An Advent Service of
Lessons & Carols

Sunday December 5, 2021 | 7:00pm
Vassar College
An Advent Service of Lessons and Carols 2021

A note on this service

The liturgy for this service is designed to lead participants into deepening reflection on the Christmas story—what Thomas Merton calls the “Great Joy [that] explodes silently upon the world.” In order to make room for people to enter attentively and prayerfully into the growing stillness of this night, please hold your applause until the end of the service, when you can heartily applaud for all.

Please also note, for the sake of our common good, everyone attending is expected to wear masks covering nose and mouth throughout the duration of the service.

Prelude  Allein Gott in der Hoh sei Ehr. BWV 662  Johann Sebastian Bach (1685-1750)
Gail Archer, College Organist

Welcome  Rev. Samuel Speers, Associate Dean
Office of Religious and Spiritual Life and Contemplative Practices

Proclamation: 1 John 4:7-8  Barak Tucker and Rahul Kumar, readers
For God is love

Lighting of Advent Candles  Elizabeth Howe Bradley, President of the College

Anthem:  The Word was God  Rosephanye Powell (b. 1962)
Vassar College Choir, Vassar College Women’s Chorus, Cappella Festiva Chamber Choir
Christine Howlett, conductor

1st Reading: Genesis 1:1-5  Carlos Alamo-Pastrana, Dean of the College
On the first day, God made light

1En el principio, cuando Dios creó los cielos y la tierra, 2todo era confusión y no había nada en la tierra. Las tinieblas cubrían los abismos mientras el espíritu de Dios aleteaba sobre la superficie de las aguas. 3Dijo Dios: "Haya luz", y hubo luz. 4Dios vio que la luz era buena, y separó la luz de las tinieblas. 5Dios llamó a la luz "Día" y a las tinieblas "Noche". Atardeció y amaneció: fue el primer día.

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.
Anthem:  *Adam lay ybounden*  
Richard R. Webster (b. 1952)  
Vassar College Choir & Cappella Festiva Chamber Choir

2nd Reading:  Isaiah 9:2&6  
Reshan Selvavelautham '23, Episcopal Church at Vassar College and Vassar Christian Fellowship

*A promise of light for a people in darkness*

Responsive Psalm:  36:7-9

Leader:  How precious is your steadfast love, O God!  
People:  All people may take refuge in the shadow of your wings.

Leader:  They feast on the abundance of your house,  
People:  and you give them drink from the river of your delights.

Leader:  For with you is the fountain of life;  
People:  in your light we see light.

3rd Reading:  Luke 1:46-55  
Mahlia Neely ‘23, Vassar Christian Fellowship

*Mary sings God’s upside down re-ordering of the world*

Unison Prayer for Our Earth  
Linda Tuttle, Affiliate Advisor, Vassar Catholic Community  
from *Laudato Si*, Pope Francis’ “Encyclical on our Care for our Common Home”

All-powerful God,  
you are present in the whole universe  
and in the smallest of your creatures.  
You embrace with your tenderness all that exists.  
Pour out upon us the power of your love,  
that we may protect life and beauty.  
Fill us with peace, that we may live  
as brothers and sisters, harming no one.

O God of the poor,  
help us to rescue the abandoned and forgotten of this earth,  
so precious in your eyes.  
Bring healing to our lives,  
that we may protect the world and not prey on it,  
that we may sow beauty, not pollution and destruction.
Touch the hearts
of those who look only for gain
at the expense of the poor and the earth.
Teach us to discover the worth of each thing,
to be filled with awe and contemplation,
to recognize that we are profoundly united
with every creature
as we journey towards your infinite light.

We thank you for being with us each day.
Encourage us, we pray, in our struggle
for justice, love and peace.

4th Reading: Luke 2:1-7  Laurel Hanson ’23, Fellowship of Latter Day Saints
The babe is born in Bethlehem

Anthem: This Little Babe (Ceremony of Carols)  Benjamin Britten (1913-1976)
Vassar College Women’s Chorus; Susan Brown, piano

5th Reading: Shona Tucker, Professor of Drama
from The Time of the End is the Time of No Room by Thomas Merton
A monk ponders why it had to be that there was no room for the Christ child

Anthem: Lux Aurumque  Eric Whitacre (b. 1970)
Vassar College Choir, Vassar College Women’s Chorus, Cappella Festiva Chamber Choir

Light,
warm and heavy as pure gold
and the angels sing softly
to the new-born babe.
–Edward Esch (b. 1970)

Lux,
calida gravisque pura velut aurum
et canunt angeli molliter
modo natum.
–Translated by Anthony Charles Silvestri

6th Reading: John 1:1-14  Szymon Baldyga ’22, Vassar Catholic Community
The great mystery of the Incarnation

*Candle-lighting Ceremony
Choir members and Religious & Spiritual Life ushers will begin the candle-lighting in each row
Silent Night, Holy Night

Music: Franz Gruber, (1787-1863)
Words: Joseph Mohr, (1792-1848)

1. 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.

2. Silent night, holy night,
   Shepherds quake at the sight;
   Glories stream from heaven afar,
   Heavenly hosts sing “Alleluia:
   Christ the Savior is born.
   Christ the Savior is born.”

Christmas Prayers

3. 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.

4. 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.

Benediction

After the Benediction, please extinguish your candle, taking care to keep dripping wax inside the candle cup, and return it to the ushers at the exits on your way out.

Postlude: Komm, Heiliger Geist, BWV 651
Johann Sebastian Bach (1685-1750)

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A free will offering will be taken for Vassar Community Works. For more information on how you may give, see: https://www.vassar.edu/communityworks/

Special thanks to Rev. Leigh Hall, Affiliate Advisor for the Episcopal Church at Vassar College, for her hospitality of tonight’s service, and to Annie Sampugnaro and Kim Andresen, Administrative Assistants for our sponsoring office and department, for all their efforts preparing this annual Advent celebration.
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