



St James's  
PICCADILLY

# Advent Music and Readings

*Awake, O sleeper, and arise from the dead,  
and Christ will shine on you ... Ephesians 5*

**Sunday 30th November 2025  
at 6pm**

With a congregation in the church  
and live on YouTube





*Icon of Sophia (Divine Wisdom)  
from St George Church, Vologda  
(16th century)*

*Advent is a time of expectation,  
anticipation and contemplation  
as we prepare for the coming  
of Christ into our broken and  
divided world.*

*It is a time to take stock,  
to lament injustice and to  
choose life for all God's  
children.*

## **ORDER OF SERVICE**

*At 6pm, please remain seated for the first reading.*

### **READING: Isaiah 9.2-7**

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; they rejoice before you as with joy at the harvest, as people exult when dividing plunder. For the yoke of their burden, and the bar across their shoulders, the rod of their oppressor, you have broken as on the day of Midian. For all the boots of the tramping warriors and all the garments rolled in blood shall be burned as fuel for the fire. 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.

## **HYMN**

[Tune: Kingsfold; Words: Alan Hinton]

**The prophets' voice comes down the years  
to teach and to inspire,  
to show the nature of our God  
in words and deeds and fire;  
not to disclose some rigid plan  
that God has set in stone,  
but to renew the promises  
the saints have always known.**

**The prophets' voice speaks of the past -  
the actions that reveal  
the way God used the people then  
this broken world to heal;  
and then translates the things gone by  
in ways that we find new  
so we can judge the world we know  
by standards ever true.**

**The prophets' voice holds up a glass  
in which to see our day;  
events which span the globe around  
and things we do and say.  
It calls us to repent and turn**

**from things that tear life down,  
to choose the path that Jesus chose  
and share his work and crown.**

## **WELCOME AND BIDDING PRAYER**

*Joanna Kelly*

Joy is God's melody amid the discord of life, a song carrying the rhythm of eternity and touching the chords of longing in our souls. Creator of the stars of night, renew in us this night the promises of light after darkness, day after night, hope after despair, joy in this moment for our trust is in you.

**Amen.**

## **THE ADVENT PROSE**

*Please join in singing the responses.*

*Solo*

Drop down, ye heavens from above  
and let the skies pour down righteousness.

***All***

**Drop down, ye heavens from above  
and let the skies pour down righteousness.**

*Choir*

Be not wroth very sore, O Lord,  
neither remember iniquity for ever:  
Thy holy cities are a wilderness,  
Sion is a wilderness,  
Jerusalem a desolation: our holy and  
our beautiful house,  
where our fathers praised thee.

**Drop down, ye heavens from above  
and let the skies pour down righteousness.**

*Solo*

We have sinned, and are as an unclean thing,  
and we all do fade as a leaf:  
and our iniquities, like the wind, have taken us away;  
thou hast hid thy face from us:  
and hast consumed us,  
because of our iniquities.

**Drop down, ye heavens from above  
and let the skies pour down righteousness.**

*Choir*

Ye are my witnesses, saith the Lord,  
and my servant whom I have chosen;  
that ye may know me and believe me:  
I, even I, am the Lord,  
and beside me there is no Saviour:  
and there is none that can deliver out of my hand.

**Drop down, ye heavens from above  
and let the skies pour down righteousness.**

*Choir*

Comfort ye, comfort ye, my people,  
my salvation shall not tarry:  
I have blotted out as a thick cloud thy transgressions:  
fear not, for I will save thee:  
for I am the Lord thy God,  
the Holy One of Israel, thy Redeemer.

**Drop down, ye heavens from above  
and let the skies pour down righteousness.**

**READING: John 1.1-9**

*The Word Became Flesh*

In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was in the beginning with God. All things came into being through him, and without him not one thing came into being. What has come into being in him was life, and the life was the light of all people. The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness did not overcome it.

There was a man sent from God, whose name was John. He came as a witness to testify to the light, so that all might believe through him. He himself was not the light, but he came to testify to the light. The true light, which enlightens everyone, was coming into the world.

**CHOIR: O Radiant Dawn**

[Words: 'O' Antiphon from the Magnificat at Vespers, Dec. 21, Isaiah 9:2; Music: James MacMillan]

**READING: Your First Word Was Light**

*from Book of Hours - I, 44, by Rainer Maria Rilke*

Your first word was light,  
and time began. Then for long you were silent.

Your second word was man, and fear began,  
which grips us still.

Are you about to speak again?  
I don't want your third word.

Sometimes I pray: Please don't talk.  
Let all your doing be by gesture only.  
Go on writing in faces and stone  
what your silence means.

You be our refuge from the wrath  
that drove us out of Paradise.

Be our shepherd, but never call us —  
We can't bear to know what's ahead.

## **HYMN**

[Words and music: Bernadette Farrell, 1993]

**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.*

**Longing for shelter, many are homeless.  
Longing for warmth, many are cold.  
Make us your building, sheltering others,  
walls made of living stone.**

*Christ, be our light ...*

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

*Christ, be our light ...*

## **READING: Anon**

After the fireworks fade and the noise quiets, there's a silence that feels unsettling.

You start wondering, Shouldn't I feel inspired?

Shouldn't I feel more alive?

But the truth is, every spiritual path has a winter.

A season where nothing grows, but everything roots.

Imagine wanting only the sun, only the rain, or only the snow. It would destroy the balance of nature.

The same is true for your inner world.

You appreciate joy because you've tasted sadness.

You value success because you've walked through failure.

The contrast gives meaning to it all.

Yet, we fear winter.

We mistake silence for stagnation, and waiting for weakness.

We panic when things slow down in love, in art, in business, in growth.

But not every quiet season is punishment.

Sometimes it's the universe saying, sit down, something deeper is rooting.

You don't have to keep blooming to prove you're alive.

You have to honour the winter.

Because what feels like pause is often preparation.

And the deeper you root, the higher you'll bloom.

## **CHOIR: Jesus Christ the Apple Tree**

[Words: Anon, Music: Elizabeth Poston (1905-1987)]

## **READING: Luke 21.9-11, 25-28**

### *Signs and persecutions*

'When you hear of wars and insurrections, do not be terrified; for these things must take place first, but the end will not follow immediately.' Then he said to them, 'Nation will rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom; there will be great earthquakes, and in various places famines and plagues; and there will be dreadful portents and great signs from heaven.

'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

## **REFLECTION**

*The Revd Dr Mariama Ifode-Blease*

*Silence.*

## **PRAYERS FOR THE WORLD**

*Rosemary Phizackerley*

This Advent, let us pray for the earth and her life,  
for people in trouble, for our city, for ourselves.

*After each line of prayer, please join the sung response:*

**We believe, Maranatha, light of the world.**

## THE LORD'S PRAYER

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.

*During the next hymn, a collection will be taken.  
If you don't have cash, please use one of the tap donation  
points in the church or the QR code on page 15 to make a  
donation to our **Christmas for All** appeal.*

## HYMN

[Words: from 'Great O antiphons' [12th-13th c.] trans. Mark Bellatini (2008); Tune: Veni Emmanuel]

O come, O come, Emmanuel,  
And with your captive children dwell.  
Give comfort to all exiles here,  
and to the aching heart bid cheer.

*Rejoice, rejoice!  
Emmanuel shall come within as Love to dwell.*

O come, you Splendour very bright,  
as joy that never yields to might.

O come, and turn all hearts to peace,  
that greed and war at last shall cease.

*Rejoice, rejoice!*

*Emmanuel shall come within as Truth to dwell.*

O come, you Dayspring, come and cheer  
our spirits by your presence here.  
And dawn in every broken soul,  
as vision that can see the whole.

*Rejoice, rejoice!*

*Emmanuel shall come within as Light to dwell.*

O come, you Wisdom from on high,  
from depths that hide within a sigh,  
to temper knowledge with our care,  
to render every act a prayer.

*Rejoice, rejoice!*

*Emmanuel shall come within as Hope to dwell.*

### **READING: Advent Calendar**

*by Rowan Williams*

He will come like last leaf's fall.  
One night when the November wind  
has played the trees to the bone, and earth  
wakes choking on the mould,  
the soft shroud's folding.

He will come like frost.  
One morning when the shrinking earth  
opens on mist, to find itself  
arrested in the net  
of alien, sword-set beauty.

He will come like dark.  
One evening when the bursting red  
December sun draws up the sheet  
and penny-masks its eye to yield  
the star-snowed fields of sky.

He will come, will come,  
will come like crying in the night,  
like blood, like breaking,  
as the earth writhes to toss him free.  
He will come like child.

**CHOIR: Blessed Be!**

[Melanie DeMore, 2022]

**READING: Ecclesiasticus 24.1-9**

*God's wisdom seeks to dwell with humankind*

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.'

## **HYMN**

[Tune: Helmsley; Words: Charles Wesley (1707-1788)]

*As we sing the hymn, we move into the courtyard to gather around the Advent fire.*

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

**Every eye shall now behold him,  
robed in glorious majesty;  
we who set at nought 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.**

**Sing, 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! Come, Lord Jesus! Come, Lord Jesus!  
Everlasting God, come down!**

## **CHOIR: Sung Responsory for Advent**

[Words: liturgical; Music: Giovanni Pierluigi da Palestrina (1525-1594)]

Judah and Jerusalem, fear not, nor be dismayed:  
*Tomorrow go ye forth, and the Lord will be with you.*

Stand ye still, and ye shall see the salvation of the Lord.  
*Tomorrow go ye forth, and the Lord will be with you.*

Glory be to the Creator, and to the Christ,  
and to the Holy Spirit  
*Tomorrow go ye forth, and the Lord will be with you.*

As it was in the beginning, is now, and ever shall be;  
World without end. Amen.  
*Tomorrow go ye forth, and the Lord will be with you.*

## **THE BLESSING**

*The priest says*

In the darkness of this present age

***All***

**We choose light.**

In the face of displacement and despair

**We choose hope.**

In the grievous inequality of our world

**We choose justice.**

In the coming of the Christ

**We choose life.**

*The priest says*

May Christ, the Sun of Righteousness  
Shine in any darkness that you know:  
and the blessing of God;  
Creator, Christ and Holy Spirit,  
be with you and remain with you always.

**Amen.**

May Christ find us watching and waiting:  
go in peace to love and serve the Lord.

**In the name of Christ.**

**Amen.**

*Please join us for refreshments in the church. All are welcome.*

## **St James's Christmas For All Appeal**

In 1684 Sir Christopher Wren's vision of St James's as a place of beauty and justice became a reality. We often use words like home and family when we talk about Christmas, as we gather to celebrate with love and joy. Yet, we should remember that for others there is no home, and many feel little love or joy at this time of year.

This Christmas, we invite you to support our work and help us continue to bring hope and comfort to those who need it most. Your donation will make a difference in our community.



Donations may be made by  
visiting [www.sjp.org.uk/christmas](http://www.sjp.org.uk/christmas)  
or by scanning the QR code.

## Christmas 2025 at St James's Church

### Blue Christmas: Sun 14th Dec at 3pm

All are welcome to this reflective service with familiar carols, a space for those who find celebrating difficult at Christmas.

### Carols for All: Sat 6th, 13th & 20th at 12.30pm; Wed 10th, 17th & 23rd at 1.10pm; Fri 12th & 19th Dec at 1.10pm

Sing along with the St James's Singers and brass ensemble to get into the festive spirit. Tickets at [www.sjp.org.uk/christmas/](http://www.sjp.org.uk/christmas/)

### Festival of Lessons and Carols: Sun 21st Dec at 6pm

All are welcome to join the parish carol service with scripture, poetry, and music from our Lay Singers and Music Scholars.

### Christmas by Candlelight: Sun 14th Dec at 7pm

Popular carols and festive music with St James's Singers and brass ensemble. Tickets at [www.sjp.org.uk/christmas/](http://www.sjp.org.uk/christmas/)

### Carols for Shoppers

#### Tue 16th Dec at 2.30pm and 5.30pm

Join young conservatoire musicians and singers for joyful traditional carols and new commissions, plus Christmas readings. Tickets at [www.sjp.org.uk/christmas/](http://www.sjp.org.uk/christmas/)

### Carols for Christmas Eve: Wed 24th Dec at 4pm

The Christmas story with choir, trumpets and congregational carols.

### Midnight Mass: Wed 24th Dec at 11.30pm

All are welcome to our midnight Eucharist with carols.

### Christmas Day Eucharist: Thu 25th Dec at 11am

Join us for our Christmas Day Eucharist with carols, followed by lunch in the church.

