

St Peter's Collegiate Church, Wolverhampton

A Procession of Lessons and Carols for Advent

Sunday 29th November 2026
6.30pm

Please ensure that all mobile telephones and devices are silenced before the service begins. Photography or recording are not permitted. During the service the congregation are invited to pray the words in Bold Type. Much of the liturgy is sung by the choir and all are invited to participate through prayer and reflection. There is a retiring collection at the end of the service, and all are asked to leave in silence.

Advent Responsory

The choir sings

I look from afar: and lo, I see the power of God coming,
and a cloud covering the whole earth.
Go ye out to meet him and say:
Tell us, art thou he that should come to reign over thy people Israel?

High and low, rich and poor, one with another.
Hear, O thou shepherd of Israel, thou that leadest Joseph like a sheep.
Stir up thy strength, O Lord, and come to reign over thy people Israel.

Glory be to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit.

I look from afar: and lo, I see the power of God coming,
and a cloud covering the whole earth.
Go ye out to meet him and say:
Tell us, art thou he that should come to reign over thy people Israel?

Mattins of the First Sunday in Advent — *Giovanni di Palestrina (1525-94)*
From The Sarum Breviary

Congregational Carol

**1. O come, O come Emmanuel, and ransom captive Israel,
that mourns in lonely exile here, until the Son of God appear.**

Rejoice! Rejoice! Emmanuel shall come to thee, O Israel.

**2. O come, Thou Day-spring, come and cheer our spirits by Thine advent here;
disperse the gloomy clouds of night, and death's dark shadows put to flight.**

**3. O come, Thou Lord of David's Key! The royal door fling wide and free;
Safeguard for us the heavenward road, and bar the way to death's abode.**

Latin 13th century — *Veni Emmanuel*
translated John Neale (1818-66) — *from a French Missal*

Welcome

We gather to pray for the coming of Christ's light in our dark world and search for the meaning of Advent as a time to reflect on its message of judgement and accountability, repentance and change, and preparation and action. Through scripture and song we hear of the way that God comes to both challenge us through warnings of end times and to prepare the way for the coming of Christ.

May this time of reflection and response be one that seeks to renew us with a determination to realise and restore God's world for all who Christ comes to save. Let us look, wait and pray to find the hope which the people of Israel longed for, and one which our world searches for in its confusion, despair and emptiness this night.

Call for Light

People of God: be glad!
Your God delights in you, giving you joy for sadness
and turning the dark of despair to Christ's liberating light.
Be strong in hope therefore; for your God comes to save.

As God's children,
make us one in the light of Christ
today and for ever. Amen.

Readings

A reading from the book of Genesis.

In the beginning when God created the heavens and the earth, the earth was a formless void and darkness covered the face of the deep, while a wind from God swept over the face of the waters. Then God said, 'Let there be light'; and there was light. And God saw that the light was good; and God separated the light from the darkness. God called the light Day, and the darkness he called Night. And there was evening and there was morning, the first day.

Genesis 1. 1-5

Reflective Reading – 'O Sapientia' by Malcom Guite (born 1957)

I cannot think unless I have been thought,
nor can I speak unless I have been spoken.
I cannot teach except as I am taught,
Or break the bread except as I am broken.
O Mind behind the mind
through which I seek,
O Light within the light by which I see,
O Word beneath the words
with which I speak,
O founding, unfound Wisdom,
finding me, O sounding Song
whose depth is sounding me,
O Memory of time, reminding me,
my Ground of Being, always grounding me,
my Maker's Bounding Line, defining me,
come, hidden Wisdom,
come with all you bring,
come to me now, disguised as everything.

Reflection

Let us pray for those who are waiting for light; what shadows fall across your path?
May we re-ignite Christ's flame of hope to bring justice, peace and liberation for all.

Choir Carol

Zion, at thy shining gates lo, the King of Glory waits,
haste thy monarch's pomp to greet, strew thy palms before his feet.

Christ, for thee their triple light, faith and hope and love unite;
this the beacon we display to proclaim thine advent day.

Come and give us peace within, loose us from the bands of sin,
take away the galling weight laid on us by Satan's hate.

Give us grace thy yoke to wear, give us strength thy cross to bear,
make us thine in deed and word, thine in heart and life, O Lord.

So, when thou shalt come again, judge of angels and of men.
We with all thy saints shall sing alleluias to our King.

Old German Melody arranged George Guest (1924-2002)

Congregational Carol

**1. Longing for light, we wait in darkness. Longing for truth, we turn to you.
Make us your own, your holy people, light for the world to see.**

Christ be our light! Shine in our hearts.
Shine through the darkness. Christ be our light!
Shine in your church gathered today.

**2. Longing for peace, our world is troubled. Longing for hope, many despair.
Your word alone has pow'r to save us. Make us your living voice.**

**3. Many the gifts, many the people, many the hearts that yearn to belong.
Let us be servants to one another, making your kingdom come.**

Music and Words: Bernadette Farrell (born 1957)
© 1994 Bernadette Farrell

The Foretelling of the Kingdom

People of God: see!
God above all, maker of all, is one with us in Christ.
Christ is the way, the truth and the life.
He calls us to witness him who is the Lord of our coming kingdom.

**As God's children,
make us one in the love of Christ
today and for ever. Amen.**

Readings

A reading from the prophecy of Isaiah.

The people who walked in darkness have seen a great light; those who lived in a land of deep darkness—on them light has shined. For a child has been born for us, a son given to us; authority rests upon his shoulders; and he is named Wonderful Counsellor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace. His authority shall grow continually, and there shall be endless peace for the throne of David and his kingdom. He will establish and uphold it with justice and with righteousness from this time onwards and for evermore. The zeal of the Lord of hosts will do this.

Isaiah 9. 2, 6-7

Reflective Reading - 'First Coming' by Madeleine L'Engle (1918-2007)

He did not wait till the world was ready,
till men and nations were at peace.
He came when the Heavens were unsteady,
and prisoners cried out for release.
He did not wait for the perfect time.
He came when the need was deep and great.
He dined with sinners in all their grime,
turned water into wine.
He did not wait till hearts were pure.
In joy he came to a tarnished world of sin and doubt.
To a world like ours, of anguished shame
he came, and his Light would not go out.
He came to a world which did not mesh,
to heal its tangles, shield its scorn.
In the mystery of the Word made Flesh
the Maker of the stars was born.
We cannot wait till the world is sane
to raise our songs with joyful voice,
for to share our grief, to touch our pain,
He came with Love: Rejoice! Rejoice!

Reflection

God is waiting for us to open the Advent Calendar door – what do we need to uncover this season and what space do we need to make to receive Christ?

Pray for all who waiting for peace and hope, and for those trying to enable it at negotiation tables and on the ground.

Choir Carol

Seek him that maketh the seven stars and Orion
And turneth the shadow of death into the morning
Alleluia, yea, the darkness shineth as the day
The night is light about me., Amen.

Jonathan Dove (born 1957)

Congregational Carol

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 forgiv'n.

4. So when next he comes with glory,
wrapping all the earth in fear,
may he then, as our defender,
on the clouds of heav'n appear.

Anonymous Latin
Tr Edward Caswall (1814-78)

Merton
William Monk (1823-89)

Waiting with Judgement

People of God: rejoice! Christ is coming, coming with power to judge and save the earth. Prepare your hearts and wait with hope.

As God's children,
make us one in the power of Christ
today and for ever. Amen

Readings

A reading from the Gospel according to St Luke.

Jesus said to his disciples: 'There will be signs in the sun, the moon, and the stars, and on the earth distress among nations confused by the roaring of the sea and the waves. People will faint from fear and foreboding of what is coming upon the world, for the powers of the heavens will be shaken. Then they will see "the Son of Man coming in a cloud" with power and great glory. Now when these things begin to take place, stand up and raise your heads, because your redemption is drawing near.'

Then he told them a parable: 'Look at the fig tree and all the trees; as soon as they sprout leaves you can see for yourselves and know that summer is already near. So also, when you see these things taking place, you know that the kingdom of God is near. Truly I tell you, this generation will not pass away until all things have taken place. Heaven and earth will pass away, but my words will not pass away.

Luke 21. 25-36

Reflective Reading
'Climate Change' by Pope Francis (1936-2025)

Climate change and the Covid-19 pandemic have exposed our deep vulnerability and raised numerous doubts and concerns about our economic systems and the way we organise our societies. We have lost our sense of security, and are experiencing a sense of powerlessness and loss of control over our lives.

We find ourselves increasingly frail and even fearful, caught up in a succession of "crises" in the areas of health care, the environment, food supplies and the economy, to say nothing of social, humanitarian and ethical crises. All these crises are profoundly interconnected. They also forecast a "perfect storm" that could rupture the bonds holding our society together within the greater gift of God's creation.

Some days ago, I met with religious leaders and scientists to sign a Joint Appeal in which we called upon ourselves and our political leaders to act in a more responsible and consistent manner. I was impressed by something said by one of the scientists present at that meeting. He told us: "If things continue as they are, in fifty years' time my baby granddaughter will have to live in an unliveable world". We cannot allow this to happen!

It is essential that each of us be committed to this urgent change of direction, sustained by our own faith and spirituality. In the Joint Appeal, we spoke of the need to work responsibly towards a "culture of care" for our common home, but also for ourselves, and the need to work tirelessly to eliminate "the seeds of conflicts: greed, indifference, ignorance, fear, injustice, insecurity and violence".

Reflection

As we lament the destruction and injustice of the climate crisis, what do we need to do to save God's planet?

May the message and warning of Jesus, challenge us to make changes in our own lives, and think more carefully about the resources that God has given us.

Choir Carol

Adam lay ybounden, bounden in a bond;
four thousand winter thought he not too long.

And all was for an apple, an apple that he took,
as clerkes finden written in their book.

Ne had the apple taken been, the apple taken been,
ne had never our lady a been heavene queen.

Blessed be the time that apple taken was,
therefore we moun singen Deo gracias.

Peter Warlock (1894-1930)

Congregational Carol

1. Lo, he comes with clouds descending,
once for favoured sinners slain;
thousand thousand saints attending
swell the triumph of his train:
alleluia!
God appears on earth to reign.

2. Every eye shall now behold him
robed in dreadful majesty;
those who set at naught and sold him,
pierced and nailed him to the tree,
deeply wailing,
shall the true Messiah see.

3. Yea, amen, let all adore thee,
high on thine eternal throne;
Saviour, take the power and glory,
claim the kingdom for thine own:
come, Lord Jesus!
everlasting God, come down!

Charles Wesley (1707-88) Helmsley
Martin Madan (1726-90) John Cennick (1718-55) *Thomas Olivers (1725-99)*

Journey to Repentance and Truth

People of God, repent!
The day is coming when you shall see God face to face.
God calls you to turn away from darkness
to walk in the light of his coming.

As God's children,
make us one as we turn to Christ.
today and for ever. Amen.

Readings

A reading from the Gospel according to St Luke.

John went into all the region around the Jordan, proclaiming a baptism of repentance for the forgiveness of sins, as it is written in the book of the words of the prophet Isaiah, 'The voice of one crying out in the wilderness: "Prepare the way of the Lord, make his paths straight. Every valley shall be filled, and every mountain and hill shall be made low, and the crooked shall be made straight, and the rough ways made smooth; and all flesh shall see the salvation of God." '

Luke 3. 3-6

Reflective Reading. From a speech by Martin Luther King. (1929-68)

I think we must see that riots do not develop out of thin air. Certain conditions continue to exist in our society which must be condemned as vigorously as we condemn riots. But in the final analysis, a riot is the language of the unheard. And what is it that we have failed to hear? We have failed to hear that the plight of the poor that has worsened over the last few years. We have failed to hear that the promises of freedom and justice have not been met. And we have failed to hear that large segments of white society are more concerned about tranquility and the status quo than about justice, equality, and humanity. And so in a real sense our nation's summers of riots are caused by our nation's winters of delay. And as long as we postpone justice, we stand in the position of having these recurrences of violence and riots over and over again. Social justice and progress are the absolute guarantors of riot prevention.

Reflection

What do we hear and what does the Church need to still say sorry for in how it has treated people in terms of race, gender and sexual orientation alongside its failure to protect vulnerable people; how can we remove prejudice and discrimination from our lives and make renew the church to be one that exposes the truth in its faith, practice and preaching.

Choir Carol

This is the truth sent from above,
the truth of God, the God of love;
therefore don't turn me from your door,
but hearken all both rich and poor.
And at that season of the year
our blest Redeemer did appear;
he here did live, and here did preach,
and many thousands he did teach.

Thus he in love to us behaved,
to show us how we must be saved;
and if you want to know the way,
be pleased to hear what he did say.

Herefordshire Carol, arranged by Christopher Robinson (b.1936)

Congregational Carol

1. On Jordan's bank the Baptist's cry
announces that the Lord is nigh;
awake and hearken, for he brings
glad tidings from the King of kings!

2. Then cleansed be every Christian
breast, and furnished for so great a guest!
Yea, let us each our heart prepare
for Christ to come and enter there.

3. For thou art our salvation, Lord,
our refuge, and our great reward;
without thy grace we waste away
like flowers that wither and decay.

4. To heal the sick stretch out thy hand,
and bid the fallen sinner stand;
shine forth, and let thy light restore
earth's own true loveliness once more.

5. All praise, eternal Son, to thee
whose advent sets thy people free,
whom, with the Father, we adore,
and Holy Ghost, for evermore.

Charles Coffin (1676-1749)
translated John Chandler (1806-76)

Winchester New
Musikalisches (1690) Hand Buch Hamburg 1690

The Coming of the Messiah

People of God: see!
God is one with us in Christ.
He is the way, the truth and the life.
God calls us to witness him
who is the Lord of our coming kingdom.

As God's children,
make us one in the love of Christ
today and for ever. Amen.

Readings

A reading from the Gospel according to St Matthew.

When the Son of Man comes in his glory, and all the angels with him, then he will sit on the throne of his glory. All the nations will be gathered before him, and he will separate people one from another as a shepherd separates the sheep from the goats, and he will put the sheep at his right hand and the goats at the left. Then the king will say to those at his right hand, "Come, you that are blessed by my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world; for I was hungry and you gave me food, I was thirsty and you gave me something to drink, I was a stranger and you welcomed me, I was naked and you gave me clothing, I was sick and you took care of me, I was in prison and you visited me." Then the righteous will answer him, "Lord, when was it that we saw you hungry and gave you food, or thirsty and gave you something to drink? And when was it that we saw you a stranger and welcomed you, or naked and gave you clothing? And when was it that we saw you sick or in prison and visited you?" And the king will answer them, "Truly I tell you, just as you did it to one of the least of these who are members of my family, you did it to me."

Matthew 25. 31-40

Reflective Reading. A reading from Saint Oscar Romero (1917-80)

Advent should admonish us to discover in each brother or sister that we greet, in each friend whose hand we shake, in each beggar who asks for bread, in each worker who wants to use the right to join a union, in each peasant who looks for work in the coffee groves, the face of Christ. Then it would not be possible to rob them, to cheat them, to deny them their rights. They are Christ, and whatever is done to them Christ will take as done to himself. This is what Advent is: Christ living among us.

Reflection

How prepared are you to receive Christ as Saviour, Christ as Friend, Christ as Stranger, Christ as Beggar. How might we prepare to receive him in unexpected guise or time?

Choir Carol

In the stillness of a church where candles glow,
In the softness of a fall of fresh white snow,

In the brightness of the stars that shine this night,
in the calmness of a pool of healing light.

In the clearness of a choir that softly sings,
In the oneness of a hush of angels' wings,

In the mildness of a night by stable bare,
in the quietness of a lull near cradle fair,

there's a patience as we wait for a new morn,
and the presence of a child soon to be born.

Katrina Shepherd *Sally Beamish (b.1956)*

Prayers

Collect for Advent Sunday

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.**

Awaiting his coming in glory, as our Saviour taught us, so we pray

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.
For thine is the kingdom,
the power and the glory,
for ever and ever. Amen.

Blessing

Christ the Sun of Righteousness,
shine upon you and scatter the darkness from before your path;
and the blessing of God almighty,
the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit,
be among you and remain with you always. **Amen.**

Congregational Carol

1. Hills of the North, rejoice,
echoing songs arise,
hail with united voice
Him who made earth and skies;
He comes in righteousness and love,
He brings salvation from above.

2. Isles of the Southern seas,
sing to the listening earth,
carry on every breeze
hope of a world's new birth:
in Christ shall all be made anew,
His word is sure, his promise true.

3. Lands of the East, arise,
He is your brightest morn,
greet him with joyous eyes,
praise shall his path adorn:
the God whom you have longed to know
in Christ draws near, and calls you now.

4. Shores of the utmost West,
lands of the setting sun,
welcome the heavenly guest
in whom the dawn has come:
He brings a never-ending light
who triumphed o'er our darkest night.

5. Shout, as you journey on,
songs be in every mouth,
Lo, from the North they come,
from East and West and South:
in Jesus all shall find their rest,
in him the universe be blest.

Charles Oakley (1832-65)

Little Cornard
Martin Shaw (1875-1958)

Dismissal

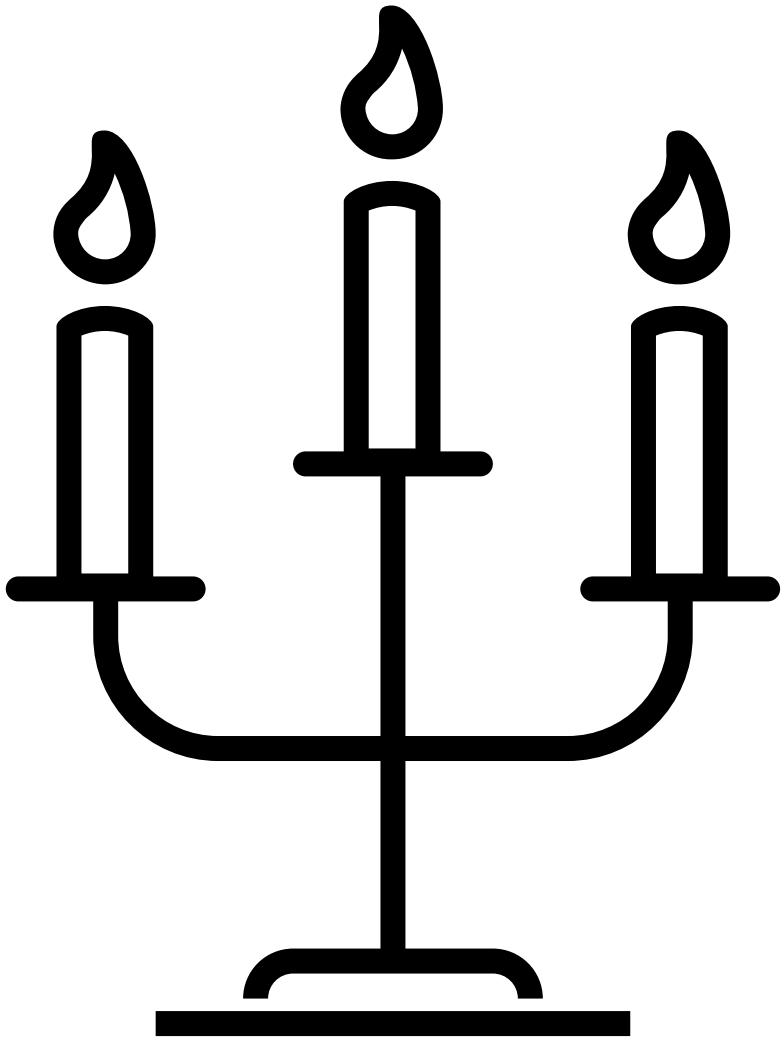
May your Spirit unite us in the love
and glory of the Father and the Son,
may we be one
so that the world may believe.
As you sent your Son into the world
so send us, to make your glory known
and be a star of hope to lead people to Christ. Amen.

Responsory

Judah and Jerusalem fear not nor be dismayed
Stand ye still and see the salvation of the Lord.

Tomorrow go ye forth, and the Lord he will be with you.
Glory be to the Father and to the Son, and to the Holy Ghost.
Tomorrow go ye forth, and the Lord he will be with you.

Giovanni di Palestrina (1525-94)



St Peter's Collegiate Church, Wolverhampton

Please join us for future special services

Wednesday 16 December at 6.00pm
The High Sheriff of West Midlands
Christmas Celebration Service
of 'Cracking Carols and Festive Cheer'
with Church, Academy, Gospel and NHS Choirs
in aid of her charity, *Black Country Women's Aid*

Sunday 20 December at 6.30pm
A Festival of Lessons and Carols for Christmas

Christmas Eve at 4.00pm
Nativity Service

Christmas Eve at 11.00pm
Midnight Mass

Christmas Day at 11.00am
Festive Sung Eucharist

Wednesday 6 January at 5.15pm
Eucharist for Epiphany

Sunday 31 January at 6.30pm
A Celebration of Lessons and Carols for Candlemas