



**Leicester Cathedral**  
*A beating heart for City and County*

# **SUNDAY WORSHIP**

from the Community  
of Leicester Cathedral

**Comfort**  
and Joy



**Sunday 20 December 2020**  
**The Fourth Sunday of Advent**

*The Revd Canon Alison Adams, Canon Pastor and Sub-Dean, leads the service.*

*David Cowen, Associate Organist, plays on the Organ*

*Prière from Suite Gothique*

*Léon Boëllmann (1862–1897)*

## **Welcome and Greeting**

We meet in the presence of God, who is Father, Son and Holy Spirit.

Behold, a virgin shall conceive, and bear a son,  
and shall call his name Immanuel.

*Isaiah 7.14*

*Canon Alison continues with words of welcome.*

The Fourth Sunday in Advent highlights Mary, the God-bearer. We hear her response to God's call, and also her voice in the words of the Magnificat, that great hymn for justice. Our Advent candles continue to present a message of hope, peace, love and joy: today Mary invites us to consider our response to all that we recognise to be wrong in our world today.

## **Penitence Asking for God's forgiveness and healing**

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

*cf Isaiah 7.14*

*Silence is kept*

Heavenly Father,  
you exalted the humble and meek:  
give us humble and contrite hearts.  
Lord, have mercy.  
**Lord, have mercy.**

Lord Jesus,  
you grew towards birth in the Virgin's womb:  
be planted also in our hearts and lives.

Christ, have mercy.  
**Christ, have mercy.**

Holy Spirit,  
you overshadowed Mary,  
that she might become the God-bearer:  
fill us with your heavenly gifts.  
Lord, have mercy.  
**Lord, have mercy.**

### **Absolution** God's forgiveness for us

May God who loved the world so much  
that he sent his Son to be our Saviour  
forgive us our sins  
and make us holy to serve him in the world.  
Through Jesus Christ our Lord.  
**Amen.**

### **Collect** for the Fourth Sunday of Advent

Let us pray.

God our redeemer,  
who prepared the Blessed Virgin Mary  
to be the mother of your Son:  
grant that, as she looked for his coming as our saviour,  
so we may be ready to greet him  
when he comes again as our judge;  
who is alive and reigns with you,  
in the unity of the Holy Spirit,  
one God, now and for ever.  
**Amen.**

## Lighting of the Advent Candle

Blessed are you, sovereign Lord, merciful and gentle:  
to you be praise and glory for ever.  
Your light has shone in our darkened world  
through the child-bearing of blessed Mary;  
grant that we who have seen your glory  
may daily be renewed in your image  
and prepared like her for the coming of your Son,  
who is the Lord and Saviour of all.  
**Blessed be God for ever.**

*All sing*

The Advent Hymn | Advent IV

**Mary's gift beyond all telling  
we recall today:  
Son of God within her dwelling,  
born to show the way.  
Who could guess the final story?  
– cross and glory; Easter day!**

ANGEL VOICES (AM26)  
Edwin George Monk (1819–1900)

Mark Earey (b.1965)

## The First Reading

Luke 1.26–38

*Read by Simon Bentley*

A reading from the Gospel of Luke.

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.

Hear the word of the Lord.

**Thanks be to God.**

## The Second Reading

Luke 1.46–55

*Read by Claire Cowen*

A reading from the Gospel of Luke.

And Mary said,

‘My soul magnifies the Lord,

and my spirit rejoices in God my Saviour,

for he has looked with favour on the lowliness of his servant.

Surely, from now on all generations will call me blessed;

for the Mighty One has done great things for me,

and holy is his name.

His mercy is for those who fear him

from generation to generation.

He has shown strength with his arm;

he has scattered the proud in the thoughts of their hearts.

He has brought down the powerful from their thrones,

and lifted up the lowly;

he has filled the hungry with good things,

and sent the rich away empty.

He has helped his servant Israel,

in remembrance of his mercy,

according to the promise he made to our ancestors,

to Abraham and to his descendants for ever.’

Hear the word of the Lord.

**Thanks be to God.**

## Reflection

The Very Revd David Monteith, Dean of Leicester

*David Cowen plays*

Meine Seele erhebt den Herren BWV648

*Johann Sebastian Bach (1685–1750)*

“My soul magnifies the Lord... He has helped his servant Israel, in remembrance of his mercy”

Doreen Ndetaramo leads

## Prayers of Intercession

*The following response is used*

Lord, come to your people  
**In your mercy, hear our prayer.**

*and this response may be used at the end:*

Merciful Father,  
**accept these prayers for the sake of your Son,  
our Saviour Jesus Christ.  
Amen.**

*The prayers conclude with The Lord's Prayer*

Let us pray with confidence as our Saviour has taught us:

**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.**

*Thank you for joining us today for the Fourth Sunday in Advent. **This is the usual time in a service that a collection would be taken** and collections are a vital source of income for us so please give generously – you can give by text or online – <http://easydonate.org/PLATE> (please see the final page for details). Your gifts enable us to continue to do this work and to keep the building open and safe for all that visit.  
**Thank you.***

## **The Hymn**

**Earth was waiting, spent and restless,  
with a mingled hope and fear,  
faithful men and women praying,  
'Surely, Lord, the day is near:  
the Desire of all the nations –  
it is time he should appear!'**

**Then the Spirit of the Highest  
to a virgin meek came down,  
and he burdened her with blessing,  
and he pained her with renown;  
for she bore the Lord's anointed  
for his cross and for his crown.**

**Earth has groaned and laboured for him  
since the ages first began,  
for in him was hid the secret  
which through all the ages ran –  
Son of Mary, Son of David,  
Son of God, and Son of Man.**

*PICARDY (AM34)  
French carol melody  
harmonised by Ralph Vaughan Williams (1872–1958)*

*Walter Chalmers Smith (1824–1908)*

## The Blessing and Dismissal

‘Comfort and Joy’ has been the theme of the Church of England throughout this season of Advent. I hope you have already experienced comfort and joy from journeying with us through Advent. As we now begin to approach the stable, and tremble at the birth, may God’s comfort and joy reside with you ever more deeply.

May God the Father,  
who loved the world so much that he sent his only Son,  
give you grace to prepare for life eternal.  
**Amen.**

May God the Son,  
who comes to us as redeemer and judge,  
reveal to you the path from darkness to light.  
**Amen.**

May God the Holy Spirit,  
by whose working the Virgin Mary conceived the Christ,  
help you bear the fruits of holiness.  
**Amen.**

and the blessing of God Almighty,  
the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit  
be among you and remain with you always.  
**Amen.**

If you’ve not booked to come to our Carol Service, do watch it online, livestreamed on Cathedral social media. There is an online Crib service on Christmas Eve, and, in the Cathedral, Midnight Mass (livestreamed also) and Christmas Day Eucharist. We look forward to seeing you, one way or another and we wish you, despite circumstances, a joyous Christmastide.

As we await our coming Saviour,  
And until we meet again,  
go in peace to love and serve the Lord.  
**In the name of Christ.**  
**Amen.**

David Cowen plays

Magnificat I Op.18x

Marcel Dupré (1886–1971)

“My soul doth Magnify the Lord, and my Spirit hath rejoiced in God my Saviour. For He hath regarded the lowliness of his Handmaiden.”

### **Leicester Cathedral needs your help**

We understand that not everyone will be able to help in this uncertain climate. But if you are able to continue your giving, or to make a donation now, it will be enormously helpful.

We have limited reserves, our earned income has come to a standstill, and giving by collection plate and envelope has ceased. As a result, we are experiencing very real financial pressures.

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