



CHURCH *of the*  
INCARNATION

The Fourth Sunday *in Lent*

*Letare*

March 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

The *St Paul's Service* is one of Howells' most celebrated settings of texts that he returned to time and again. Fashioned specially for a building with a spectacular acoustic, consequently employing a less rapidly changing harmonic rhythm than would be possible in a less resonant building, this is a work in which Howells seems at his most confident and optimistic. It is the biggest boned, the most expansive of all his treatments and justifies its reputation as one of the best of his settings for the Anglican liturgy. The *Magnificat* sets off sturdily, without introduction, and never looks back, surging forward with just an easing of the pace at the beautiful 'He remembering His mercy'. The *Nunc dimittis*, though quiet, is also expansive, building slowly and majestically to its climax. The Glorias in both canticles sweep all before them and make a big feature out of Howells' characteristic use of the 'Lydian' fourth, stretching the tonality before pulling it back to the tonic to almost cataclysmic effect.

– Note by Paul Andrews



*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

Psalm Prelude Set 1, N<sup>o</sup> 1

Herbert Howells (1892–1983)

*“Lo, the poor crieth, and the LORD heareth him; yea, and saveth him out of all his troubles.”*

*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.*

### Psalm 19

*Cæli enarrant*

Stephen Darlington (b. 1952)

**T**HE heavens declare the glory of God : and the firmament sheweth his handywork.  
One day telleth another : and one night certieth another.

There is neither speech nor language : but their voices are heard among them.

Their sound is gone out into all lands : and their words into the ends of the world.

In them hath he set a tabernacle for the sun :

which cometh forth as a bridegroom out of his chamber, and rejoiceth as a giant to run his course.  
It goeth forth from the uttermost part of the heaven, and runneth about unto the end of it again :  
and there is nothing hid from the heat thereof.

The law of the LORD is an undefiled law, converting the soul :

the testimony of the LORD is sure, and giveth wisdom unto the simple.

The statutes of the LORD are right, and rejoice the heart :

the commandment of the LORD is pure, and giveth light unto the eyes.

The fear of the LORD is clean, and endureth for ever :

the judgements of the LORD are true, and righteous altogether.

More to be desired are they than gold, yea, than much fine gold :

sweeter also than honey, and the honey-comb.

Moreover, by them is thy servant taught : and in keeping of them there is great reward.

Who can tell how oft he offendeth : O cleanse thou me from my secret faults.

Keep thy servant also from presumptuous sins, lest they get the dominion over me :

so shall I be undefiled, and innocent from the great offence.

Let the words of my mouth, and the meditation of my heart, be always acceptable in thy sight :

O LORD, my strength, and my redeemer.

*(psalm continued overleaf)*

**G**OD is our hope and strength : a very present help in trouble.  
 Therefore will we not fear, though the earth be moved :  
 and though the hills be carried into the midst of the sea.  
 Though the waters thereof rage and swell : and though the mountains shake at the tempest of the same.  
 The rivers of the flood thereof shall make glad the city of God :  
 the holy place of the tabernacle of the most Highest.  
 God is in the midst of her, therefore shall she not be removed : God shall help her, and that right early.  
 The heathen make much ado, and the kingdoms are moved :  
 but God hath shewed his voice, and the earth shall melt away.  
 The LORD of hosts is with us : the God of Jacob is our refuge.  
 O come hither, and behold the works of the LORD : what destruction he hath brought upon the earth.  
 He maketh wars to cease in all the world :  
 he breaketh the bow, and knappeth the spear in sunder, and burneth the chariots in the fire.  
 Be still then, and know that I am God :  
 I will be exalted among the heathen, and I will be exalted in the earth.  
 The LORD of hosts is with us : the God of Jacob is our refuge.

*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 48:8–22

*The Lesson can be found on page 35 of the pew Bible.*

*All stand.*

### Magnificat

*St. Paul's Service*

Herbert Howells (1892–1983)

**M**Y ✠ 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 6:27–40

*The Lesson can be found on page 75 of the pew Bible.*

*All stand.*

**Nunc Dimittis**

*St. Paul's Service*

Herbert Howells

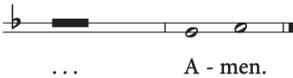
**L**ORD, ✠ now lettest thou thy servant depart in peace, according to thy word; for mine eyes have seen thy salvation, which thou hast prepared before the face of all people, to be a light to lighten the Gentiles, and to be the glory of thy people Israel.

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, ✠ and the life everlasting.



### 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

**O**UR 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*

**G**RACIOUS Father, whose blessed Son Jesus Christ came down from heaven to be the true bread which giveth life to the world: Evermore give us this bread, that he may live in us, and we in him; who liveth and reigneth with thee and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and for ever. Amen.

### *The Collect of Lent*

**A**LMIGHTY 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*

**L**IGHTEN 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**

Francisco Guerrero (1528–1599)

**O** DOMINE Jesu Christe,  
adoro te in cruce vulneratum,  
felle et aceto potatum:  
deprecor te, ut tua vulnera  
sint remedium animæ meæ.

*O Lord Jesus Christ,  
I worship thee wounded on the cross,  
having drunk of gall and vinegar:  
I pray thee that thy wounds  
will be the remedy of my soul.*

*Pope St. Gregory I (c. 540–604)*

*All kneel.*

### **The General Thanksgiving**

**A**LMIGHTY 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*

**A**LMIGHTY 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.

*The Hymn is printed overleaf.*

Hymn

Danny Boy



1. A - bove the hills of time the cross is gleam - ing, fair as the  
2. The cross, O Christ, Thy won - drous love re - veal - ing, a - wakes our



sun when night has turned to day; and from it Love's pure light is rich - ly  
hearts as with the light of morn, and par - don o'er our sin - ful spir - its



stream - ing, to cleanse the heart and ban - ish sin a - way. To this dear  
steal - ing, tells us that we, in Thee, have been re - born. Like ech - oes



cross the eyes of men are turn - ing, to - day as in the a - ges lost to  
to sweet tem - ple bells re - ply - ing, our hearts, O Lord, make an - swer to Thy



sight; And so for Thee, O Christ, men's hearts are yearn - ing, as ship - wrecked  
love; And we will love Thee with a love un - dy - ing, till we are



sail - ors yearn for morn - ing light.  
gath - ered to Thy home a - bove.



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