



CHURCH *of the* INCARNATION

The Last Sunday *after the* Epiphany
February 15, 2026
Choral Evensong

ABOUT THIS SERVICE

The origins of Choral Evensong go back many centuries, and have their roots in the ancient patterns of monastic worship, which were based on the regular singing of all 150 psalms and the systematic reading of the Bible. Brief services, or offices, were said or sung throughout the day and night, in accordance with St. Paul's instruction to 'pray without ceasing', so that the whole of the daily routine of monks and nuns could be sanctified and offered to God. In the aftermath of the Reformation in England, the first *Book of Common Prayer* (published in 1549) combined elements from a number of the monastic offices to form the dual services of Morning Prayer and Evening Prayer, or Evensong. Each has as its central feature the recitation or singing of the Psalms; readings from Scripture; and prayers for the Church, the world, and those in need. Both services have fixed songs or canticles associated with them, including the *Magnificat* (the Song of Mary from St. Luke's Gospel) and the *Nunc dimittis* (the Song of Simeon from St. Luke's Gospel) at Evensong. This format was formalized in *The Book of Common Prayer* 1662 and has remained largely unchanged ever since.

ABOUT THE MUSIC

William Walton's *The Twelve* is one of the relatively few works intended for liturgical use for which both music and text were commissioned together. In this case, the idea arose in 1964 when the Dean of Christ Church, Oxford, Cuthbert Simpson, invited two of the college's most celebrated alumni to collaborate on a new anthem. The substantial, eleven-minute work that resulted was first performed in Christ Church Cathedral in May 1965 under the direction of Sydney Watson. The composer had earlier expressed the opinion that W H Auden's text was 'obscure and difficult to set', but in truth Walton frequently had similar problems with texts and often found that inspiration came slowly. Happily in this case he successfully overcame the difficulties, producing a work of exceptional musical and emotional scope and variety that seems to raise its sights rather beyond the world of the church anthem and towards the cantata. Walton also surely does justice to what is generally thought to be a highly imaginative and resourceful poetic text. Among the highpoints are the beautiful central duet ('O Lord, my God, Though I forsake Thee Forsake me not'), and the exuberant fugal finale ('Twelve as the winds and the months'). The striking opening passage for solo baritone is typical of Walton's imaginative writing for solo voices throughout. It also features a notably virtuosic organ part. The composer subsequently orchestrated the anthem for use in the 900th anniversary celebrations of Westminster Abbey in January 1966.

—Note by James O'Donnell



Following this service, all are warmly invited to a reception in the Narthex.

Cover art: *Evensong* (depicting St. Cecilia, patron saint of musicians), John Melhuish Strudwick

SOLEMN EVENSONG

Organ Voluntary

Rhapsody in D-flat major, Op. 17, N° 1

Herbert Howells (1892–1983)

All stand at the entrance of the procession. The Officiant first reads one or more sentences of Scripture.

Invitatory

Officiant O Lord, open thou our lips.

Choir And our mouth shall show forth thy praise.

Officiant ✕ O God, make speed to save us.

Choir O Lord, make haste to help us.

Officiant Glory be to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Ghost:

Choir As it was in the beginning, is now, and ever shall be, world without end. Amen.

Officiant Praise ye the Lord.

Choir The Lord's Name be praised.

Kenneth Leighton (1929–1988)

All sit.

Psalm 114

In exitu Israel

Tonus Peregrinus, adapt. D. Willcocks

WHEN Israel came out of Egypt : and the house of Jacob from among the strange people,
Judah was his sanctuary : and Israel his dominion.

The sea saw that, and fled : Jordan was driven back.

The mountains skipped like rams : and the little hills like young sheep.

What aileth thee, O thou sea, that thou fleddest : and thou Jordan, that thou wast driven back?

Ye mountains, that ye skipped like rams : and ye little hills, like young sheep?

Tremble, thou earth, at the presence of the Lord : at the presence of the God of Jacob;

Who turned the hard rock into a standing water : and the flint-stone into a springing well.

Psalm 115

Non nobis, Domine

G. Knight

NOT unto us, O LORD, not unto us, but unto thy Name give the praise :
for thy loving mercy, and for thy truth's sake.

Wherefore shall the heathen say : Where is now their God?

As for our God, he is in heaven : he hath done whatsoever pleased him.

Their idols are silver and gold : even the work of men's hands.

They have mouths, and speak not : eyes have they, and see not.

They have ears, and hear not : noses have they, and smell not.

They have hands, and handle not; feet have they, and walk not : neither speak they through their throat.

They that make them are like unto them : and so are all such as put their trust in them.

But thou, house of Israel, trust thou in the LORD : he is their succour and defense.

Ye house of Aaron, put your trust in the LORD : he is their helper and defender.

Ye that fear the Lord, put your trust in the LORD : he is their helper and defender.

The LORD hath been mindful of us, and he shall bless us :

even he shall bless the house of Israel, he shall bless the house of Aaron.

He shall bless them that fear the LORD : both small and great.

(continued overleaf)

The Lord shall increase you more and more : you and your children.
Ye are the blessed of the LORD : who made heaven and earth.
All the whole heavens are the LORD's : the earth hath he given to the children of men.
The dead praise not thee, O LORD : neither all they that go down into silence.
But we will praise the LORD : from this time forth for evermore. Praise the LORD.

The People stand as the Choir sings

Glory be to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Ghost:
As it was in the beginning, is now and ever shall be, world without end. Amen.

All sit.

The First Lesson

Sirach 48:1-11

THEN Elijah arose, a prophet like fire, and his word burned like a torch. He brought a famine upon them, and by his zeal he made them few in number. By the word of the Lord he shut up the heavens and also three times brought down fire. How glorious you were, Elijah, in your wondrous deeds! Who can boast as you can? You who raised a corpse from death and from Hades, by the word of the Most High, who sent kings down to destruction and famous men from their sickbeds, who heard rebuke at Sinai and judgments of vengeance at Horeb, who anointed kings to inflict retribution and prophets to succeed you, who were taken up by a whirlwind of fire in a chariot with horses of fire, who were prepared at the appointed time to calm wrath before it breaks out in fury, to turn the hearts of parents to their children and to restore the tribes of Jacob. Happy are those who saw you and were adorned in love! For we also shall surely live.

All stand.

Magnificat

Service in G

Charles Villiers Stanford (1852-1924)

MY soul doth magnify the Lord, and my spirit hath rejoiced in God my Savior. For he hath regarded the lowliness of his handmaiden. For behold from henceforth all generations shall call me blessed. For he that is mighty hath magnified me, and holy is his Name. And his mercy is on them that fear him throughout all generations. He hath showed strength with his arm; he hath scattered the proud in the imagination of their hearts. He hath put down the mighty from their seat, and hath exalted the humble and meek. He hath filled the hungry with good things, and the rich he hath sent empty away. He remembering his mercy hath holpen his servant Israel, as he promised to our forefathers, Abraham and his seed for ever.

Glory be to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Ghost:
As it was in the beginning, is now, and ever shall be, world without end. Amen.

All sit.

The Second Lesson

Luke 9:18-27

ONCE when Jesus was praying alone, with only the disciples near him, he asked them, "Who do the crowds say that I am?" They answered, "John the Baptist; but others, Elijah; and still others, that one of the ancient prophets has arisen." Then he said to them, "But who do you say that I am?" Peter answered, "The Messiah of God." He sternly ordered and commanded them not to tell anyone, saying, "The Son of Man must undergo great suffering and be rejected by the elders, chief priests, and scribes and be killed

and on the third day be raised.” Then he said to them all, “If any wish to come after me, let them deny themselves and take up their cross daily and follow me. For those who want to save their life will lose it, and those who lose their life for my sake will save it. For what does it profit them if they gain the whole world but lose or forfeit themselves? Those who are ashamed of me and of my words, of them the Son of Man will be ashamed when he comes in his glory and the glory of the Father and of the holy angels. Indeed, truly I tell you, there are some standing here who will not taste death before they see the kingdom of God.”

All stand.

Nunc Dimitiss

Service in G

Charles Villiers Stanford

LORD, **X** now lettest thou thy servant depart in peace, according to thy word; for mine eyes have seen thy salvation, which thou hast prepared before the face of all people, to be a light to lighten the Gentiles, and to be the glory of thy people Israel.

Glory be to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Ghost:

As it was in the beginning, is now, and ever shall be, world without end. Amen.

The Apostle's Creed

The People and Choir chant in unison

I BELIEVE in God, the Father almighty, maker of heaven and earth; and in Jesus Christ his only Son our Lord; who was conceived by the Holy Ghost, born of the Virgin Mary, suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, dead, and buried. He descended into hell. The third day he rose again from the dead. He ascended into heaven, and sitteth on the right hand of God the Father almighty. From thence he shall come to judge the quick and the dead. I believe in the Holy Ghost, the holy catholic Church, the communion of saints, the forgiveness of sins, the resurrection of the body, **X** and the life everlasting.



... A - men.

The Prayers

Kenneth Leighton

Officiant The Lord be with you.

Choir And with thy spirit.

Officiant Let us pray.

All kneel as the Choir sings

Lord, have mercy upon us.

Christ, have mercy upon us.

Lord, have mercy upon us.

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. Amen.

Officiant O Lord, show thy mercy upon us.

Choir And grant us thy salvation.

Officiant O Lord, save the State.
Choir And mercifully hear us when we call upon thee.

Officiant Endue thy Ministers with righteousness.
Choir And make thy chosen people joyful.

Officiant O Lord, save thy people.
Choir And bless thine inheritance.

Officiant Give peace in our time, O Lord.
Choir Because there is none other that fighteth for us, but only thou, O God.

Officiant O God, make clean our hearts within us.
Choir And take not thy Holy Spirit from us.

The Collect of the Day

O GOD, who before the passion of thy only-begotten Son didst reveal his glory upon the holy mount: Grant unto us that we, beholding by faith the light of his countenance, may be strengthened to bear our cross, and be changed into his likeness from glory to glory; through the same Jesus Christ our Lord, who liveth and reigneth with thee and the Holy Spirit, one God, for ever and ever. Amen.

The Collect for Peace

O GOD, from whom all holy desires, all good counsels, and all just works do proceed; Give unto thy servants that peace which the world cannot give; that our hearts may be set to obey thy commandments, and also that by thee, we, being defended from the fear of our enemies, may pass our time in rest and quietness; through the merits of Jesus Christ our Savior. Amen.

The Collect for Aid against all Perils

LIGHTEN our darkness, we beseech thee, O Lord; and by thy great mercy defend us from all perils and dangers of this night; for the love of thy only Son, our Savior, Jesus Christ. Amen.

Anthem

William Walton (1902–1983)

WITHOUT arms or charm of culture, persons of no importance from an unimportant Province, they did as the Spirit bid, went forth into a joyless world of swords and rhetoric to bring it joy.

When they heard the Word, some demurred, some mocked, some were shocked: but many were stirred and the Word spread. Lives long dead were quickened to life; the sick were healed by the Truth revealed; released into peace from the gin of old sin, men forgot themselves in the glory of the story told by the Twelve.

Then the Dark Lord, adored by this world, perceived the threat of the Light to his might. From his throne he spoke to his own. The loud crowd, the sedate engines of State, were moved by his will to kill. It was done. One by one, they were caught, tortured, and slain.

O Lord, my God, though I forsake thee forsake me not, but guide me as I walk through the valley of mistrust, and let the cry of my disbelieving absence come unto thee, thou who declared unto Moses: "I shall be there."

Children play about the ancestral graves, for the dead no longer walk. Excellent still in their splendor are the antique statues: but can do neither good nor evil. Beautiful still are the starry heavens: but our fate is not written there. Holy still is speech, but there is no sacred tongue: the Truth may be told in all. Twelve as the winds and the months are those who taught us these things: Envisaging each in an oval glory, let us praise them all with a merry noise.

Wystan Hugh Auden (1907-1973)

All kneel.

The General Thanksgiving

ALMIGHTY God, Father of all mercies, we thine unworthy servants do give thee most humble and hearty thanks for all thy goodness and loving-kindness to us and to all men. We bless thee for our creation, preservation, and all the blessings of this life; but above all for thine inestimable love in the redemption of the world by our Lord Jesus Christ, for the means of grace, and for the hope of glory. And, we beseech thee, give us that due sense of all thy mercies, that our hearts may be unfeignedly thankful; and that we show forth thy praise, not only with our lips, but in our lives, by giving up our selves to thy service, and by walking before thee in holiness and righteousness all our days; through Jesus Christ our Lord, to whom, with thee and the Holy Ghost, be all honor and glory, world without end. Amen.

The Officiant then says A Prayer of St. Chrysostom, saying

Almighty God, who hast given us grace at this time with one accord to make our common supplications unto thee; and dost promise, that when two or three are gathered together in thy Name thou wilt grant their requests; Fulfil now, O Lord, the desires and petitions of thy servants, as may be most expedient for them; granting us in this world knowledge of thy truth, and in the world to come life everlasting. *Amen.*

All stand.

The Dismissal

Officiant The Lord be with you.

Choir And with thy spirit.

Officiant Let us bless the Lord.

Choir Thanks be to God.

Officiant The ~~¶~~ grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the fellowship of the Holy Ghost, be with us all evermore.

Choir Amen.

Hymn overleaf.

Hymn

Coefen



How shall I sing that ma - jes - ty which an - gels do _ ad - mire?
 Thy brigh - tness un - to them ap - pears, whilst I thy foot - steps trace;
 En - light - en with faith's light my heart, in - flame it with love's fire;
 How great a be - ing, Lord, is thine, which doth all be - ings keep!



Let dust in dust and si - lence lie; sing, sing, ye heav'n - ly choir.
 a sound of God comes to my ears, but they be - hold thy face.
 then shall I sing and bear a part with that ce - les - tial choir.
 Thy know - ledge is the on - ly line to sound so vast _ a deep.



Thou-sands of thou-sands stand a - round thy throne, O God most high;
 They sing, be-cause thou art their Sun; Lord, send a beam on me;
 I shall, I fear, be dark and cold, with all my fire and light;
 Thou art a sea with - out a shore, a sun with - out a sphere;



ten thou - sand times ten thou-sand sound thy praise; but who am I?
 for where heav'n is but once be - gun there al - le - lu - ias be.
 yet when thou dost ac - cept their gold, Lord, trea - sure up - my mite.
 thy time is now and ev - er - more, thy place is ev - ery - where.



Words: John Mason (c. 1645–1694)

Music: *Coefen*, Kenneth Nicholson Naylor (1931–1991)