



Advent Carol Service

"O come, o come Emmanuel"

**Reflections in hymns, choral music
and scripture readings**

Introduction

IN the Middle Ages, the Church kept Advent as a season of great solemnity - a time in which to meditate upon the ultimate issues of death, judgement, hell and heaven.

Advent, though, was also a time of great rejoicing. For Christ would come, not only as Judge, but also as Saviour, and would usher in the Kingdom of God. Advent, therefore, provided a vivid preparation for Christmas. Processions from west to east, and the use of lights, spoke of the Church's hope in the coming of Christ - the Light of the world - to banish sin and darkness. Antiphons were sung, calling upon God to deliver his people, and readings from the Old Testament were seen as pointing to the fulfilment of God's purposes in Jesus.

This Service aims to recapture something of that Advent longing and hope. It begins in darkness with the Advent Responsory, in which Christ's coming is announced 'from afar'. The Blessing of Light follows, and, as the Service unfolds, the Light is carried to other parts of the Church as the Procession moves from west to east.

The remainder of the Service is structured around the great Advent Antiphons, known as the Great 'Os'. These were sung originally as Antiphons to the Magnificat at the Evening Office from 17th to 23rd December, and have provided a rich source of devotional imagery in Advent. The readings and music serve to complement the Antiphons, and help us reflect on the theme of the Christ who comes to judge and save his people. The Antiphons are gathered together in the final hymn, *O come, O come, Emmanuel*, which is sung as the procession withdraws. The Service ends in quietness, but in confident hope in the One who is to come. Even so come, Lord Jesus.

The Gathering

The service begins in silence and darkness – no organ music is played, and the main lighting of the church is switched off 5 minutes before the start of the service

The ministers and singers move in silence to the West End with the unlit Advent Candle

*Silence is kept for 30-45 seconds before the **Advent Responsory** is sung*

Advent Responsory

Sung by the Choir

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?

Words: First Responsory of Advent Sunday (Office of Matins)

All stand

The Blessing of the Light

Minister You, O Lord are my lamp:
Choir You turn our darkness into light.
Minister With you, O Lord, is the well of life:
Choir In your light shall we see light.
Minister Your word is a lantern to my feet:
Choir and a light upon our path.

The Advent Candle is lit

Minister Jesus Christ is the Light of the world:
Choir a light no darkness can quench.
Minister Blessed are you, Lord our God, King of the universe, eternal creator of day and night. Now, as darkness is falling, hear the prayer of your faithful people. Wash away our transgressions, cleanse us by your refining fire, and make us temples of your Holy Spirit. May we live in watchfulness as we wait for the coming of your Son Jesus Christ, who shall judge the world and all its works. Rouse us from the sleep of sin and make us ready to enter your kingdom where songs of praise for ever sound. For you are the true light, who lightens everyone, and the new heavens and the new earth join to sing your praise now and for evermore.

All **Amen.**

Processional Hymn: Come, thou Redeemer of the earth

During which the light moves in procession to the Chancel Steps.

- Choir* Come, thou Redeemer of the earth,
And manifest thy virgin-birth:
Let every age adoring fall,
Such birth befits the God of all.
- 2 Begotten of no human will,
But of the Spirit, thou art still
The Word of God, in flesh arrayed,
The Saviour, now to man displayed.**
- 3 The virgin womb that burden gained
With virgin honour all unstained,
The banners there of virtue glow,
God in his temple dwells below.**
- 4 From God the Father he proceeds,
To God the Father back he speeds,
Runs out his course to death and hell,
Returns on God's high throne to dwell.**
- 5 O equal to thy Father, thou!
Gird on thy fleshly mantle now,
The weakness of our mortal state
With deathless might invigorate.**
- 6 O Jesu, Virgin-born, to thee
Eternal praise and glory be,
Whom with the Father we adore
And Holy Spirit, evermore. Amen.**

*Music: PUER NOBIS NASCITUR Michael Praetorius (1571-1621)
arranged by G. R. Woodward (1848-1934)
Veni, Redemptor gentium, Ambrose of Milan (340-397)
translated by John M Neale (1818-1866)*

All sit

Collect

Almighty God,
before the judgement seat of whose Son,
the Lord Christ, we must all appear;
keep us steadfast and faithful in his service,
and enable us so to judge ourselves in this life,
that we may not be condemned on the day of his appearing;
for his tender mercy's sake, **Amen**

O Sapientia

O Sapientia; quae ex ore Altissimi prodisti, attingens a fine, usque ad finem fortiter, suaviter, disponensque omnia; veni ad docendum nos viam prudentiae.

O Wisdom, coming forth 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.

Reading

Wisdom praises herself, and tells of her glory in the midst of her people. In the assembly of the Most High she opens her mouth, and in the presence of his hosts she tells of her glory:

'I came forth from the mouth of the Most High, and covered the earth like a mist. I dwelt in the highest heavens, and my throne was in a pillar of cloud. Alone I compassed the vault of heaven and traversed the depths of the abyss. Over waves of the sea, over all the earth, and over every people and nation I have held sway. Among all these I sought a resting-place; in whose territory should I abide? 'Then the Creator of all things gave me a command, and my Creator chose the place for my tent. He said, "Make your dwelling in Jacob, and in Israel receive your inheritance." Before the ages, in the beginning, he created me, and for all the ages I shall not cease to be.

Ecclesiasticus 24: 1-9

Silence is kept

Carol: This is the truth sent from above

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.

The first thing which I do relate,
is that God did man create,
the next thing which to you I'll tell,
woman was made with man to dwell.

Then after this 'twas God's own choice
to place them both in Paradise,
there to remain from evil free,
except they ate of such a tree.

And they did eat, which was a sin,
and thus their ruin did begin;
ruined themselves, both you and me,
and all of their posterity.

Thus we were heirs to endless woes,
till God and Lord did interpose,
and so a promise soon did run
that He would redeem us by His Son.

*Music and Words: Traditional Herefordshire Carol
collected and arranged by Ralph Vaughan Williams (1872-1958)
this version by John Barnard (b. 1948)*

O Adonai

O Adonai, et dux domus Israel, qui Moysi
in igne flammae rubi, apparuisti, et ei in
Syna legem dedisti; veni ad redimendum
nos in brachio extento.

*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.*

Reading

Moses was keeping the flock of his father-in-law Jethro, the priest of Midian; he led his flock beyond the wilderness, and came to Horeb, the mountain of God. There the angel of the Lord appeared to him in a flame of fire out of a bush; he looked, and the bush was blazing, yet it was not consumed.

Then Moses said, 'I must turn aside and look at this great sight, and see why the bush is not burned up.' When the Lord saw that he had turned aside to see, God called to him out of the bush, 'Moses, Moses!' And he said, 'Here I am.'

Then he said, 'Come no closer! Remove the sandals from your feet, for the place on which you are standing is holy ground.' He said further, 'I am the God of your father, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob.' And Moses hid his face, for he was afraid to look at God.

Exodus 3: 1-6

Silence is kept

Hymn: My God, how wonderful thou art

During which the light moves in procession into the Chancel (i.e. further east)

All stand

- 1 MY God, how wonderful thou art,
thy majesty how bright,
how beautiful thy mercy-seat,
in depths of burning light!**
- 2 How dread are thine eternal years,
O everlasting Lord,
by angel spirits day and night
incessantly adored!**
- 3 How wonderful, how beautiful,
the sight of thee must be,
thine endless wisdom, boundless power,
and awful purity!**
- 4 No earthly father loves like thee,
no mother, e'er so mild,
bears and forbears as thou hast done
with me thy sinful child.**
- 5 Father of Jesus, love's reward,
what rapture will it be,
prostrate before thy throne to lie,
and gaze and gaze on thee!**

*Music: BILLING R. R. Terry (1865-1938)
Words: Frederick William Faber (1814-1863)*

All sit

O Radix Jesse

O Radix Jesse; qui stas in signum
populorum, super quen continebunt
reges os suum, quem gentes
deprecabuntur; veni ad liberandum nos
yam noli tardare.

*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.*

Reading

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 rest on him, the spirit of wisdom and understanding, the spirit of counsel and might, the spirit of knowledge and the fear of the Lord. His delight shall be in the fear of the Lord. He shall not judge by what his eyes see, or decide by what his ears hear; but with righteousness he shall judge the poor, and decide with equity for the meek of the earth.

On that day the root of Jesse shall stand as a signal to the peoples; the nations shall inquire of him, and his dwelling shall be glorious.

Isaiah 11: 1-4a, 10

Silence is kept

Carol: A tender shoot

A tender shoot has started up from a root of grace,
as ancient seers imparted from Jesse's holy race:
It blooms without a blight, blooms in the cold mid-winter,
turning our darkness into light.

This shoot Isaiah taught us, from Jesse's root should spring;
The Virgin Mary brought us the branch of which we sing;
Our God of endless might gave her this child to save us,
Thus turning darkness into light.

*Music: Otto Goldschmidt (1829-1907)
Words: William Bartholomew (1793-1867)*

O clavis David

O clavis David; et sceptrum domus Israel, qui aperis et nemo claudit, claudis et nemo aperit; veni et educ vinctum de domo carceris, sedentem in tenebris et umbra mortis.

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.

Reading

The days are surely coming, says the Lord, when I will raise up for David a righteous Branch, and he shall reign as king and deal wisely, and shall execute justice and righteousness in the land. In his days Judah will be saved and Israel will live in safety. And this is the name by which he will be called: 'The Lord is our righteousness.'

Jeremiah 23: 5-6

Silence is kept

Hymn: From the beginning, God's most holy word

All stand

- 1 From the beginning, God's most holy word
Uttered the summons all creation heard;
Christ, the word spoken, wisdom, pow'r and light,
Transforms the darkness of the deepest night,**
- 2 Summons to wholeness all God's love enfolds,
Cherishes, nurtures, gently shapes, remoulds
Structures that fail, the institution's blight,
Bathes disappointment in transforming light.**
- 3 Jesus, you call each one of us to serve –
Amazing grace we never could deserve.
Here we renew our dedication's vow –
Word of the Father, speak your summons now.**

Music: GODMANCHESTER Peter Moger (b. 1964)

Words © Brigid Pailthorpe

Used with permission

All sit

O Oriens

O Oriens; splendor lucis aeternae et sol
justitiae; veni et illumina sedentes in
tenebris, et umbra mortis.

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

Reading

This is the testimony given by John when the Jews sent priests and Levites from Jerusalem to ask him, 'Who are you?' He confessed and did not deny it, but confessed, 'I am not the Messiah.' And they asked him, 'What then? Are you Elijah?' He said, 'I am not.' 'Are you the prophet?' He answered, 'No.' Then they said to him, 'Who are you? Let us have an answer for those who sent us. What do you say about yourself?' He said, 'I am the voice of one crying out in the wilderness, "Make straight the way of the Lord" ', as the prophet Isaiah said. Now they had been sent from the Pharisees. They asked him, 'Why then are you baptizing if you are neither the Messiah, nor Elijah, nor the prophet?' John answered them, 'I baptize with water. Among you stands one whom you do not know, the one who is coming after me; I am not worthy to untie the thong of his sandal.' This took place in Bethany across the Jordan where John was baptizing.

John 1: 19-28

Silence is kept

Canticle: Benedictus

All stand

Sung by the Choir

- 1 Blessed be the Lord God of Israel;
for he hath visited and redeemed his people,
- 2 And hath raised up a mighty salvation for us
in the house of his servant David;
- 3 As he spake by the mouth of his holy prophets,
which have been since the world began:
- 4 That we should be saved from our enemies,
and from the hand of all that hate us;
- 5 To perform the mercy promised to our forefathers,
and to remember his holy covenant;

- 6 To perform the oath which he sware to our father Abraham,
That he would give us,
- 7 that that we being delivered out of the hand of our enemies
might serve him without fear,
- 8 In holiness and righteousness before him,
all the days of our life.
- 9 And thou, child, shalt be called the Prophet of the Highest:
for thou shalt go before the face of the Lord to prepare his ways;
- 10 To give knowledge of salvation unto his people
for the remission of their sins,
- 11 Through the tender mercy of our God;
whereby the day-spring from on high hath visited us,
- 12 To give light to them that sit in darkness, and in the shadow of death,
and to guide our feet into the way of peace.

Luke 1: 68–79

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.

Music: Charles Villiers Stanford (1852-1924), Op. 115; Words: Luke 1: 68-79

All sit

O Rex Gentium

O Rex Gentium; et desideratus earum,
lapisque angularis, que facis utraque unum;
veni et salva hominem, quem de limo
formasti.

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

Reading

And I saw what appeared to be a sea of glass mixed with fire, and those who had conquered the beast and its image and the number of its name standing beside the sea of glass with harps of God in their hands. And they sing the song of Moses, the servant of God, and the song of the Lamb: ‘Great and amazing are your deeds, Lord God the Almighty! Just and true are your ways, King of the nations! Lord, who will not fear and glorify your name? For you alone are holy. All nations will come and worship before you, for your judgements have been revealed.’

Revelation 15: 2-4

Silence is kept

Hymn: Come, thou long-expected Jesus

During which the light moves in procession to the East End

All stand

- 1 **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.**
- 2 **Israel's strength and consolation,
Hope of all the earth thou art;
Dear desire of every nation,
Joy of every longing heart.**
- 3 **Born thy people to deliver,
Born a child and yet a king,
Born to reign in us for ever,
Now thy gracious kingdom bring.**
- 4 **By thine own eternal Spirit
Rule in all our hearts alone;
By thine all-sufficient merit
Raise us to thy glorious throne.**

Music: CROSS OF JESUS John Stainer (1840-1901)

last verse arrangement and descant: Lindsay Gray (b. 1953)

Words: Charles Wesley (1707-1788)

All sit

O Emmanuel

O Emmanuel; Rex et legifer noster,
expectatio gentium, et salvator earum;
veni ad salvandum nos, Domine Deus
noster.

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

Reading

Now the birth of Jesus the Messiah took place in this way. When his mother Mary had been engaged to Joseph, but before they lived together, she was found to be with child from the Holy Spirit. Her husband Joseph, being a righteous man and unwilling to expose her to public disgrace, planned to dismiss her quietly.

But just when he had resolved to do this, an angel of the Lord appeared to him in a dream and said, 'Joseph, son of David, do not be afraid to take Mary as your wife, for the child conceived in her is from the Holy Spirit. She will bear a son, and you are to name him Jesus, for he will save his people from their sins.'

All this took place to fulfil what had been spoken by the Lord through the prophet: 'Look, the virgin shall conceive and bear a son, and they shall name him Emmanuel', which means, 'God is with us.'

Matthew 1: 18-23

Silence is kept

Anthem: When came in flesh

When came in flesh the incarnate Word,
The heedless world slept on,
And only simple shepherds heard
That God had sent his Son.

When comes the Saviour at the last,
From east to west shall shine
The awful pomp, and earth aghast
Shall tremble at the sign.

Then shall the pure of heart be blest;
As mild he comes to them,
As when upon the Virgin's breast,
He lay at Bethlehem.

Lord, who could dare see thee descend
In state, unless he knew
Thou art the sorrowing sinner's friend,
The gracious and the true.

Dwell in our hearts, O Saviour blest,
So shall thine Advent's dawn
'Twixt us and thee, our bosom guest,
Be but the veil withdrawn.

*Music: from 'A Choice Collection of Psalm Tunes' W. Anchors (c. 1721)
arranged by George Guest (1924-2002); Words: J. Anstice (1805-1836)*

The Conclusion

All stand

Reading

I, John, heard a voice saying to me: 'See, I am coming soon; my reward is with me, to repay according to everyone's work. I am the Alpha and the Omega, the first and the last, the beginning and the end.'

'It is I, Jesus, who sent my angel to you with this testimony for the churches. I am the root and the descendant of David, the bright morning star.'

The Spirit and the bride say, 'Come.'

And let everyone who hears say, 'Come.'

And let everyone who is thirsty come.

Let anyone who wishes take the water of life as a gift.

The one who testifies to these things says, 'Surely I am coming soon.'

Amen. Come, Lord Jesus!

Revelation 22: 12-13, 16-17, 20

Offertory Hymn: Lo, he comes with clouds descending

During which the light returns in procession to the Nave

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

4 Yea, amen, let all adore thee,
high on thine eternal throne;
Saviour, take the power and glory,
claim the kingdom for thine own:
alleluia!
thou shalt reign, and thou alone.

Music: HELMESLEY adapted by Thomas Olivers (1725-1798)

last verse arrangement by Martin How (b. 1931)

Words: Charles Wesley (1707-1788), Martin Madan (1726-1790), John Cennick (1718-1755)

Prayers

Minister Let us pray.

All sit or kneel

Silence is kept

Minister In joyful expectation of his coming to our aid
we pray to Jesus.

After each bidding, the Minister says:

Maranatha:

All **Amen. Come, Lord Jesus.**

Minister Let us pray for the coming of the Kingdom
in the words our Saviour gave us.

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.**

All stand

Blessing

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

All **Amen.**

May God the Son,
who comes to us as Redeemer and Judge,
reveal to you the path from darkness to light.

All **Amen.**

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

All **Amen.**

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

All **Amen.**

Common Worship: Times and Seasons

Recessional Hymn: O come, O come, Emmanuel

During which the light is borne by the Minister to the West End, followed by the
Choir

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, true branch of Jesse, free
thine own from Satan's tyranny;
from depths of hell thy people save,
and give them victory o'er the grave:**

Rejoice ...

3 **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:**

Rejoice ...

4 **O come, thou Key of David, come,
and open wide our heavenly home;
make safe the way that leads on high,
and close the path to misery:**

Rejoice ...

5 **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:**

Rejoice ...

*Music: VENI EMMANUEL from a French 13th-century missal
arranged by Noël Tredinnick (b. 1949)
descant by David Iliff (b. 1939)*

Words: from the Latin (13th century), J. M. Neale (1818-1866) and others

Dismissal

All stand and turn to face the west end

Minister O Lord Jesus Christ, come at evening time with light,
and in the morning with your glory

All **to guide our feet into the way of peace.**

Minister He who receives our prayers says: Surely I come quickly.
I am the root and offspring of David, I am the bright and morning star.

All **Amen. Even so come, Lord Jesus.**

Common Worship: Times and Seasons

The congregation is asked to leave quietly

Organ music may be played after 30-45 seconds of silence

We gratefully acknowledge permission through Christian Copyright Licensing (License No. 1262444) to print any words and/or music. Designed and printed at St Michael at the North Gate. All Rights reserved.

St Michael at the North Gate, City Church of Oxford
Cornmarket, Oxford, OX1 3EY 01865 240 940 admin@smng.org.uk
www.smng.org.uk