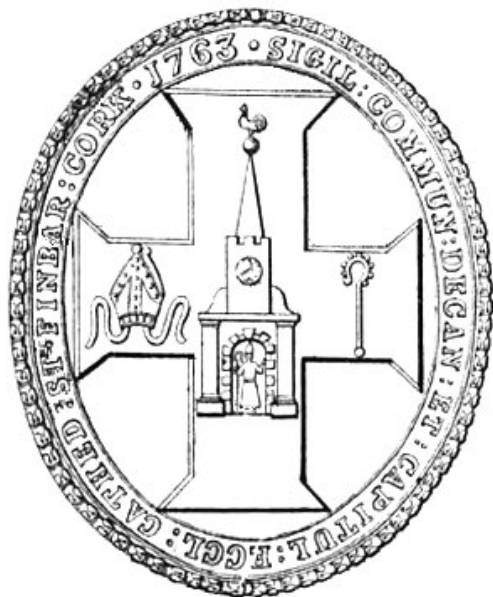




SAINT FIN BARRE'S

CATHEDRAL • CORK



# THE FESTIVAL OF NINE LESSONS AND CAROLS

Sunday 21st December 2025  
and  
Wednesday 24th December 2025

both at 4.00pm

# Welcome to Saint Fin Barre's Cathedral

## LIVE-STREAMING

In line with the first of the Five Marks of Mission ('To proclaim the good news of the kingdom') this service is being live-streamed and recorded via [www.churchservices.tv](http://www.churchservices.tv). The camera is at the back of the Cathedral and covers the Nave, Crossing, Choir Stalls and High Altar. It does not cover the North and South Aisles, Dean's Chapel and Ambulatory. If you do not wish to appear on camera please consult the churchwardens/stewards and they will guide you to a seat out of shot.

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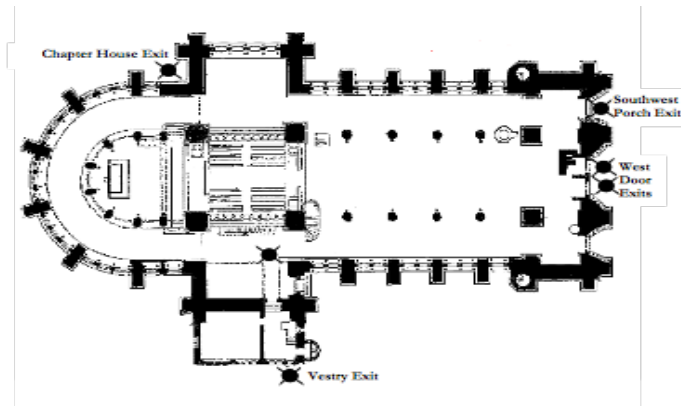
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In the unlikely event that an emergency evacuation of the Cathedral becomes necessary, an announcement will normally be made by either the Dean or the Dean's Vicar. Please follow their instructions and those of the Cathedral stewards and note the nearest Fire Exit to you.

Should there be anyone near you requiring assistance, please help them, or draw the matter to the attention of the stewards. Please remain in your place until you are instructed by the stewards to leave the Cathedral by one of the Fire Exits. Keep calm and quiet so that additional instructions can be heard. Once outside make your way to the assembly points in the Cathedral forecourt or on the lawn at the East end of the Cathedral grounds where further instructions will be given.

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## LESSON READERS

Lesson	Sunday 21st December	Christmas Eve
1	A Minor Canon	A Chorister
2	A Chapter Canon	A Junior Lay Vicar Choral
3	A Cathedral Acolyte	An Adult Lay Vicar Choral
4	A Representative of the St Fin Barre's Quarter Development Group	A Member of the Cathedral Congregation
5	A Representative of Cork Simon Community	A Cathedral Bellringer
6	A Representative of St Vincent de Paul	The Cathedral Curator
7	The Diocesan Representative for Bishops' Appeal	The Hon. Secretary of the Cathedral Board
8	The Deputy Lord Mayor of Cork	The Dean's Vicar
9	The Bishop	The Bishop

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### *Bishop*

The Rt Revd Dr. P. Colton

### *Dean*

The Very Revd N. Dunne

**Precentor:** The Very Revd S. Green

**Treasurer:** The Revd Canon P. Willoughby

**Chancellor:** The Very Revd C. Jeffers

**Archdeacon:** The Ven A. Orr

### *Prebendaries (Canons)*

Dromdaleague and Kilnaglorry

St. Michael's and Inniskenny

Kilbrittain and Holy Trinity

Desertserges and Killanully

The Revd Canon A. Marley

The Revd Canon Dr. D. Nuzum

The Revd Canon D. MacCarthy

The Revd Canon E. Murray

### *Honorary Canons*

Lay Ecumenical Canon

Canon Missioner

Canon for Vocations

Mrs. G. Kingston

The Revd Canon R. Ferris

The Revd Canon J. Ardis

### **Dean's Vicar**

The Revd M. Steele

### **Minor Canons**

The Revd E. Hunter, The Revd A. Skuse

### **Director of Music**

Mr Peter Stobart

M.A. (Hons) (RAM), B.A. (Hons) (Dunelm.),  
A.R.C.O., L.R.A.M., L.T.C.L., L.L.C.M., A.R.A.M., A.R.S.C.M.

### **Assistant Director of Music**

Mr. Matthew Breen

B.Mus. (Hons) (Dubl.)

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*All stand for*

**THE HYMN OF THE PROCESSION**

*Solo*

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.

*Choir only*

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 Saviour holy.

*All sing*

And through all his wondrous childhood  
he would honour and obey,  
love and watch the lowly maiden  
in whose gentle arms he lay;  
Christian children all must be  
mild, obedient, good as he.

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.

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.

*Cecil Frances Alexander (1818-95)*

**THE GREETING AND BIDDING PRAYER**

*The people are greeted and led in prayer*

## THE LORD'S PRAYER

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.

*Sit*

## CHOIR

### The Sussex Carol

*Words: English traditional*

*Music: Arr. Philip Ledger (1937 - 2012)*

On Christmas night all Christians sing, to hear the news the angels bring.  
News of great joy, news of great mirth, news of our merciful King's birth.

Then why should men on earth be so sad, since our Redeemer made us glad,  
when from our sin he set us free, all for to gain our liberty?

When sin departs before his grace, then life and health come in its place;  
angels and men with joy may sing, all for to see the new-born King.

All out of darkness we have light, which made the angels sing this night:  
'Glory to God and peace to men, now and forever more, Amen.'

## THE FIRST LESSON

*Genesis 3: 8 - 15*

The Fall

## CHOIR

### Adam lay ybounden

*Words: 15th century English; Music: Laura Sheils (b. 1995)*

Adam lay ybounden, bounden in a bond;  
four thousand winter thought he not too long.

And all was for an apple, an apple that he took,  
as clerkès finden written in their book.

Nè had the apple taken been, the apple taken been,  
ne had never Our Lady abeen heavenè queen.

Blessèd be the time that apple taken was;  
therefore we moun singen  
Deo gracias!

*Stand*

**CHOIR AND CONGREGATION**

It came upon the midnight clear,  
that glorious song of old,  
from angels bending near the earth  
to touch their harps of gold:  
'Peace on the earth, good-will to men,  
from heaven's all gracious King!'  
The world in solemn stillness lay  
to hear the angels sing.

Still through the cloven skies they come,  
with peaceful wings unfurled;  
and still their heavenly music floats  
o'er all the weary world;  
Above its sad and lowly plains  
they bend on hovering wing;  
and ever o'er its Babel sounds  
that blessèd angels sing.

Yet with the woes of sin and strife  
the world has suffered long;  
Beneath the angel-strain have rolled  
two thousand years of wrong;  
And man, at war with man, hears not  
the love-song which they bring:  
O hush the noise, ye men of strife,  
and hear the angels sing!

For lo! the days are hastening on,  
by prophet bards foretold,  
when, with the ever-circling years  
comes round the age of gold;  
when, peace shall over all the earth  
its ancient splendours fling,  
and the whole world give back the song  
which now the angels sing.

*Edmund Sears (1810-1876)*

*Sit*  
**THE SECOND LESSON**  
*Genesis 22: 15-18*  
The Promise to Abraham

**CHOIR**  
**In dulci jubilo**

*Words: Heinrich Seuse (1295-1366); Music: Carl Thiel (b. 1965)*

In dulci jubilo,  
nun singet und seid froh!  
Unsers Herzens Wonne  
lies in praesepio,  
und leuchtet als die Sonne  
matris in gremio,  
Alpha es et O!

O Jesu parvule  
nach dir ist mir so weh!  
Tröst' mir mein Gemüte  
O puer optime  
durch alle deine Güte  
O princeps gloriae.  
trahe me post te!

Ubi sunt gaudia  
Nirgend mehr denn da!  
Da die Engel singen  
Nova cantica,  
und die Schellen klingen  
In regis curia.  
Eia, wär'n wir da!

In dulci jubilo, (*In quiet joy*)  
*now sing and be glad.*  
*Our heart's joy*  
lies in praesepio, (*in a manger,*)  
*and shines like the sun*  
matris in gremio, (*in the mother's lap.*)  
Alpha es et O! (*thou art Alpha and Omega.*)

O Jesu parvule (*O tiny Jesus*)  
*I yearn for thee always.*  
*Comfort my soul*  
O puer optime (*O best of boys*)  
through all your mercy  
O princeps gloriae. (*Prince of glory,*)  
trahe me post te! (*draw me unto thee.*)

Ubi sunt gaudia (*Where there are joys*)  
*nowhere more than there.*  
*There angels are singing*  
Nova cantica, (*new songs*)  
*and there the bells are ringing*  
In regis curia. (*at the king's court.*)  
*O that we were there.*

*Stand*  
**CHOIR AND CONGREGATION**

God rest you merry, gentlemen,  
let nothing you dismay,  
for Jesus Christ our Saviour  
was born on Christmas Day,  
to save us all from Satan's power  
when we were gone astray:

*O tidings of comfort and joy,*  
*comfort and joy,*  
*O tidings of comfort and joy.*

From God our heavenly Father  
a blessed angel came,  
and unto certain shepherds  
brought tidings of the same,  
how that in Bethlehem was born  
the Son of God by name:

The shepherds at those tidings  
rejoiced much in mind,  
and left their flocks a-feeding  
in tempest, storm and wind,  
and went to Bethlehem straightway  
this blessed babe to find.

Now to the Lord sing praises,  
all you within this place,  
and with true love and brotherhood  
each other now embrace;  
This holy tide of Christmas  
all other doth efface.

*Traditional*

*Sit*

### **THE THIRD LESSON**

*Isaiah 9: 2, 6-7*

The Prophecy of the Messiah's Birth

### **CHOIR**

**For unto us a child is born**

*Words: Isaiah 9: 6; Music: G. F. Handel (1685-1759)*

For unto us a Child is born, unto us a Son is given,  
and the government shall be upon his shoulder;  
and his name shall be called Wonderful, Counsellor,  
the Mighty God, the Everlasting Father, the Prince of Peace.

*Stand*

### **CHOIR AND CONGREGATION**

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.



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

How silently, how silently,  
the wondrous gift is given!  
So God imparts to human hearts  
the blessings of his heaven.  
No ear may hear his coming;  
but in this world of sin,  
where meek souls will receive him,  
still the dear Christ enters in.

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.

*Philip Brooks (1835-93); based on Micah 5: 2; Luke 2: 4-7*

*Sit*

## **THE FOURTH LESSON**

*Micah 5: 2-4*

The Messiah will be born in Bethlehem

## **CHOIR**

### **I saw three ships**

*Words and music: English traditional; Arr. Stuart Nicholson (b. 1975)*

I saw three ships come sailing in  
On Christmas Day in the morning.

And what was in those ships all three?  
On Christmas Day in the morning.

Our Saviour Christ and his lady,  
On Christmas Day in the morning.

Pray wither sailed those ships all three?  
On Christmas Day in the morning.

O, they sailed into Bethlehem  
On Christmas Day in the morning.  
And all the bells on earth shall ring  
On Christmas Day in the morning.  
And all the angels in heaven shall sing,  
On Christmas Day in the morning.  
And all the souls on earth shall sing  
On Christmas Day in the morning.  
Then let us all rejoice again!  
On Christmas Day in the morning.

### THE FIFTH LESSON

*Luke 1: 26-38*

The Annunciation to the Blessed Virgin Mary

### CHOIR

#### Hymn to the Virgin

*Words: Anonymous 13th century; Music: Benjamin Britten (1913-1976)*

Of one who is so fair and bright  
*Velut maris stella, [Like a star of the sea]*  
Brighter than the day is light,  
*Parens et puella: [Both mother and maiden]*  
I cry to thee, thou see to me,  
Lady, pray thy Son for me,  
*Tam pia, [so pure]*  
That I may come to thee.  
*Maria! [Mary]*

All this world was forlorn,  
*Eva peccatrice, [because of Eve, a sinner]*  
Till our Lord was yborn,  
*De te genetrix. [through you, his mother]*  
With ave it went away,  
Darkest night, and comes the day  
*Salutis; [of salvation]*  
The well springeth out of thee.  
*Virtutis. [of virtue]*

Lady, flower of everything,  
*Rosa sine spina, [Rose without thorn]*  
Thou bare Jesu, heaven's king,

*Gratia divina:* [by divine grace]  
Of all thou bearest the prize,  
Lady, queen of paradise  
*Electa:* [chosen]  
Maid mild, mother  
*es effecta.* [you are made]

*Stand*

### **CHOIR AND CONGREGATION**

While shepherds watched their flocks by night,  
all seated on the ground, (*Sing twice*)  
the angel of the Lord came down,  
and glory shone around.

‘Fear not,’ said he; for mighty dread  
had seized their troubled mind, (*Sing twice*)  
‘glad tidings of great joy I bring  
to you and all mankind.

To you, in David’s town, this day  
is born of David’s line (*Sing twice*)  
a Saviour, who is Christ the Lord;  
and this shall be the sign:

‘The heavenly babe you there shall find  
to human view displayed, (*Sing twice*)  
all meanly wrapped in swaddling bands,  
and in a manger laid.’

Thus spake the seraph; and forthwith  
appeared a shining throng. (*Sing twice*)  
of angels, praising God, who thus  
addressed their joyful song:

‘All glory be to God on high,  
and to the earth be peace! (*Sing twice*)  
Goodwill, henceforth, from heaven to men  
begin, and never cease.’

*Nahum Tate* (1652 - 1715)

*Sit*

### **THE SIXTH LESSON**

*Luke 2: 1-7*

The Birth of Jesus

**CHOIR**  
**What child is this?**

*Words: William Chatterton Dix (1837 - 1898)*  
*Music: English traditional, Art. Philip Moore (b. 1943)*

What child is this, who, laid to rest  
on Mary's lap, is sleeping?  
Whom angels greet with anthems sweet  
while shepherds watch are keeping?  
This, this is Christ the King,  
whom shepherds worship and angels sing;  
Haste, haste to bring him praise,  
the babe, the son of Mary.

Why lies he in such mean estate  
where ox and ass are feeding?  
Come, have no fear, God's Son is here,  
His love all loves exceeding.  
Nails, spear shall pierce him through,  
the cross be borne for me, for you.  
Hail, hail, the Saviour comes,  
the babe, the son of Mary.

So bring him incense, gold, and myrrh,  
All tongues and peoples own him;  
The King of kings salvation brings,  
let every heart enthrone him.  
Raise, raise your song on high,  
While Mary sings a lullaby.  
Joy, joy, for Christ is born,  
the babe, the son of Mary.

**THE SEVENTH LESSON**

*Luke 2: 8-16*

The Shepherds go to the Manger

**CHOIR**  
**Quem vidistis pastores?**

*Words: Antiphon at Lauds for Christmas Day; Music: Richard Dering (c. 1580–1630)*

Quem vidistis, pastores, dicite, annuntiate nobis, in terris quis apparuit?  
Natum vidimus et choros angelorum collaudantes Dominum, Alleluia.

*Whom did you see, shepherds, say, tell us: who has appeared on earth?*  
*We saw the new-born and choirs of angels praising the Lord. Alleluia!*

*Stand*

**CHOIR AND CONGREGATION**

The first Nowell the angels did say  
was to certain poor shepherds in fields as they lay;  
in fields where they lay, keeping their sheep,  
on a cold winter's night that was so deep:

*Nowell, Nowell, Nowell, Nowell,  
born is the King of Israel.*

They lookèd up and saw a star,  
shining in the east, beyond them far:  
and to the earth it gave great light,  
and so it continued both day and night:

And by the light of that same star,  
three Wise Men came from country far;  
to seek for a king was their intent,  
and to follow the star wherever it went:

Then entered in those Wise Men three,  
full reverently upon their knee,  
and offered there in his presence  
their gold and myrrh and frankincense:

Then let us all with one accord  
sing praises to our heavenly Lord,  
that hath made heaven and earth of naught,  
and with his blood mankind hath bought:

*Traditional*

*Sit*

**THE EIGHTH LESSON**

*Matthew 2: 1-11*

The Magi are led by the star

**CHOIR**

**We three kings**

*Words and music: : John Henry Hopkins (1820-1891); Arr. Philip Lawson (b. 1957)*

We three kings of Orient are;	Born a King on Bethlehem's plain,
bearing gifts, we traverse afar,	gold I bring to crown him again,
field and fountain, moor and mountain,	King forever, ceasing never,
following yonder star:	over us all to reign.

*O star of wonder, star of light, star with royal beauty bright,  
westward leading, still proceeding, guide us to thy perfect light.*

Frankincense to offer have I;  
incense owns a Deity nigh;  
prayer and praising, voices raising,  
worshiping God on high.

Myrrh is mine; its bitter perfume  
breathes a life of gathering gloom;  
sorrowing, sighing, bleeding, dying,  
sealed in the stone-cold tomb.

Glorious now behold him arise;  
King and God and sacrifice:  
Heav'n sings Alleluia,  
Alleluia the earth replies.

*All stand and face the reader of*

**THE NINTH LESSON**

*The Gospel - John 1: 1-14*

The Incarnation of the Word of God

*Before the Gospel*

*Bishop:* Hear the Gospel of our Saviour Christ according to  
Saint John, chapter one, beginning at verse one.

*Choir:* Glory to you Lord Jesus Christ.

*After the Gospel*

*Bishop:* This is the Gospel of the Lord.

*Choir::* Praise to you Lord Jesus Christ.

A Collection is taken during the singing of the next carol for Cork Simon Community, St Vincent de Paul and the Church of Ireland Bishops Appeal (supporting work in developing countries and areas of conflict). Contributions to the two local charities will be distributed via the Bishop of Cork Pastoral Care Fund.

*Please give as generously as you can afford.*

**CHOIR AND CONGREGATION**

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:

*O come, let us adore him,  
Christ the Lord.*

God of God,  
Light of Light,  
Lo! he abhors not the Virgin's womb;  
very God,  
begotten, not created:

See how the shepherds,  
summoned to his cradle,  
leaving their flocks, draw nigh with lowly fear;  
we too will thither  
bend our joyful footsteps:

*O come, let us adore him,  
Christ the Lord.*

Lo! star-led chieftains,  
Magi, Christ adoring,  
offer him incense,  
gold and myrrh;  
we to the Christ-child  
bring our heart's oblations:

*O come, let us adore him,  
Christ the Lord.*

Child, for us sinners  
poor and in the manger,  
fain we embrace thee, with awe and love;  
who would not love thee,  
loving us so dearly?

*O come, let us adore him,  
Christ the Lord.*

Sing, choirs of angels,  
sing in exultation,  
sing, all ye citizens of heaven above;  
Glory to God  
in the highest:

*18th century Latin: tr.. Frederick Oakeley (1802-80),  
Abbee E J F Borderies (1764-1852) & Latin: tr. W T Brooke (1848-1917)*

*The Bishop says*

### **THE COLLECT**

Almighty God,  
you make us glad with the yearly remembrance  
of the birth of your Son Jesus Christ:  
Grant that, as we joyfully receive him as our redeemer,  
we may with sure confidence behold him  
when he shall come to be our judge:  
who is alive and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit,  
one God, now and for ever. **Amen.**

## THE BLESSING

May the joy of the angels,  
the eagerness of the shepherds,  
the perseverance of the wise men,  
the obedience of Joseph and Mary,  
and the peace of the Christ-child,  
be yours this Christmas;  
and the blessing of God almighty,  
the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit,  
be with you and remain with you always. **Amen.**

## CHOIR AND CONGREGATION

Hark! the herald-angels sing  
glory to the new-born King;  
peace on earth, and mercy mild,  
God and sinners reconciled!  
Joyful, all ye nations, rise,  
join the triumph of the skies;  
with the angelic host proclaim,  
'Christ is born in Bethlehem':

*Hark! the herald angels sing -  
Glory to the new-born King.*

Christ, by highest heaven adored!  
Christ the everlasting Lord!  
late in time behold him come,  
offspring of a Virgin's womb;  
veiled in flesh the Godhead see,  
hail, the incarnate Deity!  
Pleased as man with man to dwell,  
Jesus, our Emmanuel.

Hail, the heaven-born Prince of peace!  
Hail, the Sun of righteousness!  
Light and life to all he brings,  
risen with healing in his wings.  
mild, he lays his glory by,  
born that man no more may die,  
born to raise the sons of earth,  
born to give them second birth.

*Charles Wesley (1707-88)*

## ORGAN VOLUNTARY

Toccata on Vom Himmel hoch - Garth Edmundson (1892 - 1971)