

The song then adds a gift for each day, building on the verse before it, until you're reciting all 12 gifts together:

Day 2: two turtle doves  
Day 3: three French hens  
Day 4: four calling birds  
Day 5: five gold rings  
Day 6: six geese a-laying  
Day 7: seven swans a-swimming  
Day 8: eight maids a-milking  
Day 9: nine ladies dancing  
Day 10: 10 lords a-leaping  
Day 11: 11 pipers piping  
Day 12: 12 drummers drumming

The history of the carol is somewhat murky. The earliest known version first appeared in a 1780 children's book called *Mirth With-out Mischief*. Some historians think the song could be French in origin, but most agree it was designed as a "memory and forfeits" game, in which singers tested their recall of the lyrics and had to award their opponents a "forfeit" — a kiss or a favor of some kind — if they made a mistake.

Many variations of the lyrics have existed at different points; some mention "bears a-baiting" or "ships a-sailing"; some name the singer's mother as the gift giver instead of their true love. Early versions list four "colly" birds, an archaic term meaning black as coal blackbirds, in other words). And some people theorize that the five gold rings actually refer to the markings of a ring-necked pheasant, which would align with the bird motif of the early verses.

In any case, the song most of us are familiar with today comes from an English composer named Frederic Austin; in 1909, he set the melody and lyrics (including changing "colly" to "calling") and added as his own flourish the drawn-out cadence of "five go-old rings."

(adapted from Tanya Pai)

Service of  
Lessons and Carols

Merry  
Christmas

Christ Church Episcopal  
5101 O'Malley Road  
Anchorage, Alaska

## Our Readings and Carol Responses

Our Carol responses are found in The Hymnal 1982

Processional: #83      O Come All Ye Faithful

First Lesson: Genesis 3:1-23

Carol Response: #376 Joyful, Joyful We Adore Thee

Second Lesson: Isaiah 7:10-15

Carol Response: #66 Come Thou Long Expected Jesus

Third Lesson: Luke 1:26-38

Carol Response: #93 Angels From the Realm of Glory

Fourth Lesson: Luke 1:39-56

Carol Response: Song of Mary (Lutheran Hymnal)

Fifth Lesson: Luke 2:1-20

Carol Response: #96 Angels We Have Heard On High

Sixth Lesson: John 1:1-18

Carol Response: #100 Joy to the World

Service Music:

Offertory: Good Christian Friends Rejoice #107

Communion Hymn: Let all Mortal Flesh #324

Recessional: Go Tell it on the Mountain

Community Hymn: The Twelve Days of Christmas

*Merry  
Christmas*

## The Twelve Days of Christmas

December 25 marks the official start of the 12 days of Christmas, the Christian tradition that shares its name with a relentlessly stick-in-your-head Christmas carol.

Here are a few things you may not have known about the song and the season.

WHAT ARE THE 12 DAYS OF CHRISTMAS?

The 12 days of Christmas is the period that in Christian theology marks the span between the birth of Christ and the coming of the Magi — the three wise men. It begins on December 25 (Christmas) and runs through January 6 (the Epiphany, sometimes also called Three Kings' Day). Additionally, the four weeks preceding Christmas are collectively known as [Advent](#), which begins four Sundays before Christmas and ends on December 24.

Some families choose to mark the 12-day period by planning daily Christmas-related activities, but for many, after December 25 things go back to business as usual.

"The 12 Days of Christmas" is also a Christmas carol in which the singer brags about all the gifts they received from their "true love" during the 12 days of Christmas. Each verse builds on the previous, serving as a really effective way to annoy family members on road trips.

THE LYRICS TO "THE 12 DAYS OF CHRISTMAS" HAVE CHANGED OVER THE YEARS

The version most people are familiar with today begins with this verse:

On the first day of Christmas, my true love sent to me, a partridge in a pear tree.

(Continued on back cover)

**Prayers of the People**  
**The Confession**

**BCP 360**

Celebrant: Let us confess our sins against God and our neighbor.

**Most Merciful God,  
we confess that we have sinned against you  
in thought, word, and deed,  
by what we have done,  
and by what we have left undone.  
We have not loved you with our whole heart;  
we have not loved our neighbors as ourselves,  
We are truly sorry and we humbly repent,  
For the sake of your Son Jesus Christ,  
have mercy on us and forgive us;  
that we may delight in your will,  
and walk in your ways,  
to the glory of your Name. Amen**

Celebrant: Almighty God have mercy on you, forgive you all your sins through our Lord Jesus Christ, strengthen you in all goodness, and by the power of the Holy Spirit keep you in eternal life. Amen

**Passing of the Peace**  
**Offertory Hymn**

**Doxology**  
**The Great Thanksgiving**

Sanctus S-129  
The Lord's Prayer  
The Breaking of the Bread

All Are Welcome at the Lord's Table

Communion Hymn

Blessing

Closing: Prayers for Birthdays, Anniversaries and Travelers

Recessional Hymn

Community Hymn: The Twelve Days of Christmas

**Service of Lessons and Carols**  
**First Sunday after Christmas**

**Processional Hymn**

Opening Sentences  
**Collect for Purity:**

**Almighty God, to you all hearts are open, all desires known, and from you no secrets are hid: Cleanse the thoughts of our hearts by the inspiration of your Holy Spirit, that we may perfectly love you, and worthily magnify your holy Name; through Christ our Lord, Amen.**

Collect of the Day:

Almighty God, you have poured upon us the new light of your incarnate Word: Grant that this light, enkindled in our hearts, may shine forth in our lives; through Jesus Christ our Lord, who lives and reigns with you, in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God, now and for ever. Amen.

Gloria S-280

**First Lesson: Genesis 3:1-23**

Now the serpent was more crafty than any other wild animal that the LORD God had made. He said to the woman, "Did God say, 'You shall not eat from any tree in the garden'?" The woman said to the serpent, "We may eat of the fruit of the trees in the garden; but God said, 'You shall not eat of the fruit of the tree that is in the middle of the garden, nor shall you touch it, or you shall die.'" But the serpent said to the woman, "You will not die; for God knows that when you eat of it your eyes will be opened, and you will be like God, knowing good and evil." So when the woman saw that the tree was good for food, and that it was a delight to the eyes, and that the tree was to be desired to make one wise, she took of its fruit and ate; and she also gave some to her husband, who was with her, and he ate. Then the eyes of both were opened, and they knew that they were naked; and they sewed fig leaves together and made loincloths for themselves.

They 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.

But the LORD God called to the man, and said to him, “Where are you?” He said, “I heard the sound of you in the garden, and I was afraid, because I was naked; and I hid myself.” He said, “Who told you that you were naked? Have you eaten from the tree of which I commanded you not to eat?” The man said, “The woman whom you gave to be with me, she gave me fruit from the tree, and I ate.” Then the LORD God said to the woman, “What is this that you have done?” The woman said, “The serpent tricked me, and I ate.”

The 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. I 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.” To the woman he said, “I will greatly increase your pangs in childbearing; in pain you shall bring forth children, yet your desire shall be for your husband, and he shall rule over you.”

And to the man he said, “Because you have listened to the voice of your wife, and have eaten of the tree about which I commanded you, ‘You shall not eat of it,’ cursed is the ground because of you; in toil you shall eat of it all the days of your life; thorns and thistles it shall bring forth for you; and you shall eat the plants of the field. By the sweat of your face you shall eat bread until you return to the ground, for out of it you were taken; you are dust, and to dust you shall return.” The man named his wife Eve, because she was the mother of all living.

And the LORD God made garments of skins for the man and for his wife, and clothed them. Then the LORD God said, “See, the man has become like one of us, knowing good and evil; and now, he might reach out his hand and take also from the tree of life, and eat, and live forever”— therefore the LORD God sent him forth from the garden of Eden, to till the ground from which he was taken.

### Carol Response

### The Nicene Creed

We believe in one God,  
the Father, the Almighty,  
maker of heaven and earth,  
of all that is, seen and unseen.

We believe in one Lord, Jesus Christ,  
the only Son of God,  
eternally begotten of the Father,  
God from God, Light from Light,  
true God from true God,  
begotten, not made,  
of one Being with the Father.  
Through him all things were made.  
For us and for our salvation  
he came down from heaven:  
by the power of the Holy Spirit  
he became incarnate from the Virgin Mary,  
and was made man.  
For our sake he was crucified under Pontius Pilate;  
he suffered death and was buried.  
On the third day he rose again  
in accordance with the Scriptures;  
he ascended into heaven  
and is seated at the right hand of the Father.  
He will come again in glory to judge the living and the dead,  
and his kingdom will have no end.

We believe in the Holy Spirit, the Lord, the giver of life,  
who proceeds from the Father and the Son.  
With the Father and the Son he is worshiped and glorified.  
He has spoken through the Prophets.  
We believe in one holy catholic and apostolic Church.  
We acknowledge one baptism for the forgiveness of sins.  
We look for the resurrection of the dead,  
and the life of the world to come. Amen.

## Sixth Lesson: John 1:1-18

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

There was a man sent from God, whose name was John. He came as a witness to testify to the light, so that all might believe through him. He himself was not the light, but he came to testify to the light. The true light, which enlightens everyone, was coming into the world. He was in the world, and the world came into being through him; yet the world did not know him. He came to what was his own, and his own people did not accept him. But to all who received him, who believed in his name, he gave power to become children of God, who were born, not of blood or of the will of the flesh or of the will of man, but of God. And 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.

(John testified to him and cried out, 'This was he of whom I said, "He who comes after me ranks ahead of me because he was before me."') From his fullness we have all received, grace upon grace. The law indeed was given through Moses; grace and truth came through Jesus Christ. <sup>18</sup>No one has ever seen God. It is God the only Son,\* who is close to the Father's heart,\* who has made him known.

### Carol Response

## Second Lesson: Isaiah 7:10-15

Again the LORD spoke to Ahaz, saying, Ask a sign of the LORD your God; let it be deep as Sheol or high as heaven. But Ahaz said, I will not ask, and I will not put the LORD to the test. Then Isaiah said: 'Hear then, O house of David! Is it too little for you to weary mortals, that you weary my God also? Therefore 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. He shall eat curds and honey by the time he knows how to refuse the evil and choose the good.

### Carol Response

## Third Lesson: Luke 1:26-38

In the sixth month the angel Gabriel was sent by God to a town in Galilee called Nazareth, to a virgin engaged to a man whose name was Joseph, of the house of David. The virgin's name was Mary. And he came to her and said, 'Greetings, favoured one! The Lord is with you.' But she was much perplexed by his words and pondered what sort of greeting this might be. The angel said to her, 'Do not be afraid, Mary, for you have found favour with God. And now, you will conceive in your womb and bear a son, and you will name him Jesus. 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. He will reign over the house of Jacob for ever, and of his kingdom there will be no end.' Mary said to the angel, 'How can this be, since I am a virgin?' 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. And 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. For nothing will be impossible with God.' 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.

### Carol Response



## Fourth Lesson: Luke 1:39-56

In those days Mary set out and went with haste to a Judean town in the hill country, where she entered the house of Zechariah and greeted Elizabeth. When Elizabeth heard Mary's greeting, the child leapt in her womb. And Elizabeth was filled with the Holy Spirit and exclaimed with a loud cry, 'Blessed are you among women, and blessed is the fruit of your womb. And why has this happened to me, that the mother of my Lord comes to me? For as soon as I heard the sound of your greeting, the child in my womb leapt for joy. And blessed is she who believed that there would be a fulfilment of what was spoken to her by the Lord.'

And Mary said,  
'My soul magnifies the Lord,  
and my spirit rejoices in God my Saviour,  
for he has looked with favour on the lowliness of his servant.  
Surely, from now on all generations will call me blessed;  
for the Mighty One has done great things for me,  
and holy is his name.  
His mercy is for those who fear him  
from generation to generation.  
He has shown strength with his arm;  
he has scattered the proud in the thoughts of their hearts.  
He has brought down the powerful from their thrones,  
and lifted up the lowly;  
he has filled the hungry with good things,  
and sent the rich away empty.  
He has helped his servant Israel,  
in remembrance of his mercy,  
according to the promise he made to our ancestors,  
to Abraham and to his descendants for ever.'  
And Mary remained with her for about three months and then returned to her home.

### Carol Response

## Fifth Lesson: Luke 2:1-20

In those days a decree went out from Emperor Augustus that all the world should be registered. This was the first registration and was taken while Quirinius was governor of Syria. All went to their own towns to be registered. Joseph 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 David. He went to be registered with Mary, to whom he was engaged and who was expecting a child. While they were there, the time came for her to deliver her child. And 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.

In that region there were shepherds living in the fields, keeping watch over their flock by night. Then an angel of the Lord stood before them, and the glory of the Lord shone around them, and they were terrified. But the angel said to them, "Do not be afraid; for see—I am bringing you good news of great joy for all the people: to you is born this day in the city of David a Savior, who is the Messiah, the Lord. This will be a sign for you: you will find a child wrapped in bands of cloth and lying in a manger." And suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host, praising God and saying, "Glory to God in the highest heaven, and on earth peace among those whom he favors!" When 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." So they went with haste and found Mary and Joseph, and the child lying in the manger. When they saw this, they made known what had been told them about this child; and all who heard it were amazed at what the shepherds told them. But Mary treasured all these words and pondered them in her heart. The shepherds returned, glorifying and praising God for all they had heard and seen, as it had been told them.

### Carol Response