

The Temple Church

Sunday 21 December 2025

The Fourth Sunday of Advent

CHORAL COMMUNION, 11.15 a.m.

Welcome to this morning's service. We follow the services of the Book of Common Prayer (1662). If you are a visitor here and are a communicant member of your own Church, you are most welcome to receive Communion this morning; if you would prefer to receive a blessing, please just keep your head bowed and hands lowered when you are at the altar-rail. This is Christ's banquet; we are all his guests; and he bids us welcome.

This morning's Communion setting is Victoria's *Missa Alma redemptoris mater*. Please turn to page 31 of the white service booklet where you will find the words of the service. The public-address system has a loop-facility. If you wear a hearing-aid, please turn its setting to T.

ORGAN PRELUDE

Meine Seele erhebt den Herrn BWV 648

J. S. Bach (1685-1750)

All stand at the entrance of the choir.

INTROIT

The angel Gabriel from heaven came,
His wings as drifted snow, his eyes as flame;
'All hail,' said he, 'Thou lowly maiden Mary,
Most highly favoured lady, gloria!

'For known a blessed Mother thou shalt be,
All generations laud and honour thee,
Thy son shall be Emmanuel, by seers foretold.
Most highly favoured lady, gloria!'

Then gentle Mary meekly bowed her head,
'To me be as it pleaseth God,' she said.
'My soul shall laud and magnify his Holy Name.'
Most highly favoured lady, gloria!

Of her, Emmanuel, the Christ, was born,
In Bethlehem, all on a Christmas morn.
And Christian folk throughout the world will ever say:
Most highly favoured lady, gloria!

Music: Basque carol, arr. Edgar Pettman (1866-1943)

Words: Sabine Baring-Gould (1834-1924)

HYMN

**Sing we of the blessed Mother
Who received the angel's word,
And obedient to his summons
Bore in love the infant Lord;
Sing we of the joys of Mary
At whose breast that child was fed
Who is Son of God eternal
And the everlasting Bread.**

**Sing we, too, of Mary's sorrows,
Of the sword that pierced her through,
When beneath the cross of Jesus
She his weight of suff'ring knew,
Looked upon her Son and Saviour
Reigning high on Calvary's tree,
Saw the price of man's redemption
Paid to set the sinner free.**

**Sing again the joys of Mary
When she saw the risen Lord,
And in prayer with Christ's apostles,
Waited on his promised word:
From on high the blazing glory
Of the Spirit's presence came,
Heav'nly breath of God's own being
Manifest through wind and flame.**

**Sing the greatest joy of Mary,
When on earth her work was done,
And the Lord of all creation
Brought her to his heav'nly home:
Virgin Mother, Mary blessed,
Raised on high and crowned with grace,
May your Son, the world's redeemer,
Grant us all to see his face.**

Music: Abbot's Leigh, Cyril Taylor (1907-1991)

Words: G. B. Timms (1910-1997)

All sit or kneel after the Lord's prayer.

After the Summary of the Law the Choir sings:

THE KYRIE

THE COLLECTS

O Lord, raise up (we pray thee) thy power, and come among us, and with great might succour us; that whereas, through our sins and wickedness, we are sore let and hindered in running the race that is set before us, thy bountiful grace and mercy may speedily help and deliver us; through the satisfaction of thy Son our Lord, to whom with thee and the Holy Ghost be honour and glory, world without end. Amen.

Almighty God, give us grace that we may cast away the works of darkness, and put upon us the armour of light, now in the time of this mortal life, in which thy Son Jesus Christ came to visit us in great humility; that in the last day, when he shall come again in his glorious Majesty, to judge both the quick and the dead, we may rise to the life immortal; through him who liveth and reigneth with thee and the Holy Ghost, now and ever. Amen.

FOR THE EPISTLE

Philippians 4. 4-7

Rejoice in the Lord alway, and again I say, Rejoice. Let your moderation be known unto all men. The Lord is at hand. Be careful for nothing: but in every thing, by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving, let your requests be made known unto God. And the peace of God, which passeth all understanding, shall keep your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus.

All stand for the Psalm.

PSALM 131

Lord, I am not high-minded: I have no proud looks.

I do not exercise myself in great matters: which are too high for me.

But I refrain my soul, and keep it low, like as a child that is weaned from his mother: yea, my soul is even as a weaned child.

O Israel, trust in the Lord: from this time forth for evermore.

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 priest introduces the Gospel.

THE GOSPEL

John 1. 19-28

This is the record of John, when the Jews sent Priests and Levites from Jerusalem to ask him, Who art thou? And he confessed, and denied not; but confessed, I am not the Christ. And they asked him, What then? Art thou Elias? And he saith, I am not. Art thou that Prophet? And he answered, No. Then said they unto him, Who art thou? that we may give an answer to them that sent us. What sayest thou of thyself? He said, I am the voice of one crying in the wilderness, Make straight the way of the Lord, as said the prophet Esaias.

And they which were sent were of the Pharisees. And they asked him, and said unto him, Why baptizest thou then, if thou be not that Christ, nor Elias, neither that Prophet? John answered them, saying, I baptize with water: but there standeth one among you, whom ye know not: he it is who coming after me is preferred before me, whose shoe's latchet I am not worthy to unloose. These things were done in Bethabara beyond Jordan, where John was baptizing.

All remain standing and (in the tradition of the Temple Church) all face East while the Choir and congregation sing the Creed.

THE CREED (p. 35, white booklet)

All sit.

THE SERMON
The Master

All stand.

HYMN 50
On Jordan's bank the Baptist's cry

All sit or kneel.

THE PRAYERS

COMMUNION ANTHEM

Kindle a light to lighten the darkness,
Kindle a light each nation and race:
God in the poor is coming to meet us,
Kindle a light to shine on his face.

Kindle a light to lighten the darkness,
Kindle a light for all who despair;
God in the poor is coming to judge us,
Kindle a light with fasting and prayer.

Kindle a light to lighten the darkness,
Kindle a light in places of shame,
God in the poor is coming to heal us,
Kindle a light with hope in its flame.

Kindle a light to lighten the darkness,
Kindle a light for sorrow to cease:
God in the poor is coming to free us,
Kindle a light for justice and peace.

Christ is coming,
Coming in judgement, in truth and in grace:
Meet him and greet him,
And share his embrace.

Music: Michael Fleming (1928-2006)
Words: Michael Foster (b. 1946)

THE PRAYERS

All stand.

THE BLESSING

HYMN 49
O come, O come, Emmanuel

THE ORGAN VOLUNTARY

Fugua sopra il Magnificat BWV 733

J. S. Bach (1675-1850)

There will be a retiring collection. It will be of great advantage to the Church if you would kindly fill in a Gift Aid envelope and drop it into a collection-basket as you leave, stating the amount of your cash or contactless gift. If you would prefer to donate online kindly scan the QR code below. Thank you for your support of the Church.



Wednesday 24 December, 11.15pm

CHRISTMAS EVE: MIDNIGHT CHORAL COMMUNION

Temple Singers

Tickets not required.

Thursday 25 December, 11.15am

CHRISTMAS DAY: CHORAL MATTINS

Temple Church Choir

Tickets not required.

*We ask your prayers for those dear to us in this House, and at this time
especially for the following:*

BAPTISM

Aria Adria Annie James

MARRIAGE

Augusta Charlton and Samuel Fiddian-Green

Camilla Norton and Ian Denham

ANNIVERSARIES OF MARRIAGE

Alexander and Alexandra Bagwell

Matthew and Nicola Barnes

Anthony and Terina Corda

Nicholas and Sally Forwood

Anthony and Nell Gamble

Richard and Laura Hayward

Francis and Jessica Ijeh

Alan and Grace Karthikesalingham

Michael and Alexandra Payne

James and Emma Tussaud

Anthony and Sarah Walker

David and Victoria Ward

Jerram and Eleanor White

THE DEPARTED

Richard Compton Miller

Oliver Marriott

Peter Wilson

YEAR'S MIND

Fanny Arnold-Baker

Dorene Borrie

Joseph Butler-Sloss

Geoffrey Farmiloe

Ian (Roderick) Fletcher

Jane Green

Anthony Lloyd

Clare Marx

John Morrissey

George Newman

Penny Norton

Joanna Service

Graeme Williams

SAFEGUARDING

If you have any concerns about safeguarding, the Safeguarding Officer can be contacted confidentially at safeguarding@templechurch.com or 020 7427 5650.