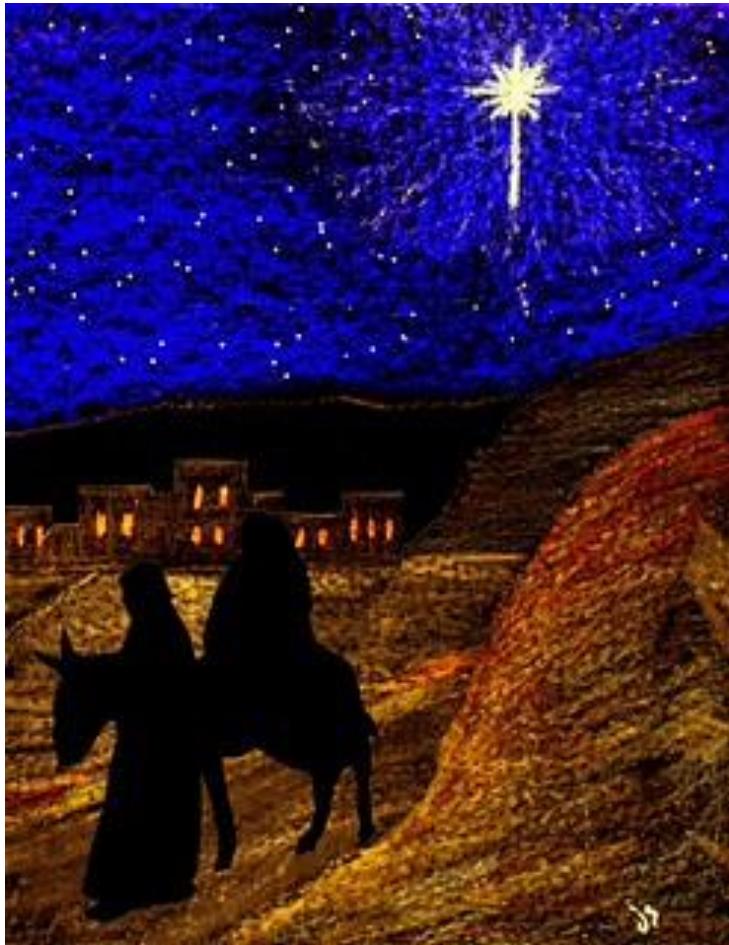


St. Paul's Episcopal Church

Advent Lessons & Carols

December 21, 2025

at 4 p.m.



Advent Festival of Lessons & Carols

The Order of Service

Opening Voluntary

Veni, Veni Emmanuel

arr. L. Sowerby (1895-1968)

Leo Sowerby held the position of Organist/Choirmaster at St. James Episcopal Church in Chicago for 35 years. In 1962, he became the founding Director of The College of Church Musicians at the Washington National Cathedral and was interred there upon his death. One of his notable students is Canon Precentor William Partridge (retired), Christ Church Cathedral, St. Louis, Mo.

Procession Hymn

O Come, O Come, Emmanuel

Hymn 56

A Bidding Prayer

Beloved in Christ, in this season of Advent, let it be our care and delight to prepare ourselves to hear again the message of the Angels, and in heart and mind to go even unto Bethlehem, to see the Babe lying in a manger.

Let us read and mark in Holy Scripture the tale of the loving purposes of God from the first days of our disobedience unto the glorious Redemption brought us by his holy Child; and let us look forward to the yearly remembrance of his birth with hymns and songs of praise.

But first, let us pray for the needs of his whole world; for peace and goodwill over all the earth; for the mission and unity of the Church for which he died, and especially for his Church in this country and within this city.

And because this of all things would rejoice his heart, let us at this time remember in his name the poor and the helpless; the hungry and the oppressed; the sick and those who mourn; the lonely and the unloved; the aged and the little children; and all those who know not the Lord Jesus, or who love him not, or who by sin have grieved his heart of love.

Lastly, let us remember before God his pure and lowly Mother, and all those who rejoice with us, but upon another shore and in a greater light, that multitude which no one can number, whose hope was in the Word made flesh, and with whom, in this Lord Jesus, we for evermore are one.

These prayers and praises let us humbly offer up to the throne of heaven, in the words which Christ himself hath taught us:

Officiant and People

***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, and the power, and the glory,
for ever and ever. Amen.***

Officiant

The Almighty God bless us with his grace; Christ gives us the joys of everlasting life; and unto the fellowship of the citizens above may the King of Angels bring us all. ***Amen.***

The Lessons

The First Reading: **Genesis 3: 8–15; 17–19**

The man and his wife heard the sound of the Lord God walking in the garden at the time of the evening breeze, and they hid themselves from the presence of the Lord God among the trees of the garden. But the Lord God called to the man, and said to him, "Where are you?" He said, "I heard the sound of you in the garden, and I was afraid, because I was naked; and I hid myself." He said, "Who told you that you were naked? Have you eaten from the tree of which I commanded you not to eat?" The man said, "The woman whom you gave to be with me, she gave me fruit from the tree, and I ate." Then the Lord God said to the woman, "What is this that you have done?" The woman said, "The serpent tricked me, and I ate." The Lord God said to the serpent,

“Because you have done this,
cursed are you among all animals
and among all wild creatures;
upon your belly you shall go,
and dust you shall eat

all the days of your life.
I will put enmity between you and the woman,
and between your offspring and hers;
he will strike your head,
and you will strike his heel.”

And to the man he said,

“Because you have listened to the voice of your wife,
and have eaten of the tree
about which I commanded you,
‘You shall not eat of it’,
cursed is the ground because of you;
in toil you shall eat of it all the days of your life;
thorns and thistles it shall bring forth for you;
and you shall eat the plants of the field.
By the sweat of your face
you shall eat bread
until you return to the ground,
for out of it you were taken;
you are dust,
and to dust you shall return.”

Here endeth the lesson.

Anthem

Adam Lay Ybounden

15th Century

*‘Adam lay ybounden’ is a 15th century carol whose title means ‘Adam lay bound.’ The carol reflects on the theological concept of the *felix culpa*, or ‘blessed fault,’ which argues that Adam’s original sin was necessary for the greater good of humanity’s redemption through the birth of Christ, and through Mary becoming the Queen of Heaven. It presents a paradoxical view that one can be grateful for the sin that made salvation possible.*

*Adam lay ybounden, bounden in a band
Four thousand winters thought he not too long.
And all was for an apple, an apple that he took,
As clergy finden written in their book.
Nor had the apple taken been,
nor had never our lady a been heaven’s queen.
Blessed be the time that apple taken was
Therefore we may singen Deo gracias!*

The Second Reading: **Isaiah 40: 1-11**

Comfort, O comfort my people,
says your God.
Speak tenderly to Jerusalem,
and cry to her
that she has served her term,
that her penalty is paid,
that she has received from the Lord's hand
double for all her sins.

A voice cries out:

"In the wilderness prepare the way of the Lord,
make straight in the desert a highway for our God.

Every valley shall be lifted up,
and every mountain and hill be made low;
the uneven ground shall become level,
and the rough places a plain.

Then the glory of the Lord shall be revealed,
and all people shall see it together,
for the mouth of the Lord has spoken."

A voice says, "Cry out!"

And I said, "What shall I cry?"

All people are grass,
their constancy is like the flower of the field.
The grass withers, the flower fades,
when the breath of the Lord blows upon it;
surely the people are grass.

The grass withers, the flower fades;
but the word of our God will stand forever.

Get you up to a high mountain,
O Zion, herald of good tidings;
lift up your voice with strength,
O Jerusalem, herald of good tidings,
lift it up, do not fear;
say to the cities of Judah,
"Here is your God!"

See, the Lord GOD comes with might,
and his arm rules for him;
his reward is with him,
and his recompense before him.
He will feed his flock like a shepherd;
he will gather the lambs in his arms,
and carry them in his bosom,
and gently lead the mother sheep.

Here endeth the lesson.

Hymn *Comfort, Comfort ye my people* Hymn 67

The Third Reading: Isaiah 7: 10-15

The Lord spoke to Ahaz, saying, "Ask a sign of the Lord your God; let it be deep as Sheol or high as heaven." But Ahaz said, "I will not ask, and I will not put the Lord to the test." Then Isaiah said: "Hear then, O house of David! Is it too little for you to weary mortals, that you weary my God also? Therefore the Lord himself will give you a sign. Look, the young woman is with child and shall bear a son, and shall name him Immanuel. He shall eat curds and honey by the time he knows how to refuse the evil and choose the good."

Here endeth the lesson.

Anthem *Light of Peace* J. Raney

*Light of peace, calm our despair.
Light of hope, lift us up when we fall.
Light of joy, brighten our days.
Light of love, teach us your ways.
Light of life, Maker of day,
gather our shadows and cast them away.
Bearer of truth, gleaming and bright,
shine in our hearts, shatter our night.
Come, thou long-expected Jesus born to set peoples free.
From our fears and sins release us, let us find our rest in thee.*

The Fourth Reading: **Baruch 4:36-5: 9**

Look toward the east, O Jerusalem, and see the joy that is coming to you from God. Look, your children are coming, whom you sent away; they are coming, gathered from east and west, at the word of the Holy One, rejoicing in the glory of God.

Take off the garment of your sorrow and affliction, O Jerusalem, and put on forever the beauty of the glory from God. Put on the robe of the righteousness that comes from God; put on your head the diadem of the glory of the Everlasting; for God will show your splendor everywhere under heaven. For God will give you evermore the name, "Righteous Peace, Godly Glory." Arise, O Jerusalem, stand upon the height; look toward the east, and see your children gathered from west and east at the word of the Holy One, rejoicing that God has remembered them. For they went out from you on foot, led away by their enemies; but God will bring them back to you, carried in glory, as on a royal throne. For God has ordered that every high mountain and the everlasting hills be made low and the valleys filled up, to make level ground, so that Israel may walk safely in the glory of God. The woods and every fragrant tree have shaded Israel at God's command. For God will lead Israel with joy, in the light of his glory, with the mercy and righteousness that come from him.

Here endeth the lesson.

Anthem

Prepare the Way of the Lord

W. Rowan

(Based on Isaiah 40: 4-5)

Prepare, prepare the way of the Lord.

Prepare the way! Make straight his path.

Prepare, prepare the way of the Lord.

*Every valley shall be exalted, every hill made low,
and the crooked shall be made straight, and the rough places plain.*

*And the glory of the Lord shall be revealed,
and all mankind shall see it, shall see it together.*

The Fifth Reading: **Isaiah 11: 1-9**

A shoot shall come out from the stump 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;
he shall strike the earth with the rod of his mouth,
and with the breath of his lips he shall kill the wicked.
Righteousness shall be the belt around his waist,
and faithfulness the belt around his loins.

The wolf shall live with the lamb,
the leopard shall lie down with the kid,
the calf and the lion and the fatling together,
and a little child shall lead them.

The cow and the bear shall graze,
their young shall lie down together;
and the lion shall eat straw like the ox.

The nursing child shall play over the hole of the asp,
and the weaned child shall put its hand on the adder's den.
They will not hurt or destroy
on all my holy mountain;
for the earth will be full of the knowledge of the Lord
as the waters cover the sea.

Here endeth the lesson.

Hymn *Lo, how a Rose e'r blooming*

Hymn 81

The Sixth Reading: **Luke 1:26-38**

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, favored 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 favor 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 forever, 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.

Here endeth the lesson.

Hymn

The Angel Gabriel

Hymn 265

All Stand

Collect

Officiant: The Lord be with you

People: And with thy Spirit.

Let us pray.

We beseech thee, Almighty God, to purify our consciences by thy daily visitation, that when thy Son our Lord cometh he may find in us a mansion prepared for himself; through the same Jesus Christ our Lord, who liveth and reigneth with thee, in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God, now and for ever. **Amen.**

Advent Blessing

May Almighty God, by whose providence our Saviour Christ came among us in great humility, sanctify you with the light of his blessing and set you free from all sin. **Amen.**

May he whose second Coming in power and great glory we await, make you steadfast in faith, joyful in hope, and constant in love. **Amen.**

May you, who rejoice in the first Advent of our Redeemer, at his second Advent be rewarded with unending life. **Amen.**

And the blessing of God Almighty, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost, be upon you and remain with you for ever. **Amen.**

Processional Hymn *Lo! He comes, with clouds descending* Hymn 57

Postlude: *Agincourt Hymn* att. to John Dunstable (1390-1453)

The original name of this tune is 'Deo Gracias'. The text celebrated that God, the Son of God, should take our mortal form for mortal's sake.

Participants in the Liturgy

Officiant: The Rev. Garron C. Daniels, OCS

Organist & Choirmaster: Gay Anderson, M.M.

Assisting Organist: Henry Evans, M.M.

Violinist: Nick Zankl

St. Paul's Handbell Choir

Choirs of St. Paul's Episcopal Church, Alton and St. Andrew's Episcopal Church,
Edwardsville

Thurifer: Donna Fisher

Crucifer: Chuck Drennan

Torch Bearer: Meg Dorris

Torch Bearer: Marti LoRusso

Lector: John Pearson

Lector: Dave Elson

Lector: Linda Dunnagan

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The Episcopal Parish of Alton

Welcome to the Episcopal Parish of Alton (EPA), a historic family-sized Anglo-Catholic parish founded in 1836 and located along the Mississippi River just north of the St. Louis Metropolitan Area. We are a member of the Springfield Diocese and a Eucharistic Community with two worship sites serving the Riverbend of Illinois – St. Paul’s Church, located in downtown Alton on the corner of Market & Third Streets, and Trinity Chapel located at 1901 State Street in North Alton.

Services on Sundays are held at 8:15 a.m. at Trinity Chapel and 10:30 a.m. at St. Paul’s.
We hope to see you again soon!

CHRISTMAS WEEK

Feast of St Thomas the Apostle Mass
Mon. Dec 22nd @5:30pm at Trinity

Sacrament of Confession
Tue. Dec 23 @11:00am-Noon & 4:30pm-5:30pm
St Elizabeth's Chapel (located in St Paul's)

Christmas Eve Mass
Wed. Dec 24th @10pm at St Paul's
(Music to begin at 9:30pm)

Christmas Day Mass
Thur. Dec 25th @10am at Trinity

Feast of St Stephen Mass
Fri. Dec 26th @5:30pm at Trinity

Feast of St John the Evangelist Mass
Sat. Dec 27th @Noon at Trinity

First Sunday of Christmas Mass
Sun. December 28th
8:15am (Trinity) and 10:30am (St Paul's)

Feast of the Holy Innocents Mass
Mon. Dec 29th @5:30pm at Trinity

