made the
Gateway of Heaven, the cure for sin!

"How shall I conceive, since I know
not a man? How shall I break what I
have firmly vowed?" The grace of
the Holy Spirit shall do this. Fear
not, but rejoice, confident that your
chastity shall remain by the power of
God.

At this, the noble Virgin, replying,
said to him: "I am the humble
servant of Almighty God. To you,
heavenly messenger, who know so
great a secret, I give my assent and
desire to see done what I hear, and
am ready to obey God's will."

O Mother of the Lord, who restored
peace to angels and men when you
gave birth to Christ, beg of your Son
that he may show himself favorable
to us and wipe away our sins,
offering help to enjoy the blessed life
after this exile. Thanks be to God.

SIXTH LESSON

Luke 2:1, 3-7

St. Luke tells of the birth of Jesus.

READER: Canon Lawrence Tremsky, Director of Music

HYMN 90 (*sung by all, standing*)

Noel

CAROL: *What sweeter music?*

John Rutter
(b. 1945)

What sweeter music can we bring
Than a carol, for to sing
The birth of this our heav'nly King?
Awake the voice! Awake the string!
Dark and dull night, fly hence away,
And give the honour to this day
That sees December turn'd to May.
Why does the chilling winter's morn
Smile, like a field beset with corn?
Or smell like a meadow newly shorn
Thus on the sudden? Come and see
The cause, why things thus fragrant be:
Tis he is born whose quick'ning birth
Gives life and lustre, public mirth,
To heaven and the underearth.
We see him come and know him ours,
Who, with his sunshine and his show'rs,
Turns the patient ground to flow'rs.
The darling of the world is come,
And fit it is, we find a room
To welcome him. The nobler part
Of all the house here, is the heart
Which we will give him; and bequeath
This holly, and this ivy wreath,
To do him honour; who's our King,
And Lord of all this reveling.

· text: Robert Herrick (1591 – 1674)

SEVENTH LESSON

Luke 2:8-16

The Shepherds go to the manger.

READER: The Right Reverend William Franklin, *Assisting Bishop*

CAROL: *Now may we singen*

Cecilia McDowall
(b. 1951)

This Babe to us that now is born,
Wonderful works He hath (y)wrought (made)
He would not loss what was forlorn,
But boldly again it bought;

*And thus it is For sooth ywis (in truth indeed), He asketh nought but
that is His. Now may we singen as it is. Quod puer natus est nobis
(For a child is born to us).*

This bargain lovèd He right well,
The price was high and bought full dear.
Who would suffer and for us feel
As did that Prince withouten peer?

And thus it is...

His ransom for us hath ypaid;
Good reason have we to be His.
Be mercy asked and He be prayed,
Who may deserve the heavenly bliss.

And thus it is...

To some purpose God made man;
I trust well to salvation.
What was His blood that from Him ran
But fence against damnation?

And thus it is...

Almighty God in Trinity,
Thy mercy we pray with whole heart,
Thy mercy may all woe make fell
And dangerous dread from us to start.

And thus it is...

· text – 15th Century English

EIGHTH LESSON

Matthew 2:1-11

The Wise Men are led by the star to Jesus.

READER: The Right Reverend Geralyn Wolf, *Assistant Bishop*

CAROL: *The Journey*

Simon Lole
(b. 1957)

The wise men left their country
To journey morn by morn,
With gold and frankincense and myrrh,
Because the Lord was born,
God sent a star to guide them,
And sent a dream to warn.

My life is like their journey,
Their star is like God's book,
I must be like those good wise men
With heavenward heart and look.
But I shall give no gift to God,
What precious gifts they took.

Lord, I will give my love to Thee,
Than gold more costlier,
More sweet to Thee than frankincense,
More prized to Thee than myrrh,
Lord, make me dearer day by day,
By day holier.

Nearer and nearer day by day,
'Til I my voice unite,
And sing my 'Glory, Glory'
With angels clad in white,
All 'Glory, Glory' given to Thee
Through all the angels height!

· text: Christina Rossetti (1830- 1894)

NINTH LESSON

John 1:1-14

St. John unfolds the great mystery of the Incarnation.

READER: The Very Reverend Canon Michael Sniffen, PhD.,
Dean of the Cathedral & The Mercer School of theology

HYMN 105 (*sung by all, standing*)

God rest you, merry

Following the Hymn, the Congregation sits and the Choirs sing the following carol while an offering is received. The offering this year will go to support the vital work of the Cathedral Choirs. Your generous support of the many activities of our choral program is greatly appreciated.

CAROL: *The Shepherds Sing*

Conrad Susa
(1935 – 2013)

This piece features the refrain “nova, nova” sung repeatedly through. In this refrain, Gabriel’s salutation (*Ave*) to Mary brings the news (*nova*) that she will be the second Eve (*Eva*), who will redeem humanity from the errors of the first. This refrain was popular throughout the Middle Ages, and is found as early as the ninth century in a Hymn from the St. Gall Manuscript. The verses are a text by George Herbert.

Nova, nova ave fit ex Eva.

The shepherds sing; and shall I silent be?
My God, no hymn for thee?

Nova, nova ave fit ex Eva.

My soul’s a shepherd too:
a flock it feeds of thoughts, and words and deeds.
The pasture is thy word; the streams thy grace
enriching all the place.

Nova, nova ave fit ex Eva.

Shepherd and flock shall sing,
and all my powers outsing the daylight hours.
Then we will chide the sun
For letting night take up his place and right:

We sing one common Lord;
wherefore he should Himself the candle hold.
I will go searching, till I find a sun shall stay.
wherefore he should Himself the candle hold.

I will go searching, till I find a sun
Shall stay, till we have done;
A willing shiner, that shall shine as gladly
As frost-nipt suns look sadly.

Then we will sing, and shine all our own day,
And one another pay:
His beams shall cheer my breast, and both so twine,
Till ev'n his beams sing, and my music shine.
Nova, nova, ave fit ex Eva.

· text: George Herbert (1593-1633)

THE CLOSING PRAYERS AND THE BLESSING

<i>The Bishop</i>	The Lord be with you.
<i>People</i>	And also with you.
<i>The Bishop</i>	Let us pray

May Almighty God, by whose providence our Savior Christ came among us in great humility, sanctify you with the light of his blessing and set you free from all sin. **Amen.**

May he whose second Coming in power and great glory we await, make you steadfast in faith, joyful in hope, and constant in love. **Amen.**

May you, who rejoice in the first Advent of our Redeemer, at his second Advent be rewarded with unending life. **Amen.**

And the blessing of God Almighty, ✠ the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit, be upon you and remain with you for ever. **Amen.**

HYMN 87

Mendelssohn

VOLUNTARY: *Carillon on a Ukrainian Carol*

Gerald Near
(b. 1942)



The Cathedral of the Incarnation is the historic Cathedral Church for the Episcopal Diocese of Long Island. As part of the worldwide Anglican Communion, worship and music are an integral part of the life of the congregation. Each week during the choir season the Cathedral Choirs provide choral music at the weekly Sunday 9:15 and 11:15 am sung Masses. Incarnation Chapel, a recent cathedral ministry, is located at 252 Rushmore Ave in Carle Place and meets Saturday evenings at 5:00 pm.

CHRISTMAS AT THE CATHEDRAL

WEDNESDAY, DECEMBER 24th – *Christmas Eve*

- 4:00 pm The Blessing of the Crèche, Christmas Pageant and The Holy Eucharist – *A Service especially for children*
- 7:00 pm Christmas Music of Willcocks, Rutter, Darke, and Stetsenko sung by the Cathedral Choirs, along with carols sung by all.
- 7:30 pm Solemn Mass - Music includes the *Missa Brevis in D* by W.A. Mozart, with traditional carols.
- 10:00 pm Christmas Music of Willcocks, Rutter, Darke, and Stetsenko sung by the Cathedral Choirs, along with carols sung by all.
- 10:30 pm Solemn Mass - Music includes the *Missa Brevis in D* by W.A. Mozart, with traditional carols.

THURSDAY, DECEMBER 25th – *Christmas Day*

- 10:00 am Sung Mass with Carols

SUNDAY, DECEMBER 28th – *The First Sunday after Christmas*

- 10:00 am Sung Mass with Carols (*our ONLY Mass this day*)

The full schedule of events at the cathedral can be seen at our website,
<incarnationgc.org>.



*From the Brooklyn Bridge to Montauk Point
A house of prayer for Long Island*