



Choral Evensong Marking Embrace the Middle East's Membership of the Community of the Cross of Nails

Sunday, 7th December, 2025

Welcome to this service of Choral Evensong, led by the Reverend Su McClellan, Cathedral Associate Minister and Church Engagement Lead at Embrace.

The Very Reverend John Witcombe, Dean of Coventry, is preaching. The Choir is directed by Joe Watson, Acting Director of Music. The organists are Liam Condon, Assistant Director of Music, and Adam Heron, Organ Scholar. The responses are those by Richard Ayleward (1626-1669).

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 leadest 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 to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Ghost. 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 translated from the First Responsory of Advent Sunday Matins
(Roman Rite)*

Music adapted from a Magnificat by Giovanni Pierluigi da Palestrina (1526-1594)

Processional 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 thy all-sufficient merit,
raise us to thy glorious throne.**

Words by Charles Wesley (1707-1788)

Tune CP 24 Cross of Jesus John Stainer (1840-1901)

Psalm 11

1. In The Lord put I my trust ♦
how say ye then to my soul, that she should flee as a bird unto the hill?
2. For lo, the ungodly bend their bow, and make ready their arrows
within the quiver ♦
that they may privily shoot at them which are true of heart.
3. For the foundations will be cast down ♦
and what hath the righteous done?
4. The Lord is in his holy temple ♦
the Lord's seat is in heaven.
5. His eyes consider the poor ♦
and his eye-lids try the children of men.
6. The Lord alloweth the righteous ♦
but the ungodly, and him that delighteth in wickedness, doth his soul abhor.

7. Upon the ungodly he shall rain snares, fire and brimstone, storm and tempest ♦
this shall be their portion to drink.
8. For the righteous Lord loveth righteousness ♦
his countenance will behold the thing that is just.

The First Lesson

Read by Monica Caro, Major Donor Manager at Embrace the Middle East.

¹¹So then, remember that at one time you Gentiles by birth, called “the uncircumcision” by those who are called “the circumcision” —a physical circumcision made in the flesh by human hands— ¹²remember that you were at that time without Christ, being aliens from the commonwealth of Israel, and strangers to the covenants of promise, having no hope and without God in the world. ¹³But now in Christ Jesus you who once were far off have been brought near by the blood of Christ. ¹⁴For he is our peace; in his flesh he has made both groups into one and has broken down the dividing wall, that is, the hostility between us. ¹⁵He has abolished the law with its commandments and ordinances, that he might create in himself one new humanity in place of the two, thus making peace, ¹⁶and might reconcile both groups to God in one body through the cross, thus putting to death that hostility through it. ¹⁷So he came and proclaimed peace to you who were far off and peace to those who were near; ¹⁸for through him both of us have access in one Spirit to the Father. ¹⁹So then you are no longer strangers and aliens, but you are citizens with the saints and also members of the household of God, ²⁰built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, with Christ Jesus himself as the cornerstone. ²¹In him the whole structure is joined together and grows into a holy temple in the Lord; ²²in whom you also are built together spiritually into a dwelling place for God.

Ephesians 2:11-22

The Magnificat

Magnificat and Nunc Dimittis in D by Charles Wood (1866–1926)

The Second Lesson

Read by Ian Livett, Director of Fundraising at Embrace the Middle East.

¹⁹ This is the testimony given by John when the Jews sent priests and Levites from Jerusalem to ask him, ‘Who are you?’ ²⁰ He confessed and did not deny it, but confessed, ‘I am not the Messiah.’ ²¹ And they asked him, ‘What then? Are you Elijah?’ He said, ‘I am not.’ ‘Are you the prophet?’ He answered, ‘No.’ ²² Then they said to him, ‘Who are you? Let us have an answer for those who sent us. What do you say about yourself?’ ²³ 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.

²⁴ Now they had been sent from the Pharisees. ²⁵ They asked him, ‘Why then are you baptizing if you are neither the Messiah, nor Elijah, nor the prophet?’ ²⁶ John answered them, ‘I baptize with water. Among you stands one whom you do not know, ²⁷ the one who is coming after me; I am not worthy to untie the thong of his sandal.’ ²⁸ This took place in Bethany across the Jordan where John was baptizing.

John 1:19-28

The Nunc Dimittis

Magnificat and Nunc Dimittis in D by Charles Wood (1866–1926)

The Lord’s Prayer

The choir sing the Lord’s Prayer in Aramaic

Abwoon d'bwashmaya,
Nethqadash shmakh;
Teytey malkuthakh;
Nehwey tzevyanak aykan di
bashmayya af ba'ara.
Lakhman di sunkanan yamana hav
lan yoma dheyn.
Wa-shbuk lan khavine aykana,
d'af hanan shbukan l'khayvine.
Wela tahn l'nesyuna Ela patzan
min bisha. Ameyn.

*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. Amen.*

Traditional Syriac Melody

A Collect for Embrace the Middle East

O God of peace,

Vouchsafe, we beseech thee, to bless by thy grace all who labour for healing and hope in the land where thine only Son didst dwell among us.

Through the ministry of them that teach, comfort, and serve,
may the flame of thy love may be rekindled in thy Church.

Through Jesus Christ thy Son our Lord,

who liveth and reigneth with thee,

in the unity of the Holy Ghost,

one God, world without end.

Amen.

The Anthem

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.

O Lord, send us now prosperity. Amen.

Text from Psalms 48 and 118

Music by Sir William McKie (1901-1984)

The Sermon

Given by the Very Reverend John Witcombe, Dean of Coventry.

The Prayers

Led by Rowena Worthington Church Engagement Manger at Embrace

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 victory 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 heavenly 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 did give the law
in cloud and majesty and awe:**

*Translated from Latin Advent Antiphons by J. M. Neale (1818-1866)
Tune CP 32 Veni Emmanuel Thomas Helmore (1811-1890)*

Prayer of Dedication and Welcome

The Dean prays

Eternal God, you have come among us in Christ to reconcile the world to yourself, and have entrusted us with the ministry of reconciliation. Strengthen all who work for the healing of conflict and pain amongst your human family. Bless all those in the worldwide Community of the Cross of Nails who inspired by this symbol of hope, bear witness to the grace and truth of your crucified and risen Son, our Saviour Jesus Christ

Amen.

Jamie Eyre, CEO of Embrace the Middle East, comes forward to receive the Cross of Nails.

Affirmation of Commitment

Do you believe that peace and justice between people and nations is the fruit of humility and penitence?

We do.

Do you believe that loving and humble service to our enemies has power to heal the hurts and sorrows of war and oppression?

We do.

Do you believe yourselves called to a ministry of reconciliation in the UK and the Middle East?

We do.

The Blessing

Go now in the peace of Christ, bearing the cross not as a burden but as a sign of healing and hope.

May the Spirit of reconciliation guide your steps, soften your hearts and strengthen your hand for the work of justice and peace.

And may the blessing of God, Creator, Redeemer and Sustainer rest upon you and remain with you and with all whom you serve, today tomorrow and always.

Amen.

Voluntary

*Please do stay for the organ voluntary, played by Liam Condon.
Allegro from Symphonie No. 6 by Charles-Marie Widor (1844-1937)*

If you would like to make a one-off donation to the Cathedral via your phone, or set up a recurring donation, please use the QR code here. There are also contactless donation points and collection boxes near the entrance. Thank you for your support.



DAILY SERVICES AT THE CATHEDRAL

Regular services at the Cathedral follow this pattern. For special services and up-to-date information about one-off cancellations of the services below, please check the calendar on the Cathedral website:

<https://www.coventrycathedral.org.uk/full-calendar>

Monday - Friday

8:30 – 9:00am: *Morning Prayer & Holy Communion*

12 – 12:10pm: *The Litany of Reconciliation*

(followed on Thursdays by BCP Holy Communion)

4 – 4:30pm: *Evening Prayer*

(or Wednesday and Thursday during school terms: Choral Evensong, 5:15 - 6pm)

Saturday

12 – 12:10pm: *The Litany of Reconciliation*

Sunday

10:30 – 11:45am: *The Cathedral Eucharist*

4 – 5pm: *BCP Evening Prayer (Choral Evensong during term time)*

JOINING OUR CHOIRS

Do you know a child who loves to sing? Boys and girls between the ages of 7 and 10 are welcome to audition for the Cathedral Boys' and Girls' Choirs. They sing an average of four times per week during term time in recordings, services and concerts. Children receive a world-class music education completely free and even receive scholarship payments. Please get in touch with the Director of

Music to learn more:

rachel.mahon@coventrycathedral.org.uk

SAFEGUARDING AT COVENTRY CATHEDRAL

We are committed to the safeguarding of all people. For details, please visit www.coventrycathedral.org.uk/about-us/safeguarding

You can report a concern using the same link or by contacting Jane Williams, Cathedral Safeguarding Officer, calling 024 7650 2349 or by emailing JaneMLWill@aol.com

Alternatively, you can contact the Diocesan Safeguarding Team led by Sarah Price: 024 7652 1345 or safeguarding@coventry.anglican.org

COMMUNITY NEWS

Acting Director of Music

We are delighted to announce that Joe Watson has been appointed Acting Director of Music during Rachel's maternity leave. Joe joins us from Liverpool Metropolitan Cathedral and takes up his role from 1 December.

Joe brings a wealth of musical experience and a deep commitment to the life of our worshipping community. He will oversee the choir, music planning, and all aspects of our musical ministry throughout this period, ably assisted by Liam Condon, our Assistant Director of Music.

Please join us in welcoming Joe to this role, and in keeping Rachel, her family, and all involved in your prayers. More about Joe's appointment is available on our website: <https://www.coventrycathedral.org.uk/worship-music/choirs-music/our-musicians>

Advent and Christmas Services

Please visit our Cathedral website for the upcoming Advent and Christmas services and events.

Please take a copy of the Christmas program on the community table or visit the Cathedral website. www.coventrycathedral.org.uk/christmas

COMING SOON

Ex Cathedra

11 December, 7pm-9pm

Escape the festive rush and immerse yourself in a concert of spellbinding seasonal music, performed by candlelight.

In the deep still darkness, comes the luminous sound of a choir in harmony. Expect some of your favourite carols, and discover a treasure trove of gorgeous new - and old - music and readings that explore the magic, humour and peace of Christmas. A concert with both familiar melodies and wondrous discoveries to make you smile as well as reflect. Early booking is advised to avoid disappointment. See website for details. Refreshments will be available to buy when doors open, at 6:15pm, and during the interval.

Cathedral Choir Christmas Concert

Friday 12 December at 7:30pm

Come hear our very own Cathedral Choir sing festive favourites with Joe Watson conducting, Liam Condon on the organ and the Brass Band of Central England. A fun Christmas celebration for the whole family. There will be carols to sing along to and hot drinks and refreshments available for purchase. Tickets: £15, under 16s FREE

<https://www.coventrycathedral.org.uk/events/coventry-cathedral-choir-christmas-concert/booking>

Wreath Making is Back!

12 December 2025, 1:00pm to 3:00pm

Let's get ready for the Christmas Season, with a relaxed time of creating in the glow of the New Cathedral at Christmastime.

Food Union will be providing an array of foliage for decoration making locally sourced from their growing sites as well as the materials needed to construct a wreath. If you have your own wreath bases from previous years then please bring them along if you wish.

If you have any materials you would like to bring along for the communal basket then please do. We'll have plenty of variety but the more the merrier!

Tickets are £5.00, all proceeds going towards our Spring and Harvest Festivals. Tickets are limited.

If the cost of a ticket is prohibitive, please email events@coventrycathedral.org.uk, and we will ensure you can come along.

Handel's Messiah by Candlelight

Saturday, 13 December, 7:00pm to 10:00pm

A highlight of the Coventry Cathedral Chorus' season is always the performance of Handel's *Messiah* and we are thrilled to again be performing this wonderful work in Coventry Cathedral. Surely, there's no better way to prepare for Christmas than through the story of the birth, ministry, death and resurrection of Jesus Christ.

Parts of the cathedral will be candlelit for this performance. Refreshments available during the interval.

Tickets will sold on the door at the full price of £25. The discounted price of £20 is available in advance only.

For ticket queries contact Jill Pacey
at tickets@coventrycathedralchorus.com or phone [01676 532436](tel:01676532436)

Blue Christmas

Sunday, 14 December at 6pm, Lady Chapel

It can be hard to feel joyful at Christmas. Join us for this service formed with care for those who find this time of year difficult, and those who wish to pray for them.