

Old South Church *in* Boston ❖ December 21, 2025 ❖ 11:00am

## Fourth Sunday in Advent

*Take heart: it is not too late to build a better world.*



# GATHER

PRELUDE

It Came upon the Midnight Clear

Smith and Hustad, *arrs.*

INVOCATION

John M. Edgerton

\*HYMN

**O Come, O Come, Emmanuel**

VENI EMMANUEL

O come, O come, Em - ma - nu - el and ran - som cap - tive  
 O come, thou Wis - dom from on high, and or - der all things  
 O come, O come, thou Lord of might, who to thy tribes on  
 O come, thou Root of Jes - se, free thine own from Sa - tan's  
 O come, thou Key of Da - vid, come, and o - pen wide our  
 O come, thou Day - spring, come and cheer our spir - its by thine  
 O come, De - sire of na - tions, bind all peo - ples in one

Is - ra - el, that mourns in lone - ly ex - ile here  
 far and nigh; to us the path of knowl - edge show,  
 Si - nai's height in an - cient times didst give the law  
 tyr - an - ny; from depths of hell thy peo - ple save  
 heav'n - ly home; make safe the way that leads on high,  
 ad - vent here; dis - perse the gloom - y clouds of night,  
 heart and mind; bid en - vy, strife, and dis - cord cease;

un - til the Son of God ap - pear.  
 and cause us in thy ways to go.  
 in cloud and maj - es - ty and awe.  
 and give them vic - tory o'er the grave.  
 and close the path to mis - er - y.  
 and death's dark shad - ows put to flight.  
 fill the whole world with heav - en's peace.

Re - jice! Re - jice!

Em - ma - nu - el shall come to thee, O Is - ra - el.

Text: Latin prose, pre-9th cent.; trans. composite  
 Tune: VENI EMMANUEL, Plainsong

## LIGHTING THE ADVENT WREATH

Old South Church Youth Group

### Introductory Sentences

This fourth week of advent, we light the candle of love. [...] We rest in the power of God's love and the presence of Jesus, God with us.

### Call to Worship

If our lives are dry and parched,

**Lord, send the living waters of your Spirit to revive us,**

to enliven us, to bring forth new life.

**Emmanuel, come quickly.**

If our bodies are weary and heavy laden,

**Lord, fill us with laughter; give us shouts of joy;**

Envelop us in your gladness.

**Emmanuel, come quickly.**

If our lives feel small and trivial amidst the world's troubles,

**Lord, let us do small things with great love,**

Enlarge our hearts, widen our minds,

**Until we love as you love.**

**Emmanuel, come quickly.**

### Lighting of Candles & Prayer

God who is Love, we praise you for your love is stronger than hate. Your love outlasts all oppression. [...] Mold our hearts to be more like yours, shape our lives after the life of Christ. **Amen.**

## SUNG RESPONSE

*Choir:*

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.

### Congregation:



Text and Music: Bernadette Farrell, 1993

WELCOME

\*PASSING OF THE PEACE

*Please greet those around you, wishing them "peace" or "the peace of Christ."*

CHILDREN'S MESSAGE

Kate M. Nintcheu

## LISTEN

SCRIPTURE

Genesis 2:8-10, 15

Amanda Grant-Rose

ANTHEM

The Secret of Christ

Richard Shephard

For a long time I have held my peace, but now will I speak.  
I will lead the blind in a way they know not,  
in paths that they have not known I will guide them.  
I will turn their darkness into light, and I will not forsake them.

And he showed me a pure river of the water of life,  
clear as crystal, proceeding out of the throne of God;  
and on either side of the river was there a tree of life,  
and the leaves of the trees were for the healing of the nations.

Help us, Lord, to persevere in prayer  
with minds awake and thankful hearts,  
that we may share the secret of Christ  
with those we meet on our earthly pilgrimage,  
following in the steps of Jesus,  
our master and our friend. Amen.

|           |   |                  |
|-----------|---|------------------|
| SCRIPTURE | Revelation 22:1-7, 14                       | Kat Woodard      |
| *HYMN 597 | <b>Shall We Gather at the River</b>         | HANSON PLACE     |
| SERMON    | At the End of the World, a Garden           |                  |
| *HYMN 107 | <b>Awake! Awake, and Greet the New Morn</b> | REJOICE, REJOICE |

## RESPOND

|  |                  |
|--|------------------|
| *CALL TO PRAYER                                      | Rachel J. Barton |
| God be with you.                                     |                  |
| <b>And also with you.</b>                            |                  |
| May the peace of Christ dwell in your hearts.        |                  |
| <b>Christ is our peace, our light, and our hope.</b> |                  |
| Let us pray. <i>Please be seated.</i>                |                  |

PASTORAL 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 debts, as we forgive our debtors; and lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil. For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, forever. Amen.**

PRAYER RESPONSE

The Most Precious Gift  
OLD SOUTH CHURCH GOSPEL CHOIR  
Ida Kamrara, *soloist*

Ida Kamrara

The most precious gift of God  
came in the form of a baby born in Bethlehem.  
He brought joy to the world, it was a holy silent night.  
He brought peace and love, forgiveness and a chance for eternal life.

The most precious gift of God  
came in the form of a baby born in Bethlehem.  
Hallelujah. Hallelujah.

CALL TO THE OFFERING

Justin Dickerson



To give via ApplePay, GooglePay,  
or Credit Card, scan the QR code.  
You can also Text 44-321  
and enter OSC to make a gift.

If you're new to Old South,  
scan the QR code with your  
smartphone camera  
to tell us more about yourself.



OFFERTORY

A Joyous Christmas

John Leavitt, *arr.*

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; O come, let us adore him;  
O come, let us adore him, Christ, the Lord!*

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! Gloria in excelsis Deo!*

Come to Bethlehem and see him whose birth the angels sing;  
come, adore on bended knee Christ, the Lord, the newborn King.

*Gloria in excelsis Deo! Gloria in excelsis Deo!*

Joy to the world! the Lord is come: let earth receive her King!  
let every heart prepare him room, and heaven and nature sing,  
and heaven and nature sing, and heaven, and heaven and nature sing!

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

#### PRAYER OF DEDICATION

\*HYMN 563

**We Cannot Own the Sunlit Sky**

ENDLESS SONG

\*BIDDING TO MISSION AND BENEDICTION

Kat Woodard

POSTLUDE

Grand March from *Athalie*, Op. 74

Felix Mendelssohn



Today's flowers are given by Kate Meacham Nintcheu  
in honor of her late father Robert Colegrove Meacham,  
who passed away 25 years ago on Dec 22nd, 2000.

Bob Meacham loved church, sang in every choir that would let him,  
and his impact on everyone who knew him still resonates, all these years later.

Join us for Refreshments & Fellowship  
in the Gordon Chapel following the Postlude.

*Close-Up*, a twenty minute tour of the Sanctuary,  
begins immediately following worship. Please meet at the pulpit.  
Led by docent Stephanie LaShoto-Westfield.



## CANDLELIGHT CHRISTMAS EVE

December 24, 2025

*Family Service with Impromptu Pageant* | 5PM

*Lessons and Carols* | 8PM

*Carols and Communion* | 11PM



## NEW YEAR'S AT OLD SOUTH

### BOSTON FIRST NIGHT: PIPES AND POPS CONCERTS

*Wednesday, December 31, 6:30 and 8 pm, Old South Church in Boston*

The best of Boston's brass and percussion artists join organist Mitchell Crawford in a supersonic program of popular classics. Featuring fun and engaging programming for the whole family, this concert includes a seasonal sing of "Let There Be Peace on Earth." Experience Old South's incredible E. M. Skinner organ, with over 7,000 room-shaking pipes! Free and open to the public.

### PAJAMA CHURCH

*Sunday December 28, Single Worship Service at 10am*

Come for a relaxed celebration of Christmastide as we worship God who is with us, Emmanuel. Come in your pajamas or coziest of clothes, bring a loved one and settle in with us to experience the love of God coming into our world.



## **WELCOME TO OLD SOUTH CHURCH**

Welcome to Old South Church in Boston. We are a progressive Christian church first gathered in 1669. The Church played a significant role in early American history. Today, Old South Church continues to serve as a sanctuary in the city of Boston.

### **NEW AT OLD SOUTH?**

Welcome! We are so glad you're here! Please take a moment to fill out a friendship pad so that we can be in touch with you. If you have any questions or would like to talk to a minister to learn more about the church, contact Associate Minister Ashley Popperson at [ashley@oldsouth.org](mailto:ashley@oldsouth.org).

Children are welcome in all aspects of worship. We also offer childcare from 8:20am-12:30pm every Sunday and Church School at 10am. For questions about our children and family ministries, email [children@oldsouth.org](mailto:children@oldsouth.org).

For LARGE print bulletins or children's bulletins, please ask an Usher.

An accessible, single-stall restroom is available near Reception. More restrooms are available, ask at the reception desk.

### **HEARING ASSISTANCE**

Hearing assist devices are available from Ava Welling, our Director of Audio. Please see Ava for a device and instructions on how to use it. For more information or answers to questions, please contact Ava at [ava@oldsouth.org](mailto:ava@oldsouth.org).

### **GARAGE PARKING VALIDATIONS**

We have arrangements for discounted parking with two nearby garages for Old South Church for Sunday worship services only. For more information check out [www.oldsouth.org/your-first-visit](http://www.oldsouth.org/your-first-visit) or see the front desk.

### **LEARN MORE**

Check out the church website [www.oldsouth.org](http://www.oldsouth.org) for more on the history and ministries of Old South. See [www.oldsouth.org/calendar](http://www.oldsouth.org/calendar) for a calendar of current events.

CCLI #2802138 ❖ CCS #12028 ❖ OneLicense #A-700000

## OLD SOUTH CHURCH *in* BOSTON — MINISTERS, OFFICERS, & STAFF

John M. Edgerton, *Senior Minister*

Ashley J. Popperson, *Associate Minister* ❖ Rachel J. Barton, *Associate Minister for Transformation*

Kat Woodard, *Taylor Resident for Mission in the City* ❖ Justin Dickerson, *Seminarian*

Donald A. Wells, *Theologian in Residence* ❖ June R. Cooper, *Theologian in the City*

David F. Story, *Wedding Minister* ❖ Kenneth H. Orth, *Healing Worship Minister*

James W. Crawford, *Senior Minister Emeritus* ❖ Nancy S. Taylor, *Senior Minister Emeritus*

Mitchell Crawford, *Minister of Music*

Jonathan Reddix, *Collaborative Pianist* ❖ Jan Christoph Hadenfeldt, *Visiting Organist*

Audrey Woodhams, *Creative Director for Thursday Night Church*

Tim Harbold, *Director, Gospel Choir* ❖ Peter Coulombe, *Director, Old South Ringers*

Kate Nintcheu, *Director, Children & Family Ministries*

Summer Marsh, *Director, Old South Preschool*

Aislin Kate Anderson, *Children's Choir Director* ❖ Yuexuan Joyce Wang, *Children's Choir Accompanist*

Rory Razon, *Youth Group Co-Leader*

Amelia Gerrard, *Director of Administration* ❖ Rebecca Pasipanodya, *Director of Operations*

Rémy Hatfield-Gardner, *Administrative Assistant* ❖ Kathleen Steen, *Staff Accountant*

Emily Ross, *Archivist* ❖ Karen Hand, *Wedding Coordinator*

Jamie Garuti Sage, *Multimedia Director* ❖ Ava Welling, *Director of Audio*

Rémy Hatfield-Gardner & William Wei, *Livestream Production Assistants*

Elias Perez, *Senior Sexton* ❖ Tahmina Akter, Richard Serebour, & M.D. Rahman, *Sextons*

Corey Spence, *Weekday Receptionist*

Sarah Acheson-Field, Shirley Bivins, & Shelia Randolph, *Evening & Weekend Receptionists*

Maren Batalden, *Moderator* ❖ Rob Gabler, *Clerk* ❖ Donna Matson, *Treasurer*

Debby Kuenstner, *Chair, Board of Trustees* ❖ Kate Silfen, *Historian*

Rebecca Bowen & Laurie Stickels, *Senior Deacons*

### A NOTE ON THE INCLUSIVE DIMENSIONS OF GOD'S GRACE

Old South Church in Boston, in the name of its host, Jesus Christ, and in the spirit of Christ's invitation carved into the stone of this church's portico, "Behold I Set Before You an Open Door," welcomes all who seek to know God. Following the One who we believe is Sovereign and Savior, we affirm that each individual is a child of God, and recognize that we are called to be like one body with many members, seeking with others of every race, ethnicity, creed, class, age, gender, marital status, physical or mental ability, sexual orientation, gender identity, and gender expression to journey together toward the promised realm of God. We invite everyone to join in the common life and mission of our reconciling community through participation and leadership in this congregation, and by fully sharing in the worship, rites and sacraments of this church. As we all move forward with the work of this church, we commit ourselves to making justice and inclusivity a reality in this congregation and in the world. On the threshold of Christ's open door, we rely upon the healing, unconditional nature of God's love and grace to be our help and guide.



OLD  
SOUTH  
CHURCH  
*in* BOSTON

# ANNOUNCEMENTS

## **ADVENT SERMON CONVERSATIONS: PRECEDENTED TIMES**

*Sundays, 10am, in Mary Norton Hall, December 21 —John Edgerton*

The world feels as if it is spiraling out of control. Institutions that once seemed sturdy teeter, national commitments are abandoned, and rights are under attack. How is a Christian to understand these days? Join our ministers throughout Advent for conversations about their sermons and a chance to reflect together, ask questions, and share insights as we explore this year's Advent theme as a community.

## **NEW AROUND HERE?**

*December 21 and every 3rd Sunday, in Rev. Ashley's office,*

*Meet in Elevator Lobby at 10:05am*

Join Pastor Ashley and church members for informal conversation and coffee. If you've been coming for one week, or a dozen, or just exploring online, join us to get to know more about the church and to make a friend or two! Questions? Email [ashley@oldsouth.org](mailto:ashley@oldsouth.org).

## **LONGEST NIGHT INTERFAITH HOMELESS SERVICE**

*Monday, December 22, Noon, St. Paul's Cathedral, 138 Tremont St.*

On the longest night of the year, people without homes, religious leaders, and community partners join together to remember the people that our community has forgotten. We warmly invite you to join us. Lunch is at 12noon, followed by a service at 1pm.

## **PAJAMA CHURCH**

*Sunday, December 28, Single Worship Service at 10am*

Come for a relaxed celebration of Christmastide as we worship God who is with us, Emmanuel. Come in your pajamas or coziest of clothes, bring a loved one and settle in with us to experience the love of God coming into our world. This 10AM service will be the only service on the 28th; no 9am and 11am worship.

## **BOSTON FIRST NIGHT: PIPES AND POPS CONCERTS**

*Wednesday, December 31st at 6:30 and 8 p.m., Old South Church in Boston*

The best of Boston's brass and percussion artists join organist Mitchell Crawford in a supersonic program of popular classics. Featuring fun and engaging programming for the whole family, this concert includes a seasonal sing of "Let There Be Peace on Earth." Experience Old South's incredible E. M. Skinner organ, with over 7,000 room-shaking pipes! Free and open to the public.

## **(G)RACE SPEAKS AT ISABELLA STEWART GARDNER MUSEUM**

*Sunday, January 4, 1pm, Isabella Stewart Gardner Museum, 25 Evans Way, Boston*

(G)RACE Speaks is sponsoring an outing to the Isabella Stewart Gardner Museum at 1 PM following Festival Worship. We will explore the exhibit featuring Allan Rohan Crite: Urban Glory. Crite was an African American artist who celebrated, recorded and spoke to Boston's Black community. Tickets are \$22 and, if cost is prohibitive, please let the church know so a ticket can be purchased for you. RSVP/questions to [amyecoe@gmail.com](mailto:amyecoe@gmail.com)

## **EXTRA! EXTRA! MARY NORTON TO VISIT OLD SOUTH! MEET THE LEGEND!**

*Sunday, January 11, following Festival Worship, Mary Norton Hall*

*Go to [tinyurl.com/1-2025MaryNortonRSVP](https://tinyurl.com/1-2025MaryNortonRSVP) to let us know you want to join us!*

Enjoy a delicious 17th century lunch by Carol Blair that includes homemade cornbread and vegetarian baked beans. Then wonder at a dramatic performance starring Pam Roberts as Mary Norton, John Edgerton as himself, Laurie Stickels as herself, and Scott McInturff as the Rev. John Norton. The one-act play, written by Debbie Wiess, is based on an original premise by Mary Kohák and Debbie Wiess.

## **GIVING BACK: THE TRUE SPIRIT OF CHRISTMAS**

As we prepare our hearts for Christmas, Old South has several opportunities to give to the wider community. A Christmas tree will be near the reception desk decorated with ornaments. Each ornament will have instructions for a gift for one of the gift drives listed below. You can select an ornament from the tree or you can participate online at [oldsouth.org/true-spirit-Christmas](https://oldsouth.org/true-spirit-Christmas)

## **CONTEMPLATIVE PRAYER**

*First Sundays, 10am, in the Columbarium*

Need some space to breathe? Time to rest in the spacious silence of God's presence? Please join us for Contemplative Prayer. Together, we'll engage in practices of contemplative prayer, share from our hearts, and find strength and solace in God's abiding love. Questions? Email [ashley@oldsouth.org](mailto:ashley@oldsouth.org).

## **ONLINE SMALL GROUP**

*January 4 at 7:30pm EST and every first Sunday of the month*

*Go to [tinyurl.com/2025OSOnlineSmallGroup](https://tinyurl.com/2025OSOnlineSmallGroup) password 684963 to join*

Gather with other online members and Rev. Ashley for a time of fellowship, communion, and deepening our relationships with one another. Please bring something to eat (bread, cracker, cookie) and something to drink (juice, water, coffee) as your communion elements.

## FINAL GIVING IN 2025

We are deeply grateful for our generous donors, whose support makes our ministries and service to the community possible. If you are still planning on making a contribution in 2025, we encourage you to **send any final donations by December 25th, 2025**. Due to processing times in our financial system, gifts made in the final days of December may be recorded as having been received in 2026, including in your tax statements. Thank you in advance for your generosity and understanding. Reach out to Remy Hatfield-Gardner at [remy@oldsouth.org](mailto:remy@oldsouth.org) or (617) 536-1970 with any questions.

## REVOLUTIONARY GENEROSITY—2026 STEWARDSHIP CAMPAIGN

We are also excited to announce our 2026 stewardship campaign, Revolutionary Generosity, is underway! Old South revolutionaries of today practice radical change in our society, serve neighbors, and open doors wide to the city. Join us in practicing revolutionary generosity by pledging online at: <https://tiny.oldsouth.org/pledge2026>.

Questions? Contact Amelia at [amelia@oldsouth.org](mailto:amelia@oldsouth.org) or 617-536-1970.

## CHURCH CENTER UPDATE

Our new church software, Church Center, is now live! You can access the church directory on the Church Center website and app. Go to [oldsouthchurch.churchcenter.com/home](https://oldsouthchurch.churchcenter.com/home) to sign in and [oldsouth.org/church-center](https://oldsouth.org/church-center) for our FAQ. Stay tuned for giving and calendar on Church Center, live on January 2nd, 2026. We will have an all-church training on how to use the giving and calendar features on January 18th, in-person at 10 AM and online at 2 PM. Reach out to Amelia Gerrard at [amelia@oldsouth.org](mailto:amelia@oldsouth.org) with any questions.

## DONATE FLOWERS FOR SUNDAY WORSHIP IN 2026

*Email Amelia Gerrard at [amelia@oldsouth.org](mailto:amelia@oldsouth.org) to sign up for a Sunday*

Every week, the church has beautiful flowers in front of the pulpit. Would you like to give the flowers one Sunday - in memory or in honor of a special person or event? It is quite meaningful every Sunday to read the flower message. The price is \$100. If cost is prohibitive, please reach out to Amelia Gerrard for more information. Please send your message along with your payment. You can drop it off, send a check, or donate online at [oldsouth.org/donate](https://oldsouth.org/donate).

## THE TWELVE GREEN TIPS OF CHRISTMAS

7. Buy experiences instead of physical gifts.
8. Take a nature hike with family or friends to enjoy the gift of the outdoors together.

## CHRISTIAN SERVICE AND OUTREACH

### THE WEEKLY PUSHBACK - Capuchin Mobile Ministries

Learn more about their work at [www.capuchin.org/ministries/mobile-ministries](http://www.capuchin.org/ministries/mobile-ministries)

Have other weekly action ideas? Email [outreach@oldsouth.org](mailto:outreach@oldsouth.org)

To get involved or ask questions email Kat Woodard at [kat@oldsouth.org](mailto:kat@oldsouth.org)

Our final Advent candle invites us to embody Love, a type of love that is present, mobile, and unafraid to meet people exactly where they are. Capuchin Mobile Ministries brings spiritual care, food, everyday living supplies, and human connection directly to unhoused neighbors throughout Boston. Old South is giving \$10,000 this week to help sustain their ministry of love on the move.

## CANDLELIGHT CHRISTMAS EVE

December 24, 2025

Family Service with Impromptu Pageant | 5PM

Lessons and Carols | 8PM

Carols and Communion | 11PM

### WEEKLY WORSHIP

Join us in person, on Facebook, and YouTube

**Thursday Night Church**, Thursdays at 6:00 p.m., no service 12/25 and 1/1

**FIRST Worship** Sundays at 9:00 a.m.

**FESTIVAL Worship** Sundays at 11:00 a.m.

**VESPERS HEALING Worship**, Second Sundays at 5:00 p.m. via Zoom



To give via ApplePay, GooglePay, or Credit Card, scan the QR code. You can also Text 44-321 and enter OSC to make a gift.

If you're new to Old South, scan the QR code with your smartphone camera to tell us more about yourself.



NOTICES 1) Worship services and events at Old South Church are sometimes photographed and videotaped to document the vibrant life of our church. If you do not wish to be included in these recordings, please notify an usher. 2) Please do not leave bags unattended in the building, including the Sanctuary, for any length of time.

Old South Church in Boston ❖ 645 Boylston Street, Boston 02116 ❖ [www.oldsouth.org](http://www.oldsouth.org)