

O come, O come, Emmanuel

An Advent Sequence

Veni Emmanuel

Based on an order by the Royal School of Church Music

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 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.

Today's 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, sung in confident hope in the One who is to come.

This is the twelfth year we have used this order at Mark the Evangelist, with variations in the readings, settings and carols each year.

The Congregation of Mark the Evangelist

21 December 2025

Advent 4A

All are invited to stay for refreshments after the worship service.



Gathering

PRELUDE N DE GRIGNY, *POINT D'ORGUE*

PROCESSIONAL HYMN Creator of the stars of night

Conditor

We remain seated for the hymn.

Creator of the stars of night,
your people's everlasting light,
O Christ, Redeemer of us all,
we pray you hear us when we call.

In sorrow that the ancient curse
should doom to death a universe,
you came, O Saviour, to set free
your own in glorious liberty.

When this old world drew on toward night,
you came; but not in splendour bright,
not as a monarch, but the child
of Mary, blameless mother mild.

At your great Name, O Jesus, now
all knees must bend, all hearts must bow:
all things on earth with one accord,
like those in heaven, shall call you Lord.

Come in your holy might, we pray,
redeem us for eternal day;
defend us while we dwell below
from all assaults of our dread foe.

To God the Father, God the Son,
And God the Spirit, Three in One,
praise, honour, might, and glory be
from age to age eternally.

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WITH THE CHILDREN An introduction to the service

The fourth Advent Candle is lit

Christ is the light of the world: in him is the light of life.

The O Antiphons

READING 1 – Ecclesiasticus 24.1–9

O SAPIENTIA

MtE 1A

O Wisdom, coming forth from the mouth of the Most High,
reaching from end to end,
ordering all things with strength and gentleness:
Come, and teach us the way of prudence.



READING 2 – Exodus 3.1–6

O ADONAI

MtE 1B

O Adonai, Leader of the house of Israel
you appeared in the burning bush to Moses,
and gave him the law on Sinai:
Come with outstretched arm to save us.

Psalm 26.1-3,8-11

PCS 24

REFRAIN: Organ, then cantor, then all together (sung also at the end).

David Clark Isele

Re-deem me and show me your mer - cy. —

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**READING 3 – Isaiah 11.1-4a, 10****O RADIX JESSE**

O Root of Jesse, standing as a sign for all peoples,
before you all rulers will keep silent,
and nations lift up their prayers
Come quickly to deliver us.

**READING 4 – Jeremiah 23. 5-6****O CLAVIS DAVID**

O Key of David, Sceptre over the house of Israel
you open and none can close,
you close and none can open:
Come to set free the prisoners who dwell in darkness
and the shadow of death.

MtE 1C

MtE 1D

INTERLUDE: Sinfony from G F Handel's *Messiah***READING 5 – Luke 1.26-38****O ORIENS**

MtE 1E

O Morning Star, splendour of eternal light, sun of justice:
Come, and shine on those who live in darkness
and the shadow of death.

HYMN The Magnificat

Hymn 173

We remain seated for the hymn.

1. My soul gives glory to the Lord,
in God my Saviour I rejoice.
my lowliness he did regard,
exalting me by his own choice.
From this day all shall call me blest,
for he has done great things for me;
of all great names his is the best,
for it is holy; strong is he.

2. His mercy goes to all who fear,
from age to age and to all parts.
his arm of strength to all is near;
he scatters those who have proud hearts.
He casts the mighty from their throne
and raises those of low degree;
he feeds the hungry as his own,
the rich depart in poverty.

3. He raised his servant Israel,
remembering his eternal grace,
as from of old he did foretell
to Abraham and all his race.
O Father, Son and Spirit blest,
in threefold name are you adored;
to you be every prayer addressed,
from age to age the only Lord.

Words John T. Mueller; music Michael Jones: GIA Publications.

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READING 6 – Revelation 22. 12-13, 16-17, 20

O REX GENTIUM

MtE 1F

O King of nations and their desire, the cornerstone,
which binds together:
Come, and save us whom you formed from the dust of the earth.

Hymn Hark the glad sound! (vv.1, 4-6)

Hymn 269

We remain seated for this hymn

1. Hark, the glad sound! The Saviour comes,
the Saviour promised long!
Let every heart prepare a throne,
and every voice a song.

3. He comes the prisoners to release,
in Satan's bondage held;
the gates of brass before him burst,
the iron fetters yield.

4. He comes the broken heart to bind,
the bleeding soul to cure,
and with the treasures of his grace
to enrich the humbled poor.

6. Our glad Hosannas, Prince of Peace,
your welcome shall proclaim;
and heaven's eternal arches ring
with your beloved name. *Philip Doddridge, Public Domain*



READING 7 – Matthew 1.18-25

O EMMANUEL

MtE 1G

O Emmanuel,
our Sovereign and lawgiver, hope and Saviour of nations:
Come and save us, O Lord our God.



HYMN Long ago, prophets knew

Hymn 283

We stand for this hymn.

1. Long ago, prophets knew
Christ would come, born a Jew.
Come to make all things new;
Bear his people's burden,
Freely love and pardon.

Refrain:

Ring, bells, ring, ring, ring!
Sing, choirs, sing, sing, sing!
When he comes,
When he comes,
Who will make him welcome?

2. God in time, God in man,
This is God's timeless plan:
He will come, as a man,
Born himself of woman,
God divinely human.

Refrain:

Ring, bells, ring, ring, ring!
Sing, choirs, sing, sing, sing!
When he comes,
When he comes,
Who will make him welcome?

3. Mary, hail! Though afraid,
She believed, she obeyed.
In her womb God is laid;
Till the time expected
Nurtured and protected. *Refrain*

4. Journey ends! Where afar
Bethlem shines, like a star,
Stable door stands ajar.
Unborn Son of Mary,
Saviour, do not tarry! *Refrain*

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music by Gustav Holst, arrangement John Wilson © OUP.
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THE CONFESSION, DECLARATION OF FORGIVENESS AND INVITATION

...your sins are forgiven!

thanks be to God!

OFFERING

Many members now make their offerings by electronic transfer; the plate will be passed for those who prefer to make cash/envelope offerings. The prayer dedicating the offerings 'captures' the full range of gifts.

The Eucharist

HYMN – YE GATES, LIFT UP YOUR HEADS

TIS 12

1. Ye gates, lift up your heads on high; ye doors, doors that last for ay, be lift-ed up, that so the King of that do last for ay, be lift-ed up that so the King of glo-ry en-ter may. (Men:) But who of glo-ry is the glo-ry en-ter may. (Men:) But who is he that is the King? (All:) The migh-ty Lord is this, ev'n that same Lord, that King (All:) the King of glo-ry, who is this? The Lord of hosts, and great in might and strong in bat-tle is, ev'n that same Lord that none but he, the King of glo-ry is, the Lord of hosts, and great in might and strong in bat-tle is.

(After v.2)

Hal - le - lu - jah, Hal - le - lu - jah, Hal - le - lu - jah, Ha - le - lu - jah, Hal - le - lu - jah, A - men, A - men, A - men.

THE GREAT PRAYER OF THANKSGIVING

The Lord be with you.

And also with you.

Lift up your hearts.

We lift them to the Lord.

Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.

It is right to give our thanks and praise.

(The prayer continues...)

SANCTUS

Ho - ly, ho - ly, ho - ly Lord, God of power and might,

5

he-a-ven and earth are full of your glor-y, ho - san - na in the high-est!

BENEDICTUS

Bless - ed is he who comes in the name of the Lord! Ho -

4

san - na, ho - san - na, ho - san - na in the high - est!

**Holy, holy, holy Lord, God of power and might,
heaven and earth are full of your glory.**

Hosanna in the highest.

Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord.

Hosanna, hosanna, hosanna in the highest!

(The prayer continues...)

(INCLUDING THE GENERAL INTERCESSIONS)

...Come, Lord, and in your mercy,
hear our prayer

THE LORD'S PRAYER

**Our Father in heaven,
hallowed be your name,
your kingdom come,
your will be done,
on earth as in heaven.**

Give us today our daily bread.

**Forgive us our sins,
as we forgive those who sin against us.**

**Save us from the time of trial
and deliver us from evil.**

**For the kingdom, the power, and the glory are yours
now and for ever. Amen.**

(The people sit)

THE BREAKING OF THE BREAD

...The gifts of God for the people of God.

THE COMMUNION

The Uniting Church recognises this Table as the Lord's and, so, open to all who would normally commune in their home congregations.

GATHERING: *We'll gather in a circle around the table for the distribution of the elements; please wait until all have received and the prayer is said before returning to your seats.*

If you can't stand or walk to the front but would like to receive communion, please raise your hand if the celebrant has not already noticed you.



Conclusion

HYMN – O come, O come, Emmanuel

TIS 265

We stand for this hymn

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, 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:

3 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:

- 4 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:
- 5 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:

*Words: from the Latin (13th century)
J M Neale (1818–1866) and others
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BLESSING

ORGAN POSTLUDE F COUPERIN, *DIALOGUE I -II -III*

The Ecumenical Prayer Cycle

www.oikoumene.org/resources/prayer-cycle

China (Hong Kong SAR)

Hong Kong was a British protectorate from 1841 when it was ceded to the United Kingdom by China. In 1997, Hong Kong Island, Kowloon Peninsula and the New Territories on the mainland were returned to Chinese sovereignty, and became the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region (SAR) of China. In this agreement, China promised that, under its "one country, two systems" formula, Hong Kong will enjoy a high degree of autonomy in all matters except foreign and defence affairs for a period of 50 years. Hong Kong has a thriving economy, based on international trade. It contributes to, and benefits from China's rapidly developing economy. The churches are a minority, but very active in social work and evangelism. Many churches and Christian organizations have significant links with partner churches and agencies in mainland China. There has been renewed commitment to the issue of poverty and the area of education in Hong Kong. About half of the Protestant churches belong to the Evangelical, Pentecostal, and Holiness traditions. For several years now there has been a Metropolitanate of the Ecumenical Patriarchate (Eastern Orthodox) in Hong Kong, which covers South East Asia. As an international city, Hong Kong has also many foreign language congregations. The Hong Kong Christian Council is the ecumenical body.

Taiwan

Taiwan is formed by one large and several small islands off the coast of China. From the 16th through the 19th century, it was part of China, and from 1895 through 1945 it was a colony of Japan called Formosa. It reverted to China after World War II. Following the communist victory on mainland China in 1949, some two million Nationalist Party Chinese fled to Taiwan and declared a government for all of China based on the constitution of 1946. Since then, the dominant issue is the relationship between Taiwan and mainland China. There is a political movement in favour of independence. In 2000, Taiwan underwent its first peaceful transfer of power from the Nationalist to the Democratic Progressive Party.

Taiwan has become one of the leading economies of Asia, and economic and cultural relationships with the mainland are growing rapidly. Christianity came to the island in the 17th century but only developed significantly in the 19th and 20th centuries. Taiwan has an indigenous population which is heavily Christian. Besides the Catholic Church and the Presbyterian Church, other large churches are the Little Flock (Evangelical) and the True Jesus Church (Pentecostal). In recent years, other Pentecostal and Charismatic groups have established themselves. The Catholic Church is a member of the national council of churches.

NOTICES

FAITH AFTER FAITH

Craig publishes weekly on *Faith after Faith*, a Substack site. You can subscribe to receive email updates of recent posts (avoid the paid subscription invitations!). Use the QR image here to check in, or see faithafterfaith.substack.com for more info. Recent posts include:

- Recent Sermons
- New Theological Fragments (90-94): Divine absence and the Incarnation.



Fragment 93

The one God — and so, the absent God — arrives when the world becomes itself: Jesus of Nazareth.



UPCOMING MEETINGS AND EVENTS

See above for more details on these events

Christmas Day
Normal service times in January
CAN will join MtE at the CTM for Sunday worship
MtE will conduct a combined worship service at CAN, 180 Palmerston Street, Carlton
Monday Morning Movies @ The Nova
Church Council
Quarterly Conversation on the Quarterly Essay

Thu Dec 25, 9.30am
NOTE Jan 18!
Sun Jan 11, normal service
Sun Jan 18, 10.00@CAN
Mon Feb 2, time TBA
Tue Feb 3, 7.30pm online
Fri Feb 6, 11.00am CTM Library

People to commemorate this week

Stephen, martyr

Ecumenical Prayer Cycle

Hong Kong, Macau, Taiwan, and the Mainland of China

Lectionary Readings | 28 December 2025

Isaiah 63:7-9; Psalm 148; Hebrews 2:10-18; Matthew 2:13-23

A Parish Mission of the UCA, MtE is responsible for Hotham Mission

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