



News from the Royal School of Church Music

FREE DOWNLOAD FROM RSCM: FESTIVAL OF SIX LESSONS AND CAROLS.

A new alternative outline for a Christmas carol service has been published by the Royal School of Church Music (RSCM). It provides suggested hymns and carols, prayers and **SIX readings instead of the traditional nine. The outline can be downloaded free from the RSCM's website www.rscm.com.**

The RSCM Carol Service has been devised by Tim Ruffer, the RSCM's Head of Publishing and The Revd Peter Moger, the Church of England's National Worship Development Officer. The new service provides an alternative choice to the traditional Festival of Nine Lessons and Carols first drawn up by Bishop Edward Benson of Truro, later to be adopted by the Dean of King's College Chapel, Cambridge in 1918.

In its seasonal resource book *Common Worship: Times and Seasons*, the Church of England offers three patterns of Christmas carol service, one being the nine-lesson scheme from King's College, Cambridge, one with seven lessons and another with six. The RSCM Carol Service provides a further option to add to these established resources.

The service provides an opportunity for reflection on each of the six readings. Along with prayers and a choice of carols and hymns, the service is divided into four sections; Gathering, Word of God, Prayers and Dismissal. Unlike the traditional service, the new outline suggests a procession to the Crib where it is blessed, and also from where St Luke's account of the Birth of Jesus is read. Speaking in an RSCM podcast to promote the newly published *Carol Book Supplement*, Peter Moger explains that the Crib is the visual focus for many who come to church at Christmas. "There's a danger that we can be swamped in a sea of words," he said. "[But] the importance of those words can be heightened by having movement at that point during the service."

Some of the traditional carols have also been moved. For example, *Once in Royal David's City* which often begins the traditional service is moved to the procession to the Crib. "It's a carol about the Incarnation," says Peter Moger. "It's about Jesus being born as one of us, and then who grew to be our pattern for human life, so really it makes much more sense to have that at the account of his birth."

The new alternative outline can be downloaded from the *Sunday by Sunday* section of the RSCM website www.rscm.com. Peter Moger explains his thinking about the structure of the service in a podcast about *The Carol Book Supplement* in the Media section on the same website.

Ends

2 November 2009

Notes for Editors

The RSCM Carol Service can be downloaded from http://www.rscm.com/publications/carol_service.php

Listen to Peter Moger in a podcast about the Carol Book Supplement
http://www.rscm.com/info_resources/media/index.php

The Royal School of Church Music (RSCM) is an educational charity that promotes the best use of music in worship, church life, and the wider community. The RSCM also publishes music and training resources, and organises courses, short workshops and activities. With over 8,000 affiliates, members and friends in over 40 countries it is an international network, supported by over 750 volunteers and a small team of staff based throughout the UK. More at www.rscm.com

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