

THE CATHEDRAL CHURCH OF ST. PAUL

Detroit, Michigan

The Very Reverend Joseph Caldwell Alsay
Dean-Elect

The Right Reverend Dr. Bonnie A. Perry
Eleventh Bishop of the Diocese of Michigan



December 21, 2025
Cathedral Evensong, 4:00 p.m.

The Fourth Sunday of Advent
Blue Christmas

Welcome! Our vision is to be an extraordinary spiritual gathering place where people of all backgrounds and ages are welcome to question and learn, pray, worship and serve; being loved by God in ways that change and improve their lives and the lives of others.

Concerning the Service

Cathedral Evensong this day will be a time when we can acknowledge the “blue” feelings many people have at Christmas time. For those who have lost a loved one or who are single or estranged from family, this is a time of sharp loneliness. For others who have lost a relationship, health, a job, or had a financial setback it may be a time of pain, confusion, or fear. This is not a joyous season for everyone. At the conclusion of this service, the clergy will offer healing prayers and the laying on of hands.

Please silence all electronic devices.

This service is also being streamed on our YouTube channel.

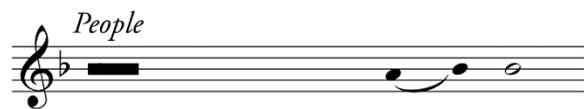
Organ *Lo, how a Rose e'er blooming*

Mary Beth Bennett (b. 1954)

Please stand as you are able. The Officiant then begins with
The Invitatory



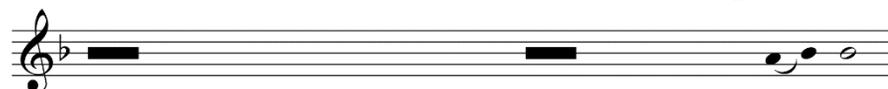
O God, make speed to save us.



O Lord, make haste to help us.



Glory to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spi - rit:



as it was in the beginning, is now, and will be for ever. A - men.

Prayers at the Advent Wreath

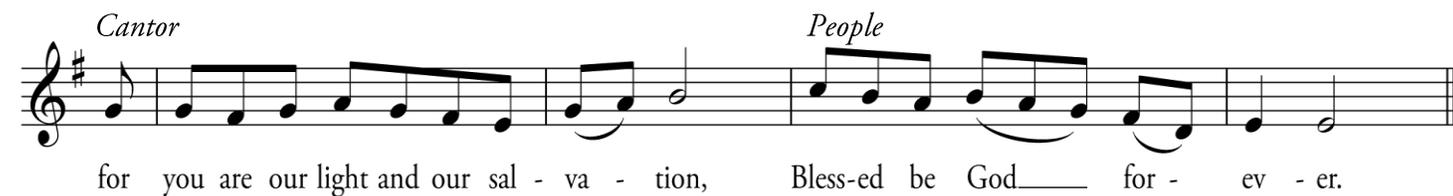
The following is sung as the Advent wreath is lit. The Cantor sings and all repeat



Bless - ed are you, _____ Sov - reign Lord, just _____ and _____
true; to you, be praise _____ and glo - ry for - ev - er!

Cantor

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,



Cantor for you are our light and our sal - va - tion, *People* Bless-ed be God _____ for - ev - er.

All then sing
Hymn

O come, O come, Emmanuel

Veni, 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 Dayspring from on high,
And cheer us by thy drawing nigh;
Disperse the gloomy clouds of night,
And death's dark shadows put to flight.
Rejoice! Rejoice! Emmanuel
Shall come to thee, O Israel!

Please be seated.

The Lesson *Isaiah 42:1-9*

Here is my servant, whom I uphold, my chosen, in whom my soul delights; I have put my spirit upon him; he will bring forth justice to the nations. He will not cry out or lift up his voice or make it heard in the street; a bruised reed he will not break, and a dimly burning wick he will not quench; he will faithfully bring forth justice. He will not grow faint or be crushed until he has established justice in the earth, and the coastlands wait for his teaching. Thus says God, the Lord, who created the heavens and stretched them out, who spread out the earth and what comes from it, who gives breath to the people upon it and spirit to those who walk in it: I am the Lord; I have called you in righteousness; I have taken you by the hand and kept you; I have given you as a covenant to the people, a light to the nations, to open the eyes that are blind, to bring out the prisoners from the dungeon, from the prison those who sit in darkness. I am the Lord; that is my name; my glory I give to no other, nor my praise to idols. See, the former things have come to pass, and new things I now declare; before they spring forth, I tell you of them.

Please stand as you are able and sing

Magnificat

Cantor *All join*

1. My soul proclaims the greatness of the Lord, my spirit rejoices in God my Sav - ior;
for he has looked with favor on his low - ly ser - vant.

2. From this day all generations will call me bless - ed; the Almighty has done great things for me,
and ho - ly is his Name. 3. He has mercy on those who fear him
in every gen - er - a - tion. 4. He has shown the strength of his arm,
he has scattered the proud in their con - ceit. 5. He has cast down the might - y
from their thrones, and has lifted up the low - ly. 6. He has filled the hun - gry
with good things, and the rich he has sent a - way emp - ty. 7. He has come to the help of
his ser - vant Is - ra - el, for he has remembered his promise of mer - cy.

8. The promise he made to our fa - thers, to Abraham and his children for ev - er.

Glo - ry to the Fa - ther and to the Son, and to the Ho - ly Spi - rit;

As it was in the be - gin - ning, is now, and will be for ev - er. A - men.

Remaining standing, all say together
The Apostles' Creed

I believe in God, the Father almighty,
 creator of heaven and earth.
 I believe in Jesus Christ, his only son, our Lord.
 He was conceived by the power of the Holy Spirit
 and born of the Virgin Mary.
 He suffered under Pontius Pilate,
 was crucified, died, and was buried.
 He descended to the dead.
 On the third day he rose again.
 He ascended into heaven,
 and is seated at the right hand of the Father.
 He will come again to judge the living and the dead.
 I believe in the Holy Spirit,
 the holy catholic Church,
 the communion of saints,
 the forgiveness of sins,
 the resurrection of the body,
 and the life everlasting. Amen.

The Prayers

Officiant The Lord be with you.
People And also with you.
Officiant Let us pray.

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.

The Suffrages

Carl MaultsBy (b. 1949)

Cantor Show us your mercy, O Lord, *All* And grant us your sal- vation.

Cantor Clothe your ministers with right- eous- ness, *All* Let your people sing with joy.

Cantor Give peace, O Lord, in all the world, *All* For only in you can we live in safety.

Cantor Lord, keep this nation under your care, *All* And guide us in the way of jus- tice and truth.

Cantor Let your way be known up- on earth, *All* Your saving health a- mong all nations.

Cantor Let not the needy, O Lord be for- gotten, *All* Nor the hope of the poor be ta- ken a- way.

Cantor Create in us clean hearts, O God, *All* And sustain us with your Ho- ly Spirit.

The Collect of the Day

Purify our conscience, Almighty God, by your daily visitation, that your Son Jesus Christ, at his coming, may find in us a mansion prepared for himself; who lives and reigns with you, in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God, now and for ever. *Amen.*

A Collect for Hope

Almighty God, open us to your healing power. We entrust ourselves to your care, knowing that you are doing for us and for all the world far better things than we can ask or imagine. With you as our companion and guide, strengthen us to hope for all that is good, and to fear no evil. For your love is stronger than death, and your faithfulness reaches to the heavens; and to you we give glory, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, now and to the ages of ages. *Amen.*

A Collect for Mission

Keep watch, dear Lord, with those who work, or watch, or weep this night, and give your angels charge over those who sleep. Tend the sick, Lord Christ; give rest to the weary, bless the dying, soothe the suffering, pity the afflicted, shield the joyous; and all for your love's sake. *Amen.*

All sing

Hymn 66

Come, thou long-expected Jesus

Stuttgart

The Homily

The Very Reverend Joseph C. Alsay

Please kneel.

A Litany of Remembrance

The Officiant begins

One legend we celebrate in this season tells how a few brave fighters, defending their temple, had only enough oil to light the sacred lamp for one day, but it burned for eight days until relief arrived. Another legend tells how in a little hill town a homeless couple with tax problems took shelter in a stable among the animals and gave birth to a light that would change the world. So, we light candles tonight with the hope that the One who was born light from light, will help us to banish the darkness of our hearts, minds, and world.

We light a candle to remember those persons who have been loved and lost. We remember their names, their faces, their voices.

People

Light a candle, light the dark.

Light the world, light a heart.

Light a candle for me;

I'll light a candle for you.

Brief silence is observed.

Officiant

We light a candle to remember the pain of loss: loss of love, loss of relationships, loss of trust, loss of jobs, loss of health, loss of faith, the loss of joy.

People

Light a candle, light the dark.

Light the world, light a heart.

Light a candle for me;

I'll light a candle for you.

Silence

Officiant

We light a candle to remember the children who need more than presents can bring.

People

Light a candle, light the dark.

Light the world, light a heart.

Light a candle for me;

I'll light a candle for you.

Silence

Officiant

We light a candle to remember the old man who sits staring out a frosty windowpane and the woman who is lonely and every Christmas is the same.

People

Light a candle, light the dark.

Light the world, light a heart.

Light a candle for me;

I'll light a candle for you.

Silence

Officiant

We light a candle to remember the homeless and hungry, who need shelter from the cold; the broken and forgotten who need a loving touch.

People

Light a candle, light the dark.
Light the world, light a heart.
Light a candle for me;
I'll light a candle for you.

Silence

Officiant

We light a candle to remember ourselves in this Christmas time. We pause and remember the past weeks, months, and for some of us years, that have been heavy with our burdens.

People

Light a candle, light the dark.
Light the world, light a heart.
Light a candle for me;
I'll light a candle for you.

Silence

Officiant

We light a candle to remember faith, the gift of light, healing, and hope that God offers to us in the story of Christmas.

People

Light a candle, light the dark.
Light the world, light a heart.
Light a candle for me;
I'll light a candle for you.

Silence

Officiant

Lighten our darkness we beseech you, O God; give us the light in the night season; and by your great mercy defend us from all perils and dangers of this night. *Amen.*

Please stand.

Officiant

Let us pray.

Lord, it is night. The night is for stillness.

People Let us be still in the presence of God.

Officiant It is night after a long day.

People What has been done has been done;
what has not been done has not been done;
let it be.

Officiant The night is dark.

People Let our fears of the darkness of the world and of our own lives rest in you.

Officiant The night is quiet.
People Let the quietness of your peace enfold us,
all who are dear to us,
and all who have no peace.

Officiant The night heralds the dawn.
People Let us look expectantly to a new day, new joys, new possibilities.
In your name we pray. Amen.

The Blessing

May the God of Grace heal you, body and soul. May your pain cease. May your strength increase.
May your fears and worries be released. And may blessings, love and joy surround you—now and always. *Amen.*

The Dismissal

Officiant Go in peace, with the courage to face the coming days ahead with the hope is God by your side.
People Thanks be to God.

Please remain standing as the procession leaves the Cathedral.

All are welcome to come forward and light a candle in memory of a loved one, or for experiences of loss and pain that are weighing on hearts and minds.

Father Alsay is available in Nativity Chapel for prayers for healing and the laying on of hands.

In this afternoon's liturgy

Officiant
The Very Rev'd Joseph C. Alsay

Cantors
Meriem Lanseur
Aaron Denk

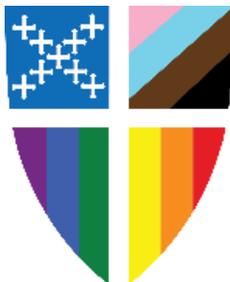
Organist
Canon Jeremy David Tarrant

Acolyte
Linda O'Brien

Technology
Alan Ccooper

Copyright acknowledgements

Advent Wreath Prayers Malcolm Archer (b. 1952) Copyright © 2000 Oxford University Press All rights reserved. *Suffrages* © 2007 Church Publishing, Inc. All rights reserved. *Other service music* © 1985 Church Publishing, Inc. All rights reserved. All selections reprinted under OneLicense.net #A-712602.



Diverse people Daily relevance Inspiring space

4800 Woodward Avenue · Detroit, Michigan 48201 ·

(313) 831-5000 · website: www.detroitcathedral.org · email: info@detroitcathedral.org ·

