

THE SCOTT CENTER FOR SPIRITUAL AND RELIGIOUS LIFE AND THE MIDDLEBURY COLLEGE CHOIR PRESENT

A CANDLELIGHT SERVICE OF LESSONS AND CAROLS FOR ADVENT AND CHRISTMAS

An annual celebration of traditional Christmas music and biblical texts of the season



Mark R. Orten

Dean of Spiritual and Religious Life

Jeffrey Buettner

Musical Director

Sunday, December 7, 2025

4:00 and 7:00 PM • Middlebury College Chapel

**Lessons and Carols
for Advent and Christmas**

Celebrating Fifty-Five Years of Lessons and Carols at Middlebury College

THE CARILLON

Graydon Hanson ’25, and George Matthew Jr., *Carillonners*

THE PRELUDE

Lo, How a Rose E’er Blooming

Arr. Diane Bish (1976)

Wie schön leuchtet der Morgenstern

Dietrich Buxtehude (BuxWV 223; late 17th century)

Ronnie Romano ’20, *Organist*

***PROCESSIONAL HYMN**

Once in Royal David’s City

1. Solo: Chelsea Colley Robinson ’26

Once in royal David’s city
Stood a lowly cattle shed,
Where a mother laid her baby
In a manger for his bed:
Mary was that mother mild,
Jesus Christ her little child.

4. (Choir and Congregation)

For he is our childhood’s pattern,
Day by day like us he grew.
He was little, weak, and helpless,
Tears and smiles like us he knew.
And he feeleth for our sadness,
And he shareth in our gladness.

2. (Choir)

He came down to earth from heaven
Who is God and Lord of all,
And his shelter was a stable,
And his cradle was a stall.
With the poor and mean and lowly
Lived on earth our Savior holy.

5. (Choir and Congregation)

And our eyes at last shall see him,
Through his own redeeming love,
For that child so dear and gentle
Is our Lord in heaven above;
And he leads his children on
To the place where he is gone.

3. (Choir and Congregation)

And through all his wondrous childhood
He would honor and obey,
Love, and watch the lowly maiden,
In whose gentle arms he lay:
Christian children all must be
Mild, obedient, good as he.

6. (Choir and Congregation)

Not in that poor lowly stable,
With the oxen standing by,
We shall see him; but in heaven
Set at God’s right hand on high;
When like stars his children crowned
All in white shall wait around.

(Words by Cecil Francis Alexander, 1848; music by H. J. Gauntlett; setting by David Willcocks)

THE BIDDING PRAYER

THE LORD’S PRAYER

CHOIR

Veni, Veni, Emmanuel

Anonymous plainsong (15th century; sung in Latin)

Jeff Lewis ’27 and Maya Murtuza-Lanier ’29, soloists

O come, O come, Emmanuel, and ransom captive Israel
that mourns in lonely exile here until the Son of God appears.

Rejoice! Rejoice! Emmanuel shall come to thee, O Israel.

O come, O Wisdom from on high, who orders all things mightily;
to us the path of knowledge show, and teach us in her ways to go.

O come, O Dayspring, from on high, and cheer us by your drawing nigh;
disperse the gloomy clouds of night, and death’s dark shadows put to flight.

(Words from Psalterium Canticum Catholicarum, Cologne, 1710;
music discovered in 15th-century manuscript, France)

FIRST LESSON

Genesis 3:8–13, 22–24

Peter Shellhaas ’25.5 (4:00 *p.m.*), Sebastian Holbrook ’26 (7:00 *p.m.*)

***HYMN**

In the Bleak Midwinter

Choir and Congregation

1. In the bleak midwinter,
frosty wind made moan,
Earth stood hard as iron,
water like a stone;
Snow had fallen, snow on snow,
snow on snow,
In the bleak midwinter, long ago.

2. Choir and Congregation
Our God, Heaven cannot hold Him,
nor earth sustain;
Heaven and earth shall flee away
when He comes to reign.
In the bleak midwinter
a stable place sufficed
The Lord God Almighty, Jesus Christ.

3. (Choir solo) Angels and archangels
may have gathered there,
Cherubim and seraphim
thronged the air;
But His mother only,
in her maiden bliss,
Worshipped the beloved with a kiss.

4. Choir and Congregation
What can I give Him, poor as I am?
If I were a shepherd,
I would bring a lamb;
If I were a Wise Man,
I would do my part;
Yet what I can I give Him:
give my heart.

(A Christmas Carol” by Christina Rossetti; music by Gustav Holst, 1906)

SECOND LESSON

Isaiah 9:2, 6–7

Jen Irwin, *Student Financial Services (4:00 p.m.)*
Jude Kuykendall ’28 (7:00 p.m.)

CHOIR

Priiditye Poklonimsya

Sergei Rachmanninoff (1915)

Amen. Come let us worship God, our King.

Come let us worship and bow down before Christ, our King and our God.

Come, let us worship and bow down before the very Christ, our King and our God.

Come, let us worship and bow down before him.

(Orthodox Liturgy; sung in Church Slavonic)

THIRD LESSON

Isaiah 40:1–8

Marco Infosino ’28 (4:00 p.m.), Talitha Hicks ’27 (7:00 p.m.)

***HYMN**

Comfort, Comfort Now My People

Choir and Congregation

1. “Comfort, comfort now my people,
speak of peace,” thus says our God.
“Comfort those who sit in darkness,
mourning ’neath their sorrows’ load.
Speak unto Jerusalem
of the peace that waits for them;
tell them that their sins I cover, and
their warfare now is over.”

2. Hark, the voice of one who’s crying
in the desert far and near,
bidding all to full repentance
since the Kingdom now is here.
O that warning cry, obey!
Now prepare for God a way;
let the valleys rise to meet him
and the hills bow down to greet him.
3. O make straight what long was
crooked,
make the rougher places plain;
let your hearts be true and humble,
as befits God’s holy reign.
For the glory of the Lord
now o’er earth is shed abroad,
and all flesh shall see the token
that God’s word is never broken.

(Words by Johann Olearius, 1671; music from Genevan Psalter, 1551)

FOURTH LESSON

Isaiah 11:1–9

Derisa Collymore, *Executive Director, Centers for Belonging (4:00 p.m.)*
Evelyn Rodriguez ’26.5 (7:00 p.m.)

CHOIR

The Holly and the Ivy

June Nixon (2010)

Andrés Contreras-Villaltas ’29, soloist

The holly and the ivy when they are both full grown,

Of all the trees that are in the wood the holly bears the crown,

O the rising of the sun, and the running of the deer,

The playing of the merry organ sweet singing in the choir.

The holly bears a prickly as sharp as any thorn

And Mary bore sweet Jesus Christ on Christmas Day in the morn.

The holly bears a bark as bitter as any gall

And Mary bore sweet Jesus Christ for to redeem us all.

(English traditional carol)

FIFTH LESSON

Luke 1:26–33, 38

Dani Pham ’28 (4:00 p.m.), Claire Hatch ’26 (7:00 p.m.)

CHOIR

Alma redemptoris Mater

Giovanni da Palestrina (ca. 1560)

Antiphonal ensemble:

Chelsea Colley Robinson ’26, Phoebe Davis ’25.5, Anna Miller ’25.5,

Xander Bowles ’26, Simon Hall ’26, Will Mortell ’26,

Sebastian Holbrook ’26, Peter Shellhaas ’25.5

Dear mother of our redeemer, who the open gate of heaven [you] remain,

and star of the sea, aid the rising up of your failing people.

You who bore to the marvel of nature your own holy Creator,

Virgin before and after, from the mouth of Gabriel,

receiving that “Ave!” [hail] have mercy on sinners.

(Gregorian Marion hymn ca. 9th-10th c.)

SIXTH LESSON
Luke 2:1–7

Jeffrey Buettner, *Director of Choral Activities (4:00 p.m. and 7:00 p.m.)*

***HYMN**
O Little Town of Bethlehem
Choir and Congregation

1. O little town of Bethlehem,
how still we see thee lie!
Above thy deep and dreamless sleep
the silent stars go by.
Yet in thy dark streets shineth
the everlasting light;
the hopes and fears of all the years
are met in thee tonight.

2. For Christ is born of Mary;
and, gathered all above,
while mortals sleep, the angels keep
their watch of wond’ring love.
O morning stars, together
proclaim the holy birth,
and praises sing to God the king,
and peace to all on earth.

3. How silently, how silently,
the wondrous gift is giv’n!
So God imparts to human hearts
the blessings of his heav’n.
No ear may hear his coming,
but in this world of sin,
where meek souls will receive Him still,
the dear Christ enters in.

4. O holy Child of Bethlehem,
descend to us, we pray;
cast out our sin and enter in;
be born in us today.
We hear the Christmas angels,
the great glad tidings tell;
O come to us, abide with us,
our Lord Emmanuel!

*(Words by Phillips Brooks, 1868; tune FOREST GREEN, from the English folk melody,
“The Ploughboy’s Dream,” transcribed by Ralph Vaughan Williams, early 20th c.)*

CHOIR
In dulci jubilo
Cecilia McDowell (2023)

1. In dulci jubilo (in sweet jubilation), let
us our homage shew;
Our heart’s joy reclineth in praesepio
(in a manger)
And like the bright star shineth Matris
in gremio. Alpha es et O!
(In a mother’s lap. Alpha and Omega!)

2. O Jesu parvule! (O infant Jesus!) I
yearn for thee alway!
Hear me I beseech thee, O Puer optime!
(O best of boys!)
My prayer let it reach thee, O princeps
gloriae! Trahe me post te.
(O prince of glory! Draw me after you!)

3. O Patris caritas, O Nati lenitas! (O love
of the Father, O mercy of the Son!)
Deeply were we stained Per nostra
crimina (through our sins);
But thou has for us gained coelorum
gaudia (the joys of heaven).
O that we were there!

4. Ubi sunt gaudia (where are the joys), if
that they be not there?
There are angels singing nova cantica
(new songs),
There the bells are ringing in regis
curia (in the king’s courts):
O that we were there!

(Anonymous 15th–16th c. text; translated by Robert Lucas Pearsal, early 19th c.)

SEVENTH LESSON
Luke 2:8–20

Jonathan Buchholz ’27 *(4:00 p.m.)*
Maya Troy, *Assistant Director of Admissions (7:00 p.m.)*

CHOIR
Go, Tell It On the Mountain
Arr. Stacey Gibbs (2012)

Go, tell it on the mountain, over the hills and everywhere,
Go, tell it on the mountain that Jesus Christ is born.

When I was a seeker, I sought both night and day.
I asked the Lord to help me, and he showed me the way.

They found a lowly manger, where humble Christ was born,
And God sent our salvation that blessed Christmas morn.

(Christmas Spiritual)

***HYMN**
Angels We Have Heard On High
Choir and Congregation

1. Angels we have heard on high,
sweetly singing o’er the plains,
And the mountains in reply
echoing their joyous strains.
Gloria in excelsis Deo!

2. Shepherds, why this jubilee?
Why your joyous strains prolong?
What the gladsome tidings be,
Which inspire your heavenly song?
Gloria in excelsis Deo!

3. Come to Bethlehem and see Christ
whose birth the angels sing;
Come adore on bended knee, Christ,
the Lord, the newborn King.
Gloria in excelsis Deo!

4. See him in a manger laid,
Whom the choirs of angels praise;
Mary, Joseph, lend your aid,
While our hearts in love we raise.
Gloria in excelsis Deo!

(Traditional French carol, ca. 18th c.)

EIGHTH LESSON
Matthew 2:1-12

Andy Gobin ’27 (4:00 p.m.), Yonika Collins ’27 (7:00 p.m.)

CHOIR
Here Is the Little Door
Herbert Howells (1918)

Here is the little door, lift up the latch, oh lift!
We need not wander more but enter with our gift;
Our gift of finest gold,
Gold that was never bought or sold;
Myrrh to be strewn about his bed;
Incense in clouds about His head;
All for the child that stirs not in His sleep,
But holy slumber hold with ass and sheep.

Bend low about His bed, for each He has a gift;
See how His eyes awake, lift up your hands, O lift!
For gold, He gives a keen-edged sword (Defend with it thy little Lord!)
For incense, smoke of battle red
Myrrh for the honored happy dead;
Gifts for His children, terrible and sweet,
Touched by such tiny hands and Oh such tiny feet.

(Frances Chesterton)

OFFERING

The free-will offering received at these services will be directed to HOPE (Helping to Overcome Poverty’s Effects), Project Independence, and Addison County Home Health and Hospice. Please be as generous as your means permit.

***HYMN**
Joy to the World
Choir and Congregation

1. Joy to the world! the Lord is come:
Let Earth receive her King;
Let ev’ry heart prepare him room,
And heav’n and nature sing.

2. Joy to the Earth, the Savior reigns;
Let all their songs employ,
While fields and floods,
rocks, hills and plains,
Repeat the sounding joy.
3. No more let sins and sorrows grow,
Nor thorns infest the ground;
He comes to make his blessings flow
Far as the curse is found.

4. He rules the world
with truth and grace,
And makes the nations prove
The glories of his righteousness,
And wonders of his love.

(Words by Isaac Watts; tune ANTIOCH attrib. G. F. Handel, arr. Lowell Mason, 1848)

COLLECT

CHOIR
The Shepherd’s Carol
Bob Chilcott (2000)

We stood on the hills, Lady, our day’s work done,
watching the frosted meadows that winter had won.
The evening was calm, Lady, the air so still,
silence more lovely than music folded the hill.

There was a star, Lady, shone in the night,
larger than Venus it was and bright, so bright.
Oh, a voice from the sky, Lady, it seemed to us then
telling of God being born in the world of men.

And so we have come, Lady, our day’s work done,
our love, our hopes, ourselves, we give to your son.

(Clive Sansom)

NINTH LESSON

John 1:1–5, 9–14

Mark R. Orten (4:00 and 7:00)

***HYMN**
Silent Night! Holy Night!
Choir and Congregation

1. Silent night! Holy night!
All is calm, all is bright,
Round yon virgin mother and Child!
Holy infant, so tender and mild,
Sleep in heavenly peace,
Sleep in heavenly peace.

2. Silent night! Holy night!
Shepherds quake at the sight,
Glories stream from heaven afar,
Heavenly hosts sing: “Alleluia;
Christ the Savior is born,
Christ the Savior is born.”
3. Silent night! Holy night!
Son of God, love’s pure light.
Radiant beams from thy holy face,
With the dawn of redeeming grace,
Jesus, Lord, at thy birth,
Jesus, Lord, at thy birth.

(Words Joseph Mohr, trans. attr. John Freeman Young; music by Franz Xaver Grüber)

***BENEDICTION**

***RECESSIONAL HYMN**
O Come, All Ye Faithful
Choir and Congregation

1. O come, all ye faithful,
joyful and triumphant,
O come ye, O come ye to Bethlehem;
Come and behold him,
born the King of Angels;

2. See how the shepherds,
summoned to his cradle,
Leaving their flocks draw nigh to gaze;
We too will thither,
bend our joyful footsteps; *O Come . . .*
3. Yea, Lord, we greet thee,
born that happy morning,
Jesus, to thee be all glory giv’n.
Word of the Father, now in flesh
appearing. *O Come . . .*

4. Sing, choirs of angels,
sing in exultation,
Sing, all ye citizens of heaven above;
Glory to God In the highest; *O Come . . .*

(Words attr. Frederick Oakeley; melody by J. F. Wade; setting by David Willcocks)

POSTLUDE
In Dulci Jubilo
Johann Sebastian Bach (BWV 729; ca. 1710)
Jeffrey Buettner, Organist

WELCOME AND HISTORICAL INTRODUCTION

We are pleased that you could join us for the 55th annual Service of Lessons and Carols for Advent and Christmas at Middlebury College. Our service is based on the Festival of Nine Lessons and Carols that has been celebrated every year at King’s College, Cambridge, England, since 1918, with precedents in the late 19th century. Beginning in the 1930s the King’s College service was broadcast annually to millions worldwide on BBC Radio. It was originally planned by Eric Milner-White, the Dean of King’s College Chapel. He had been a World War I British army chaplain and became a liturgical pioneer who was convinced that the Church of England needed more imaginative worship. Christmas Eve 1918 was a mere six weeks from the World War I armistice; nearly half of Cambridge University undergraduates had gone to war; a third of them never came back. Thus, the phrase, “all those who rejoice with us, but on another shore and in a greater light,” from the Bidding Prayer, had particular resonance. Though the music changes each year, the prayers and lessons have remained virtually unchanged in the Cambridge service since those days.

The first Middlebury College service took place in 1971, under the direction of Emory Fanning and Chaplain Charles P. Scott. They were certain that the College’s music department was up to the challenge, and that the community would welcome this colorful and moving celebration of the season. Middlebury’s Lessons and Carols service was broadcast two television specials: *Christmas in Vermont: A Celebration of Lessons and Carols*, filmed in 1984, and in 1988 Vermont Public Television produced *A Vermont Christmas*, narrated by actor Burgess Meredith and filmed on location in Middlebury and on the College’s Bread Loaf campus. Each production was rebroadcast nationally over several years by over 200 public television stations.

The overall format of this service provides a rich opportunity to experience the emotional resonance and familiarity of tradition, each year also offering music that is unfamiliar or new. Over the years, that blend of constancy and innovation creates anticipation and joy well-suited for the Advent and Christmas seasons. For the Christian community, Advent is not only about the expectation of the birth of Jesus, which has already happened in history. It is also about the rebirth of the earth, the re-infusing of the New Creation into our currently beautiful but broken world. That hope is expressed every time the Lord’s Prayer is recited in public and private devotion: “thy kingdom come, thy will be done, on earth as it is in heaven.”

We stand in awe of the beauty of the story of Mary, Joseph, and Jesus. We recognize that from what is small, vulnerable, humble, poor, powerless, and barely noticed, there can arise a constant inspiration and religious devotion that has outlived many an empire. We give in support of our local community as we are able: each year the offering is donated to HOPE (Helping to Overcome Poverty’s Effects), Project Independence, and Addison Home Health and Hospice.

—by Reverend Laurel Macaulay Jordan ’79
Chaplain Emerita, Middlebury College

NOTES ON THE MUSIC

The Service of Lessons and Carols for Advent and Christmas is a celebration of tradition and music and we hope that it brings you joy. Much of the music is of the hymn tradition of the 18th and 19th centuries, including our opening and closing hymns, both performed in arrangements by Sir David Willcocks (1919–2015), who served as director of music of King’s College, Cambridge, from 1957 to 1974. But the whole collection of music in our service spans a remarkable history of time, place, style, and purpose.

Our service includes medieval plainsong, European dance tunes, folk song, and newly composed music. European carols and hymns reveal the adoption of secular music into church tradition, including the dance tunes that captured the imagination of church composers who gave the tunes sacred texts and merged them into practice, to become some of the best known of sacred music. Compositions by Australian composer June Nixon and British composer Cecilia McDowall are marvelous examples of contemporary pieces with sacred and traditional elements preserved, including lively dance rhythm and in the case of *In dulci jubilo*, a macaronic text with Latin phrases interspersed among the English text. The music and poetry of this service also considers the condition of our world today, as it has since the inception of the service of lessons and carols in late 19th-century England. The text of *Here Is the Little Door*, by English composer Herbert Howells includes martial imagery, not uncommon in church music of the 19th and 20th centuries but remarkable here in how it sensitizes the listener to the dissonance of such imagery as a sword, battle, and remembering the dead when encountering the humble sweetness of the newborn Jesus in the manger. Howells was deeply affected by the horrors of World War I, and over a century later we find ourselves again in a time of war in Europe and escalating conflict globally.

The final choral piece, *The Shepherd’s Carol* by Bob Chilcott, is a favorite among our choral students. Clive Samson’s poem depicts people in daily routine who experience a revelatory moment of awe, expressed musically in the phrase, “O, a voice from the sky, Lady;” they pause in their work, and give joyfully and selflessly. The vividness of the musical moment, the simplicity and humanity of the message, and the sheer joy in singing it are certainly reasons for why this piece and perhaps all of the traditional music of this service is so loved. We share this program in the spirit of artistic beauty, thoughtful inquiry, and joyful community.

Why such a humble birth in the story of the Christian Savior? Why, for this darkest and also most holy of times, is there to be dancing and carrying on in the name of Christmas? In his defense of the carol as human expression, English hymn scholar Eric Routley wrote, “What is natural can be uncomely and embarrassing, and all ceremony . . . is devised as a safeguard against the unseasonable embarrassment caused by the uninhibitedly ‘natural’” (*The English Carol*, 1958; 237).

Thank you for gathering with us today to join in this celebration of community, hope, and peace. Let our time shared together be a gift, and may the light and warmth of this service accompany you throughout the season and into the new year.

—Jeffrey Buettner

IN MEMORIAM

Aria Kamal ’27, a member of the College Choir
who loved the choir and the Lessons and Carols service
lost her life in December, 2023.

The College Choir cherishes her memory.

PROGRAM COVER ART



Henry Ossawa Turner, *The Annunciation*, 1898 oil on canvas, 57 x 71.25 in., USA
(active in France)

Henry Ossawa Turner was an American painter of African American heritage who worked and lived in Paris for the latter part of his life, during which he achieved international fame. Also a writer, activist and Abolitionist, some of his most famous works, including *The Banjo Lesson* (1893) feature distinctly American subjects. *The Annunciation* is held by the Philadelphia Art Museum, where Turner studied in his early twenties prior to moving to Europe.

SPECIAL THANKS

Joan Pellerin, *American Sign Language (ASL) Interpreters*

Valerie Costello, *Graphic Designer*

Ellen McKay Jewett, *Administrative Coordinator, Chaplain's Office*

Molly Andres, *Arts Events Manager*

Mae Watters, *Director of Events Management*

Joe DeFelice and Johnny Meli, *Audio Visual Specialists*

Kristal Hier and Joan Pellerin, *ASL Interpreters*

CARILLONNEURS

Graydon Hanson '25
Student Carillonneur

George Matthew Jr.
College Carillonneur

MUSICIANS IN THE SERVICE

Jeffrey Buettner
*Director of Choral Activities and
Christian A. Johnson Professor of Music
Conductor and Organist*

Ronnie Romano '20
Organist and Chorister

MIDDLEBURY COLLEGE CHOIR

SOPRANO

Daphne Frank '29
Maya Murtuza-Lanier '29
Adina Newman-Toker '29
Zoe Parker '27.5
Chelsea Colley Robinson '26

TENOR

Xander Bowles '26
Andrés Contreras-Villaltas '29
Simon Hall '26
Will Mortell '26
Ontario Osoinach '29

ALTO

Phoebe Davis '25.5
Cathy Dyer '28
Anna Miller '25.5

BASS

Sebastian Holbrook '26
Jeff Lewis '27
Liam Salerno '27
Danny Smith '27
Peter Shellhaas '25.5
Oran von der Heydt '28

THE CHOIR ALUMNI

Naomi Clark '24
Kai Fukuda '23.5
Samantha-Grey Solomon '25
Wendy Taylor '21.5

For more details about Lessons and Carols, please go to our website at
middlebury.edu/academics/music/middleburylessonsandcarols

Office of the Chaplain

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