A SERVICE OF CAROLS AND READINGS FOR ADVENT SUNDAY
Charity Collection

Our Advent Carol Service is usually a chance to raise a significant amount of money for a nominated charity, either based in Oxford or relevant to the college community. Although, this year, we cannot have a physical collection, we know that the vital work of many charities has been threatened by the pandemic and economic downturn, and that more and more people are in need of charitable support. So we are asking you, if you’re able, to donate online to Emmaus Oxford.

Emmaus provides housing and meaningful work for people who have experienced homelessness, helping them to find a way to move on with their lives. They provide housing in Oxford for 28 formerly homeless people, and have a workshop where they restore, mend and sell furniture and household items. Although their physical shop is closed, they now have a virtual store so they can continue during the pandemic. However, the pandemic has meant a significant loss of income.

The link for donations is: https://www.gofundme.com/f/christ-church-advent-carols

Charity Number: 1066618

Cover photograph: Simeon Hayns
Advent is one of the most poignant seasons in the church calendar. The word means ‘coming’ and the season of Advent is a time of waiting and preparation as we look in hope to the birth of Jesus Christ.

Our annual Advent Carol services, for both cathedral and college communities, are a chance to focus this sense of expectation. Coming together to hear Advent words and music, we pray for God to come into our world to bring healing and hope.

Although we are unable to gather physically on Advent Sunday this year, we still come together in prayer and reflection this Advent. This service reminds us that we long for the light of Christ to continue to break through into the darkness of our world. This year has been like no other and many of us will have experienced this darkness up close through loss, pain, separation and sickness. We long to be able to physically gather together as both college and cathedral congregations once again and sing the great carols of Advent in our Chapel and Cathedral. But until then we wait and hope, giving thanks that we are able to sing and pray from wherever we are, knowing that God has come to dwell with us and light will shine in the darkness.

And in the words of the final blessing, ‘May Christ the Sun of Righteousness shine upon you and scatter the darkness from before your path.’

The Revd Clare Hayns,  
College Chaplain

The Revd Richard Peers  
Sub Dean

Organ Music before the service
Played by Benjamin Sheen, Sub Organist

Fantasia on ‘Veni Emmanuel’  
Kenneth Leighton (1929–1988)
The service begins in darkness that recalls the silent, expectant darkness of the beginning of time, before the voice of God brought light into being.

First Reading
Genesis 1: 1–15
read by Giulia da Cruz
President of the Junior Common Room.

God creates light and separates it from the darkness.

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.

And God said, 'Let there be a dome in the midst of the waters, and let it separate the waters from the waters.' So God made the dome and separated the waters that were under the dome from the waters that were above the dome. And it was so. God called the dome Sky. And there was evening and there was morning, the second day.

And God said, 'Let the waters under the sky be gathered together into one place, and let the dry land appear.' And it was so. God called the dry land Earth, and the waters that were gathered together he called Seas. And God saw that it was good. Then God said, 'Let the earth put forth vegetation: plants yielding seed, and fruit trees of every kind on earth that bear fruit with the seed in it.' And it was so. The earth brought forth vegetation: plants yielding seed of every kind, and trees of every kind bearing fruit with the seed in it. And God saw that it was good. And there was evening and there was morning, the third day.

And God said, 'Let there be lights in the dome of the sky to separate the day from the night; and let them be for signs and for seasons and for days and years, and let them be lights in the dome of the sky to give light upon the earth.' And it was so.
Anthem

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 leadest Joseph like a sheep.
Tell us, are 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.

WORDS: First Responsory at Matins of Advent Sunday

MUSIC: from a Magnificat by Giovanni Pierluigi da Palestrina (1525–1594)
arranged by David Willcocks (1919–2015)

Bidding Prayer

The Revd Clare Hayns,
College Chaplain.

We have come together at this season to proclaim and receive in our hearts the good news of the coming of God’s Kingdom and so prepare ourselves to celebrate with joy the birth of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ.

As we declare our hope in God’s loving purpose, we pray for this aching world which waits for his coming. We pray for all who at this time especially need his pity and protection: the sick in body or in mind, the bereaved and the lonely; those who are shielding, key workers and all whose work puts them at risk; those who suffer from loss of work and loss of hope; victims and perpetrators of violence; those who face the future with fear and despair. And we trust in God’s promises that hope will not disappoint us and at the last, all will be made new.

May God, of his grace, grant to all his people a new trust in his good providence and a new obedience to his sovereign will, for to him is most justly due all glory, honour, worship and praise, which we offer up in the words which Christ himself taught us:
Please join in with the Lord’s Prayer. Although we are physically separated, as we join together in prayer we are united in spirit.

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,
now and forever. Amen.

May the Lord, when he comes, find us watching and waiting,
that we may be made worthy
to join the company of his Saints in light. Amen.

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 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, 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:

Words: J.M. Neale (1818–1866)
Music: Veni Emmanuel, melody adapted from a French Missal
by Thomas Helmore (1811–1890)
Choir Carol

Drop down ye heavens, from above, and let the skies pour down righteousness:
Let the earth open and bring forth a Saviour.
Lord, thou hast blessed thy land:
Thou hast turned away the captivity of Jacob.
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.

WORDS: liturgical Latin
MUSIC: William Byrd (1539–1623)

Second Reading
Isaiah 9: 2–7
read by Jim Godfrey
Cathedral Verger

The prophet Isaiah foretells the coming of the Saviour.

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.
You have multiplied the nation,
you have increased its joy.
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.

Choir Carol

The tree of life my soul hath seen,
Laden with fruit, and always green:
The trees of nature fruitless be
Compared with Christ the apple tree.

His beauty doth all things excel:
By faith I know, but ne’er can tell
The glory which I now can see
In Jesus Christ the apple tree.

For happiness I long have sought,
And pleasure dearly I have bought:
I missed of all; but now I see
‘Tis found in Christ the apple tree.

I’m weary with my former toil,
Here I will sit and rest awhile:
Under the shadow I will be
of Jesus Christ the apple tree.

This fruit doth make my soul to thrive,
It keeps my dying faith alive;
Which makes my soul in haste to be
With Jesus Christ the apple tree.

Words: ’R.H.’, 1761
Music: Elizabeth Poston (1905–1987)
HILLS of the North, rejoice,
river and mountain-spring,
hark to the advent voice;
valley and lowland, sing.
Christ comes in righteousness and love,
he brings salvation from above.

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.

Lands of the East, arise,
he is your brightest morn,
greet him with joyous eyes,
praise shall his path adorn:
your seers have longed to know their Lord;
to you he comes, the final word.

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.

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

*Words: Editors of English Praise (1975)*
*based on Charles E. Oakley (1832–1865)*
*Music: Little Cornard, Martin Shaw (1875–1958)*
The Angel Gabriel announces the coming birth of Jesus.

In the sixth month the angel Gabriel was sent by God to a town in Galilee called Nazareth, to a virgin engaged to a man whose name was Joseph, of the house of David. The virgin’s name was Mary. And he came to her and said, ‘Greetings, favoured one! The Lord is with you.’ But she was much perplexed by his words and pondered what sort of greeting this might be. The angel said to her, ‘Do not be afraid, Mary, for you have found favour with God. And now, you will conceive in your womb and bear a son, and you will name him Jesus. He will be great, and will be called the Son of the Most High, and the Lord God will give to him the throne of his ancestor David. He will reign over the house of Jacob for ever, and of his kingdom there will be no end.’ Mary said to the angel, ‘How can this be, since I am a virgin?’ The angel said to her, ‘The Holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the Most High will overshadow you; therefore the child to be born will be holy; he will be called Son of God. And now, your relative Elizabeth in her old age has also conceived a son; and this is the sixth month for her who was said to be barren. For nothing will be impossible with God.’ Then Mary said, ‘Here am I, the servant of the Lord; let it be with me according to your word.’ Then the angel departed from her.

Choir Carol

Ave Maria, gratia plena, Dominus tecum;
benedicta tu in mulieribus, 
et benedictus fructus ventris tui, Jesus.

Hail Mary, full of grace, the Lord is with thee; 
blessed art thou among women, 
and blessed is the fruit of thy womb, Jesus.

WORDS: liturgical Latin, from Luke 1:28, 41
MUSIC: Robert Parsons (c.1535–c.1571)
Fourth Reading
Luke 1: 67–79
read by Professor Geraldine Johnson,
Senior Censor and Tutor in History of Art.

The dawn from on high shall break upon us.

Zechariah was filled with the Holy Spirit and spoke this prophecy:

‘Blessed be the Lord God of Israel,
    for he has looked favourably on his people and redeemed them.
He has raised up a mighty saviour for us
    in the house of his servant David,
as he spoke through the mouth of his holy prophets from of old,
    that we would be saved from our enemies
    and from the hand of all who hate us.
Thus he has shown the mercy promised to our ancestors,
    and has remembered his holy covenant,
the oath that he swore to our ancestor Abraham,
    to grant us that we, being rescued from the hands of our enemies,
might serve him without fear, in holiness and righteousness
    before him all our days.
And you, child, will be called the prophet of the Most High;
    for you will go before the Lord to prepare his ways,
to give knowledge of salvation to his people
    by the forgiveness of their sins.
By the tender mercy of our God,
    the dawn from on high will break upon us,
to give light to those who sit in darkness and in the shadow of death,
    to guide our feet into the way of peace.’
Hymn

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.

Still through the cloven skies they come,
with peaceful wings unfurled;
and still their heavenly music floats
o’er all the weary world:
above its sad and lowly plains
they bend on hovering wing;
and ever o’er its Babel-sounds
the blessèd angels sing.

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.

Words: Edmund Hamilton Sears (1810–76)
May the Lord send upon us the light of life.
May he come to us with justice, loving kindness, and peace.

The Advent Collect

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.

The Blessing
given by the Sub Dean,
the Revd Canon Richard Peers

Christ the Sun of Righteousness shine upon you,
scatter the darkness from before your path,
and make you ready to meet him when he comes in glory;
and the blessing of God Almighty,
the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit,
be among you and remain with you this night and for evermore.
Amen.
Procedenti puero – Eya, nobis annus est!
Virginis ex utero – Gloria! Laudes!
Deus homo factus est et immortalis.
Sine viri semine natus est de virgine.
Sine viri copia natus est ex Maria.
In hoc festo determino Benedicamus Domino!

For the advent of a child – hurrah! the season is upon us.
From a virgin’s womb — Glory, praises!
God has been made man and immortal.
Without seed of a man he has been born of a virgin;
Without recourse to a husband he has been born of Mary.
Upon this festal tide let us bless the Lord.

Words: anonymous,
from a fifteenth century English manuscript
Music: Peter Warlock (1894–1930)

Organ Music after the service

Le Monde dans l’attende du Sauveur, from Symphonie-Passion, Op. 23
Marcel Dupré (1886–1971)