

Welcome

Call for Humility

based on Luke 10:21

Leader Hear now, it is not the intellectually lazy
nor the willfully naïve,
it is not the stubborn skeptic nor the arrogant cynic
who will see God tonight.

All **For the arrogant and the fool cannot see God
as they have blinded themselves.**

Leader No, it is the meek, the humble, the sincere,
those with integrity of heart.
They recognize their place in the universe,
their fundamental state of need and their helplessness,

All **The humble and broken hearted will know God,
find him beautiful, and receive his grace.**

Leader For a gift is not a gift if it is given to someone deserving.

All **No, a true gift means there is no reasonable transaction
only sheer generosity and kindness
bestowed on someone who has nothing to give in return.**

Leader To such people God has chosen to reveal his hidden glory.

All **Jesus, may we be humble before you tonight,
you who made the most powerful and distant stars,
you who know us intimately because you give us breath each moment.
May our hearts be quiet before you tonight
and seek you with sincerity.**

Carol

“O Savior of Our Fallen Race”

All

**O Savior of our fallen race, O Brightness of the Father’s face,
O Son who shared the Father’s might, Before the world knew day or night,
O Jesus, very Light of light, Our constant star in sin’s deep night:
Now hear the prayers your people pray Throughout the world this holy day.**

**Remind us Lord of life and grace, How once, to save our fallen race,
You put our human vesture on, And came to us as Mary’s son.
Today, as year by year its’ light, Brings to our world a promise bright
One precious truth outshines the sun: Salvation comes from you alone.**

**For from the Father’s throne you came, His banished children to reclaim;
And earth and sea and sky revere, The love of Him who sent you here.
And we are jubilant today, For you have washed our guilt away.
O hear the glad new song we sing, On this, the birth of Christ our King!**

**O Savior of our fallen race, The world will see your radiant face
For you who came to us before, Will come again and all restore.
Let songs of praise your name adorn, O Christ, Redeemer, virgin-born
Whom with the Father we adore, And Holy Spirit evermore.**

Christe Redemptor Omnium, Latin office hymn, circa 6th Century; music: Nathan Partain, 2014

ACT 1: God's hidden glory in creation and his people

based on Genesis 1:1; Psalm 8; Romans 1:19–20; Matthew 11:25; Genesis 3; Romans 2 and 3

Lesson 1

Readers

“In the beginning, God created the heavens and the earth.”

“True God, our LORD, the majesty of who you are is found throughout the whole earth!
Your glory is higher than the heavens.”

“Since the creation of the world God’s invisible qualities—his eternal power and divine nature—have been clearly seen, being understood from what has been made,
So that no one can say, ‘I don’t know anything about God.’”

“You have taught children and infants
to tell of your strength,
silencing your enemies
and all who oppose you.”

Leader

And so we all together join with Jesus who said:

All

**O Father, Lord of heaven and earth,
thank you for hiding these things
from those who think themselves wise and clever,
and for revealing them to the childlike.
Yes, Father, it pleased you to do it this way.**

Carol

“O come, O come, Emmanuel!”

All

**O come, O come, Emmanuel, And ransom captive Israel,
That mourns in lonely exile here, Until the Son of God appear.
Rejoice! Rejoice! Emmanuel shall come to thee, O Israel.**

**O come, Thou Rod of Jesse, free, Thine own from Satan’s tyranny;
From depths of hell Thy people save, And give them victory over the grave.
Rejoice! Rejoice! Emmanuel shall come to thee, O Israel.**

words: Anonymous, 9th cent.; trans.: John M. Neale, 1851; music: French melody, 15th cent.

Lesson 2

Reader

“God created humanity in his own image.
In the image of God he created them;
male and female he created them.

When I look at the night sky and see the work of your fingers—
the moon and the stars you set in place—
what are mere mortals that you should think about them,
human beings that you should care for them?
Yet you made them only a little lower than the angels
and yet crowned them with glory and honor.

Carol

“O come, O come, Emmanuel!”

All

**O come, thou Day-spring, come and cheer, Our spirits by thine advent here;
Disperse the gloomy clouds of night, And death’s dark shadows put to flight.
Rejoice! Rejoice! Emmanuel shall come to thee, O Israel.**

**O come, Desire of Nations, bind, In one the hearts of all mankind;
Bid thou our sad divisions cease, And be thyself our King of Peace.
Rejoice! Rejoice! Emmanuel shall come to thee, O Israel.**

words: Anonymous, 9th cent.; trans.: John M. Neale, 1851; music: French melody, 15th cent.

Reader

You gave them charge of everything you made,
putting all things under their authority—
the flocks and the herds
and all the wild animals,
the birds in the sky, the fish in the sea,
and everything that swims the ocean currents.
True God, our Lord, the majesty of who you are is found throughout the whole earth!

Carol

“O come, O come, Emmanuel!”

All

**Rejoice! Rejoice! Emmanuel shall come to thee, O Israel.
Rejoice! Rejoice! Emmanuel shall come to thee, O Israel.**

words: Anonymous, 9th cent.; trans.: John M. Neale, 1851; music: French melody, 15th cent.

Lesson 3

Reader

So we confess together as the letter to the Romans continues:

All

**Although we knew God, we neither glorified him as God nor gave thanks to him,
but our thinking became futile and our foolish hearts were darkened.
Although we claimed to be wise, we became fools.**

Reader

“I will cause hostility between you, Satan and Eve,
and between your offspring and her offspring.
He will strike your head,
and you will strike his heel.”

Carol

“Savior of the Nations Come”

All

**Savior of the nations, come, show yourself, the virgin’s Son.
Marvel, heaven, wonder, earth, that our God chose such a birth.**

**Not by human power or seed did the woman’s womb conceive;
Only by the Spirit’s breath was the Word of God made flesh.**

**Christ laid down his majesty, passed through dark Gethsemane.
Though he left his Father’s home, Christ now sits on God’s own throne.**

**Christ in glory intercede for your creature’s suffering need.
Let your resurrecting power soon complete the victory hour.**

*words: Ambrose, 4th, and Martin Luther, 1523; trans.: Calvin Seerveld, 1984;
music: Enchiridia, Erfurt, 1524; arr.: Bruce Benedict, 2009*

ACT 2: God's Hidden Glory in Jesus's Birth

based on Isaiah 53:1-3; Micah 5:2; Luke 1:26-38; Luke 2:1-7; Luke 2:8-20

Lesson 1

Readers

“Though the world was made through him, the world did not recognize him.”

“He came to that which was his own, but his own people did not receive him”.

“Who has believed our message?

To whom has the LORD revealed his powerful arm?

My servant grew up in the LORD's presence like a tender green shoot,
like a root in dry ground.

There was nothing beautiful or majestic about his appearance,
nothing to attract us to him.

In fact, he was despised and rejected—

a man who knew many sorrows, acquainted with deepest grief.

We turned our backs on him and looked the other way.

He was despised, and we did not care.

“But you, Bethlehem,

though you are small among the clans of Judah,

out of you will come for me

one who will be ruler over Israel,

whose origins are from of old,

from ancient times.”

Carol

“Once in Royal David's City”

**Once in royal David's city stood a lowly cattle shed,
Where a mother laid her baby in a manger for his bed:
Mary was that mother mild, Jesus Christ her little child.**

words: Cecil F. Alexander, 1848; music: Henry J. Gauntlett, 1849

Lesson 2

Readers

“Greetings, favored woman! The Lord is with you!”

“Don’t be afraid, Mary, for you have found favor with God!
You will conceive and give birth to a son, and you will name him Jesus.
He will be very great and will be called the Son of the Most High.
The Lord God will give him the throne of his ancestor David.
And he will reign over Israel forever; his Kingdom will never end!”

“But how can this happen? I am a virgin.”

“The Holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the Most High will overshadow you. So the baby to be born will be holy, and he will be called the Son of God. What’s more, your relative Elizabeth has become pregnant in her old age! People used to say she was barren, but she has conceived a son and is now in her sixth month. For the word of God will never fail.”

“I am the Lord’s servant. May everything you have said about me come true.”

Then the angel left her.

Carol

“Once in Royal David’s City”

All

**He came down to earth from heaven, who is God and Lord of all,
And his shelter was a stable, and his cradle was a stall;
With the poor and mean and lowly, lived on earth our Savior holy.**

**And our eyes at last shall see him through his own redeeming love,
For that child so dear and gentle is our Lord in heaven above;
And he leads his children on to the place where he is gone.**

words: Cecil F. Alexander, 1848; music: Henry J. Gauntlett, 1849

Lesson 3

Readers

At that time the Roman emperor, Augustus, decreed that a census should be taken throughout the Roman Empire. (This was the first census taken when Quirinius was governor of Syria.) All returned to their own ancestral towns to register for this census. And because Joseph was a descendant of King David, he had to go to Bethlehem in Judea, David's ancient home. He traveled there from the village of Nazareth in Galilee. He took with him Mary, to whom he was engaged, who was now expecting a child.

And while they were there, the time came for her baby to be born and she gave birth to her firstborn son.

She wrapped him snugly in strips of cloth and laid him in a food trough, because there was no lodging available for them.

Carol

"What Child is This"

All

**What child is this who, laid to rest, on Mary's lap is sleeping?
Whom angels greet with anthems sweet, while shepherds watch are keeping?
This, this is Christ the King, whom shepherds guard and angels sing;
Haste, haste, to bring him laud, the babe, the son of Mary.**

**Why lies he in such mean estate, where ox and ass are feeding?
Good Christians, fear, for sinners here the silent Word is pleading.
Nails, spear shall pierce him through, the cross be borne for me, for you.
Hail, hail the Word made flesh, the babe, the son of Mary.**

**So bring him incense, gold, and myrrh, come peasant, king to own him;
The King of kings salvation brings, let loving hearts enthrone him.
Raise, raise a song on high; The virgin sings her lullaby.
Joy, joy for Christ is born, the babe, the son of Mary.**

**Raise, raise a song on high; The virgin sings her lullaby.
Joy, joy for Christ is born, the babe, the son of Mary.**

trad. English carol, 16th cent.; adapt.: William C. Dix, 1865

Lesson 4

Readers

That night there were shepherds staying in the fields nearby, guarding their flocks of sheep. Suddenly, an angel of the Lord appeared among them, and the radiance of the Lord's glory surrounded them. They were terrified, but the angel reassured them.

“Don't be afraid! I bring you good news that will bring great joy to all people. The Savior—yes, the Messiah, the Lord—has been born today in Bethlehem, the city of David! And you will recognize him by this sign: You will find a baby wrapped snugly in strips of cloth, lying in a food trough.”

Suddenly, the angel was joined by a vast host of others—the armies of heaven—praising God and saying,

“Glory to God in highest heaven,
and peace on earth to those with whom God is pleased.”

When the angels had returned to heaven, the shepherds said to each other,

“Let's go to Bethlehem! Let's see this thing that has happened, which the Lord has told us about.”

They hurried to the village and found Mary and Joseph. And there was the baby, lying in the manger. After seeing him, the shepherds told everyone what had happened and what the angel had said to them about this child. All who heard the shepherds' story were astonished, but Mary kept all these things in her heart and thought about them often. The shepherds went back to their flocks, glorifying and praising God for all they had heard and seen, that were just as the angel had told them.

Carol

“Hark the Herald Angels Sing”

All

**Hark! The herald angels sing, “Glory to the newborn King;
Peace on earth, and mercy mild, God and sinners reconciled!”
Joyful, all ye nations rise, join the triumph of the skies;
With th’ angelic host proclaim, “Christ is born in Bethlehem!”
Hark! The herald angels sing, “Glory to the newborn King!”**

**Christ, by highest heav’n adored, Christ, the everlasting Lord!
Late in time behold him come, offspring of a virgin’s womb.
Veiled in flesh the Godhead see; Hail th’ Incarnate Deity,
Pleased as man with men to dwell, Jesus, our Emmanuel.
Hark! The herald angels sing, “Glory to the newborn King!”**

**Hail the heav’n-born Prince of Peace! Hail the Sun of Righteousness!
Light and life to all he brings, ris’n with healing in his wings.
Mild he lays his glory by, born that man no more may die.
Born to raise the sons of earth, born to give them second birth.
Hark! The herald angels sing, “Glory to the newborn King!”**

words: Charles Wesley, 1739; music: Felix Mendelssohn, 1840

ACT 3: God's Glory Revealed Through the Work of Christ in Death and Resurrection

based on Luke 4:16-22; Zechariah 9:9; Isaiah 53; John 12:32-41; Revelation 1:9-18

Lesson 1

Readers

“The Spirit of the Lord is upon me,
for he has anointed me to bring Good News to the poor.
He has sent me to proclaim that captives will be released,
that the blind will see,
that the oppressed will be set free,
and that the time of the Lord's favor has come.”

“The Scripture you've just heard has been fulfilled this very day!”

Everyone spoke well of him and was amazed by the gracious words that came from his lips. “How can this be? Isn't this Joseph's son?”

Carol

“Joy to the World”

All

**Joy to the world, the Lord is come! Let earth receive her King;
Let every heart prepare him room, and heav'n and nature sing,
And heav'n and nature sing, and heav'n, and heav'n and nature sing.**

**No more let sins and sorrows grow, nor thorns infest the ground;
He comes to make his blessings flow, far as the curse is found,
Far as the curse is found, far as, far as the curse is found.**

**He rules the world with truth and grace, and makes the nations prove
The glories of his righteousness and wonders of his love,
And wonders of his love, and wonders, wonders of his love.**

words: Isaac Watts, 1719; music: “Antioch”; arr.: Lowell Mason, 1836

Lesson 2

Reader

“Now the time has come for the Son of Man to enter into his glory. I tell you the truth, unless a kernel of wheat is planted in the soil and dies, it remains alone. But its death will produce many new kernels—a plentiful harvest of new lives. Those who love their life in this world will lose it. Those who care nothing for their life in this world will keep it for eternity.

“Now my soul is deeply troubled. Should I pray, ‘Father, save me from this hour’? But this is the very reason I came! Father, bring glory to your name.”

“I have already brought glory to my name, and I will do so again.”

When the people heard the voice from heaven, some thought it was thunder, while others declared an angel had spoken to him.

“The voice was for your benefit, not mine. The time for judging this world has come, when Satan, the ruler of this world, will be cast out. And when I am lifted up from the earth, I will draw everyone to myself.”

He said this to indicate how he was going to die.

Lesson 3

Reader

I was exiled to the island of Patmos for preaching the word of God and for my testimony about Jesus. It was the Lord’s Day, and I was worshiping in the Spirit.

“Write in a book everything you see, and send it to the seven churches.”

When I turned to see who was speaking to me, I saw seven gold lampstands. And standing in the middle of the lampstands was someone like the Son of Man. He was wearing a long robe with a gold sash across his chest. His head and his hair were white like wool, as white as snow. And his eyes were like flames of fire. His feet were like polished bronze refined in a furnace, and his voice thundered like mighty ocean waves. He held seven stars in his right hand, and a sharp two-edged sword came from his mouth. And his face was like the sun in all its brilliance.

When I saw him, I fell at his feet as if I were dead. But he laid his right hand on me and said,

“Don’t be afraid! I am the First and the Last. I am the living one. I died, but look—I am alive forever and ever! And I hold the keys of death and the grave.

Carol

“O Savior Rend the Heavens Wide”

All

**O Savior, rend the heavens wide; Come down, come down with mighty stride;
Unlock the gates, the doors break down, unbar the way to heaven’s crown.**

words: German spiritual song; trans.: Martin L. Seltz; music: Nathan Partain, 2003

Readers

Then I saw a new heaven and a new earth, for the old heaven and the old earth had disappeared. And the sea was also gone. And I saw the holy city, the new Jerusalem, coming down from God out of heaven like a bride beautifully dressed for her husband. I heard a loud shout from the throne:

“Look, God’s home is now among his people! He will live with them, and they will be his people. God himself will be with them. He will wipe every tear from their eyes, and there will be no more death or sorrow or crying or pain. All these things are gone forever.”

“Look, I am making everything new!”

“Write this down, for what I tell you is trustworthy and true.”

“It is finished! I am the Alpha and the Omega—the Beginning and the End. To all who are thirsty I will give freely from the springs of the water of life. All who are victorious will inherit all these blessings, and I will be their God, and they will be my children.

“But those who will not trust, who will not believe, who revel in wickedness, who disregard human life, who entice others into sexual defilement, who manipulate through magical power, who give honor to idols, and all those who deceive to take advantage of others—their fate is in the fiery lake of burning sulfur. This is the death after their human death.”

Carol

“O Savior Rend the Heavens Wide”

All

**O Morning Star, O Radiant Sun, when will our hearts behold your dawn?
O Sun, arise; without your light, ee grope in gloom and dark of night.**

words: German spiritual song; trans.: Martin L. Seltz; music: Nathan Partain, 2003

Lesson 3

(cont.)

Reader

“Come with me! I will show you the bride, the wife of the Lamb.”

So he took me in the Spirit to a great, high mountain, and he showed me the holy city, Jerusalem, descending out of heaven from God. It shone with the glory of God and sparkled like a precious stone—like jasper as clear as crystal.

I saw no temple in the city, for the Lord God Almighty and the Lamb are its temple. And the city has no need of sun or moon, for the glory of God illuminates the city, and the Lamb is its light. The nations will walk in its light, and the kings of the world will enter the city in all their glory. Its gates will never be closed at the end of day because there is no night there. And all the nations will bring their glory and honor into the city. Nothing evil will be allowed to enter, nor anyone who practices shameful idolatry and dishonesty—but only those whose names are written in the Lamb’s Book of Life.

Carol

“O Savior Rend the Heavens Wide”

All

**Sin’s dreadful doom upon us lies; Grim death looms fierce before our eyes.
O, come, lead us with mighty hand, through exile to the promised land.**

**There shall we all our praises bring ever to you, our Savior King;
There shall we laud you and adore forever and forever more.
Forever and forever more. Forever and forever more.**

words: German spiritual song; trans.: Martin L. Seltz; music: Nathan Partain, 2003

Homily

Charles Anderson

The Story of Glory

Valediction

Leader The Word became flesh and lived for a while among us.

All **We have seen his glory, the glory of God's only Son,
who came from His Father, full of grace and truth.**

Carol

"Silent Night"

All **Silent night! Holy night!
All is calm; all is bright**

**'Round yon virgin mother and child.
Holy infant, so tender and mild,**

**Sleep in heavenly peace,
Sleep in heavenly peace.**

**Silent night! Holy night!
Son of God, Love's pure light,**

**Radiant, beams from thy holy face,
With the dawn of redeeming grace,**

**Jesus, Lord, at thy birth,
Jesus, Lord, at thy birth.**

**Silent night! Holy night!
Wondrous star, lend thy light**

**With the angels let us sing;
Alleluia to our King.**

**Christ the Savior is born!
Christ the Savior is born!**

words: Joseph Mohr, c. 1818; vs. 1 & 3 trans.: John F. Young, 1863; music: Franz Gruber, 1820

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