

**The Community of
St Stephen Walbrook**



**Choral Evensong
For Ash Wednesday
Wednesday 17th February 2021**

Welcome to St Stephen Walbrook for Choral Evensong

Evensong is an Anglo-Saxon term for the sung evening liturgy. It originated in the western Wessex kingdom's diocese centred on Sherborne Abbey, later at Old Sarum (Salisbury) and was used in the Sarum rite. Other dioceses, post-Conquest, and all other monastic houses followed the Roman rite and used the continental term Vespers (French: Vêpres).

Archbishop Thomas Cranmer abolished the medieval minor offices and for his revised liturgy of the Book of Common Prayer merged the old Evensong (having taken the Sarum rite as his basis) with Compline which then doubled the responses, Lord's Prayer, canticles and lessons. The 1549 book continued the term Evensong, though this moved further from the Anglo-Saxon into Evening Prayer in the more reformed book of 1552 thence onto the 1662.

The Church's early Evensong descended from the Jewish tradition of evening prayers conducted as the light faded and the candles were lit. To the Jews the end of daylight was the end of the day and thus the evening prayers began the new day. Early Christians followed this tradition and hence a feast-day's First Evensong was on the eve, and the Second Evensong was on the day. Technically the earliest Evensong could be was the winter fading light at 3pm and thus adopted by most cathedrals. In more modern practice it now tends to be later than this.

Officiant: Revd Stephen Baxter

Music: The Choral Scholars of St Stephen Walbrook,
 Directed by Gabriella Noble

Organist: Ben Giddens

Introit

Civitas sancti tui by William Byrd (1540-1623)

Introduction

Beloved, we are come together in the presence of almighty God and of the whole company of heaven to offer unto him through our Lord Jesus Christ our worship and praise and thanksgiving; to make confession of our sins; to pray, as well for others as for ourselves, that we may know more truly the greatness of God's love and shew forth in our lives the fruits of his grace; and to ask on behalf of all men such things as their well-being doth require.

Wherefore let us sit in silence, and remember God's presence with us now.

Confession

Almighty and most merciful Father,

we have erred, and strayed from thy ways like lost sheep.

We have followed too much the devices and desires of our own hearts.

We have offended against thy holy laws. We have left undone those things which we ought to have done;

and we have done those things which we ought not to have done; and there is no health in us.

But thou, O Lord, have mercy upon us, miserable offenders. Spare thou them, O God, which confess their faults.

Restore thou them that are penitent; according to thy promises declared unto mankind in Christ Jesu our Lord. And grant, O most merciful Father, for his sake, that we may hereafter live a godly, righteous, and sober life, to the glory of thy holy name. Amen.

Grant, we beseech thee, merciful Lord, to thy faithful people pardon and peace, that they may be cleansed from all their sins, and serve thee with a quiet mind; through Jesus Christ our Lord.

Amen.

The Preces

Philip Radcliffe (1905-86)

O Lord, open thou our lips.

And our mouth shall shew forth thy praise.

O God, make speed to save us.

O Lord, make haste to help us.

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.

Praise ye the Lord.
The Lord's Name be praised.

Psalm 51

Plainsong

Miserere mei, Deus

1. Have mercy upon me, O God, after thy great goodness: according to the multitude of thy mercies do away mine offences.
2. Wash me thoroughly from my wickedness: and cleanse me from my sin.
3. For I acknowledge my faults: and my sin is ever before me.
4. Against thee only have I sinned, and done this evil in thy sight: that thou mightest be justified in thy saying, and clear when thou art judged.
5. Behold, I was shapen in wickedness: and in sin hath my mother conceived me.
6. But lo, thou requirest truth in the inward parts: and shalt make me to understand wisdom secretly.
7. Thou shalt purge me with hyssop, and I shall be clean: thou shalt wash me, and I shall be whiter than snow.
8. Thou shalt make me hear of joy and gladness: that the bones which thou hast broken may rejoice.
9. Turn thy face from my sins: and put out all my misdeeds.
10. Make me a clean heart, O God: and renew a right spirit within me.
11. Cast me not away from thy presence: and take not thy holy Spirit from me.
12. O give me the comfort of thy help again: and stablish me with thy free Spirit.
13. Then shall I teach thy ways unto the wicked: and sinners shall be converted unto thee.
14. Deliver me from blood-guiltiness, O God, thou that art the God of my health: and my tongue shall sing of thy righteousness.
15. Thou shalt open my lips, O Lord: and my mouth shall shew thy praise.
16. For thou desirest no sacrifice, else would I give it thee: but thou delightest not in burnt-offerings.
17. The sacrifice of God is a troubled spirit: a broken and contrite heart, O God, shalt thou not despise.
18. O be favourable and gracious unto Sion: build thou the walls of Jerusalem.
19. Then shalt thou be pleased with the sacrifice of righteousness, with the burnt-offerings and oblations: then shall they offer young bullocks upon thine altar.

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 First Reading: Isaiah 1: 10-18 read by Phillip Dawson

Hear the word of the Lord, ye rulers of Sodom; give ear unto the law of our God, ye people of Gomorrah.

To what purpose is the multitude of your sacrifices unto me? saith the Lord: I am full of the burnt offerings of rams, and the fat of fed beasts; and I delight not in the blood of bullocks, or of lambs, or of he goats.

When ye come to appear before me, who hath required this at your hand, to tread my courts?

Bring no more vain oblations; incense is an abomination unto me; the new moons and sabbaths, the calling of assemblies, I cannot away with; it is iniquity, even the solemn meeting.

Your new moons and your appointed feasts my soul hateth: they are a trouble unto me; I am weary to bear them.

And when ye spread forth your hands, I will hide mine eyes from you: yea, when ye make many prayers, I will not hear: your hands are full of blood.

Wash you, make you clean; put away the evil of your doings from before mine eyes; cease to do evil;

Learn to do well; seek judgment, relieve the oppressed, judge the fatherless, plead for the widow.

Come now, and let us reason together, saith the Lord: though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be as white as snow; though they be red like crimson, they shall be as wool.

The Magnificat

Setting: Collegium Magdalенаe Oxoniense by Kenneth Leighton (1929-88)

My soul doth magnify the Lord :
and my spirit hath rejoiced in God my Saviour.

For he hath regarded :
the lowliness of his hand-maiden.

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 shewed 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.

Second reading – Luke 15:11-end read by Gay Soper

And he said, A certain man had two sons:
And the younger of them said to his father, Father, give me the portion of goods
that falleth to me. And he divided unto them his living.
And not many days after the younger son gathered all together, and took his
journey into a far country, and there wasted his substance with riotous living.
And when he had spent all, there arose a mighty famine in that land; and he began
to be in want.
And he went and joined himself to a citizen of that country; and he sent him into his
fields to feed swine.
And he would fain have filled his belly with the husks that the swine did eat: and no
man gave unto him.

And when he came to himself, he said, How many hired servants of my father's have
bread enough and to spare, and I perish with hunger!
I will arise and go to my father, and will say unto him, Father, I have sinned against
heaven, and before thee,
And am no more worthy to be called thy son: make me as one of thy hired servants.
And he arose, and came to his father. But when he was yet a great way off, his
father saw him, and had compassion, and ran, and fell on his neck, and kissed him.
And the son said unto him, Father, I have sinned against heaven, and in thy sight,
and am no more worthy to be called thy son.
But the father said to his servants, Bring forth the best robe, and put it on him; and
put a ring on his hand, and shoes on his feet:
And bring hither the fatted calf, and kill it; and let us eat, and be merry:
For this my son was dead, and is alive again; he was lost, and is found. And they
began to be merry.
Now his elder son was in the field: and as he came and drew nigh to the house, he
heard musick and dancing.
And he called one of the servants, and asked what these things meant.

And he said unto him, Thy brother is come; and thy father hath killed the fatted calf, because he hath received him safe and sound.

And he was angry, and would not go in: therefore came his father out, and intreated him.

And he answering said to his father, Lo, these many years do I serve thee, neither transgressed I at any time thy commandment: and yet thou never gavest me a kid, that I might make merry with my friends:

But as soon as this thy son was come, which hath devoured thy living with harlots, thou hast killed for him the fatted calf.

And he said unto him, Son, thou art ever with me, and all that I have is thine.

It was meet that we should make merry, and be glad: for this thy brother was dead, and is alive again; and was lost, and is found.

The Nunc Dimittis

Setting: Collegium Magdalenae Oxoniense by Kenneth Leighton (1929-88)

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 Apostles' Creed

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.

Amen.

The Responses

Philip Radcliffe (1905-86)

The Lord be with you.
And with thy spirit.

Let us pray.

Lord, have mercy upon us.
Christ, have mercy upon us.
Lord, have mercy upon us.

Our Father, which art in heaven, hallowed be thy name;
thy kingdom come; thy will be done,
in earth as it is in heaven.
Give us this day our daily bread.
And forgive us our trespasses,
as we forgive them that trespass against us.
And lead us not into temptation;
but deliver us from evil. Amen.

O Lord, shew thy mercy upon us.
And grant us thy salvation.

O Lord, save the Queen.
And mercifully hear us when we call upon thee.

Endue thy ministers with righteousness.
And make thy chosen people joyful.

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

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

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

The Collect of the day

Almighty and everlasting God, who hatest nothing that thou hast made, and dost forgive the sins of all them that 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 both, 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 Saviour. 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 Saviour, Jesus Christ. Amen.

The Anthem

Wash me throughly by S.S. Wesley (1810-76)

Closing Prayers

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

Closing hymn: Forty days and forty nights

Forty days and forty nights
Thou wast fasting in the wild,
Forty days and forty nights
Tempted and yet undefiled.

Sunbeams scorching all the day,
Chilly dewdrops nightly shed,
Prowling beasts about thy way,
Stones thy pillow, earth thy bed.

Let us thine endurance share,
And awhile from joys abstain,
With thee watching unto prayer,
Strong with thee to suffer pain.

And if Satan, vexing sore,
Flesh or spirit should assail,
Thou, his vanquisher before,
Grant we may not faint nor fail.

So shall we have peace divine,
Holier gladness ours shall be,
Round us too shall angels shine,
Such as ministered to thee.

Keep, O keep us, Saviour dear,
Ever constant by thy side,
That with thee we may appear
At the eternal Eastertide.

GH Smyttan (1822-70 & Francis Pott (1832-1909)
Tune: Aus der tiefe in Nurnbergische Gesangbuch (1676);
Melody possibly by M Herbst (1654-81)

The Blessing

Organ voluntary: Fantasia in C minor, BMV562, by JS Bach (1685-1750)