



CHURCH *of the* INCARNATION

The Third Sunday *in* Lent

March 8, 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

The *Gloucester Service* is one of Herbert Howells' most beloved settings of the evening canticles. Beginning quite simply, a meditative duet between the sopranos carries the text to "He hath showed strength with his arm," at which point the organ's color shifts and the tenors and basses enter in an almost operatic show of strength.

Throughout the piece, the organ and voices at times seem at odds, as if gently contending with one another. The *Gloria Patri* stands among Howells' most thrilling and beautiful conclusions, radiant and expansive in its final flourish.



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

Con moto maestoso *from* Sonata N^o 3 in A, Op. 65

Felix Mendelssohn (1809–1847)

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

Invitatory

Humphrey Clucas (b. 1941)

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.

All sit.

Psalms 34

Benedicam Dominum

Charles South (1850–1916)

I WILL always give thanks unto the LORD : his praise shall ever be in my mouth.

My soul shall make her boast in the LORD : the humble shall hear thereof, and be glad.

O praise the LORD with me : and let us magnify his Name together.

I sought the LORD, and he heard me : yea, he delivered me out of all my fear.

They had an eye unto him, and were lightened : and their faces were not ashamed.

Lo, the poor crieth, and the LORD heareth him : yea, and saveth him out of all his troubles.

The angel of the LORD tarrieth round about them that fear him : and delivereth them.

O taste, and see, how gracious the LORD is : blessed is the man that trusteth in him.

O fear the LORD, ye that are his saints : for they that fear him lack nothing.

The lions do lack, and suffer hunger :

but they who seek the LORD shall want no manner of thing that is good.

Come, ye children, and hearken unto me : I will teach you the fear of the LORD.

What man is he that lusteth to live : and would fain see good days?

Keep thy tongue from evil : and thy lips, that they speak no guile.

Eschew evil, and do good : seek peace, and ensue it.

The eyes of the LORD are over the righteous : and his ears are open unto their prayers.

The countenance of the LORD is against them that do evil :

to root out the remembrance of them from the earth.

The righteous cry, and the LORD heareth them : and delivereth them out of all their troubles.

The LORD is nigh unto them that are of a contrite heart : and will save such as be of an humble spirit.

Great are the troubles of the righteous : but the LORD delivereth him out of all.

He keepeth all his bones : so that not one of them is broken.

But misfortune shall slay the ungodly : and they that hate the righteous shall be desolate.

(psalm continues overleaf)

The LORD delivereth the souls of his servants :
and all they that put their trust in him shall not be destitue.

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

Genesis 44:1-17

JOSEPH commanded the stewards of his house, "Fill the men's sacks with food, as much as they can carry, and put each man's money in the top of his sack. Put my cup, the silver cup, in the top of the sack of the youngest, with his money for the grain." And he did as Joseph told him. As soon as the morning was light, the men were sent away with their donkeys. When they had gone only a short distance from the city, Joseph said to his steward, "Go, follow after the men, and when you overtake them, say to them, 'Why have you returned evil for good? Why have you stolen my silver cup? Is it not from this that my lord drinks? Does he not indeed use it for divination? You have done wrong in doing this.'" When he overtook them, he repeated these words to them. They said to him, "Why does my lord speak such words as these? Far be it from your servants that they should do such a thing! Look, the money that we found at the top of our sacks, we brought back to you from the land of Canaan; why then would we steal silver or gold from your lord's house? Should it be found with any one of your servants, let him die; moreover, the rest of us will become my lord's slaves." He said, "Even so; in accordance with your words, let it be: he with whom it is found shall become my slave, but the rest of you shall go free." Then each one quickly lowered his sack to the ground, and each opened his sack. He searched, beginning with the eldest and ending with the youngest, and the cup was found in Benjamin's sack. At this they tore their clothes. Then each one loaded his donkey, and they returned to the city. Judah and his brothers came to Joseph's house while he was still there, and they fell to the ground before him. Joseph said to them, "What deed is this that you have done? Do you not know that one such as I can practice divination?" And Judah said, "What can we say to my lord? What can we speak? How can we clear ourselves? God has found out the guilt of your servants; here we are then, my lord's slaves, both we and also the one in whose possession the cup has been found." But he said, "Far be it from me that I should do so! Only the one in whose possession the cup was found shall be my slave, but as for you, go up in peace to your father."

All stand.

Magnificat

Gloucester Service

Herbert Howells (1892-1983)

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

John 5:25–29

JESUS said: Very truly, I tell you, the hour is coming and is now here when the dead will hear the voice of the Son of God, and those who hear will live. For just as the Father has life in himself, so he has granted the Son also to have life in himself, and he has given him authority to execute judgment because he is the Son of Man. Do not be astonished at this, for the hour is coming when all who are in their graves will hear his voice and will come out: those who have done good to the resurrection of life, and those who have done evil to the resurrection of condemnation.

All stand.

Nunc Dimittis

Gloucester Service

Herbert Howells

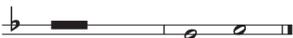
LORD, ✠ now lettest thou thy servant depart in peace, according to thy word; for mine eyes have seen thy salvation, which thou hast prepared before the face of all people, to be a light to lighten the Gentiles, and to be the glory of thy people Israel.

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

IBELIEVE 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, ✠ and the life everlasting.



... A - men.

The Prayers

Humphrey Clucas

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

ALmighty God, who seest that we have no power of ourselves to help ourselves: Keep us both outwardly in our bodies and inwardly in our souls, that we may be defended from all adversities which may happen to the body, and from all evil thoughts which may assault and hurt the soul; through Jesus Christ our Lord, who liveth and reigneth with thee and the Holy Spirit, one God, for ever and ever. Amen.

The Collect of Lent

ALmighty and everlasting God, who hatest nothing that thou hast made and dost forgive the sins of all those who are penitent: Create and make in us new and contrite hearts, that we, worthily lamenting our sins and acknowledging our wretchedness, may obtain of thee, the God of all mercy, perfect remission and forgiveness; through Jesus Christ our Lord. 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

Pablo Casals (1876–1973)

OVOS omnes qui transitis per viam
attendite et videte:
si est dolor sicut dolor meus.

*All you who pass by,
stop and see;
if there be any sorrow like mine.*

Lamentations 1:12

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 268

Ye who claim the faith of Jesus

Julion



CHURCH *of the*
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