Pershore Abbey



Advent Carol Service 2026

THE GIFT OF CHRISTMAS

Welcome to our Advent Carol Service.

The congregation is invited to stand for the carols and
to sit for the choir pieces and readings.



Choir The Matin Responsory – *Palestrina (c.1525-1594)*

I look from afar:
And lo, I see the pow'r of God coming,
and a cloud cov'ring 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 be to the Father, and to the Son,
and to the Holy Ghost.
I look from afar: And lo, I see the pow'r of God coming,
and a cloud cov'ring 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?



Choir and Ministers process

Nun Komm der Heiden Heiland - Dietrich Buxtehude



Welcome and Bidding Prayer

Carol **O come, O come, Emmanuel** *(Veni Emmanuel)*

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 didst give the law
in cloud and majesty and awe:

[John Mason Neale. 1818-1866]

The First Reading Zechariah 9:9-10
Rejoice greatly, your king comes to you

Carol **Hark, a thrilling voice is sounding** *(Merton)*

Hark, a thrilling voice is sounding;
"Christ is nigh," it seems to say;
"Cast away the dreams of darkness,
O ye children of the day!"

Wakened by the solemn warning,
let the earth-bound soul arise;
Christ, her sun, all ill dispelling,
shines upon the morning skies.

Lo, the lamb, so long expected,
comes with pardon down from heaven;
let us haste, with tears of sorrow,
one and all to be forgiven;

That when next he comes with glory,
and the world is wrapped in fear,
with his mercy he may shield us,
and with words of love draw near.

Honour, glory, might, and blessing
to the Father and the Son,
with the everlasting Spirit,
while eternal ages run.

[Edward Caswall, 1814-1878]

The Second Reading Jeremiah 23:5-6
I will raise up for David a righteous branch

Choir Veiled in Darkness – *Glen Rudolph (b. 1951)*

Veiled in darkness Judah lay,
Waiting for the promised day,
While across the shadowy night
Streamed s flood of glorious light,
Heav'n-ly voices chanting then,
'Peace on earth, goodwill to men'.
Still the earth in darkness lies,
Up from death's dark vale a-rise
Voices of a world in grief,
Prayers of men who seek relief;
Now our darkness pierce again,
'Peace on earth, goodwill to men'.
Light of light, we humbly pray,
Shine up on Thy world today;
Break the gloom of our dark night,
Fill our souls with love and light,
Send thy blessed word again,
'Peace on earth, goodwill to men'.

Carol **Come, thou long-expected Jesus** *(Cross of Jesus)*

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 thy own eternal Spirit,
rule in all our hearts alone;
by thy all-sufficient merit,
raise us to thy glorious throne.

[Charles Wesley, 1707-1788]



The Third Reading Psalm 118:19-29
Open to me the gates of righteousness



Carol **Hark the glad sound! the Saviour comes** *(Bristol)*

Hark the glad sound! the Saviour comes,
the Saviour promised long:
let every heart prepare a throne,
and every voice a song.

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

He comes, the broken heart to bind,
the bleeding soul to cure,
and with the treasures of his grace
to bless the humble poor.

Our glad hosannas, Prince of Peace,
thy welcome shall proclaim;
and heaven's eternal arches ring
with thy beloved name.

[Philip Doddridge, 1702-1751]



The Fourth Reading Isaiah 9: 2, 6-7
The people that walked in darkness have seen a great light

Carol **Longing for light** *(Longing for Light)*

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 peace, our world is troubled.
Longing for hope, many despair.
Your word alone has power to save us.
Make us your living voice.

Longing for food, many are hungry.
Longing for water, many still thirst.
Make us your bread, broken for others,
Shared until all are fed.

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

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

[Bernadette Farrell, b. 1957]

The Fifth Reading Isaiah 7:10-15
Behold, a virgin shall conceive and bear a son

Carol **Earth was waiting, spent and restless** *(Picardy)*

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.

[Walter Chalmers Smith, 1824-1908]

Choir E'en so Lord Jesus – *Paul Manz (1919-2009)*

Peace be to you and grace from him
Who freed us from our sins
Who loved us all and shed his blood
That we might saved be
sing Holy, Holy to our Lord
The Lord, Almighty God
Who was, and is, and is to come
Sing Holy, Holy Lord
Rejoice in heaven, all ye that dwell within
Rejoice on earth, ye saints below

For Christ is coming, is coming soon
For Christ is coming soon
E'en so Lord Jesus, quickly come
And night shall be no more
They need no light nor lamp nor sun
For Christ will be their All!



The Sixth Reading Romans 12:1-2; 13:11-14
Salvation is nearer to us now than when we first believed



Carol **Hills of the North, rejoice** *(Little Cornard)*

Hills of the North, rejoice,
river and mountain-spring,
hark to the advent voice;
valley and lowland, sing.
Christ comes in righteousness and love,
he brings salvation from above.

Isles of the Southern seas,
sing to the listening earth,
carry on every breeze
hope of a world's new birth:
In Christ shall all be made anew,
his word is sure, his promise true.

Lands of the East, arise,
he is your brightest morn,
greet him with joyous eyes,
praise shall his path adorn:
your seers have longed to know their Lord;
to you he comes, the final word.

Shores of the utmost West,
lands of the setting sun,
welcome the heavenly guest
in whom the dawn has come:
he brings a never-ending light
who triumphed o'er our darkest night.

Shout, as you journey home,
songs be in every mouth,
lo, from the North they come,
from East and West and South:
in Jesus all shall find their rest,
in him the universe be blest.

[Editors of English Praise, 1975
based on Charles Ernest Oakley, 1832-1865]



The Seventh Reading Matthew 25:1-13
Keep awake, for you know neither the day nor the hour



Choir This is the record of John— *Orlando Gibbon (1583—1625)*

This is the record of John,
when the Jews sent priests and Levites from Jerusalem to ask him,
Who art thou?
And he confessed and denied not, and said plainly,
I am not the Christ.
And they asked him, What art thou then? Art thou Elias?
And he said, I am not.
Art thou the prophet?
And he answered, No.
Then said they unto him,
What art thou?
that we may give an answer unto them that sent us.
What sayest thou of thyself?

And he said, I am the voice of him that crieth in the wilderness,
Make straight the way of the Lord.



Conclusion

Blessed be the Lord. the God of Israel,
who has come to his people and set them free.

Hosanna to the Son of David.
Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord.
Hosanna in the highest.

Blessed is the coming kingdom of our father David.
Hosanna in the highest.

Blessed be the name of the Lord,
now and for ever. Amen.



Collect for Advent Sunday

Almighty God,
give us grace to cast away the works of darkness
and to put on the armour of light,
now in the time of this mortal life,
in which your Son Jesus Christ came to us in great humility;
that on the last day,
when he shall come again in his glorious majesty
to judge the living and the dead,
we may rise to the life immortal;
through him who is alive and reigns with you,
in the unity of the Holy Spirit,
one God, now and for ever.
Amen.



A collection will be taken during this hymn

Carol **Lo, he comes with clouds descending** *(Helmsley)*

Lo, he comes with clouds descending,
once for favoured sinners slain;
thousand thousand saints attending
swell the triumph of his train:
Alleluia!
Christ appears on earth to reign. *(x 3)*

Every eye shall now behold him
robed in dreadful majesty;
those who set at naught and sold him,
pierced and nailed him to the Tree,
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
gaze we on those glorious scars!

Yea, Amen, let all adore thee,
high on thine eternal throne;
Saviour, take the power and glory,
claim the kingdom for thine own:
Alleluia!
Thou shalt reign, and thou alone.

[Charles Wesley, (1707-1788)
and John Cennick, (1718-1755)]



Blessing

Organ Voluntary

Nun Komm der Heiden Heiland BWV 659a - JS Bach

The congregation are invited to remain seated and listen to the voluntary

Director of Music - James MacDowall-Scott

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Please join us after the service for coffee, tea and biscuits.

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We invite you all to join us in church and online

PERSHORE BENEFICE for CHRISTMAS 2026

Sunday 6 December

0800 Eucharist *(Pershore Abbey)*
1030 Edible Nativity - Booking Essential *(St Andrew's Centre)*
1030 Sung Eucharist *(Pershore Abbey with* LIVESTREAM*)**
1030 Patronal Holy Communion Service *(St Nicholas', Pinvin)*
1700 Evensong *(Pershore Abbey)*

Sunday 13 December

0800 Eucharist *(Pershore Abbey)*
0930 Café Church *(St Andrew's Centre)*
1030 Sung Eucharist *(Pershore Abbey with* LIVESTREAM*)**
1730 Light in Our Darkness - a service for people who would like to find some peace and quiet during this busy Christmas time *(Pershore Abbey)*
1800 Carol Service with Friends of St Mary's *(St Mary's, Wick)*

Sunday 20 December

0800 Eucharist *(Pershore Abbey)*
1030 Sung Eucharist *(Pershore Abbey with* LIVESTREAM*)**
1030 Carol Service *(St Nicholas', Pinvin)*
1700 Service of Lessons and Carols *(Pershore Abbey with* LIVESTREAM*)**
1800 Carols and Christingles *(St James', Birlingham)*

Christmas Eve Thursday 24 December

1530 Christingle Service *(Pershore Abbey)*
1600 Christingle Service *(St Mary's, Wick)*
1700 Christingle and Crib Service *(St Nicholas', Pinvin)*
2315 Midnight Mass with choir *(Pershore Abbey with* LIVESTREAM*)**

Christmas Day Friday 25 December

0800 Eucharist *(Pershore Abbey)*
0900 Parish Communion *(St Mary's, Wick)*
1030 Holy Communion *(St James', Birlingham)*
1030 All Age Eucharist *(Pershore Abbey with* LIVESTREAM*)**

Sunday 27 December

0800 Eucharist *(Pershore Abbey)*
1030 Benefice Sung Eucharist *(Pershore Abbey with* LIVESTREAM*)**

Join in with our **LIVESTREAM services at the time advertised on the Pershore Abbey Community YouTube Channel or catch up later*

01386 552071
www.pershoreabbey.org.uk

Pershore Abbey

LIGHT IN OUR DARKNESS



SUNDAY 13 DECEMBER
17:00
Pershore Abbey

This is a quiet service for people who would like to find some peace and quiet during this busy Christmas time.
During the service there will be time for reflection and prayer.
There will also be time to light a tea light for the people and situations on your heart.

01386 552071
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Pershore Abbey

SERVICE OF LESSONS & CAROLS



SUNDAY 20 DECEMBER
17:00
Pershore Abbey

A traditional candlelit festival of bible readings interspersed with carols and anthems followed by mince pies and mulled wine

This service will be livestreamed on our YouTube Channel:
Pershore Abbey Community

01386 552071
www.pershoreabbey.org.uk

Pershore Abbey

CHRISTINGLE SERVICE



CHRISTMAS EVE
15:30
Pershore Abbey

Dress up in your favourite nativity outfit for our traditional Christingle

JOIN OUR FAMILY-FRIENDLY SERVICE!

01386 552071
www.pershoreabbey.org.uk

Pershore Abbey

MIDNIGHT MASS



CHRISTMAS EVE
23:15
Pershore Abbey

A special service celebrating the birth of Christ, the Light of the World, in the midst of darkness.

ALL WELCOME

This service will be livestreamed on our YouTube Channel:
Pershore Abbey Community

01386 552071
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