



ELY
CATHEDRAL

Hark the glad sound! The Saviour comes

Worship, Prayer and Christian Formation at Ely Cathedral
Advent, Christmas and Epiphany 2025/26



Hark the glad sound! The Saviour comes

We celebrate with great joy the coming of Jesus, our Lord and Saviour, in the seasons of Advent, Christmas and Epiphany when we wait in joyful expectation and prepare ourselves for the coming of Jesus as the child of Bethlehem.

We rejoice in the revealing of God to all nations, peoples, languages and cultures throughout history and especially to us in our own generation especially at this time of pain and sadness in the land Christ made holy.



A Prayer for the Season

*Hark the glad sound! the Saviour comes,
The Saviour promised long!
Let every heart prepare a throne,
And every voice a song.*

*Our glad hosannas, Prince of peace,
Thy welcome shall proclaim,
And heaven's eternal arches ring
With thy beloved name.*

Worship is offered daily; all are welcome.

Monday - Saturday

7.30am	Morning Prayer (<i>A short said service with Bible readings and prayers</i>)
8.00am	Holy Communion (<i>said</i>)
5.30pm	Choral Evensong or Evening Prayer (<i>said</i>)

Sunday

8.15am	Holy Communion (<i>A said service, in traditional language with a short address</i>)
10.30am	Sung Eucharist with music, hymns and sermon
4.00pm	Choral Evensong with short address

On Thursdays and Saints' Days there is an additional Eucharist at 12.10pm.

On Wednesdays and Fridays a short service is offered by our Day Chaplains in St Catherine's Chapel at 12.15pm.

A full list of services can be found on the Cathedral website: www.elycathedral.org

Advent

In Advent we traditionally reflect on The Four Last Things - Death, Judgement, Heaven and Hell - but we also look forward in hope and anticipation to the coming of Christ as Saviour, as a human being, God with us. These two elements of solemn contemplation and joyful expectation are both essential to the proper understanding of a good Advent.

Tuesdays 2, 9 & 16 December, 8pm

Advent Compline *in the Lady Chapel*

Compline is the last of the seven daily services which are sung in monasteries and convents. It brings us to the end of the day, and it is also a gentle preparation for the end of life, very much in the spirit of Thomas Ken's words:

*Teach me to live, that I may dread
The grave as little as my bed;
Teach me to die, that so I may
Rise glorious at the awful day.*

Compline in the Cathedral has changed very little since the monks of Ely sang it before the Reformation. It is a meditative, candlelit space for music, prayer and reflection, to quiet and calm the soul, to look back over the day that is gone, and to commend ourselves and those we love to the care of God as night comes.

Advent Sermon Series

Advent sermons traditionally focus on the four last things – Death, Judgement, Heaven and Hell – but we look forward in anticipation to the coming of Christ as our Saviour – Emmanuel - God-with-us. Balancing solemnity and hope, serious self-examination and joyful anticipation, is the task of the Christian.



Sunday 30 November, 10.30am

Advent Sunday

Preacher: Canon Jenny Wright

*Many peoples shall come and say,
'Come let us go up to the mountain of the
LORD, that may teach us his ways and
that we may walk in his paths.'*

(Isaiah 2.3)



Sunday 7 December, 10.30am

Second Sunday of Advent

Preacher: Canon James Reveley

*A shoot shall come out from the stock
of Jesse, and a branch shall grow out
of his roots. The spirit of the LORD shall
be upon him, the spirit of wisdom and
understanding, counsel and might, of
knowledge and the fear of the LORD.*

(Isaiah 11.1-2)



Sunday 14 December, 10.30am

Third Sunday of Advent

Preacher: The Dean

The wilderness and the dry land shall be glad, the desert blossom and burst into song. And a highway shall be there, it shall be called the holy way.

(Isaiah 35.1, 8)



Sunday 21 December, 10.30am

Fourth Sunday of Advent

Preacher: Canon James Garrard

The young woman is with child and shall bear a son, and shall name him Immanuel.

(Isaiah 7.14)





Advent Worship

Choral Evensong during this holy season provides a time for quiet reflection; the choir sings a selection of much-loved Advent music.

Sunday 30 November

Advent Sunday

10.30am

Advent Sunday Eucharist

Today we begin a new Church Year and start again to explore the depth that this has to offer. The choir will sing music by Ben Parry and James MacMillan.

British Sign Language interpreted.

6pm

Advent Procession

The traditional and mystical service which marks the beginning of the church's year featuring the Cathedral Choir. The service is based around the Great Advent Antiphons (explained in their own section on page 8); music will include the much-loved Advent hymns *O come, O come, Emmanuel* and *Lo! he comes with clouds descending*.

Sunday 7 December

Second Sunday of Advent

10.30am

Sung Eucharist

Music includes Anthony Piccolo's striking setting of *I look from afar*.

4pm

Choral Evensong

In the Lady Chapel

5.15pm

The Big Christmas Tree Lights Switch-on Service

Come and enjoy the biggest, most spectacular, Christmas tree in Ely as we count down to the switching on of the lights.

This popular family event celebrates the festive season in song and prayer, concluding with the blessing of the magnificent tree! Sung by the Girl Choristers and the Ely Imps.



Sunday 14 December

Third Sunday of Advent

10.30am

Sung Eucharist

Music includes works by James Davy and Palestrina.

4pm

Choral Evensong

5.15pm

Carols on Palace Green

(Join us outside the main doors of the Cathedral)

We are joined by our local Ely Collaboration Choir for this very happy event. Please wrap up warm for outdoor carol singing. Hot chocolate provided.

The 'Great O's' of Advent

The 'Great O's' are seven invocations of the different names of Christ, looking towards his coming into the world under different titles. Each one, addressing Christ, begins 'O..!'

They are used as antiphons (opening and closing chants) for the Magnificat during Evensong or Evening Prayer from Wednesday 17 December.



Wednesday 17 December

5.30pm

Evening Prayer

O Wisdom, coming from the mouth of the most High, reaching from one end to the other, mightily and sweetly ordering all things: Come and teach us the way of prudence.

O Sapientia O Wisdom

Thursday 18 December

5.30pm

Choral Evensong

O Adonai, and leader of the House of Israel, who appeared to Moses in the fire of the burning bush and gave him the law on Sinai: Come and redeem us with an outstretched arm.

O Adonai O Lord

Friday 19 December

O Radix Jesse O Root of Jesse

5.30pm

Choral Evensong

O Root of Jesse, standing as a sign among the peoples; before you kings will shut their mouths, to you the nations will make their prayer: Come and deliver us, and delay no longer.

Saturday 20 December

O Clavis David O Key of David

5.30pm

Choral Evensong

O Key of David and sceptre of the House of Israel; you open and no one can shut; you shut and no one can open: Come and lead the prisoners from the prison house, those who dwell in darkness and the shadow of death.

Sunday 21 December

O Oriens O Dayspring

Fourth Sunday of Advent

10.30am

Sung Eucharist

O Dayspring, splendour of light eternal and sun of righteousness: Come and enlighten those who dwell in darkness and the shadow of death.

On the fourth Sunday of Advent, the response of Mary to the Angel's greeting is the focus of our attention, *'Let it be to me according to your word.'*

4pm

Choral Evensong

Monday 22 December

O Rex Gentium O King of the Nations

5.30pm

Evening Prayer

O King of the nations, and their desire, the cornerstone making both one: Come and save the human race, which you fashioned from clay.

Tuesday 23 December, 6pm

O Emmanuel God With us

Carol Service 1

O Emmanuel, our king and our lawgiver, the hope of the nations and their Saviour: Come and save us, O Lord our God.

This processional service includes many opportunities for congregational singing as well as a colourful mix of carols from the Cathedral Choir.



Peace on Earth, Goodwill to All People

At Christmas, God comes among us - not in power, or in eloquence, but as a new-born, dependent upon human love and care for his survival. The great Bishop of Ely Lancelot Andrewes called Jesus, *The Word without a word*, because the swaddled baby in the manger is also the power which has brought everything into being. Because God emptied himself out to become human, human beings are forever brought back into close intimacy with God.

A Prayer for the Season

Lord Jesus, may your light shine upon our way, as once it guided the steps of the magi: that we all may be led into your presence and worship you, the Child of Mary, the Word of the Father, the King of nations, the Saviour of all humanity; to whom be glory for ever.

Frank Colquhoun

Wednesday 24 December

Christmas Eve

12pm & 3pm

Crib Services

See page 15 for details.

6pm

Carol Service 2

See Carol Service 1 (page 9) for details.

11pm

Midnight Eucharist

When peaceful silence lay over all, and the night in its swift course was half spent: down from the heavens, from the royal throne, leapt your all powerful Word.

The waiting and watching of Advent is brought to fulfilment in the deepest part of the night. Mary brings to birth the newborn infant who is also the redeemer of all creation. The midnight service hallows the turning of the night to Christmas, and honours Jesus' birth in word and sacrament, carols and song. The service is sung by the Cathedral Choir.

The Bishop of Huntingdon will preside and preach.

Thursday 25 December

Christmas Day

8.15am

Holy Communion

10.30am

Festal Eucharist

Yea, Lord, we greet thee, born this happy morning!

The people of God rejoice together, singing carols, sharing in communion, hearing and receiving the Word. The service is sung by the Girl and Boy Choristers and Lower Voices. Music includes traditional carols and Mozart's Mass in F.

The Dean will preside and preach.

4pm

Festal Evensong

We conclude our Christmas Day celebrations with a glorious Evensong sung by the Girl Choristers and Lay Clerks, featuring Will Todd's *My Lord is come* and John Rutter's *Nativity Carol*.

Friday 26 December - Saturday 27 December &
Monday 29 December - Thursday 1 January

8.30am **Morning Prayer**

9am **Holy Communion**

12.10pm **Holy Communion** (26, 27, 29 December & 1 January)

12.15pm **Midday Prayer** (31 December)

4pm **Evening Prayer / Evensong**

Friday 26 December

Stephen, Deacon, first martyr

Stephen was the first martyr of the early Christian church. In honouring him, the order of the Church's feasts moves abruptly from rejoicing to the realities of commitment to Christ's Way in this confused and violent world. Stephen witnessed to Jesus as Messiah and was then stoned for blasphemy. As he died, Stephen saw a vision of heaven and prayed for forgiveness for his persecutors.

Saturday 27 December

St John the Evangelist

St John the Evangelist is honoured for the Gospel named after him, which contains the most mystical of the visions of Jesus as both human and divine, participating both in human mortality and in the eternal nature of God the maker, redeemer and sustainer of all things.

Sunday 28 December

1st Sunday of Christmas

10.30am

Sung Eucharist

Preacher: Canon Jenny Wright

4pm

Come and Sing Carols

(see next page for information)

Monday 29 December

The Holy Innocents

Again we see the violence with which the realities of human power and greed surround the proclamation of the good news of peace. The feast of the Holy Innocents remembers the infants of Bethlehem killed by King Herod. Herod ordered their murder in an attempt to eliminate the threat he perceived to his own power in Jesus' birth. Jesus and his family escaped his soldiers to become refugees in Egypt.

Thursday 1 January 2026

Naming and Circumcision of Jesus

Eight days after Jesus' birth, he was circumcised according to Jewish law, and this Feast marks that moment in real time, eight days after the Feast Day of Christmas itself.

Carol Services

Enjoy music, rejoicing, story, brass bands, choirs, and all the joy of Christmas in our Ely community at our various different carol services!

Saturday 13 December, 2pm

Community Christmas Carols

Come and sing along to your favourite carols with Littleport Brass Band. With Christmas music, readings and prayers.

Tuesday 23 & Wednesday 24 December, 6pm

Service of Lessons and Carols

A carol service sung by the Girl Choristers, Boy Choristers, Choral Scholars and Lower Voices of the Cathedral Choir.

Sunday 28 December, 4pm (rehearsal 2.15-4pm)

Come and Sing Carols

Be part of the choir for an afternoon of favourite carols in this festive free-for-all! This annual service is led by local singers and any other singers who happen to be visiting Ely and who would like to join them. Assemble under the Octagon at 2.15pm to rehearse. The carol choices are selected from books 1 and 2 of *Carols for Choirs*. Some copies will be available to borrow on the day, but we have to rely on most people bringing their own books. All welcome.



Children and Families at Advent and Christmas



Thursday 4 December, 10.15am

Story and Song Time

Messy Christingle

Celebrate the beginning of Advent and create your own Christingle at this interactive children's service

A service for children under 5 and their parents and carers.

Sunday 7 December, 5.15pm

The Big Christmas Tree Lights Switch-On Service

Come and enjoy the biggest, most spectacular Christmas tree in Ely as we count down to the switching on of the lights. This popular family event celebrates the festive season in song and prayer, concluding with the blessing of the magnificent tree.

Thursday 18 December, 10.15am

Story and Song Time

Nativity

Enjoy our final pre-schooler service of 2025 as we hear the story of the Nativity and sing Christmas carols.

A service for children under 5 and their parents and carers.

Friday 19 December - Monday 5 January,

Available during opening hours

The Nativity Riddle Trail

Discover the story of the first Christmas through our 6 banner trail. Solve the riddles to find the hidden word. This trail also includes a simple retelling of the story using PECS symbols.

Suitable for all ages.

(Included in usual entrance fee)

Monday 22 December, 10am - 12pm

Christmas Themed Craft Activities

in the Lady Chapel with the Learning Team.

Come dressed as your favourite Nativity character.

Suitable for under 12s and their families.

(Included in usual entrance fee)

Wednesday 24 December, 12pm & 3pm

Crib Services

The children of the Cathedral retell the story of Christmas in this wonderful tableau of shepherds, angels and wise men. Sing carols and enjoy this family friendly celebration to mark the birth of Jesus.

Dressing up optional!

12pm: Sung by the Ely Imps. 3pm: Sung by the Choristers



Epiphany



Epiphany is 'a showing'. It is associated with light, with the idea of being illuminated with an astonishing truth which changes life for ever. First, Jesus is recognised as a King and worshipped by the Magi, who follow the light of a star to his dwelling place. Second, Jesus is himself baptised in the river Jordan and the 'heavens tear apart' as he is recognised by God himself as his Son, the Beloved. Third, at the wedding in Cana, Galilee, Jesus shows his abundant and generous power, changing water into wine at the wedding feast to which he comes as a guest.

A Prayer for the Season

*We honour this holy day,
adorned with three miracles:
today the star led the Magi to the manger;
today water was turned into wine for the wedding:
Today Christ desired to be baptised in the Jordan,
that he might save us all.
This is the day the Lord has made;
let us rejoice and be glad in it.
Alleluia.*

Sunday 4 January, 10.30am

Sung Eucharist

Preacher: Canon Jenny Wright

The Eucharist for Epiphany focuses particularly on the coming of the Magi, the wise men, following a star to offer their homage to the infant Jesus.

4pm

Choral Evensong

Saturday 10 January, 5.30pm

Choral Evensong with Britten's Ceremony of Carols

Benjamin Britten's Ceremony of Carols is sung by girl and boy choristers together, conducted by Edmund Aldhouse, with harpist Elizabeth Bass. The 1942 collection of settings from medieval and sixteenth-century carol texts is framed at beginning and end by plainsong.

Sunday 11 January

Baptism of Christ

10.30am

Sung Eucharist

Preacher: Canon James Reveley

4pm

Choral Evensong

Sunday 18 - Sunday 25 January

Week of Prayer for Christian Unity

Sunday 18 January, 10.30am

Sung Eucharist

Preacher: Canon James Garrard

4pm

Epiphanytide Procession

This processional service is based around the three miracles of Epiphany: the wedding at Cana, the coming of the Magi and the baptism of Jesus. Its fine carols and hymns, like its dynamic liturgy, ponder the themes of divine manifestation and human transformation.

Sunday 25 January, 10.30am

The Conversion of St Paul

Sung Eucharist

Preacher: The Dean

Today's feast celebrates the dramatic change of direction in St Paul's life - from a man who persecuted the early followers of the Christian Way, to one who would give his own life, health, and intellectual and emotional energies to spreading the Gospel of peace across all the peoples of the Mediterranean and near East.

4pm

Choral Evensong

6pm

Ecumenical Service

at St Mary's Church, Ely

The Presentation of Christ in the Temple (Candlemas)

Forty days after Christmas Day comes Candlemas.

The Church marks the first forty days of Jesus' life, culminating in his dedication to God's service, at the Temple, as was traditional for a first-born son. As he was presented, he was recognised and honoured as the Messiah, the Anointed One, by two faithful Temple servants, Simeon and Anna. Each of them prophesied his greatness and the transformation not only of Israel but of all nations.

Historically Candlemas has been a great feast of light – proclaiming Jesus as the 'light to lighten the Gentiles'. It brings the celebrations of Christmastide to a fitting culmination and very gently hints at Lent and Easter the next great period of the Church's year.

Sunday 1 February, 10.30am

Choral Mattins

It's only once a year that we have Choral Mattins, so please join us and enjoy the Boys, Girls and Lower Voices leading our worship.

6pm

Candlemas Candlelit Sung Eucharist

Preacher: Canon James Reveley

The Feast of Candlemas is one of the oldest festivals of the Church and will be celebrated with a glorious Eucharist. The congregation is advised to be seated by 5.50pm as this is a very popular service.



Community Events

Friday 12 December, from 10pm

Advent Sleepout



Join **Canon James**, **Canon Jenny** and **Bishop Dagmar** for the Advent Sleepout at Ely Cathedral, in aid of the Cambridge Churches Homelessness Project, and Crisis.

You will have a choice of sleeping outside or in the beautiful Lady Chapel.

While one night sleeping out in the confines of Ely Cathedral in a friendly group together bears no resemblance to sleeping rough with no home to go to, our Advent Sleepout is an opportunity to remind people of the issue of homelessness and to raise funds for a local and national homelessness project.

Registration:

£10 for adults. £5 for children.

Register to join via the website:

www.elycathedral.org

Registration closes on 9 December.

Ely Community Lunches Christmas Day Meal



The **Ely Community Lunches** team is excited to bring festive cheer to our community again this year.

They will be welcoming bookings for Christmas Day lunch from individuals and couples who are likely to find the festivities financially challenging, would otherwise spend Christmas alone, or are experiencing homelessness.

For family groups and those who are housebound, prepacked Christmas meals can be delivered to your door.

Donations towards the cost of Christmas meals for others are welcome.

Subsidised tickets available via the Ely Community Lunches Facebook page or email:
events@elycommunitylunches.com



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More details about **Hark the glad sound! The Saviour comes** can be found on our website.

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