



Advent Festival of Lessons & Carols

Sunday, December 14, 2025 | 4:00 PM

PALMER MEMORIAL EPISCOPAL CHURCH



Welcome to Palmer, in this season of Advent!

We are a community of Christians worshipping in the Episcopal tradition, which has its roots in the practices of the ancient Church. We are a congregation that values not only eternal answers but also important questions. You are surrounded by the love of Jesus here this afternoon. Scan the QR code to the left or visit palmerchurch.org/ connect to fill out a welcome card or a request for prayer.

MEDICAL CENTER GUESTS

If you or a family member are here for care at the Texas Medical Center, please let us know how we can support you while you are in Houston by contacting Suzie Dennis at sdennis@palmerchurch.org.

SEEKING BAPTISM

If you have never been baptized and desire to be immersed in grace and forgiveness as a follower of Jesus, please speak with a member of the clergy after this hour of worship. It would be a joy to baptize you as a Christian here at Palmer Memorial Episcopal Church.



SUPPORTING OUR CHURCH MINISTRIES

Those who would like to make an offering are invited to place it in the offering plate located near the front doors of the church. Others are invited to make their financial contributions online at palmerchurch.org/give or by using this QR code.

CHRISTMAS AT PALMER

Christmas Eve
Wednesday, December 24

3:00 pm
Holy Eucharist, Rite II
with the Children's Choir

5:30 pm
Carols with Congregation & Choir
6:00 pm
Choral Eucharist, Rite II
with Light Incense and Candles

8:30 pm
Carols with Congregation & Choir
9:00 pm
Choral Eucharist, Rite I
with Incense and Candles

Christmas Day
Thursday, December 25

10:00 am
Holy Eucharist, Rite I

First Sunday after Christmas
Sunday, December 28

8:00 am Holy Eucharist, Rite I
10:00 am Christmas Lessons & Carols
with Holy Communion, Rite I

Prelude: Symphonic Poem for the Time of Advent

Rachel Laurin

This composition is inspired by two Gregorian chant melodies: The 7th-century Hymn for the Vespers of the First Sunday of Advent Conditor alme siderum (Hymn 60) and the Kyrie of Mass XVIII (XI Century), for Advent and Lent.

Rachel Laurin expresses various descriptive ideas found in the text of the hymn verses through musical symbolism. A musical “World of Stars” begins the tone poem, after which the Kyrie melody represents the pleas of humankind for our prayers to be heard (verse 1). More dark and chaotic music depicts the temptation of Adam and inherited sin before yielding to a more triumphant passage representing the power of Divine glory and its ability to cure our ills (verse 2). The more tranquil middle section corresponds to verse 3 and 4 of the hymn, referring to the Creator’s coming as a “child of Mary, blameless mother mild.” A return of the more tumultuous music illustrates the plea made in verse 5 for our defense at Judgement Day. Finally, the music representing the “World of Stars” returns, this time combined with the Kyrie theme, which is played three times, in representation of the Trinity.

Introit: *Matin Responsory*

John Brooks

I look from afar, and lo, I see the power of God coming, and a cloud covering 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 ledest 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.

Processional Voluntary: Prelude on “Veni Emmanuel”

Calvin Hampton

The Bidding Prayer

Beloved in Christ, as we await the great festival of Christmas, let us prepare ourselves so that we may be shown its true meaning. Let us hear, in lessons from Holy Scripture, how the prophets of Israel foretold that God would visit and redeem the waiting people. Let us rejoice, in our hymns and anthems, that the good purpose of God is being mightily fulfilled. Let us celebrate the promise that our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ, will bring all people and all things into the glory of God’s eternal kingdom. The blind receive their sight, and the lame walk, the lepers are cleansed, and the deaf hear, the dead are raised up, and the poor have the Gospel preached to them.

But first, let us pray for the world which God so loves, for those who have not heard the good news of God, or who do not believe it; for those who walk in darkness and the shadow of death; and for the Church in this place and everywhere, that it may be freed from all evil and fear, and may in pure joy lift up the light of the love of God.

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

<i>Priest</i>	Our Father,
<i>People</i>	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.

Hymn 59 "Hark! a thrilling voice is sounding"

Merton

Descant

2 Wak-ened by the sol-emn warn-ing, from earth's bond-age let us rise;
 5 Hon-or, glo-ry, might, and bless-ing to the Fa-ther and the Son,
 1 Hark! a thrill-ing voice is sound-ing: "Christ is nigh," it seems to say;
 2 Wak-ened by the sol-emn warn-ing, from earth's bond-age let us rise;
 3 Lo! the Lamb, so long ex-pect-ed, comes with par-don down from heaven;
 4 so when next he comes with glo-ry, and the world is wrapped in fear,
 5 Hon-or, glo-ry, might, and bless-ing to the Fa-ther and the Son,

2 Christ, our sun, all sloth dis-pel-ling, shines up-on the morn-ing skies.
 5 with the ev-er-last-ing Spi-rit while un-end-ing a-ges run.
 1 "Cast a-way the works of dark-ness, O ye child-ren of the day."
 2 Christ, our sun, all sloth dis-pel-ling, shines up-on the morn-ing skies.
 3 let us haste, with tears of sor-row, one and all to be for-given;
 4 may he with his mer-cy shield us, and with words of love draw near.
 5 with the ev-er-last-ing Spi-rit while un-end-ing a-ges run.

Now the serpent was more crafty than any other wild animal that the Lord God had made. He said to the woman, 'Did God say, "You shall not eat from any tree in the garden"?' The woman said to the serpent, 'We may eat of the fruit of the trees in the garden; but God said, "You shall not eat of the fruit of the tree that is in the middle of the garden, nor shall you touch it, or you shall die."' But the serpent said to the woman, 'You will not die; for God knows that when you eat of it your eyes will be opened, and you will be like God, knowing good and evil.' So when the woman saw that the tree was good for food, and that it was a delight to the eyes, and that the tree was to be desired to make one wise, she took of its fruit and ate; and she also gave some to her husband, who was with her, and he ate. Then the eyes of both were opened, and they knew that they were naked; and they sewed fig leaves together and made loincloths for themselves.

They heard the sound of the Lord God walking in the garden at the time of the evening breeze, and the man and his wife 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.'

Anthem: *Adam lay in bondage*

Conrad Susa

Adam Lay in bondage
Bounden in a bond;
Four thousand winter
Thought he not too long.
And all was for an apple
An apple that he took
As holy men find
Written in their book.

Had not the apple taken been,
The apple taken been,
Then never would our Lady
Been heaven's queen.
Blessed be the time
That apple taken was
Therefore may we sing it,
Deo gratias.

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 for ever. 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.

Anthem: *Thou shalt know him*

David Ashley White

Thou shalt know him when he comes,
Not by any din of drums,
Nor his manners, nor his airs,
Nor by any thing he wears.

Thou shalt know him when he comes,
Not by a crown nor by a gown,
But his coming known shall be,
By the holy harmony
Which his coming makes in thee.
Thou shalt know him when he comes.

Third Lesson: Isaiah 7:10-15

Victor Lamas

Again 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.

Anthem: *Drop Down Low, O Heavens*

Robert F. Twynham

Drop down dew, ye heavens, from above,
and let the clouds rain the just:
let the earth be opened, and bud forth a saviour

But you, O Bethlehem of Ephrathah, who are one of the little clans of Judah, from you shall come forth for me one who is to rule in Israel, whose origin is from of old, from ancient days. Therefore he shall give them up until the time when she who is in labour has brought forth; then the rest of his kindred shall return to the people of Israel. And he shall stand and feed his flock in the strength of the Lord, in the majesty of the name of the Lord his God. And they shall live secure, for now he shall be great to the ends of the earth.

Hymn 61 "Sleepers, wake! A voice astounds us"

Wachet auf

1 "Sleep - ers, wake!" A voice a - stounds us, the
 2 Zi - on hears the watch - men sing - ing; her
 3 Lamb of God, the heavens a - dore you; let

shout of ram - part - guards sur - rounds us: "A -
 heart with joy - ful hope is spring - ing, she
 saints and an - gels sing be - fore you, as

wake, Je - ru - sa - lem, a - rise!" Mid - night's peace their
 wakes and hur - ries through the night. Forth he comes, her
 harps and cym - bals swell the sound. Twelve great pearls, the

cry has bro - ken, their ur - gent sum - mons clear - ly spo -
 Bride-groom glo - rious in strength of grace, in truth vic - to -
 ci - ty's por - tals: through them we stream to join the im - mor -

ken: "The time has come, O maid - ens wise!
 rious: her star we is risen, her light grows bright.
 tals as we with joy your throne sur - round.

Rise up, and give us light; the Bride - groom is in
 Now come, most wor - thy Lord, God's Son, In - car - nate
 No eye has known the sight, no ear heard such de -

sight. Al - le - lu - ia! Your lamps pre - pare and
 Word, Al - le - lu - ia! We fol - low all and
 light: Al - le - lu - ia! There - fore we sing to

has - ten there, that you the wed - ding feast may share."
 heed your call to come in - to the ban - quet hall.
 greet our King; for ev - er let our prais - es ring.

Sing aloud, O daughter Zion; shout, O Israel! Rejoice and exult with all your heart, O daughter Jerusalem! The Lord has taken away the judgements against you, he has turned away your enemies. The king of Israel, the Lord, is in your midst; you shall fear disaster no more. On that day it shall be said to Jerusalem: Do not fear, O Zion; do not let your hands grow weak. The Lord, your God, is in your midst, a warrior who gives victory; he will rejoice over you with gladness, he will renew you in his love; he will exult over you with loud singing as on a day of festival. I will remove disaster from you, so that you will not bear reproach for it.

Offertory Anthem: *Angelus ad Virginem*

Andrew Carter

*Angelus ad virginem,
Subintrans in conclave,
Virginis formidinem
Demulcens, inquit, Ave!
Ave, regina virginum;
Coeli terraeque dominum
Concipies
Et paries intacta
Salutem hominum;
Tu porta coeli facta,
Medela criminum.*

*Quomodo conciperem,
Quod virum non cognovi?
Qualiter infringerem,
Quae firma mente vovi?
Spiritus Sancti gratia
Perficiet haec omnia;
Ne timeas,
Sed gaudeas secure
Quod castimonia
Manebit in te pura
Dei potentia.*

When the angel came secretly
to the Virgin in her room,
soothing the maiden's fear,
he said: "Hail!
Hail, Queen of virgins.
While yet untouched by man
you shall conceive and bear
the Lord of heaven and earth,
salvation for humanity.
You have become the gate of heaven,
a remedy for sins."

"How can I conceive,
since I have not known a man?
How can I break the vow
I made with firm intent?"
"The grace of the Holy Spirit
shall bring all this to pass.
Fear not,
but rejoice, secure in the
knowledge that pure chastity
shall remain yours
through God's mighty power."

*Ad haec virgo nobilis
 Respondens inquit ei:
 Ancilla sum humilis
 Omnipotentis Dei.
 Tibi coelesti nuntio,
 Tanti secreti conscio,
 Consentiens,
 Et cupiens videre
 Factum quod audio;
 Parata sum parere,
 Dei consilio.*

*Eia mater Domini,
 Quae pacem reddidisti
 Angelis et homini
 Cum Christum genuisti;
 Tuum exora filium
 Ut se nobis propitium
 Exhibeat,
 Et deleat peccata:
 Praestans auxilium
 Vita frui beata
 Post hoc exilium.
 Deo Gracias.*

To this the noble Virgin
 replied, saying:
 "I am the lowly handmaiden
 of Almighty God.
 I bend my will to you,
 O celestial messenger,
 who share so great a mystery,
 and I long to see performed
 what I now hear.
 I am ready to yield myself
 to God's design."

Ah, mother of the Lord,
 who gave back peace
 to angels and humanity
 when you bore Christ,
 pray your son
 to be gracious to us,
 and wipe away
 our sins,
 granting us aid
 to enjoy a blessed life
 after this exile.
 Thanks be to God.

Sixth Lesson: Luke 1:26–38

Hal Gordon

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.

Anthem: *Ave Maria*

Franz Schubert

Nidia Guevara-Nolasco, *mezzo-soprano*

*Ave Maria, gratia plena
Dominus tecum;
Benedicta tu in mulieribus,
et benedictus fructus ventris tui, Jesus.
Sancta Maria, Mater Dei,
ora pro nobis peccatoribus,
nunc et in hora mortis nostrae.
Amen.*

Hail Mary, full of grace,
The Lord is with thee;
Blessed art thou amongst women,
And blessed is the fruit of thy womb, Jesus.
Holy Mary, Mother of God,
Pray for us sinners,
Now and at the hour of our death.
Amen.

Seventh Lesson: John 1:6–28

The Rev'd Allen JuneK

There was a man sent from God, whose name was John. He came as a witness to testify to the light, so that all might believe through him. He himself was not the light, but he came to testify to the light. The true light, which enlightens everyone, was coming into the world.

He was in the world, and the world came into being through him; yet the world did not know him. He came to what was his own, and his own people did not accept him. But to all who received him, who believed in his name, he gave power to become children of God, who were born, not of blood or of the will of the flesh or of the will of man, but of God.

And the Word became flesh and lived among us, and we have seen his glory, the glory as of a father's only son, full of grace and truth. (John testified to him and cried out, "This was he of whom I said, "He who comes after me ranks ahead of me because he was before me.") From his fullness we have all received, grace upon grace. The law indeed was given through Moses; grace and truth came through Jesus Christ. No one has ever seen God. It is God the only Son, who is close to the Father's heart, who has made him known.

This is the testimony given by John when the Jews sent priests and Levites from Jerusalem to ask him, 'Who are you?' He confessed and did not deny it, but confessed, 'I am not the Messiah.' And they asked him, 'What then? Are you Elijah?' He said, 'I am not.' 'Are you the prophet?' He answered, 'No.' Then they said to him, 'Who are you? Let us have an answer for those who sent us. What do you say about yourself?' He said,

'I am the voice of one crying out in the wilderness, "Make straight the way of the Lord"', as the prophet Isaiah said. Now they had been sent from the Pharisees. They asked him, 'Why then are you baptizing if you are neither the Messiah, nor Elijah, nor the prophet?' John answered them, 'I baptize with water. Among you stands one whom you do not know, the one who is coming after me; I am not worthy to untie the thong of his sandal.' This took place in Bethany across the Jordan where John was baptizing.

Anthem: *Shout the Glad Tidings*

Paul Lindsey Thomas

Shout the glad tidings, exultingly sing,
Jerusalem triumphs, Messiah is king!
Sion the marvelous story be telling,
The Son of the Highest, how lowly his birth;
The brightest archangel in glory excelling,
He stoops to redeem thee, he reigns upon earth.

Tell how he cometh from nation to nation,
The heart-cheering news let the earth echo 'round.
How free to the faithful he offers salvation,
His people with joy everlasting are crowned.
Mortals your homage be gratefully bringing,
And sweet let the gladsome hosanna arise,
Ye angels the full alleluia be singing,
One chorus resound through the earth and the skies.

The Rector's Greeting

The Collect

Priest The Lord be with you.

People: **And with thy spirit.**

Priest Let us pray.

O God, who makest us glad with the yearly expectation of thy coming, Grant that we, who with joy receive thy only-begotten Son as our Redeemer, may without fear behold him when he shall come to be our Judge, even thy Son our Lord Jesus Christ; who liveth and reigneth with thee and the Holy Ghost, one God, world without end. **Amen.**

The Blessing

May the Sun of Righteousness shine upon you and scatter the darkness from before your path; and the blessing of God Almighty, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost, be amongst you and remain with you always. **Amen.**

Hymn 57 "Lo! he comes"

Helmsley

1 Lo! he comes, with clouds de - scend - ing, once for
 2 Ev - ery eye shall now be - hold him, robed in
 3 Those dear tok - ens of his pas - sion still his
 4 Yea, a - men! let all a - dore thee, high on

our sal - va - tion slain; thou - sand thou - sand
 dread - ful ma - jes - ty; those who set at
 daz - zling bo - dy bears, cause of end - less
 thine e - ter - nal throne; Sa - vior, take the

saints at - tend - ing swell the tri - umph of his
 nought and sold him, pierced, and nailed him to the
 ex - ul - ta - tion to his ran - somed wor - ship -
 power and glo - ry; claim the king - dom for thine

train: Al - le - lu - ia! Al - le - lu - ia!
 tree, deep - ly wail - ing, deep - ly wail - ing,
 ers; with what rap - ture, with what rap - ture,
 own: Al - le - lu - ia! Al - le - lu - ia!

Al - le - lu - ia! Christ the Lord re - turns to reign.
 deep - ly wail - ing, shall the true Mes - si - ah see.
 with what rap - ture gaze we on those glo - rious scars!
 Al - le - lu - ia! Thou shalt reign, and thou a - lone.

Postlude: Fugue on "Sleepers, Wake!" Op. 52, No. 2

Max Reger

*Join us for a festive reception and art opening
 following this service in the Parish Hall.*

The Rev'd Neil Alan Willard
Officiant

Dr. Brady Knapp
Director of Music

Ken Cowan
Organist and Artist-in-Residence

Laura Smith
Associate Organist

Courtney Daniell-Knapp
Director of the Children's Choir

David Ashley White
Composer-in-Residence

Margie Dieter
Crucifer

Judy Fletcher and James Westin
Torchbearers



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— HOUSTON, TEXAS —