The Hymn and Oratorio Society of the Philippines (HYMNOS)

in partnership with

Union Church of Manila

HELD IN ONE EMBRACE



A liturgical music program for the First Sunday of Advent

November 29, 2026 | 10:30 AM | UCM Sanctuary

Featuring the Hymnos Chorale
with Music Director Dr. Joel P. Navarro

HYMNOS
THE HYMN AND ORATORIO SOCIETY OF THE PHILIPPINES

UNION CHURCH
OF MANILA

Prelude Alejandro D. Consolacion II
Noël (Grand Jeu et Duo) *organist*
Louis-Claude Daquin (1694-1772)

Welcome Pastor Chad Williams

Call to Worship and Processional Gary Fabricante
The Advent Prose (Rorate Caeli) *baritone*
Words: Passages from the Book of Isaiah
Music: Medieval Plainsong

I. Expectation

Lighting of the First Advent Candle (*Responsive)* Millicent Lao
Rimher Manubay
Inha Ines
Allan Dale Alojipan

Opening Hymn* Congregation and Hymnos Chorale
Come, Thou Long-Expected Jesus
Words: Charles Wesley
Music: HYFRYDOL Rowland H. Prichard
Arrangement: Dan Forrest

Prayers of the People Meg Salud
Union Church of Manila

The Lord's Prayer *(Recited)**

The Advent Creed

Choral Response ***The Embrace*** Hymnos Chorale
Words: Pamela Stewart
Music: Craig Courtney

II. Prophecy

Reading from the Hebrew Bible *Isaiah 40:1-5, 9-11* Hezekiah See
St. Stephen's Parish

**Please stand if able*

Songs Hymnos Chorale

Advent Canticle
Words: Psalteriolum Cantionum Catholicarum
Translation: John M. Neale
Music: VENI EMMANUEL
Setting: Mark Shepperd

Ad Te Levavi
Words and Music: Robert G. Farrell

Deus Tu Convertens
Words and Music: Robert G. Farrell

Benedixisti Domine
Words and Music: Robert G. Farrell

III. Fulfillment

Reading from the New Testament *Luke 1:26-38* Noemi Binag
Grace Christian Church of the Philippines

Songs Hymnos Chorale

Gabriel's Message
Words: Basque Carol
Paraphrase: Sabine Baring-Gould
Music: Matthew Culloton

Breath of Heaven
Words and Music: Chris Eaton and Amy Grant
Arrangement: Craig Courtney

Message Pastor Chad Williams

"The Great Descent"

Choral Response Hymnos Chorale

The Long-Expected Hour
Words: Thomas Campbell
Music: Early American Ballad Melody
Adaptation and arrangement: Howard Helvey

Offertory Song Hymnos Chorale

Those Who Wait on the Lord
Words: From Isaiah 40:28-31
Music: Craig Courtney

Doxology* Words: Thomas Ken
Music: Genevan Psalter
Hymn Tune: OLD HUNDREDTH

Prayer of Dedication Ding Cristobal
IEMELIF

IV. Promise

Closing Hymn* Congregation and Hymnos Chorale

Hail to the Lord's Anointed
Words: James Montgomery
Music: Gesangbuch der H. W. k. Hofkapele
Adaptation and harmony: W. H. Monk

Benediction Pastor Chad Williams

Choral Response* Congregation and Hymnos Chorale

Lo! He Comes with Clouds Descending
Words: Charles Wesley
Music: Helmsley 18th century English melody
Fanfare and arrangement: John Rutter
v. 2 harmony: R. Vaughan Williams

Postlude Alejandro D. Consolacion II
Noël Suisse (Grand Jeu et Duo) *organist*
Louis-Claude Daquin (1694-1772)

**Please stand if you are able and joyfully join in the singing.*

Program Narrative: Held in One Embrace

Advent is the season of holy threshold—a quiet, luminous space suspended between memory and promise, between the shadows of a weary world and the first golden edge of dawn. Today's service, *Held in One Embrace*, takes its name from a tender phrase in Pamela Stewart's poetic text for Craig Courtney's choral anthem *The Embrace*. In those words, the infinite mystery of the Incarnation is distilled into an image of breathtaking intimacy: eternity stooping to cradle humanity, heaven and earth folded together in a single, redeeming hold.

Across thirteen musical offerings, our journey traces the full arc of Advent longing. We begin in the ancient stillness of solitary prophecy, gather voice with generations of believers praying for deliverance, and stand beside Mary in her quiet courage and human vulnerability. Along the way, timeless Latin prayers, contemplative *a cappella* motets, and soaring congregational hymns remind us that waiting is never passive. Rather, Advent waiting is an act of shared trust—a recognition that across centuries, languages, and lives, all who hope in the coming Light are already held in one embrace.

Program Notes

1. The Advent Prose — *Medieval Chant (Baritone or Tenor Solo)* Out of silence rises the ancient Advent refrain *Rorate caeli desuper* ("Drop down, ye heavens, from above, and let the skies pour down righteousness"). Sung by a solo voice without accompaniment, this timeless plainsong evokes the parched earth yearning for rain, carrying the prophetic cries of Isaiah into the stillness of the sanctuary and awakening the soul to watchfulness.

2. Come, Thou Long-Expected Jesus — *Arranged by Dan Forrest (Choral SATB, Congregation, Organ, and Piano)* Charles Wesley's beloved eighteenth-century prayer gives collective voice to

Israel's centuries-old yearning and the Church's enduring hope: *"Born thy people to deliver, born a child and yet a king."* In Dan Forrest's radiant arrangement, the choir and congregation unite over the rich foundation of organ and piano, transforming personal longing into a sweeping communal hymn of release, strength, and consolation.

3. The Embrace — *Craig Courtney (Choral SATB and Piano)* At the heart of tonight's theme stands Craig Courtney's luminous setting of Pamela Stewart's text. With delicate lyricism and expressive harmonic warmth, the music contemplates the paradox of the Nativity: the Creator of the cosmos entering human frailty, holding our sorrow and our hope together in one merciful embrace. The gentle pulse of the piano supports the choral lines like a steady, reassuring heartbeat.

4. Advent Canticle — *Mark Shepperd (Choral SATB, Solos, Flute, and Oboe)* Drawing upon the spirit of Mary's *Magnificat*, Mark Shepperd's *Advent Canticle* pairs a reflective alto solo with warm choral harmonies and the pastoral colors of flute and oboe. The woodwinds weave silvery countermelodies above the voices, capturing the wonder of a humble heart magnifying the faithfulness of God as promise begins to take flesh.

5. Ad Te Levavi — *Robert G. Farrell (Choral SATB, A cappella)* The first of three unaccompanied Latin motets by Robert G. Farrell sets the traditional Introit for the First Sunday of Advent from Psalm 25: *"Ad te levavi animam meam"* ("To you, O Lord, I lift up my soul"). Stripped of instrumental support, the pure *a cappella* vocal texture embodies unadorned trust—an upward gaze of surrender, vulnerability, and quiet confidence that those who wait upon God will never be put to shame.

6. Deus, Tu Convertens — *Robert G. Farrell (Choral SATB, A cappella)* Taken from Psalm 85, *Deus, tu convertens* ("You will turn again, O God, and give us life, and your people will rejoice in you") deepens the contemplative stillness of the central *a cappella*

triptych. Farrell's transparent polyphony allows the Latin phrases to breathe with natural speech-rhythm, turning an ancient plea for spiritual renewal into an intimate, resonant prayer for mercy and salvation.

7. Benedixisti, Domine — *Robert G. Farrell (Choral SATB, A cappella)* Completing Farrell's set of three *a cappella* Advent motets, *Benedixisti, Domine* ("Lord, you have blessed your land") moves from supplication to quiet gratitude. Grounded in the Advent liturgy's promise that grace and peace will meet upon the earth, the vocal lines blend in serene consonance, offering a musical glimpse of the reconciliation already unfolding in God's faithfulness.

8. Gabriel's Message — *Matthew Culloton (Choral SATB, A cappella)* Sabine Baring-Gould's translation of the traditional Basque carol recounts the Annunciation with poetic clarity and tenderness: *"The angel Gabriel from heaven came, his wings as drifted snow, his eyes as flame."* Matthew Culloton's *a cappella* setting shapes the narrative with supple phrasing and luminous harmonic shifts, tracing Mary's journey from startled wonder to humble *"Gloria!"* as she welcomes the hidden light within.

9. Breath of Heaven (Mary's Song) — *Arranged by Craig Courtney (Choral SATB, Soprano Solo, and Piano)* Written by Chris Eaton and Amy Grant, *Breath of Heaven* steps inside the quiet, human trembling of Mary on the road to Bethlehem. Rather than speaking in grand theological pronouncements, a lone soprano voice offers an honest prayer of inadequacy and trust—asking the "Breath of Heaven" to hold her together and lighten her darkness. Craig Courtney's sensitive arrangement surrounds the soloist with supportive choral warmth and flowing piano accompaniment.

10. The Long-Expected Hour — *Howard Helvey (Choral SATB, A cappella)* Howard Helvey's unaccompanied choral meditation returns to the theme of sacred anticipation, capturing the hushed

expectancy of watchmen scanning the night horizon. Through richly voiced chords and unhurried harmonic progressions, the music inhabits the stillness just before daybreak—when centuries of prophecy converge upon a single, decisive hour of grace.

11. Those Who Wait on the Lord — *Craig Courtney (Choral SATB and Piano)* Rooted in the soaring promise of Isaiah 40:31, Craig Courtney's anthem proclaims that waiting on the Lord is not exhaustion, but renewal. Over an uplifting, propulsive piano accompaniment, the choral voices rise with growing assurance—picturing weary travelers mounting up with wings like eagles, running without growing faint, and finding inexhaustible strength in the presence of God.

12. Hail to the Lord's Anointed — *Text: James Montgomery, 1821; Tune: Gesangbuch der H. W. k. Hofkapelle, 1784, adapt. and harm. W. H. Monk, 1868 (Congregational Hymn and Organ)* James Montgomery's majestic paraphrase of Psalm 72 proclaims the arrival of a King whose reign brings justice to the oppressed, peace to the nations, and joy to the afflicted. Supported by the full resonance of the organ, the congregation rises to sing this historic hymn, celebrating a kingdom whose tenderness and righteousness reach from shore to shore.

13. Lo! He Comes with Clouds Descending — *Arranged by John Rutter (Choral SATB, Congregation, Organ, and Piano)* Advent looks not only backward to Bethlehem, but forward to the final consummation of all things in glory. In John Rutter's exhilarating setting of Charles Wesley's classic Advent hymn, choir, congregation, organ, and piano join in triumphant proclamation. The quiet longing that began in a solitary chant now bursts into radiant *Alleluias*—affirming that from first Advent to final dawn, creation is forever held in one eternal embrace.

Hymnos: A Ministry of Sacred Choral Music

The Hymn and Oratorio Society of the Philippines (Hymnos) was organized in 2023 by a group of music ministers desiring to proclaim biblical truth through sacred music and Christian worship. The group sent out invitations to church choirs to send their best choristers to be part of this ministry. Its members include choir conductors, music faculty and graduates, outstanding singers, and experienced choristers from leading choirs in Metro Manila.

More than a performing ensemble, Hymnos seeks to serve churches and communities through musical outreach, spiritual encouragement, and training for choir conductors, worship leaders, and choristers.

Its objectives include presenting sacred music programs during Christmas and Lent; providing training in worship leadership, conducting, and ensemble direction; offering music-reading and learning sessions; partnering with churches and faith-based institutions for outreach; and developing national and international partnerships for church music education. In time, Hymnos hopes to become a vibrant musical witness in the country through diverse musical celebrations.

Hymnos is a ministry partner of the Union Church of Manila, sharing its commitment to community outreach and biblically grounded musical programs. The church provides venues, participants, and pastoral and administrative support, while Hymnos contributes professional expertise, organization, and funding. Together, they draw on the leadership of some of the Philippines' leading musicians and choral directors.

If you desire to know more and be part of this sacred musical experience, please call us at (+63) 908-085-0892 or send us an email at *hymnosphilippines@gmail.com*

Music Director

Joel P. Navarro, DMA

Choristers

Sopranos
Liz Aguila
Stef Bernardo*
Noemi Binag*
Verna Buensuceso
Love Dela Peña
Inha Ines*
Grace Koo
Millicent Lao
Angel H. Liang*
Amy Navarro
Gem Paraso
Chrysene Sitosta
Marlene Suarez
Jenny Tolibas

Altos
Liza Alcances
Gayla Carreon
Elaine Grospe
Rose Inocencio
PJ Manalo
Lizamarie Manayon
Gene Matias
Yan Recto*
Alyssa Rigon
Becky Salonga
Meg Salud*

Tenors
Allan Dale Alojipan
Donwayne Cogay
Josua Gohoc
Rimher Manubay*
Othello Razon
Alex Resurreccion
Aaron Rosales
David Vicente*

Basses
Ding Cristobal
Gary Fabricante*
Errol Gallespen
Red Garcia*
Johann Gohoc
Sean Palmiano
Ron Pattugalan
Hezekiah See

*Soloist

Instrumentalists

Alejandro D. Consolacion II, *organist*
Gabriel James Frias, *pianist*
Crystal Milarose Rodis-Concepcion, *flutist*
Arvin Jan Medrano, *oboist*

UCM BULLETIN
NOVEMBER 29, 2026

UNION CHURCH
OF MANILA

For the services in this season of

Advent

Everyone is encouraged to wear something purple or violet - the primary liturgical color of Advent, symbolizing preparation, repentance, reflection, and the royalty of Christ.



The Word Made Flesh

A Christmas Canticle Celebration

featuring
K. Lee Scott's *The Incarnation* &
Benjamin Harlan's *Christmas Canticles*

Presented by: Union Church of Manila Chancel Choir

DECEMBER 13, 2026 | 6:30 PM | UCM Main Sanctuary



Christmas Eve @ UCM

DECEMBER 24, 2026 | UCM Main Sanctuary

5:00 PM *Family Service*

7:30 PM *Candlelight Service*

GINGERBREAD HOUSE

DECORATING EVENT



DECEMBER 5 & 12, 2026 (Sat)
9 AM - 12 PM | UCM Fellowship Hall

REGISTRATION FEE: P1,500 / group or family
REGISTER/PAY AT THE INFO DESK

- All decor items will be provided for
- The gingerbread house that you made will be yours after the event

Proceeds will go to the UCM Ushering Ministry
For inquiries: *omi.diaz@unionchurch.ph*



Flower Offering

Some of today's flowers are from the Albutra family, celebrating the 76th birthday of the late Wilfredo Albos Albutra.

Love in a Bag
THE UCM CHRISTMAS PROJECT 2026

Help us bless families in need this Christmas!
With just **P1,000** your generosity can help provide:

- Noche Buena Groceries
- Healthy Meal Packs • Bible

Please drop by the Missions & Benevolence Table, Fellowship Hall after the service to learn how you can give.

Please give your donations within today (Nov. 29, 2026).

Help us distribute the gifts to our beneficiaries: December 1, 3 & 12.

KNOW MORE: **www.unionchurch.ph/love-in-a-bag**

For inquiries: *mbassist@unionchurch.ph*

Union Church of Manila
Philippines Foundation, Inc. (UCMPFI)

Child Education & Nutrition Enhancement Program (CENEP)

MEDICAL/DENTAL MISSIONS
DECEMBER 2, 2026 | Brgy. Kabulusan, Pakil, Laguna

December 2 will be a whole day activity. Vans will leave UCM at exactly 5AM and anticipated arrival back at UCM will be 6-7PM. Sign-up today at the Library Table, Fellowship Hall.
Contact Rangel for details: 8812-6062 or 0926-0636818 / Email: *ucmpfi@gmail.com*

GCash

QRPh

GIVING is now more accessible than ever!

CREDIT & DEBIT CARD TERMINAL

You can give in person using your credit or debit card.

- Sundays: Information Desk, Fellowship Hall (8 AM to 2 PM)
- Weekdays (except Mondays): Level 4 (8 AM to 5 PM)

ONLINE GIVING

Please visit **https://unionchurch.ph/giving** to give securely from anywhere, anytime.

You may also scan any of the QR Codes.

Generosity for God's Mission

We ask you to pray about your pledge in 2027. Give cheerfully and generously to spread God's Word across the world to make disciples of all nations. Whatever you pledge will be used for God's Work in the best way possible.

SCAN ME

Pledge Cards are in the pew racks and at the Info Desk, Fellowship Hall.

You may also visit **https://unionchurch.ph/ucm-pledge** or scan the QR Code.

For inquiries: *stewardship@unionchurch.ph*