



Welcome

A Service of Music and Readings for Advent

14 December 2025



actorschurch



St. Paul's Covent Garden

Please switch off all mobile phones.

BEWARE: We do occasionally suffer from theft: take care of your belongings

Accessibility

There are instructions to 'stand' at various points in the service.

If you are unable to stand for long periods, please ignore them!

Large Print versions of the Order of Service are available.

Gluten free wafers are available.

Hearing loop installed; collect a receiver from the back of church.

Hosanna to the Son of David

Words: Matthew 21:9 and Luke 19:38

Music: Thomas Weelkes (1576-1623)

Collect for the Third Sunday of Advent

O Lord Jesu Christ, who at thy first coming didst send thy messenger to prepare thy way before thee: Grant that the ministers and stewards of thy mysteries may likewise so prepare and make ready thy way, by turning the hearts of the disobedient to the wisdom of the just, that at thy second coming to judge the world we may be found an acceptable people in thy sight, who livest and reignest with the Father and the Holy Spirit, ever one God, world without end. **Amen.**

Congregational Hymn: O Come, O Come, Emmanuel

**I O come, O come, Emmanuel,
Redeem Thy captive Israel,
That into exile drear is gone,
Far from the face of God's dear son.
Rejoice! Rejoice! Emmanuel
Shall come to Thee, O Israel.**

Choir only:

**2 O come, thou Wisdom from on high!
Who madest all in earth and sky,
Creating Man from dust and clay:
To us reveal salvation's way
Rejoice! Rejoice! Emmanuel
Shall come to Thee, O Israel.**

All:

**3 O come, Thou Root of Jesse, draw
The quarry from the Lion's claw;
From the dread caverns of the grave,
From nether hell, Thy people save.
Rejoice! Rejoice! Emmanuel
Shall come to Thee, O Israel.**

**4 O come, Thou Lord of David's key!
The royal door fling wide and free;
Safeguard for us the heav'nward road,
And bar the way to death's abode.
Rejoice! Rejoice! Emmanuel
Shall come to Thee, O Israel.**

**7 O come, desire of nations! Show
Thy kingly reign on earth below;
Thou Cornerstone, uniting all,
Restore the ruin of our fall
Rejoice! Rejoice! Emmanuel
Shall come to Thee, O Israel.**

Reading: Genesis 3: 8-19

And they heard the sound of the Lord God walking in the garden in the cool of the day, 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?" And he said, "I heard the sound of thee 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 of the tree of which I commanded you not to eat?" The man said, "The woman whom thou gavest to be with me, she gave me fruit of 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 beguiled me, and I ate."

The Lord God said to the serpent, "Because you have done this, cursed are you above all cattle, and above all wild animals; 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 seed and her seed; he shall bruise your head, and you shall bruise his heel."

To the woman he said, "I will greatly multiply your pain 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 Adam he said, "Because you have listened to the voice of your wife, and have eaten of the tree of 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 to you; and you shall eat the plants of the field. In the sweat of your face you shall eat bread till you return to the ground, for out of it you were taken; you are dust, and to dust you shall return."

Adam Lay Ybounden

Words: Anon. 15th Century

Music: Boris Ord (1897-1961)

Antiphon: O Wisdom

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

Reading: Genesis 22: 15-18

And the angel of the Lord called to Abraham a second time from heaven, and said, "By myself I have sworn, says the Lord, because you have done this, and have not withheld your son, your only son, I will indeed bless you, and I will multiply your descendants as the stars of heaven and as the sand which is on the seashore. And your descendants shall possess the gate of their enemies, and by your descendants shall all the nations of the earth bless themselves, because you have obeyed my voice."

Herrick's Carol

Words: Robert Herrick (1591-1634) adapted

Music: German traditional

Antiphon: O Adonai

O Adonai, and Leader of the house of Israel,
who appearedst in the Bush to Moses in a flame of fire,
and gavest him the law in Sinai:
Come and deliver us with an out-stretched arm.

Reading: Isaiah 11: 1-9

There shall come forth a shoot from the stump of Jesse, and a branch shall grow out of his roots. And the Spirit of the Lord shall rest upon him, the spirit of wisdom and understanding, the spirit of counsel and might, the spirit of knowledge and the fear of the Lord. And his delight shall be in the fear of the Lord.

He shall not judge by what his eyes see, or decide by what his ears hear; but with righteousness he shall judge the poor, and decide with equity for the meek of the earth; and he shall smite the earth with the rod of his mouth, and with the breath of his lips he shall slay the wicked. Righteousness shall be the girdle of his waist, and faithfulness the girdle of his loins.

The wolf shall dwell with the lamb, and the leopard shall lie down with the kid, and the calf and the lion and the fatling together, and a little child shall lead them. The cow and the bear shall feed; their young shall lie down together; and the lion shall eat straw like the ox. The sucking child shall play over the hole of the asp, and the weaned child shall put his hand on the adder's den. They shall not hurt or destroy in all my holy mountain; for the earth shall be full of the knowledge of the Lord as the waters cover the sea.

A Tender Shoot

Words: William Bartholomew (1793-1867)

Music: Otto Goldschmidt (1829 -1907)

Antiphon: O Root

O Root of Jesse, which standest for an ensign of the people,
at whom kings shall shut their mouths,
to whom the Gentiles shall seek:
Come and deliver us, and tarry not.

Reading: Romans 13: 11-14

Besides this you know what hour it is, how it is full time now for you to wake from sleep. For salvation is nearer to us now than when we first believed; the night is far gone, the day is at hand. Let us then cast off the works of darkness and put on the armour of light; let us conduct ourselves becomingly as in the day, not in revelling and drunkenness, not in debauchery and licentiousness, not in quarrelling and jealousy. But put on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make no provision for the flesh, to gratify its desires.

How Strange it is to Tell You

Words: NFS Grundtvig (1783-1872) tr. Gallagher Music: Carl Nielsen (1865 -1931)

Antiphon: O Key

O Key of David, and sceptre of the house of Israel:
that openest, and no man shutteth;
and shuttest and no man openeth:
Come, and bring the prisoner out of the prison-house,
and him that sitteth in darkness, and the shadow of death.

Congregational Hymn: Hark! a Herald Voice is Calling

**1 Hark! A herald voice is calling:
'Christ is nigh,' it seems to say;
'Cast away the dreams of darkness,
O ye children of the day!'**

**2 Startled at the solemn warning,
Let the earth-bound soul arise;
Christ, her Sun, all sloth dispelling,
Shines upon the morning skies.**

**3 Lo! the Lamb, so long expected,
Comes with pardon down from heav'n;
Let us haste, with tears of sorrow,
One and all to be forgiven;**

**4 So when next he comes in glory,
And earth's final hour draws near,
May he then as our defender
On the clouds of heaven appear.**

Reading: Isaiah 35: 1-6, 10

The wilderness and the dry land shall be glad, the desert shall rejoice and blossom; like the crocus it shall blossom abundantly, and rejoice with joy and singing. The glory of Lebanon shall be given to it, the majesty of Carmel and Sharon. They shall see the glory of the Lord, the majesty of our God.

Strengthen the weak hands and make firm the feeble knees. Say to those who are of a fearful heart, "Be strong, fear not! Behold, your God will come with vengeance, with the recompense of God. He will come and save you." Then the eyes of the blind shall be opened, and the ears of the deaf unstopped; then shall the lame man leap like an hart, and the tongue of the dumb sing for joy. And the ransomed of the Lord shall return and come to Zion with singing; everlasting joy shall be upon their heads; they shall obtain joy and gladness, and sorrow and sighing shall flee away.

Rejoice in the Lord Always

Words: Philippians 4: 4-7

Music: Anon 16th Century

Antiphon: O Dayspring

O Dayspring, Brightness of Light everlasting,
and Sun of Righteousness:
Come, and enlighten him that sitteth in darkness,
and the shadow of death.

Isaiah 9: 2-4, 6

The people who walked in darkness have seen a great light; those who dwelt in a land of deep darkness, on them has light shined. Thou hast multiplied the nation, thou hast increased its joy; they rejoice before thee as with joy at the harvest, as men rejoice when they divide the spoil. For the yoke of his burden, and the staff for his shoulder, the rod of his oppressor, thou hast broken as on the day of Mid'ian. For to us a child is born, to us a son is given; and the government will be upon his shoulder, and his name will be called "Wonderful Counsellor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace."

Hail Gladdening Light

Words: John Keble (1792-1866)

Music: Charles Wood (1866 -1926)

Antiphon: O King

O King of the nations, and their Desire;
the Cornerstone, who makest both one:
Come, and save mankind, whom thou formedst of clay.

Reading: Baruch 4: 36 – 5: 7

Look towards the east, O Jerusalem, and see the joy that is coming to you from God. Look, your children are coming, whom you sent away; they are coming, gathered from east and west, at the word of the Holy One, rejoicing in the glory of God.

Take off the garment of your sorrow and affliction, O Jerusalem, and put on for ever the beauty of the glory from God. Put on the robe of the righteousness that comes from God; put on your head the diadem of the glory of the Everlasting; for God will show your splendour everywhere under heaven. For God will give you evermore the name, 'Righteous Peace, Godly Glory'.

Arise, O Jerusalem, stand upon the height; look towards the east, and see your children gathered from west and east at the word of the Holy One, rejoicing that God has remembered them. For they went out from you on foot, led away by their enemies; but God will bring them back to you, carried in glory, as on a royal throne.

People Look East

Words: Eleanor Farjeon (1881-1965)

Music: Traditional French carol

Congregational Hymn: Hills of the North, Rejoice!

**I Hills of the North, rejoice;
River and mountain spring,
Hark to the advent voice;
Valley and lowland, sing;
Though absent long, your Lord is
nigh;
He judgment brings and victory.**

**2 Isles of the southern seas,
Deep in your coral caves
Pent be each warring breeze,
Lulled be your restless waves:
He comes to reign with boundless
sway,
And makes your wastes His great
highway.**

**3 Lands of the East, awake,
Soon shall your sons be free;
The sleep of ages break,
And rise to liberty.
On your far hills, long cold and
grey,
Has dawned the everlasting day.**

**4 Shores of the utmost West,
Ye that have waited long,
Unvisited, unblest,
Break forth to swelling song;
High raise the note, that Jesus died,
Yet lives and reigns, the Crucified.**

**5 Shout, while ye journey home;
Songs be in every mouth;
Lo, from the North we come,
From East, and West, and South.
City of God, the bond are free,
We come to live and reign in thee!**

Antiphon: O Emmanuel

O Emmanuel, our King and Lawgiver,
the Desire of all nations, and their Salvation:
Come and save us O Lord, our God.

Reading: Luke 1: 26 -38

In the sixth month the angel Gabriel was sent from God to a city of Galilee named Nazareth, to a virgin betrothed to a man whose name was Joseph, of the house of David; and the virgin's name was Mary. And he came to her and said, "Hail, O favoured one, the Lord is with you!" But she was greatly troubled at the saying, and considered in her mind what sort of greeting this might be.

And the angel said to her, "Do not be afraid, Mary, for you have found favour with God. And behold, you will conceive in your womb and bear a son, and you shall call his name 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 father David, and he will reign over the house of Jacob for ever; and of his kingdom there will be no end."

And Mary said to the angel, "How shall this be, since I have no husband?" And 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 called holy, the Son of God. And behold, your kinswoman Elizabeth in her old age has also conceived a son; and this is the sixth month with her who was called barren. For with God nothing will be impossible."

And Mary said, "Behold, I am the handmaid of the Lord; let it be to me according to your word." And the angel departed from her.

A Hymn to the Virgin

Words: Anon c.1300

Music: Benjamin Britten (1913 -1976)

Antiphon: O Virgin

O Virgin of virgins how shall this be?
for neither before thee was any like thee,
nor shall there be after.
Daughters of Jerusalem, why marvel ye at me?
The thing which ye behold is a divine mystery.

Please stand, if you are able

Reading: John 1: 1-14

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 were made through him, and without him was not anything made that was made. In him was life, and the life was the light of men. The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness has not overcome it.

There was a man sent from God, whose name was John. He came for testimony, to bear witness to the light, that all might believe through him. He was not the light, but came to bear witness to the light.

The true light that enlightens every man was coming into the world. He was in the world, and the world was made through him, yet the world knew him not. He came to his own home, and his own people received him not. 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 nor of the will of the flesh nor of the will of man, but of God.

And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, full of grace and truth; we have beheld his glory, glory as of the only Son from the Father.

Ave Verum

Words: 13th century Latin

Music: Philip Stopford (b.1977)

Collect for Advent

Almighty God, give us grace to cast away the works of darkness and to put on the armour of light, now in the time of this mortal life, in which your Son Jesus Christ came to us in great humility; that on the last day, when he shall come again in his glorious majesty to judge the living and the dead, we may rise to the life immortal; through him who is alive and reigns with you, in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God, now and for ever. **Amen.**

Congregational Hymn: Lo! He Comes with Clouds Descending

**1 Lo! he comes with clouds descending,
Once for favoured sinners slain;
Thousand thousand saints attending
Swell the triumph of his train:
Alleluya!
God appears, on earth to reign.**

**2 Every eye shall now behold him
Robed in dreadful majesty;
Those who set at nought and sold him,
Pierced and nailed him to the tree,
Deeply wailing
Shall the true Messiah see.**

**3 Those dear tokens of his passion
Still his dazzling body bears,
Cause of endless exultation
To his ransomed worshippers:
With what rapture
Gaze we on those glorious scars!**

**4 Yea, Amen! let all adore thee,
High on thine eternal throne;
Saviour, take the power and glory:
Claim the kingdom for thine own:
O come quickly!
Alleluya! Come, Lord, come!**

Blessing

Christ the Sun of Righteousness shine upon you, scatter the darkness from before your path, and make you ready to meet him when he comes in glory; and the blessing of God almighty, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit be among you and remain with you this night and always. **Amen.**

Refreshments will be available after the service.