

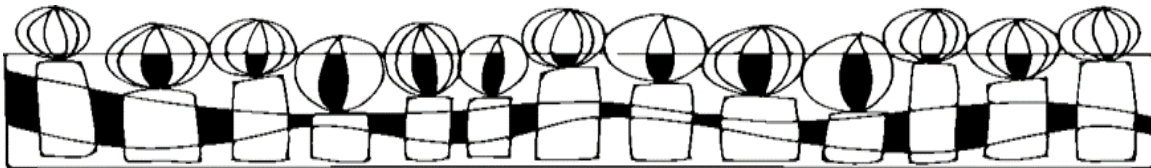
A decorative graphic on the right side of the page features several musical staves. A large red treble clef is at the top, with a red note on the first line. Below it, several staves with black and red notes and stems curve upwards and then downwards. The background of the entire page is a light gray with faint, larger-scale musical notes and staves.

LESSONS AND

Carols

Zion Lutheran Church

*319 South 5th Street
Albion, Nebraska*



✠ THE FIRST SUNDAY OF CHRISTMAS ✠
December 28, 2025

Call to Worship

Jesus, the bright Morning Star, shines light in the world.
By day and night he shines for all to see.

Jesus was born in the midst of injustice and poverty
that the world may see the justice and richness of God.

God so loved the world that God sent Jesus,
so that all who believe in him may not perish but have eternal life.

Jesus is the light of the world.
Jesus is the light of our lives.

Sing to God a new song!
A song of hope, joy, and peace around the world.

Gathering Carol

It Came Upon the Midnight Clear

#282



- 1 It came up - on the mid - night clear, that glo - rious song of old,
- 2 Still through the clo - ven skies they come with peace - ful wings un - furled,
- 3 And you, be - neath life's crush - ing load, whose forms are bend - ing low,
- 4 For lo! The days are has - t'ning on, by proph - ets seen of old,



from an - gels bend - ing near the earth to touch their harps of gold;
and still their heav'n - ly mu - sic floats o'er all the wea - ry world.
who toil a - long the climb - ing way with pain - ful steps and slow:
when with the ev - er - cir - cling years shall come the time fore - told.



"Peace on the earth, good will to all, from heav'n's all-gra-cious king."
A - bove its sad and low - ly plains they bend on hov - 'ring wing,
look now, for glad and gold-en hours come swift - ly on the wing;
when peace shall o - ver all the earth its an - cient splen-dors fling,



The world in sol - emn still-ness lay to hear the an - gels sing.
and ev - er o'er its ba - bel sounds the bless - ed an - gels sing.
oh, rest be - side the wea - ry road and hear the an - gels sing!
and all the world give back the song which now the an - gels sing.

Text: Edmund H. Sears, 1810-1876
Music: Richard S. Willis, 1819-1900
Public Domain

Greeting

May the One who by his incarnation gathered into one –
things earthly and heavenly,
fill us with the sweetness of inward peace and good will.
The blessings of God, the love of Christ,
and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with you all.
And also with you.

Prayer of the Day

Let us pray... (*A brief silence is kept.*)
O Lord God,
you know that we cannot place our trust in our own powers.
As you protected the infant Jesus,
so defend us and all the needy from harm and adversity,
through Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord,
who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit,
one God, now and forever. Amen.

First Lesson

Genesis 1:1-5, 14-18

A reading from Genesis.

¹In 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.

¹⁴And God said, "Let there be lights in the dome of the sky

to separate the day from the night;

and let them be for signs and for seasons and for days and years,

¹⁵and let them be lights in the dome of the sky

to give light upon the earth." And it was so.

¹⁶God made the two great lights — the greater light to rule the day

and the lesser light to rule the night — and the stars.

¹⁷God set them in the dome of the sky to give light upon the earth,

¹⁸to rule over the day and over the night,

and to separate the light from the darkness.

And God saw that it was good.

The Word of the Lord. **Thanks be to God.**

Carol

Angels We Have Heard on High

#289



1 An - gels we have heard on high, sweet - ly sing - ing o'er the plains,

2 Shep-herds, why this ju - bi - lee? Why your joy - ous strains pro - long?

3 Come to Beth - le - hem and see him whose birth the an - gels sing;



and the moun-tains in re - ply. ech - o - ing their joy - ous strains.

What the glad-some tid - ings be which in - spire your heav'n - ly song?

come, a - dore on bend - ed knee Christ the Lord, the new - born king.



Text: French carol; tr. H. F. Hemy, *The Crown of Jesus Music*, 1864
 Music: French carol; arr. Edward S. Barnes, 1887-1958
 Public Domain

Second Lesson

Micah 5:2-5a

A reading from Micah.

²But you, O Bethlehem of Ephrathah,
 who are one of the little clans of Judah,
 from you shall come forth for me one who is to rule in Israel,
 whose origin is from of old, from ancient days.

³Therefore he shall give them up until the time
 when she who is in labor has brought forth;
 then the rest of his kindred shall return to the people of Israel.

⁴And he shall stand and feed his flock in the strength of the LORD,
 in the majesty of the name of the LORD his God.

And they shall live secure, for now he shall be great
 to the ends of the earth; ⁵and he shall be the one of peace.
 The Word of the Lord. **Thanks be to God.**



Carol

O Little Town of Bethlehem

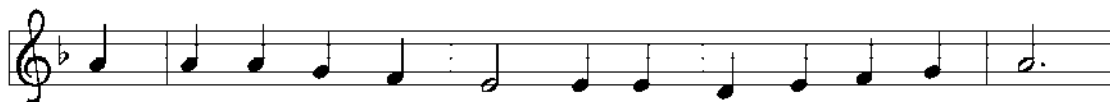
#279



1 O lit - tle town of Beth - le - hem, how still we see thee lie!
 2 For Christ is born of Mar - y, and, gath - ered all a - bove
 3 How si - lent - ly, how si - lent - ly the won - drous gift is giv'n!
 4 O ho - ly child of Beth - le - hem, de - scend to us, we pray:



A - bove thy deep and dream-less sleep the si - lent stars go by;
 while mor - tals sleep, the an - gels keep their watch of won - d'ring love.
 So God im - parts to hu - man hearts the bless - ings of his heav'n.
 cast out our sin, and en - ter in, be born in us to - day.



yet in thy dark streets shin - eth the ev - er - last - ing light.
 O morn - ing stars, to - geth - er pro - claim the ho - ly birth,
 No ear may hear his com - ing; but, in this world of sin,
 We hear the Christ-mas an - gels the great glad tid - ings tell;



The hopes and fears of all the years are met in thee to - night.
 and prais - es sing to God the king, and peace to all the earth!
 where meek souls will re - ceive him, still the dear Christ en - ters in.
 oh, come to us, a - bide with us, our Lord Im - man - u - el!

Text: Phillips Brooks, 1835-1893
 Music: Lewis H. Redner, 1831-1908
 Public Domain

Third Lesson

Luke 1:26-35, 38

A reading from Luke.

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.

²⁸ And he came to her and said,
 "Greetings, favored one! The Lord is with you."
²⁹ But she was much perplexed by his words
 and pondered what sort of greeting this might be.
³⁰ The angel said to her,
 "Do not be afraid, Mary, for you have found favor with God.
³¹ And now, you will conceive in your womb and bear a son,
 and you will name him Jesus.
³² He 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.
³³ He will reign over the house of Jacob forever,
 and of his kingdom there will be no end."
³⁴ Mary said to the angel,
 "How can this be, since I am a virgin?"
³⁵ The 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.
³⁸ Then 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.
 The Word of the Lord. **Thanks be to God.**

Carol

Hark! The Herald Angels Sing

#270



1 Hark! The her - ald an - gels sing, "Glo - ry to the new - born king;
 2 Christ, by high - est heav'n a - dored, Christ, the ev - er - last - ing Lord,
 3 Hail the heav'n - born Prince of peace! Hail the Sun of righ - teous - ness!



peace on earth, and mer - cy mild, God and sin - ners rec - on - ciled."
 late in time be - hold him come, off - spring of a vir - gin's womb.
 Light and life to all he brings, ris'n with heal - ing in his wings.

Joy - ful, all you na - tions, rise; join the tri - umph of the skies;
Veiled in flesh the God - head see! Hail, in - car - nate de - i - ty!
Mild he lays his glo - ry by, born that we no more may die,

with an - gel - ic hosts pro - claim, "Christ is born in Beth - le - hem!"
Pleased as man with us to dwell, Je - sus, our Em - man - u - el!
born to raise each child of earth, born to give us sec - ond birth.

Refrain
Hark! The her - ald an - gels sing, "Glo - ry to the new - born king!"

Text: Charles Wesley, 1707-1788, alt.
Music: Felix Mendelssohn, 1809-1847; arr. William H. Cummings, 1831-1915
Public Domain

Fourth Lesson

Matthew 1:18-25

A reading from Matthew.

¹⁸Now the birth of Jesus the Messiah took place in this way.

When his mother Mary had been engaged to Joseph,
but before they lived together,
she was found to be with child from the Holy Spirit.

¹⁹Her husband Joseph,

being a righteous man and unwilling to expose her to public disgrace,
planned to dismiss her quietly.

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."

²⁴When Joseph awoke from sleep,
he did as the angel of the Lord commanded him;
he took her as his wife,

²⁵but had no marital relations with her until she had borne a son;
and he named him Jesus.

The Word of the Lord. **Thanks be to God.**

Carol

What Child Is This

#296



1 What child is this, who, laid to rest, on Mar - y's lap is sleep - ing?
2 Why lies he in such mean es - tate where ox and ass are feed - ing?
3 So bring him in - cense, gold, and myrrh; come, peas - ant, king, to own him.



Whom an - gels greet with an-thems sweet while shep-herds watch are keep - ing?
Good Chris-tian, fear; for sin-ners here the si - lent Word is plead - ing.
The King of kings sal - va - tion brings; let lov - ing hearts en-throne him.



This, this is Christ the king, whom shep-herds guard and an - gels sing;
Nails, spear shall pierce him through, the cross be borne for me, for you;
Raise, raise the song on high, the vir - gin sings her lul - la - by;



haste, haste to bring him laud, the babe, the son of Mar - y!
hail, hail the Word made flesh, the babe, the son of Mar - y!
joy, joy, for Christ is born, the babe, the son of Mar - y!

Text: William C. Dix, 1837-1898
Music: English ballad, 16th cent.
Public Domain

Fifth Lesson

Luke 2:8-20

A reading from Luke.

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 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."

¹⁶So they went with haste and found Mary and Joseph, and the child lying in the manger.

¹⁷When they saw this, they made known what had been told them about this child;

¹⁸and all who heard it were amazed at what the shepherds told them.

¹⁹But Mary treasured all these words and pondered them in her heart.

²⁰The shepherds returned, glorifying and praising God for all they had heard and seen, as it had been told them.

The Word of the Lord. **Thanks be to God.**



Carol

The First Noel

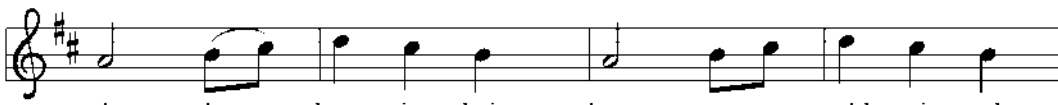
#300



1 The first No - el the an - gel did say was to
 2 They look - ed up and saw . . a star shin - ing
 3 And by the light of that . . same star three . .
 4 This star drew near to the . . north - west, o'er . .
 5 Then en - tered in those wise . . men three, full . .



cer - tain poor shep - herds in fields as they lay; in fields where
 in . . . the east . . be - yond . . them far; and to the
 wise . . men came . . from coun - try far; to seek for a
 Beth - le - hem . . it took . . its rest; and there it
 rev - 'rent - ly . . up - on . . their knee, and of - fered



they lay, keep - ing their sheep, on a cold win - ter's
 earth it gave . . . great light, and . . so it con -
 king was their . . . in - tent, and to fol - low the
 did both stop . . . and stay right . . o - ver the
 there in his . . . pres - ence their . . gold, . . . and

Refrain



night that was so deep.
 tin-ued both day and night.
 star wher - ev - er it went. No - el, No - el, No -
 place where Je - sus lay.
 myrrh, and frank - in - cense.



el, No - el! Born is the King of Is - ra - el.

Text: English traditional
 Music: English traditional; arr. John Stainer, 1840-1901
 Public Domain

Sixth Lesson

Matthew 2:1-11

A reading from Matthew.

¹In 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:

⁶And 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."

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.

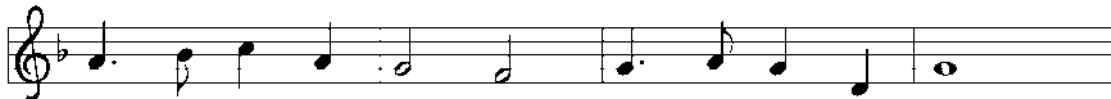
Then, opening their treasure chests,
they offered him gifts of gold, frankincense, and myrrh.
The Word of the Lord. **Thanks be to God.**



Carol

In The Bleak Midwinter

#294



1 In the bleak mid - win - ter, frost - y wind made moan,
2 Heav - en can - not hold him, nor . . . earth sus - tain;
3 What . . . can I give him, poor . . . as I am?



earth stood hard as i - ron, wa - ter like a stone;
heav'n and earth shall flee a - way when he comes to reign;
If I were a shep - herd I would bring a lamb;



snow had fall - en, snow on snow, snow on snow,
in the bleak mid - win - ter a sta - ble place suf - ficed
if I were a wise . . . man I would do my part;



in the bleak mid - win - ter, long a - go.
the Lord . . . God al - might - y, Je - sus Christ.
yet what I can I give him— give my heart.

Text: Christina Georgina Rossetti, 1830-1894
Music: Gustav Holst, 1874-1934
Public Domain

Seventh Lesson

John 1:1-14

A reading from John.

¹In 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 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.
The Word of the Lord. **Thanks be to God.**

Carol

Let All Together Praise Our God

#287 (V. 1-4)



1 Let all to - geth - er praise our God be - fore the
2 From God's right hand the Son de - scends, is born an
3 O ten - der Child, you veil in flesh the splen - dor
4 Your moth - er feeds you ten - der - ly, sings you a



high - est throne; to - day God o - pens heav'n a - gain and
in - fant small, and lies in pov - er - ty, his bed a
of your might; a ser - vant's garb now wraps the one who
lul - la - by, while an - gels, hail - ing Da - vid's heir, your



sends the on - ly Son, and sends the on - ly Son.
man - ger in a stall, a man - ger in a stall.
clothed the sky with light, who clothed the sky with light.
glo - ry mag - ni - fy, your glo - ry mag - ni - fy.

Text & Music: Nikolaus Herman, 1480-1561; tr. hymnal version
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Apostles' Creed

Living together in trust and hope, let us confess our faith...

**I believe in God, the Father almighty,
creator of heaven and earth.**

**I believe in Jesus Christ, God's only Son, our Lord,
who was conceived by the Holy Spirit,
born of the virgin Mary, suffered under Pontius Pilate,
was crucified, died, and was buried;
he descended into hell.
On the third day he rose again; he ascended into heaven,
he is seated at the right hand of the Father,
and he will come again to judge the living and the dead.
I believe in the Holy Spirit, the holy catholic church,
the communion of saints, the forgiveness of sins,
the resurrection of the body, and the life everlasting. Amen.**

Prayers of Intercession

P Empowered by the news of Christ's birth,
let us pray boldly for the church, creation, and all who are in need.

A brief silence is kept.

A God of grace, you show us mercy not according to our worthiness,
but according to the abundance of your steadfast love.
Grant us the courage to go into the world and do likewise.
Hear us, O God. **Your mercy is great.**

- P God of abundance,
the sun and moon praise you and the shining stars sing of your love.
Where we have desecrated your creation,
make us into a healing balm for what we have broken.
Hear us, O God. **Your mercy is great.**
- A God of righteousness,
when leaders fail to fulfill their calls to enact justice,
you suffer alongside us. Propel those in power
to see you reflected in the faces of all they serve.
Hear us, O God. **Your mercy is great.**
- P God of life,
you claim us as your own and care for us as Christ's siblings.
Pour out your compassion in every place your people suffer,
and protect them in the palm of your hand.
We pray especially for . . .
Hear us, O God. **Your mercy is great.**
- A God of compassion, you nurture children as the apple of your eye.
As you sheltered your son Jesus from Herod's grasp,
shelter all children in danger. As you comforted Rachel,
comfort all who have lost children to violence.
Hear us, O God. **Your mercy is great.**
- P Here other Intercessions may be offered in silent or aloud.
Hear us, O God. **Your mercy is great.**
- A God of love, you console those who weep for lost beloved ones.
Even as we mourn,
we offer thanks for those who have gone before us,
trusting in your comfort and protection.
Hear us, O God. **Your mercy is great.**
- P With the joy of Christ's birth in our hearts,
we commend our prayers to you, O God,
trusting in your boundless mercy and eternal love;
through Jesus Christ our Savior. **Amen.**

Peace

The Peace of Christ be with you always
And also with you.

Offering Response

Christ, Be Our Light

#715 (V. 5)

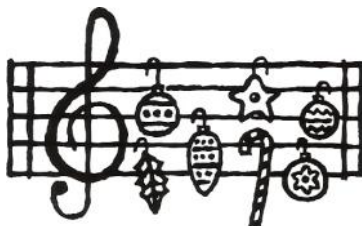
5 Man - y the gifts, man - y the peo - ple, man - y the
hearts that yearn to be - long. Let us be ser - vants
to one an - oth - er, signs of your king - dom come.

Refrain
Christ, be our light! Shine in our hearts. Shine through the
dark - ness. Christ, be our light! Shine in your
church gath - ered to - day.

Text & Music: Bernadette Farrell, b. 1957

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Lord's Prayer

Let us pray together as Jesus 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,
forever and ever. Amen.**

Benediction

Almighty God, who sent the Holy Spirit to Mary,
proclaimed joy through the angels,
sent the shepherds with good news,
and led the magi by a star,
bless you this day through the Word made flesh. **Amen.**

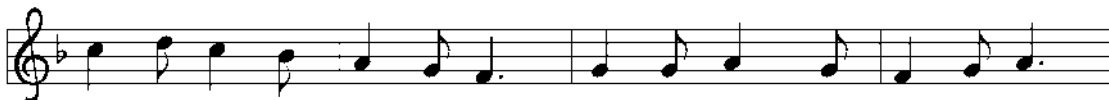
Sending Song

Good Christian Friends, Rejoice

#288



- 1 Good Chris - tian friends, re - joice with heart and soul and voice;
- 2 Good Chris - tian friends, re - joice with heart and soul and voice;
- 3 Good Chris - tian friends, re - joice with heart and soul and voice;



give ye heed to what we say: Je - sus Christ is born to - day;
now ye hear of end - less bliss: Je - sus Christ was born for this!
now ye need not fear the grave: Je - sus Christ was born to save!



ox and ass be - fore him bow, and he is in the man - ger now.
He has o - pened heav - en's door, and we are blest for - ev - er - more.
Calls you one and calls you all to gain the ev - er - last - ing hall.



Christ is born to - day!
Christ was born for this!
Christ was born to save!

Christ is born to - day!
Christ was born for this!
Christ was born to save!

Text: Medieval Latin carol; tr. John Mason Neale, 1818-1866
Music: German carol, 14th cent.; arr. Robert L. Pearsall, 1795-1856
Public Domain

Dismissal

Go in peace to love and serve the Lord.
Thanks Be to God!

THE FAMILY CIRCUS

By Bill Keane



ZION LUTHERAN CHURCH

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What did the wise men give Jesus?



They brought gifts for Jesus!



What is myrrh?

The wise men worshiped Jesus.
They gave Him gifts of gold, frankincense, and myrrh.

Find and circle the objects hidden in the picture.