



*St Thomas of
Canterbury, the
Parish Church for
Brentwood*

**Blue Christmas
Choral Evensong**

**The Second Sunday
of Advent**

**Sunday
7th December 2025**

Please stand when the bell rings as we sing the processional hymn.

1 O little town of Bethlehem,
How still we see thee lie!
Above thy deep And dreamless sleep
The silent stars go by.
Yet in thy dark streets shineth
The everlasting light;
The hopes and fears of all the years
Are met in thee to-night.

2 O morning stars, together
Proclaim the holy birth
And praises sing to God the king,
And peace to men on earth;
For Christ is born of Mary;
And, gathered all above,
While mortals sleep, the angels keep
Their watch of wondering love.

3 How silently, how silently,
The wondrous gift is given!
So God imparts to human hearts
The blessings of his heaven.
No ear may hear his coming;
But in this world of sin,
Where meek souls will receive him, still
The dear Christ enters in.

5 O holy Child of Bethlehem,
Descend to us, we pray;
Cast out our sin, and enter in,
Be born in us today.
We hear the Christmas angels
The great glad tidings tell:
O come to us, abide with us,
Our Lord Emmanuel.

Phillips Brooks (1835-93)

The priest introduces the service with a few words of welcome before leading the choir in the singing of the first set of responses.

Priest. O Lord, open thou our lips.

Answer. And our mouth shall shew forth thy praise.

Priest. O God, make speed to save us.

Answer. O Lord, make haste to help us.

Here, all standing up, the Priest shall say,

Glory be to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Ghost;

Answer. As it was in the beginning, is now, and ever shall be,
world without end. Amen.

Priest. Praise ye the Lord.

Answer. The Lord's Name be praised.

THE Lord will come and not be slow,
His footsteps cannot err;
Before him righteousness shall go,
His royal harbinger.

Truth from the earth, like to a flower,
Shall bud and blossom then;
And justice from her heavenly bower,
Look down on mortal men.

Rise, God, judge thou the earth in might,
This wicked earth redress;
For thou art he who shalt by right
The nations all possess.

The nations all whom thou hast made
Shall come, and all shall frame
To bow them low before thee, Lord,
And glorify thy name.

For great thou art, and wonders great
By thy strong hand are done:
Thou in thy everlasting seat
Remainest God alone.

John Milton (1608-74)

Then shall be said or sung the Psalms in order as they be appointed. We sit for the psalm and stand for the doxology.

Psalm 11

In the Lord put I my trust : how say ye then to my soul, that she should flee as a bird unto the hill?

For lo, the ungodly bend their bow, and make ready their arrows within the quiver : that they may privily shoot at them which are true of heart. For the foundations will be cast down : and what hath the righteous done?

The Lord is in his holy temple : the Lord's seat is in heaven.

His eyes consider the poor : and his eye-lids try the children of men.

The Lord alloweth the righteous : but the ungodly, and him that delighteth in wickedness, doth his soul abhor.

Upon the ungodly he shall rain snares, fire and brimstone, storm and tempest : this shall be their portion to drink.

For the righteous Lord loveth righteousness : his countenance will behold the thing that is just.

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.

Then a Lesson of the Old Testament, as is appointed. (Sit)

1 Kings 18:17-39

And after that Magnificat (or the Song of the Blessed Virgin Mary) in English, as followeth. (Stand)

MAGNIFICAT

Luke 1

MY soul doth magnify the Lord :
and my spirit hath rejoiced in God my Saviour.

For he hath regarded :
the lowliness of his hand-maiden.

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 shewed strength with his arm :
he hath scattered the proud in the imagination 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.

Then a Lesson of the New Testament, as it is appointed. (Sit)

John 1:19-28

*And after that Nunc dimittis (or the Song of Simeon) in English, as followeth.
(Stand)*

2.29

LORD, now lettest thou thy servant depart in peace:
according to thy word.

For mine eyes have seen: thy salvation;

Which thou hast prepared: before the face of all people;

To be a light to lighten the Gentiles :
and to be the glory of thy people Israel.

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.

Then shall be said or sung the Apostles' Creed, by the Minister and the people standing.

THE APOSTLES' CREED

I BELIEVE in God the Father Almighty, Maker of heaven and earth: And in Jesus Christ his only Son our Lord, Who was conceived by the Holy Ghost, Born of the Virgin Mary, Suffered under Pontius Pilate, Was crucified, dead, and buried: He descended into hell; The third day he rose again from the dead; He ascended into heaven, And sitteth on the right hand of God the Father Almighty; From thence he shall come to judge the quick and the dead. I believe in the Holy Ghost; The holy Catholick Church; The Communion of Saints; The Forgiveness of sins; The Resurrection of the body, And the Life everlasting. Amen.

And after that these Prayers following, all devoutly kneeling: the Minister first pronouncing with a loud voice,

Minister. The Lord be with you.

Answer. And with thy spirit.

Minister. Let us pray.

Lord, have mercy upon us.

Answer. Christ, have mercy upon us.

Lord, have mercy upon us.

Then the Minister, Clerks, and people shall say the Lord's Prayer with a loud voice.

OUR Father, which art in heaven, Hallowed be thy Name, Thy kingdom come, Thy will be done, in earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread; And forgive us our trespasses, As we forgive them that trespass against us; And lead us not into temptation, But deliver us from evil. Amen.

Then the Priest standing up shall say,

Priest. O Lord, shew thy mercy upon us.

Answer. And grant us thy salvation.

Priest. O Lord, save the King.

Answer. And mercifully hear us when we call upon thee.

Priest. Endue thy Ministers with righteousness.

Answer. And make thy chosen people joyful.

Priest. O Lord, save thy people.

Answer. And bless thine inheritance.

Priest. Give peace in our time, O Lord.

Answer. Because there is none other that fighteth for us, but only thou, O God.

Priest. O God, make clean our hearts within us.

Answer. And take not thy Holy Spirit from us.

Then shall follow three Collects: The first of the day: The second for Peace: The third for Aid against all Perils, as hereafter followeth: which two last Collects shall be daily said at Evening Prayer without alteration.

Collect of the Day

BLESSED LORD, who hast caused all holy Scriptures to be written for our learning: Grant that we may in such wise hear them, read, mark, learn, and inwardly digest them, that by patience, and comfort of thy holy Word, we may embrace, and ever hold fast, the blessed hope of everlasting life, which thou hast given us in our Saviour Jesus Christ. Amen.

The Second Collect at Evening Prayer

O GOD, from whom all holy desires, all good counsels, and all just works do proceed: Give unto thy servants that peace which the world cannot give; that both our hearts may be set to obey thy commandments, and also that by thee we being defended from the fear of our enemies may pass our time in rest and quietness; through the merits of Jesus Christ our Saviour. Amen.

The Third Collect, for Aid against all Perils

LIGHTEN our darkness, we beseech thee, O Lord; and by thy great mercy defend us from all perils and dangers of this night; for the love of thy only Son, our Saviour, Jesus Christ. Amen.

In Quires and Places where they sing here followeth the Anthem.

In the bleak midwinter — *Harold Darke*

After the Anthem, we sing the following hymn.

1 It came upon the midnight clear,
That glorious song of old,
From angels bending near the earth
To touch their harps of gold:
'Peace on the earth, good-will to men,
From heaven's all-gracious King!'
The world in solemn stillness lay
To hear the angels sing.

2 Still through the cloven skies they come,
With peaceful wings unfurled;
And still their heav'nly music floats
O'er all the weary world;
Above its sad and lowly plains
They bend on hovering wing;
And ever o'er it Babel sounds
The blessèd angels sing.

3 Yet with the woes of sin and strife
The world has suffered long;
Beneath the angel-strain have rolled
Two thousand years of wrong;
And man, at war with man, hears not
The love-song which they bring:
O hush the noise, ye men of strife,
And hear the angels sing!

4 For, lo! the days are hastening on,
By prophet bards foretold,
When, with the ever-circling years,
Comes round the age of gold;
When peace shall over all the earth
Its ancient splendours fling,
And the whole world give back the song
Which now the angels sing.

Edmund Sears (1810-76)

A short homily follows before the priest invites us to come forward in silence and place our unlit candles on the candle stand at the front of the church as we look forward to the light that will come among us to be a light in the darkness.

You came as a baby, Lord, as a helpless little child who relied on a human family to care for him. You cried because you were hungry because you were homeless. Because you were a stranger, far away from home. You still cry with hunger, Lord, in the voices of many who are starving; Your tears still flow: for the homeless, the lonely, and the forgotten. You still rely on human families to care for you. And so, this Christmas, Lord, we pray: help us to be the kind of people who look for you in the world, and joyfully discover you as we care for one another. Amen.

Unlooked for, Christ comes. Loving Father, we pray for our community. In the midst of our everyday lives, surprise us with glimpses of your glorious, humble love at the heart of our everyday existence.

Lord, come to your people
In your mercy, set us free.

Loving Father, we pray for the leaders of the world. Guide them with your light, to seek wisdom, justice and peace.

Lord, come to your people
In your mercy, set us free.

Longed for, Christ comes. Loving Father, we pray for those whose lives are hard and painful, or whose existence is sorrowful, bitter or empty. In their need, may they know your healing touch, reaching out to comfort, strengthen and restore.

Lord, come to your people
In your mercy, set us free.

Loving Father, we pray for those whom we love but are separated from by distance or by discord. In this separation may we learn to rejoice in the

contact we enjoy and come to know your reconciling love that binds all together. Lord, come to your people
In your mercy, set us free.

Christ the Redeemer, we commend to your sure love those who have died and whose memory we treasure. In our grief and sorrow may we find hope in the good news of your resurrection and comfort in the promise of eternal life.

Lord, come to your people
In your mercy, set us free.

Loving God, come to us now,
As you have come to your people in every age,

During this next hymn, please come forward to light a candle as a reminder that in the darkness, in the messiness, in the coldness of life, the Christmas story of God in Christ, breaking into the world, offers hope that light will come with the morning.

1 God rest you merry, gentlemen,
Let nothing you dismay,
Remember Christ our Saviour
Was born on Christmas Day,
To save us all from Satan's power
When we were gone astray:

Refrain:

*O tidings of comfort and joy, comfort and joy!
O tidings of comfort and joy!*

2 From God our heavenly Father
A blessed angel came,
And unto certain shepherds
Brought tidings of the same,
How that in Bethlehem was born
The son of God by name: [Refrain]

3 And when they came to Bethlehem
Where our dear Saviour lay,
They found him in a manger,
Where oxen feed on hay;
His mother Mary kneeling down,
Unto the Lord did pray: [Refrain]

4 Now to the Lord sing praises,
All you within this place,
And with true love and brotherhood
Each other new embrace;
This holy tide of Christmas
All other doth efface: [Refrain]

The priest will conclude the service with a blessing before the choir sing this final set of responses.

Minister. The Lord be with you.

Answer. And with thy spirit.

Minister. Let us bless the Lord.

Answer. Thanks be to God.

The sacred ministers leave during the organ voluntary.

Seasonal refreshments are available in the Church Centre, please make your way through the double door to the right at the front of the church .

A collection is not taken at this celebration. If you don't have cash or are not part of our planned giving scheme and would like to support the ministry costs of St Thomas', please scan the QR code on the back of the chair in front of you to be taken to the online donations page where you can easily donate to support the work of St Thomas' and complete the details allowing the reclamation of Gift Aid on your donation.

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