



CHESTER
CATHEDRAL

Advent Procession

30th November 2025
6.00pm

WELCOME

We welcome you to Chester Cathedral! It is a place where the mission of the church to proclaim God's love is central, and your welcome presence here for worship helps to strengthen this vital act of witness.

We're a paperless Cathedral and are working environmentally to save paper. The service can be downloaded to your device using the QR code at the back of the nave, or by visiting [Services - Chester Cathedral](#). Hymns, readings and responses will be presented on the screens.

Throughout the service, where indicated, please only stand if you feel able to do so. The Cathedral will be dark for much of the service, so please be careful if moving around the building.

The Cathedral Choir is directed by Philip Rushforth, Organist and Master of the Choristers. The organ is played by Alex Lanigan-Palotai, Sub-Organist, and Daniel Mathieson, Head of Music Outreach and Assistant Organist.

COLLECTION

The Cathedral costs around £6000 a day to keep open, and we need your support.

We invite you to generously give to ensure our future:

A collection will be taken during the service; donations can otherwise be left with cash or using the

Contactless Donation Plates.

A sidesperson can help you with this.

Via the Cathedral Website

www.chestercathedral.com/donate

We need your help to make sure that services like this one can continue and that we can keep the doors open for everyone. Thank you for your generous contributions.

BEFORE THE SERVICE

*Daniel Mathieson, Head of Music Outreach
and Assistant Organist, plays*

Rorate Caeli *Melissa Dunphy b.1980*

Nun komm, der Heiden Heiland BWV 659
J S Bach 1685-1750

Rorate Caeli *Jeanne Demessieux 1921-68*

Prelude on 'Veni, veni Emmanuel'
Leo Sowerby 1895-1968

When the lights are dimmed, please keep a few minutes silence and then remain seated as the Choir sings the introit from the Baptistry.

Introit

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: go ye out to meet him and say:
hear, O thou Shepherd of Israel,
thou that ledest Joseph like a sheep:
tell us, art thou he that should come?
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 Ghost.

Matin Responsory G P. da Palestrina c. 1525-1594

Introduction

The Dean says

In the name of God, who has delivered us from the dominion of darkness and made a place for us in the kingdom of his beloved Son, we welcome you: grace to you and peace.

As we meet to celebrate anew the coming of God's kingdom, we hear revealed the mystery of God's loving purpose for us – how that when we were far off, he met us in his Son and brought us home; how he humbled himself to take our human nature, that we might share his divine glory.

Let us then so celebrate this coming with our carols and hymns of praise, that our lives may be charged with his life; that we may bear witness to his glory and so bring light to those who sit in darkness. So first we pray for those among whom the Christ was born: the poor and helpless, the aged and young children; the cold, the hungry and the homeless; the victims of poverty, injustice and oppression, the sick and those who mourn, the lonely and the unloved; those in despair or in the shadow of death.

Then, as we hear again the message of peace on earth and goodwill among all his people, we pray for the leaders of the nations, that all may be inspired to work together for the establishment of justice, freedom and peace the world over.

And that we may bear true witness to this hope in a divided world, we pray for the peace and unity of Christ's Body, the

Church universal, that the whole earth may live to praise his name.

Finally, as we rejoice with the saints in heaven and on earth, we remember all who have gone before us with the sign of faith, whose hope was in the Word made flesh, Jesus Christ our Lord, through whom we offer up our prayers for the coming of his kingdom, in the words he himself has taught us, saying:

**Our Father, who art in heaven,
hallowed be thy name;
thy kingdom come; thy will be done;
on earth as it is in heaven.
Give us this day our daily bread.
And forgive us our trespasses,
as we forgive those
who 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.**

And may the Lord when he comes find us watching and waiting, now and at all times.
Amen.

Please stand to sing the hymn during which the Choir moves to the West Steps.

Hymn

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.

O come, thou rod of Jesse, free
thine own from Satan's tyranny;
from depths of hell thy people save,
and give them vic'try o'er the grave.

O come, thou dayspring, come and cheer
our spirits by thine advent here;
disperse the gloomy clouds of night,
and death's dark shadows put to flight.

O come, thou key of David, come
and open wide our heav'nly home;
make safe the way that leads on high,
and close the path to misery.

O come, O come, thou Lord of might,
who to thy tribes on Sinai's height
in ancient times didst give the Law,
in cloud and majesty and awe.

from the 'Great O Antiphons' VENI EMMANUEL
trans. John Mason Neale 1818-1866 French Missal

Anthem

Please be seated. The Choir sings

Vigilate, nescitis enim quando dominus domus veniat sero, an media nocte, an gallicantu, an mane vigilate ergo, ne cum venerit repente, inveniat vos dormientes quod autem dico vobis, omnibus dico: vigilate!

Keep awake - for you do not know when the master of the house will come, in the evening, or at midnight, or at cockcrow, or at dawn, or else he may find you asleep when he comes suddenly. And what I say to you I say to all: 'Keep awake.'

Mark 13:35-37

William Byrd 1540-1623

Antiphons

O Sapientia:

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.

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.

Bible reading

*Read by The Revd Canon Rosie Woodall,
Canon Precentor and Vice Dean*

A reading from the prophecy of Isaiah.

Comfort, O comfort my people,
says your God.

Speak tenderly to Jerusalem,
and cry to her that she has served her
term, that her penalty is paid,
that she has received from the Lord's hand
double for all her sins.

A voice cries out:

'In the wilderness prepare the way of
the Lord,

make straight in the desert
a highway for our God.

Every valley shall be lifted up,
and every mountain and hill be made low;
the uneven ground shall become level,
and the rough places a plain.

Then the glory of the Lord shall be revealed,

and all people shall see it together,
for the mouth of the Lord has spoken.'

A voice says, 'Cry out!'

And I said, 'What shall I cry?'

All people are grass, their constancy is like
the flower of the field.

The grass withers, the flower fades,
when the breath of the Lord blows
upon it; surely the people are grass.

The grass withers, the flower fades;
but the word of our God will stand for
ever.

Get you up to a high mountain,

O Zion, herald of good tidings;

lift up your voice with strength,

O Jerusalem, herald of good tidings,
lift it up, do not fear;

say to the cities of Judah,

'Here is your God!'

See, the Lord God comes with might,
and his arm rules for him;

his reward is with him,

and his recompense before him.

He will feed his flock like a shepherd;

he will gather the lambs in his arms,

and carry them in his bosom,

and gently lead the mother sheep.

Isaiah 40:1-11

Anthem

The Choir sings

There is no rose of such virtue
as is the rose that bare Jesu. *Alleluia.*
For in this rose contained
was heaven and earth in little space.
Resmiranda.

By that rose we may well see
there be one God in persons three.
Paresforma.

The angels sungen the shepherds to:
'Gloria in excelsis Deo'. *Gaudeamus.*
Then leave we all this worldly mirth
and follow we this joyous birth.
Transeamus.

Words and melody 15th century

arr. John Joubert 1927-2019

Antiphons

During which the Choir moves to the centre of the Nave.

O Radix Jesse:

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.

O Clavis David:

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.

Bible reading

Read by Revd Jonathon Green, Dean's Vicar

A reading from the prophecy of Isaiah.

How beautiful upon the mountains
are the feet of the messenger who
announces peace,
who brings good news,
who announces salvation,
who says to Zion, 'Your God reigns.'
Listen! Your sentinels lift up their voices,
together they sing for joy;
for in plain sight they see
the return of the Lord to Zion.
Break forth together into singing,
you ruins of Jerusalem;
for the Lord has comforted his people,
he has redeemed Jerusalem.
The Lord has bared his holy arm

before the eyes of all the nations;
and all the ends of the earth shall see
the salvation of our God.

Isaiah 52:7-10

Anthem

The Choir sings

Never weather-beaten sail
more willing bent to shore.
Never tired pilgrim's limbs
affected slumber more,
Than my wearied sprite now
longs to fly out of my troubled breast:
O come quickly, sweetest Lord,
and take my soul to rest.

Ever blooming are the joys
of Heaven's high Paradise.
Cold age deafs not there our ears
nor vapour dims our eyes:
Glory there the sun outshines
whose beams the blessed only see:
O come quickly, glorious Lord,
and raise my sprite to thee!

Thomas Campion 1567-1620

Hubert Parry 1848-1918

Please stand to sing the hymn, during which the Choir moves to the Nave choir stalls.

Hymn

Of the Father's heart begotten,
ere the world from chaos rose,
he is Alpha: from that Fountain
all that is and hath been flows;
he is Omega, of all things
yet to come the mystic Close,
evermore and evermore.

By his word was all created;
he commanded and 'twas done;
earth and sky and boundless ocean,
universe of three in one,
all that sees the moon's soft radiance,
all that breathes beneath the sun,
evermore and evermore.

He assumed this mortal body,
frail and feeble, doomed to die,
that the race from dust created
might not perish utterly,
which the dreadful Law had sentenced
in the depths of hell to lie,
evermore and evermore.

This is he, whom seer and sibyl
sang in ages long gone by;
this is he of old revealed
in the page of prophecy;
lo! he comes, the promised Saviour;
let the world his praises cry!
evermore and evermore.

Sing, ye heights of heaven, his praises;
angels and Archangels, sing!
wheresoe'er ye be, ye faithful,
let your joyous anthems ring,
every tongue his name confessing,
countless voices answering,
evermore and evermore.

Prudentius 348-413

DIVINUM MYSTERIUM

Trans. R.F. Davis 1866-1937

Piae Cantiones

Theoderici Petri Nylandensis 1582

Please be seated. The Choir sings

Antiphon

O oriens:

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

Some of the Cathedral lights are illuminated.

Bible reading

Read by Jennifer Jackson

A reading from the prophecy of Malachi.

See, I am sending my messenger to prepare the way before me, and the Lord whom you seek will suddenly come to his temple. The messenger of the covenant in whom you delight—indeed, he is coming, says the Lord of hosts. But who can endure the day of his coming, and who can stand when he appears?

For he is like a refiner's fire and like fullers' soap; he will sit as a refiner and purifier of silver, and he will purify the descendants of Levi and refine them like gold and silver, until they present offerings to the Lord in righteousness. Then the offering of Judah and Jerusalem will be pleasing to the Lord as in the days of old and as in former years.

Then I will draw near to you for judgement; I will be swift to bear witness against the sorcerers, against the adulterers, against those who swear falsely,

against those who oppress the hired workers in their wages, the widow, and the orphan, against those who thrust aside the alien, and do not fear me, says the Lord of hosts.

Malachi 3:1-5

Anthem

The Choir sings

We wait for Thy loving kindness, O God:
in the midst of Thy temple. Alleluia.

O God, according to Thy name,
so is Thy praise unto the world's end.
Thy right hand is full of righteousness.
Alleluia.

We wait for Thy loving kindness, O God,
in the midst of Thy temple.

O Lord, send us now prosperity. Amen.

Psalm 48:8-9; 118:25

William McKie 1901-84

Antiphon

O Rex Gentium:

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

Bible reading

Read by Julia McGuinness, Cathedral Reader

A reading from the Letter to the Romans.

I appeal to you therefore, brothers and sisters, by the mercies of God, to present your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable to God, which is your spiritual worship. Do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your minds, so that you may discern what is the will of God - what is good and acceptable and perfect.

Besides this, you know what time it is, how it is now the moment for you to wake from sleep. For salvation is nearer to us now than when we became believers; the night is far gone, the day is near. Let us then lay aside the works of darkness and put on the armour of light; let us live honourably as in the day, not in revelling and drunkenness, not in debauchery and licentiousness, not in quarrelling and jealousy. Instead, put on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make no provision for the flesh, to gratify its desires.

Romans 12: 1-2; 13:11-14

Please stand, if able, to sing the hymn.

Hymn

Come, thou long-expected Jesus,
born to set thy people free,
from our fears and sins release us,
let us find our rest in Thee.

Israel's strength and consolation,
hope of all the earth thou art,
dear desire of every nation,
joy of every longing heart.

Born thy people to deliver,
born a child and yet a king,
born to reign in us for ever,
now thy gracious kingdom bring.

By Thine own eternal Spirit,
rule in all our hearts alone;
by thine all-sufficient merit
raise us to thy glorious throne.

Charles Wesley 1707-88

*CROSS OF JESUS
John Stainer 1840-1901*

Please be seated. The Choir sings

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.

Bible reading

Read by Revd Tina Lightfoot, Priest Vicar

A reading from the Gospel according to Luke.

In those days Mary set out and went with haste to a Judean town in the hill country, where she entered the house of Zechariah and greeted Elizabeth. When Elizabeth heard Mary's greeting, the child leapt in her womb. And Elizabeth was filled with the Holy Spirit and exclaimed with a loud cry, 'Blessed are you among women, and blessed is the fruit of your womb. And why has this happened to me, that the mother of my Lord comes to me? For as soon as I heard the sound of your greeting, the child in my womb leapt for joy. And blessed is she who believed that there would be a

fulfilment of what was spoken to her by the Lord.’

And Mary said...

Luke 1:39-46a

Anthem

The Choir sings

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.

Luke 1:46-55

*Gloucester Service
Herbert Howells 1892-1983*

Prayers

Led by The Revd Canon Dr Anthony Lees-Smith, Canon Missioner

The following response will be used:

Maranatha.

Amen. Come, Lord Jesus!

(Maranatha is an Aramaic phrase thought to mean, "Come, O Lord!"). The prayers conclude with the 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.

Please stand to sing the hymn, during which a collection is taken.

Hymn

Lo, he comes with clouds descending,
once for mortal sinners slain;
thousand thousand saints attending
swell the triumph of his train.
Alleluia! Alleluia! Alleluia!
Christ appears on earth to reign.

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

Those dear tokens of his passion
still his dazzling body bears,
cause of endless exultation
to his ransomed worshippers:
with what rapture, with what rapture,
with what rapture
gaze we on those glorious scars!

Yea, amen, let all adore thee,
high on thine eternal throne;
Saviour, take the pow'r and glory,
claim the kingdom for thine own.
Alleluia! Alleluia! Alleluia!
Thou shalt reign, and thou alone.

Charles Wesley 1707-88

HELMSLEY

Thomas Olivers 1725-99

Blessing

*Please remain standing as The Bishop of
Stockport gives the blessing.*

May God the Father,
who loved the world so much
that he sent his only Son,
give you grace to prepare for life eternal.
Amen.

May God the Son,
who comes to us as redeemer and judge,
reveal to you the path
from darkness to light.
Amen.

May God the Holy Spirit,
by whose working the Virgin Mary
conceived the Christ,
help you bear the fruits of holiness.
Amen.

And the blessing of God almighty,
the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit,
be among you and remain with you always.
Amen.

*Please remain standing as the Clergy and
Choir leave and then sit for the organ
voluntary.*

Voluntary

Fantasia and fugue in G minor (BWV 542)
J S Bach 1685-1750

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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