While the service of Advent Lessons and Carols is of rather modern origin, it is based in the ancient practice of reading lessons and singing hymns while waiting in preparation for the great festivals of the Church year. This often takes the form of extended versions of the daily office, as with the Royal Hours in the Byzantine Rite. Our service of Lessons and Carols makes use of elements of Matins (which is a service of nine readings in the West) and Vespers (including the Great “O” antiphon, sung with the Magnificat in the days before Christmas). This service is offered to assist us in our preparations for the coming of the Savior, remembering both His first coming, born of a Virgin Mother, and looking forward to His coming again in power and great glory.

St. Gregory the Great Orthodox Church
Washington, D.C.
16 December 2006 at 6:00 in the afternoon
Prelude

Creator of the Stars of Night

David Johnson

The Advent Prose

The people respond after each verse

Drop down ye heavens from above, and let the skies pour down righteousness.

Hymn 29

Creator of the Stars of Night

Bidding Prayer (concluding with the Lord’s prayer)

Our Father, who art in heaven, hallowed by 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. Amen.

Hail Mary, full of grace, the Lord is with thee, blessed art thou among women and blessed is the fruit of thy womb, Jesus. Holy Mary, Mother of God, pray for us sinners, now and at the hour of our death. Amen.

The First Lesson - The Prophet proclaims good news to a people in exile (Isaiah 40:1-8)

Hymn 28

Comfort, Comfort Ye My People

The Second Lesson - The Prophet foretells the glory of the Kingdom of God (Isaiah 35:1-6)

Hymn 32

Hark! The Glad Sound! The Savior Comes

The Third Lesson - The Prophet foretells the birth of Christ (Isaiah 9:2-7)

Hymn 68

The Race That Long in Darkness Pined

The Fourth Lesson - Christ warns all to watch and be prepared (Matthew 25:1-13)

Hymn 42

Wake, O wake! With tidings thrilling

The Fifth Lesson - The angel Gabriel salutes the Blessed Virgin Mary (Luke 1:26-35, 38)

Chant (sung by the choir) 

Ave Maria

The Sixth Lesson - The Blessed Virgin Mary visits her cousin Elizabeth (Luke 1:39-47)

Canticle

Magnificat

Antiphon: O Wisdom, which camest out of the mouth of the most High, and reachest from one end to another, mightily and sweetly ordering all things: Come and teach us the way of prudence.

Tone II 2

MY SOUL doth magnify the / Lord, * and my spirit hath rejoiced in / God my Savior.

FOR HE hath re/garded * the lowliness of / his handmaiden.
FOR BEhold from / henceforth * all generations shall / call me
blessed.
FOR HE that is mighty hath magnified / me; * and / holy is
his Name.
AND HIS mercy is on them that / fear him * throughout all /
generations.
HE HATH showed strength with his / arm; * he hath scattered the
proud in the imagi/nation of their hearts.
HE HATH put down the mighty from their / seat, * and hath
exalted the / humble and meek.
HE HATH filled the hungry with good / things; * and the rich he
hath sent / empty away.
HE REmembering his mercy † hath holpen his servant / Israel; *
as he promised to our forefathers, Abraham and his / seed for
ever.
GLORY be to the Father and to the / Son, * and / to the
Holy Ghost.
AS IT was in the beginning, † is now and ever / shall be, * world /
without end. Amen.

The antiphon is repeated.

Vespers Responsory

V.  Judah and Jerusalem, fear not, nor be / dismayed;
R.  Tomorrow go ye forth, and the Lord, he will be with / you.
V.  Stand ye still, and ye shall see the salvation of / the Lord.
R.  Tomorrow go ye forth, and the Lord, he will be with / you.
V.  Glory be to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Ghost.
R.  Tomorrow go ye forth, and the Lord, he will be with / you.
V.  We wait for thy loving kindness, / O Lord.
R.  In the midst of thy tem/ple.

The Collects and the Blessing

Hymn 34  O Come, O Come, Emmanuel

Postlude  Comfort, Comfort Ye, My People  Georg Boehm

The Seventh Lesson - The Angel appears to Joseph, telling of the
birth of Christ (Matthew 1:18-24)

Carol  A Child is Born in Bethlehem, Alleluia  Samuel Scheidt

The Eighth Lesson - Jesus proclaims the coming of the Kingdom of
God (Mark 1:1-15)

Hymn 31  Hark! A Thrilling Voice is Sounding

The Ninth Lesson - St. John foresees the Second Coming of Christ
(Revelation 22)

Hymn 33  Lo, He Comes With Clouds Descending