

**WORLD PREMIERE**

# **Celebrating Women in the Bible**

**by Tristan Latchford**

performed by the Choral Scholars of  
St Stephen Walbrook directed by Andrew Earis

**Wednesday 14th June 6.30pm**

Doors open 6pm. Tickets £15 Eventbrite

[www.ststephenwalbrook.net/women-in-the-bible](http://www.ststephenwalbrook.net/women-in-the-bible)

**7 anthems by Tristan Latchford on**

**7 poems by Graham Kings on**

**7 paintings by Silvia Dimitrova**

The paintings of Sarah, Miriam, Ruth, Esther, Magdalene, Lydia and Priscilla, will be exhibited.



**St Stephen Walbrook**  
City of London

**39 Walbrook, London, EC4N 8BN**  
[www.ststephenwalbrook.net](http://www.ststephenwalbrook.net)



# Sarah



**Painting by Silvia Dimitrova (2015)**

## Genesis 18: 1-15

The LORD appeared to Abraham by the oaks of Mamre, as he sat at the entrance of his tent in the heat of the day. 2 He looked up and saw three men standing near him. When he saw them, he ran from the tent entrance to meet them, and bowed down to the ground. 3 He said, 'My lord, if I find favour with you, do not pass by your servant. 4 Let a little water be brought, and wash your feet, and rest yourselves under the tree. 5 Let me bring a little bread, that you may refresh yourselves, and after that you may pass on—since you have come to your servant.' So they said, 'Do as you have said.' 6 And Abraham hastened into the tent to Sarah, and said, 'Make ready quickly three measures[c] of choice flour, knead it, and make cakes.' 7 Abraham ran to the herd, and took a calf, tender and good, and gave it to the servant, who hastened to prepare it. 8 Then he took curds and milk and the calf that he had prepared, and set it before them; and he stood by them under the tree while they ate.

9 They said to him, 'Where is your wife Sarah?' And he said, 'There, in the tent.' 10 Then one said, 'I will surely return to you in due season, and your wife Sarah shall have a son.' And Sarah was listening at the tent entrance behind him. 11 Now Abraham and Sarah were old, advanced in age; it had ceased to be with Sarah after the manner of women. 12 So Sarah laughed to herself, saying, 'After I have grown old, and my husband is old, shall I have pleasure?' 13 The LORD said to Abraham, 'Why did Sarah laugh, and say, "Shall I indeed bear a child, now that I am old?" 14 Is anything too wonderful for the LORD? At the set time I will return to you, in due season, and Sarah shall have a son.' 15 But Sarah denied, saying, 'I did not laugh'; for she was afraid. He said, 'Oh yes, you did laugh.'

## **Sarah by Graham Kings**

Who is this woman,  
Eyes uplifted,  
Elderly, beautiful,  
Pondering, anxious,  
Right hand responsive,  
Stopping laughing,  
Brow furrowed,  
Fingers knobbly,  
Left hand supportive,  
Relaxed, accepting?

Who is this man,  
Eyebrows surprised,  
Mature, elegant,  
Wondering, welcoming,  
Left hand cupped  
Near to heart,  
Beckoning hearth,  
Reckoned as righteous,  
Right hand blessing,  
Thickening calf?

Who are these visitors,  
Arrayed in radiance,  
Mysterious in difference,  
Framed by bowing  
Oaks of Mamre and  
Tent of Meeting,  
Together as three,  
Emerging out of  
Scintillating leaves  
Merging as One?

Mother of Promise  
Of people and nations,  
Forever empty,  
Who ceased to be  
After manner of women,  
Laughs to herself,  
Then covers it up,  
Eventually conceives,  
Bears and believes  
'He who laughs.'

Father of Promise  
Of people and nations,  
As good as dead,  
Who previously laughed,  
Suggesting a son of  
Slave girl instead,  
Now furnishes  
Nourishing relief,  
Hope against hope,  
Sealing belief.

Lord of Promise  
Of people and nations,  
Proclaiming astonishing  
Fertility, fecundity,  
Wonderfully righting  
Wrongful response:  
For incoherent jest,  
Co-inherence sows.  
From mature oaks,  
An acorn grows.



# Miriam



**Painting by Silvia Dimitrova (2018)**

## **Exodus 2:1-10**

Now a man from the house of Levi went and married a Levite woman. 2 The woman conceived and bore a son; and when she saw that he was a fine baby, she hid him for three months. 3 When she could hide him no longer she got a papyrus basket for him, and plastered it with bitumen and pitch; she put the child in it and placed it among the reeds on the bank of the river. 4 His sister stood at a distance, to see what would happen to him.

5 The daughter of Pharaoh came down to bathe at the river, while her attendants walked beside the river. She saw the basket among the reeds and sent her maid to bring it. 6 When she opened it, she saw the child. He was crying, and she took pity on him. 'This must be one of the Hebrews' children,' she said. 7 Then his sister said to Pharaoh's daughter, 'Shall I go and get you a nurse from the Hebrew women to nurse the child for you?' 8 Pharaoh's daughter said to her, 'Yes.' So the girl went and called the child's mother. 9 Pharaoh's daughter said to her, 'Take this child and nurse it for me, and I will give you your wages.' So the woman took the child and nursed it. 10 When the child grew up, she brought him to Pharaoh's daughter, and she took him as her son. She named him Moses,[a] 'because', she said, 'I drew him out[b] of the water.'...

## **Exodus 15: 19-21**

19 When the horses of Pharaoh with his chariots and his chariot drivers went into the sea, the LORD brought back the waters of the sea upon them; but the Israelites walked through the sea on dry ground.

20 Then the prophet Miriam, Aaron's sister, took a tambourine in her hand; and all the women went out after her with tambourines and with dancing. 21 And Miriam sang to them:

'Sing to the LORD, for he has triumphed gloriously;  
horse and rider he has thrown into the sea.'



## Miriam by Graham Kings

Who is this woman,  
Tapping a tabor,  
Rejoicing in song,  
Elegant in beauty,  
More than Egyptian?

Who is this baby,  
Lifting his limbs,  
Drifting in basket,  
Floating on river,  
Secluded in reeds?

Who are these men,  
Walking together,  
Bearing symbols,  
Leading the way  
Between fire and water?

Miriam, the prophet,  
The shrewd saviour  
Of baby brother,  
Dancing, proclaims:  
'Sing to the Lord  
Who has triumphed gloriously;  
Horse and rider,  
He has thrown into the sea.'

Moses, on the Nile,  
Escapes annihilation,  
Responds at bush of fire,  
Foil Pharaoh's ire,  
Receives the Law in awe,  
Accompanies Aaron, the eloquent,  
Whose head and beard and robe  
Will run with precious oil.

The Red Sea is redressed:  
Waves of horses crest the waves,  
Roaring, rushing, downing, drowning,  
Trampling hostile oppression.

For God's people, safely across,  
Good things come to those who wait.

# Ruth



**Painting by Silvia Dimitrova (2019)**



## Ruth 1:11-22

11 But Naomi said, 'Turn back, my daughters, why will you go with me? Do I still have sons in my womb that they may become your husbands? 12 Turn back, my daughters, go your way, for I am too old to have a husband. Even if I thought there was hope for me, even if I should have a husband tonight and bear sons, 13 would you then wait until they were grown? Would you then refrain from marrying? No, my daughters, it has been far more bitter for me than for you, because the hand of the LORD has turned against me.' 14 Then they wept aloud again. Orpah kissed her mother-in-law, but Ruth clung to her.

15 So she said, 'See, your sister-in-law has gone back to her people and to her gods; return after your sister-in-law.' 16 But Ruth said,

'Do not press me to leave you  
or to turn back from following you!

Where you go, I will go;  
where you lodge, I will lodge;  
your people shall be my people,  
and your God my God.

17 Where you die, I will die—  
there will I be buried.

May the LORD do thus and so to me,  
and more as well,

if even death parts me from you!'

18 When Naomi saw that she was determined to go with her, she said no more to her.

19 So the two of them went on until they came to Bethlehem. When they came to Bethlehem, the whole town was stirred because of them; and the women said, 'Is this Naomi?' 20 She said to them,

'Call me no longer Naomi,  
call me Mara,  
for the Almighty has dealt bitterly with me.

21 I went away full,  
but the LORD has brought me back empty;  
why call me Naomi

when the LORD has dealt harshly with me,  
and the Almighty has brought calamity upon me?'

22 So Naomi returned together with Ruth the Moabite, her daughter-in-law, who came back with her from the country of Moab. They came to Bethlehem at the beginning of the barley harvest.

## Ruth by Graham Kings

Who is this woman,  
Poised and balanced,  
Pointing to baby,  
Carrying sheaves, which  
Wave to waves of barley?

Who is this man,  
Supporting, protecting,  
Prosperous, assured,  
Backed by sprouting  
And spreading tree?

Who is this madonna,  
Cuddling a boy,  
With delight and tenderness,  
Signalling the way  
To fertile foliage?

Ruth, the Moabite,  
Widowed, bereaved,  
Loyal and faithful to  
Mother-in-law from Israel.

'Where you go, I will go:  
Where you lodge, I will lodge:  
Your people shall be my people  
And your God, my God.  
Where you die, I will die  
And there will I be buried.'

Ruth reaps and gleans  
A harvest of love  
And husband of joy.

Boaz, worthy and wealthy,  
Honourable and wise,  
Hospitable to foreigner,  
Welcoming, redeeming,  
Redresses history  
And Moses in Moab.

Naomi, triply emptied,  
Gentle guidance  
Now fulfilled,  
Nurses her grandson.

Obed, gurgling, worshipping,  
Bequeathes the tree of Jesse.  
Bethlehem rejoices to house  
The house of David,  
And, in God's good time,  
Great David's greater son.



# Esther



**Painting by Silvia Dimitrova (2020)**

## **Esther 4.6-17**

6 Hathach went out to Mordecai in the open square of the city in front of the king's gate, 7 and Mordecai told him all that had happened to him, and the exact sum of money that Haman had promised to pay into the king's treasuries for the destruction of the Jews. 8 Mordecai also gave him a copy of the written decree issued in Susa for their destruction, that he might show it to Esther, explain it to her, and charge her to go to the king to make supplication to him and entreat him for her people.

9 Hathach went and told Esther what Mordecai had said. 10 Then Esther spoke to Hathach and gave him a message for Mordecai, saying, 11 'All the king's servants and the people of the king's provinces know that if any man or woman goes to the king inside the inner court without being called, there is but one law—all alike are to be put to death. Only if the king holds out the golden sceptre to someone, may that person live. I myself have not been called to come in to the king for thirty days.' 12 When they told Mordecai what Esther had said, 13 Mordecai told them to reply to Esther, 'Do not think that in the king's palace you will escape any more than all the other Jews. 14 For if you keep silence at such a time as this, relief and deliverance will rise for the Jews from another quarter, but you and your father's family will perish. Who knows? Perhaps you have come to royal dignity for just such a time as this.' 15 Then Esther said in reply to Mordecai, 16 'Go, gather all the Jews to be found in Susa, and hold a fast on my behalf, and neither eat nor drink for three days, night or day. I and my maids will also fast as you do. After that I will go to the king, though it is against the law; and if I perish, I perish.' 17 Mordecai then went away and did everything as Esther had ordered him.



## Esther by Graham Kings

Who is this woman,  
Framed by arches,  
Beautiful, bountiful,  
Centred, subtle, shrewd,  
Carrying scented lilies?

Who is this man,  
Pictured with pillars,  
Royal, imperial,  
Majestic, magnetic,  
Extending his sceptre?

Who is this man,  
Holding a scroll, eyes alert,  
Beckoning, suggesting,  
Suppliant, petitioning?

Who is this man,  
Head down, eyes closed,  
Gallowed, glowering,  
Schemer, scowling?

Who are these girls,  
Gazing at us,  
And the woman,  
With posy and scroll?

Esther, Jewish Queen of Persia,  
Orphaned, adopted, awesome,  
Raised to the heights,  
Reticent, persuasive, risk-taker,  
'If I perish, I perish',  
Bravely delivers her race,  
From depths of death.

Xerxes, King of Persian Empire,  
Reigns in citadel of Susa,  
From India to Ethiopia,  
Opulent, hospitable, terrifying,  
Saved by Esther from murder,  
Hears her pleas for her people.

Mordecai, cousin of Esther,  
Foster-father, chronicler,  
Honourably perceptive:  
'Perhaps you have come  
To royal dignity  
For such a time as this?'

Haman, vizier of Xerxes,  
Machiavellian murderer,  
Plans destruction of Jews:  
Snarler ensnared,  
Worsted, reversed, hoisted,  
Despised for ever.

Jewish children and families,  
Throughout the ages,  
Celebrate Purim,  
Reading the scroll,  
Feasting and sharing,  
Remembering friendship and revenge.

Yet, the Jew of Nazareth  
Enjoins love for enemies,  
Endures imperial gallows,  
Absorbing vengeance:  
Death is destroyed by  
Esther's successor at Easter.

# Magdalene



**Painting by Silvia Dimitrova (2003)**

## **John 20:11-18**

11 But Mary stood weeping outside the tomb. As she wept, she bent over to look into the tomb; 12 and she saw two angels in white, sitting where the body of Jesus had been lying, one at the head and the other at the feet. 13 They said to her, 'Woman, why are you weeping?' She said to them, 'They have taken away my Lord, and I do not know where they have laid him.' 14 When she had said this, she turned round and saw Jesus standing there, but she did not know that it was Jesus. 15 Jesus said to her, 'Woman, why are you weeping? For whom are you looking?' Supposing him to be the gardener, she said to him, 'Sir, if you have carried him away, tell me where you have laid him, and I will take him away.' 16 Jesus said to her, 'Mary!' She turned and said to him in Hebrew, 'Rabbouni!' (which means Teacher). 17 Jesus said to her, 'Do not hold on to me, because I have not yet ascended to the Father. But go to my brothers and say to them, "I am ascending to my Father and your Father, to my God and your God."' 18 Mary Magdalene went and announced to the disciples, 'I have seen the Lord'; and she told them that he had said these things to her.



## **Magdalene by Graham Kings**

Who is this woman facing this man,  
Head lightly inclined,  
Eyes wide open, gazing;  
Hands uplifted, palms upward, surprised;  
Gorgeously arrayed?

Who is this man facing this woman,  
Coming from the right,  
Profile clear, bearded;  
Hand outstretched, palm down;  
Gloriously apparelled?

Behind her, two angels hover,  
Reflecting her shape:  
Behind him, scented trees lean,  
Setting the scene:  
Below her, a dark opening hints.  
All silent witnesses.

The eyes have it:  
Focus of tension and attention.  
One word awakes her: 'Mary'.  
One word responds: 'Rabbouni'.

Their hands shape a triangle  
At the centre of meeting:  
Her two, shocked and suppliant;  
His one, blessing, calming, sending.

# Lydia



**Painting by Silvia Dimitrova (2009)**

## **Acts 16:6-15**

6 They went through the region of Phrygia and Galatia, having been forbidden by the Holy Spirit to speak the word in Asia. 7 When they had come opposite Mysia, they attempted to go into Bithynia, but the Spirit of Jesus did not allow them; 8 so, passing by Mysia, they went down to Troas. 9 During the night Paul had a vision: there stood a man of Macedonia pleading with him and saying, 'Come over to Macedonia and help us.' 10 When he had seen the vision, we immediately tried to cross over to Macedonia, being convinced that God had called us to proclaim the good news to them.

11 We set sail from Troas and took a straight course to Samothrace, the following day to Neapolis, 12 and from there to Philippi, which is a leading city of the district[a] of Macedonia and a Roman colony. We remained in this city for some days. 13 On the sabbath day we went outside the gate by the river, where we supposed there was a place of prayer; and we sat down and spoke to the women who had gathered there. 14 A certain woman named Lydia, a worshipper of God, was listening to us; she was from the city of Thyatira and a dealer in purple cloth. The Lord opened her heart to listen eagerly to what was said by Paul. 15 When she and her household were baptized, she urged us, saying, 'If you have judged me to be faithful to the Lord, come and stay at my home.' And she prevailed upon us.



## Lydia by Graham Kings

Who is this woman,  
Slender in purple,  
Approaching the river,  
Head demure,  
Hands across  
Heart secure?

Who are these women,  
Accompanying her,  
Tumbling, cascading,  
Following her gaze,  
Slightly perplexed,  
Subtly amazed?

Who is this man,  
Bearded, intriguing,  
Joining the women,  
Gorgeous in vesture,  
Gently announcing  
Greeting in gesture?

By the river of Philippi,  
They sat down and met  
And sang the songs of Zion,  
Outside the gate of the  
Greek city, Roman colony.

Lydia, with friends and household,  
Dealer in purple, in business astute,  
From Thyatira in Asia Minor,  
Gentile worshipping God of the Jews.

Paul, with friends, Silas and Luke,  
Following a vision of Asia Minor,  
Meets a woman of Macedonia,  
The Good News comes to Europa.

With hearts open to the cross of Christ,  
They pass through the river of baptism,  
To enter the joy of the Kingdom.  
Like trees planted by the waterside,  
They bring forth their fruit in due season.

# Priscilla



**Painting by Silvia Dimitrova (2009)**

## **Acts 18: 1-4 and 24-28**

After this Paul left Athens and went to Corinth. 2 There he found a Jew named Aquila, a native of Pontus, who had recently come from Italy with his wife Priscilla, because Claudius had ordered all Jews to leave Rome. Paul went to see them, 3 and, because he was of the same trade, he stayed with them, and they worked together—by trade they were tentmakers. 4 Every sabbath he would argue in the synagogue and would try to convince Jews and Greeks...

24 Now there came to Ephesus a Jew named Apollos, a native of Alexandria. He was an eloquent man, well-versed in the scriptures. 25 He had been instructed in the Way of the Lord; and he spoke with burning enthusiasm and taught accurately the things concerning Jesus, though he knew only the baptism of John. 26 He began to speak boldly in the synagogue; but when Priscilla and Aquila heard him, they took him aside and explained the Way of God to him more accurately. 27 And when he wished to cross over to Achaia, the believers encouraged him and wrote to the disciples to welcome him. On his arrival he greatly helped those who through grace had become believers, 28 for he powerfully refuted the Jews in public, showing by the scriptures that the Messiah is Jesus.

## **Romans 16: 3-4**

3 Greet Prisca and Aquila, who work with me in Christ Jesus, 4 and who risked their necks for my life, to whom not only I give thanks, but also all the churches of the Gentiles.



## Priscilla by Graham Kings

Who is this woman,  
Pure eyes, profoundly rounded,  
Beautiful face, honourably tilted,  
Open hands releasing dove?

Who is this man,  
Noble head, bearded attractive,  
Working hands, intently attentive.  
Inclined together, touching love?

Who are these men,  
Weighing a letter, ponderingly,  
Carrying a scroll, inscrutably,  
Trees and windows hovering  
above?

Four converge on Ephesus,  
Silver shrine of Artemis,  
Expound the word of God  
And form a church at home in  
love.

Priscilla and Aquila,  
Refugees from Roman Emperor,  
Host to Paul at Corinth and  
Ephesus,  
Fellow workers in Christ and canvas,  
More accurately explain the Way  
To the Jew of Alexandria.

Apollos, eloquent and scriptural,  
Burning and enthusing,  
Knowing now the Holy Spirit,  
Crosses over to Corinth  
And causes chaos. Perhaps  
Composes letter to Hebrews?

Paul writes to church at Corinth,  
Settling contending leaders.  
Paul sows, Apollos waters,  
God gives the growth.  
Ironically, rhetorically,  
Cross empties eloquence.

Priscilla and Aquila return to Rome,  
Hosting the body of Christ in their  
home.



**Silvia Dimitrova** was born in Bulgaria in 1970 and studied at the School of Applied Arts at Troyan and then focused on icon painting in Sofia. In 1999 she was commissioned by Downside Abbey to paint the Icon of St Benedict. She painted the Fourteen Stations of the Cross at Wells Cathedral and was shortlisted for the European Women of Achievement Awards 2000 for contributions to the Arts. Since then she has been working on both private and public commissions including St Paul's Cathedral, Hertford College, Oxford, Bishop's Palace, Wells and St Peter's, Eaton Square, as well as these seven paintings of 'Women in the Bible' for Graham and Alison Kings. She lives in Bath with her husband Simon and daughter Alexandra.

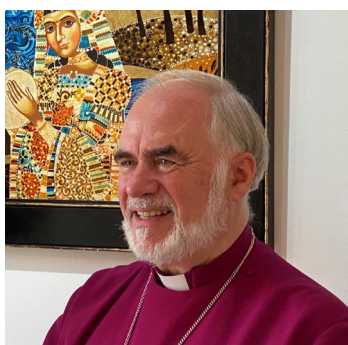
[www.silviadimitrova.co.uk](http://www.silviadimitrova.co.uk)



**Dr Tristan Latchford** was born in England in 1997 and studied music at Bachelors and Masters levels at St Chad's College, Durham, where he was Director of Music. He has just completed his PhD in composing at the Peabody Institute of Johns Hopkins University and lives in Swaffham Prior, near Cambridge. Working internationally, he has held posts as composer-in-residence at the Seoul Oratorio and Palatine Studios. Commissions include 'A Celebration of Women in the Bible' (2020), 'Prince Siddhartha' (2022), and a mass for St Etienne Du Mont (Cambridge Voices, 2022).

Tristan founded Harmonicham, a recording company in 2022, which recorded the CD, 'Celebrating Women in the Bible'.

[www.tristanlatchford.com](http://www.tristanlatchford.com) [www.harmonicham.com](http://www.harmonicham.com)



**The Rt Revd Dr Graham Kings** was born in England in 1953 and studied theology at the universities of Oxford, Cambridge and Utrecht and was an Honorary Fellow of Durham University 2015-18, where he met Tristan Latchford. Before retirement to Cambridge in 2020, he served as a curate in Harlesden, London, a missionary at St Andrew's College, Kabare, Kenya, the founding Director of the Cambridge Centre for Christianity Worldwide, Vicar of Islington, Bishop of Sherborne, and Mission Theologian in the Anglican Communion. His recent books include

Nourishing Connections: Poetry (2020) and Nourishing Mission: Theological Settings (2022). Graham is married to Alison and they have three daughters and five grandchildren.

[www.grahamkings.org](http://www.grahamkings.org)



**Andrew Earis** is Director of Music at St Martin-in-the-Fields where he oversees the music programme at this busy London church. Andrew is a graduate of the Royal College of Music and Imperial College, London, and holds a PhD from the University of Manchester. Recent performances include Mozart's Mass in C Minor with the Academy of St Martin in the Fields and Beethoven Mass in C with Southbank Sinfonia. He has given organ recitals in venues including King's College Chapel, Cambridge, Westminster Cathedral, Westminster Abbey and Washington National Cathedral, and has performed as soloist in performances of Poulenc's Organ Concerto and Saint-Saëns' Organ Symphony. In addition to his duties at St Martin's, Andrew is a regular contributor to BBC Radio's religious output as a producer of programmes including Radio 4 Sunday Worship and Radio 3 Choral Evensong.



**The Choral Scholars of St Martin in the Fields & St Stephen Walbrook** are among the most stimulating and educative choral programmes available in London. The scheme is aimed at choral singers who are either students or recent graduates wishing to embark on a professional career in singing. The Choral Scholarships provide an opportunity for ten singers to enjoy an intensive, focused period of training with others of a similar standard and interests and are an integral part of an exciting choral music programme.

The Choral Scholars performing this evening are: Laura Newey, Natalie Houlston, Ellen Griffiths, Isabelle Palmer, Lowri Bufton, Alex Milne, Ben Munden, Justin Soriano, Ed Walters and Will Harmer. Organ Scholar : Phoebe Tak Man Chow

Do stay behind for refreshments after the concert. The CD, 'Celebrating Women in the Bible' by Tristan Latchford (Harmonicham) and Nourishing Connections: Poems (Canterbury Press, 2020) by Graham Kings will be available.

Fugue State Films, founded by Will Fraser, will be making a short film on the work of Tristan Latchford. Thank you to all the sponsors who have supported the making of this film. <https://fuguestatefilms.co.uk/>

Bible quotations are from the NRSV Anglicized version.

Photos of Silvia Dimitrova's paintings are by Natalie Sloan.

Poems are by Graham Kings from Nourishing Connections: Poems (Canterbury Press, 2020).

Thank you to Reverend Stephen Baxter, Priest in Charge and Phillip Dawson, Organist and the team at St Stephen Walbrook for hosting this concert. Find out more information about the church at [www.ststephenwalbrook.net](http://www.ststephenwalbrook.net)