



# Choral Evensong for Easter Sunday



*"Walking with them, he opened up the scriptures to them..."*

Sunday 31<sup>st</sup> March 2024, 5.30pm  
St Mary's Kidlington

Wherever you are from and whatever has brought you here today, you are most welcome at this service of Choral Evensong. The music in this service is sung by the choir offering praise to God on behalf of those gathered here and around the world; the people join silently in prayer alongside them and in speaking together the Confession, The Lord's Prayer, the Creed and in singing the Hymns.

The service derives from the medieval church and is offered here in classical form from the 1662 Book of Common Prayer of the Church of England. It is deeply rooted in ancient texts and the liturgy follows a set pattern. Following the Opening Sentences, Confession, Absolution, and Lord's Prayer, the Choir sings the Preces (short petitions) and the Psalms appointed for this day in the evening. Evensong brings before us God's plan of salvation. Following the Psalms, the Old Testament lesson recalls God's promise to Abraham and looks forward to the coming of a Messiah. The Magnificat links the Old and New Testaments. It is the splendid song of the Blessed Virgin Mary before Jesus was born and has become the Church's greatest hymn of the Incarnation, by which God came to earth to save us. Following the New Testament lesson, from which we learn about Jesus's life and teaching here on earth, the Choir sings the Nunc Dimittis, the prayer of Simeon, an aged man who longed to see the Christ before he died. All then stand and, facing the altar used at the Holy Eucharist, address God in the words of the Apostles' Creed. The Officiant and the Choir then sing The Lesser Litany and the Collects: set prayers that with simplicity collect our thoughts, bidding God to strengthen our faith and protect us from all perils as evening falls. The Anthem follows, meditating on Biblical and Prayer Book texts and providing a sermon in music.

Distinct from the noisy world around us, Choral Evensong anchors us in the presence of the Living Christ. It is a place for rest and refreshment. There is space to listen to music, to pray quietly for yourself and for other people and to put down the burdens of the day.

On this Easter Sunday, we turn towards Jerusalem and recall again the good news of Jesus' resurrection from the dead, and the hope, mercy, grace and love he offers to all people for all time.

*Instructions to stand are invitations only – if it is more comfortable for you to remain seated you are welcome to do so.*

*You are invited to stand for the entry of the Choir and Clergy*

## **Welcome**

### **Hymn**

Ye choirs of new Jerusalem,  
your sweetest notes employ,  
the Paschal victory to hymn  
in strains of holy joy.

For Judah's lion bursts his chains  
crushing the serpent's head;  
and cries aloud through death's domains,  
to wake the imprisoned dead.

Triumphant in His glory now  
to Him all power is given;  
To Him in one communion bow  
all saints in earth and heaven.

While we, His soldiers, praise our king,  
his mercy we implore,  
Within His palace bright to bring  
and keep us evermore.

All glory to the Father be,  
all glory to the Son,  
all glory, Holy Ghost, to thee,  
while endless ages run. Alleluia, Amen.

Fulbert of Chartres, tr: Robert Campbell

### **Introduction**

DEARLY beloved, the Scripture moveth us in sundry places  
to acknowledge and confess our manifold sins and wickedness;  
and that we should not dissemble nor cloke them  
before the face of Almighty God our heavenly Father;  
but confess them with an humble, lowly, penitent,  
and obedient heart;  
to the end that we may obtain forgiveness of the same,  
by his infinite goodness and mercy.

And although we ought at all times humbly to acknowledge  
our sins before God;  
yet ought we most chiefly so to do,  
when we assemble and meet together to render thanks  
for the great benefits that we have received at his hands,  
to set forth his most worthy praise,  
to hear his most holy Word,  
and to ask those things which are requisite and necessary,  
as well for the body as the soul.  
Wherefore I pray and beseech you,  
as many as are here present,  
to accompany me with a pure heart and humble voice  
unto the throne of the heavenly grace, saying after me:

*You are invited to sit or kneel*

**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.**

**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.  
For thine is the kingdom, the power, and the glory,  
For ever and ever. Amen.**

*Please sit*

*The preces and responses this evening are sung to the setting by John Reading (d.1692)*

Cantor O Lord, open thou our lips.  
Choir And our mouth shall shew forth thy praise.  
Cantor O God, make speed to save us.  
Choir O Lord, make haste to help us.  
Cantor 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.  
Cantor Praise ye the Lord.  
Choir The Lord's Name be praised.

## **Psalm 114**

- 1 When Israel came out of Egypt:  
and the house of Jacob from among the strange people,
- 2 Judah was his sanctuary:  
and Israel his dominion.
- 3 The sea saw that, and fled:  
Jordan was driven back.
- 4 The mountains skipped like rams:  
and the little hills like young sheep.
- 5 What aileth thee, O thou sea, that thou fleddest:  
and thou Jordan, that thou wast driven back?
- 6 Ye mountains, that ye skipped like rams:  
and ye little hills, like young sheep?
- 7 Tremble, thou earth, at the presence of the Lord:  
at the presence of the God of Jacob;
- 8 Who turned the hard rock into a standing water:  
and the flint-stone into a springing well.

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.

## **Old Testament Reading: Ezekiel 37.1–14**

<sup>37</sup> The hand of the Lord came upon me, and he brought me out by the spirit of the Lord and set me down in the middle of a valley; it was full of bones. He led me all round them; there were very many lying in the valley, and they were very dry.

He said to me, 'Mortal, can these bones live?'

I answered, 'O Lord God, you know.'

Then he said to me, 'Prophecy to these bones, and say to them:

O dry bones, hear the word of the Lord. Thus says the Lord God to these bones: I will cause breath to enter you, and you shall live. I will lay sinews on you, and will cause flesh to come upon you, and cover you with skin, and put breath in you, and you shall live; and you shall know that I am the Lord.'

So I prophesied as I had been commanded; and as I prophesied, suddenly there was a noise, a rattling, and the bones came together, bone to its bone. I looked, and there were sinews on them, and flesh had come upon them, and skin had covered them; but there was no breath in them.

Then God said to me,

'Prophecy to the breath, prophecy, mortal, and say to the breath:

Thus says the Lord God: Come from the four winds, O breath, and breathe upon these slain, that they may live.'

I prophesied as he commanded me, and the breath came into them, and they lived, and stood on their feet, a vast multitude.

Then God said to me,

'Mortal, these bones are the whole house of Israel. They say, "Our bones are dried up, and our hope is lost; we are cut off completely." Therefore prophecy, and say to them,

Thus says the Lord God: I am going to open your graves, and bring you up from your graves, O my people; and I will bring you back to the land of Israel. And you shall know that I am the Lord, when I open your graves, and bring you up from your graves, O my people. I will put my spirit within you, and you shall live, and I will place you on your own soil; then you shall know that I, the Lord, have spoken and will act, says the Lord.'

*You are invited to stand*

*The canticles this evening are sung to the setting by Herbert Sumsion (1899-1995)*

## **Magnificat: Luke 1:46-55**

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.**

*Please sit*

## **New Testament Reading: Luke 24.13-35**

Now on that same day two of them were going to a village called Emmaus, about seven miles from Jerusalem, and talking with each other about all these things that had happened. While they were talking and discussing, Jesus himself came near and went with them, but their eyes were kept from recognizing him. And he said to them, 'What are you discussing with each other while you walk along?'

They stood still, looking sad. Then one of them, whose name was Cleopas, answered him, 'Are you the only stranger in Jerusalem who does not know the things that have taken place there in these days?' He asked them, 'What things?'

They replied, 'The things about Jesus of Nazareth, who was a prophet mighty in deed and word before God and all the people, and how our chief priests and leaders handed him over to be condemned to death and crucified him.'

But we had hoped that he was the one to redeem Israel. Yes, and besides all this, it is now the third day since these things took place. Moreover, some women of our group astounded us. They were at the tomb early this morning, and when they did not find his body there, they came back and told us that they had indeed seen a vision of angels who said that he was alive. Some of those who were with us went to the tomb and found it just as the women had said; but they did not see him.'

Then he said to them, 'Oh, how foolish you are, and how slow of heart to believe all that the prophets have declared! Was it not necessary that the Messiah should suffer these things and then enter into his glory?' Then beginning with Moses and all the prophets, he interpreted to them the things about himself in all the scriptures.

As they came near the village to which they were going, he walked ahead as if he were going on. But they urged him strongly, saying, 'Stay with us, because it is almost evening and the day is now nearly over.' So he went in to stay with them.

When he was at the table with them, he took bread, blessed and broke it, and gave it to them. Then their eyes were opened, and they recognized him; and he vanished from their sight.

They said to each other, 'Were not our hearts burning within us while he was talking to us on the road, while he was opening the scriptures to us?'

That same hour they got up and returned to Jerusalem; and they found the eleven and their companions gathered together. They were saying, 'The Lord has risen indeed, and he has appeared to Simon!' Then they told what had happened on the road, and how he had been made known to them in the breaking of the bread.

*You are invited to stand*

### **Nunc Dimittis: Luke 2:29-32**

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.



*You are invited to turn to face the East Window*

## **The Apostles' Creed**

Let us declare our faith in God, saying together:

**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 Catholick Church;  
The Communion of Saints;  
The Forgiveness of sins;  
The Resurrection of the body,  
And the Life everlasting. Amen.**

Cantor    The Lord be with you.

Choir      And with thy spirit.

Cantor    Let us pray.

*You are invited to sit or kneel*

Cantor    Lord, have mercy upon us

Choir      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.

Cantor    O Lord, shew thy mercy upon us.

Choir      And grant us thy salvation.

Cantor    O Lord, save the King.

Choir      And mercifully hear us when we call upon thee.

Cantor Endue thy Ministers with righteousness.  
Choir And make thy chosen people joyful.  
Cantor O Lord, save thy people.  
Choir And bless thine inheritance.  
Cantor Give peace in our time, O Lord.  
Choir Because there is none other that fighteth for us, but only thou, O God.  
Cantor O God, make clean our hearts within us.  
Choir And take not thy Holy Spirit from us.

### **The First Collect: Collect of the Day**

O God, who for our redemption didst give thine only-begotten Son to the death of the cross, and by his glorious resurrection hast delivered us from the power of our enemy: Grant us to die daily unto sin, that we may evermore live with him in the joy of his resurrection; through the same Jesus Christ our Lord.

### **The Second Collect: 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 Third Collect: 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.

**Anthem:** Greater Love, John Ireland (1879 – 1962)

### **Reflection**

### **Prayers**

*Ending with the congregation saying the Grace*

**The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God,  
and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit,  
be with us all evermore. Amen.**

*You are invited to stand*

## **Hymn**

Love's redeeming work is done;  
fought the fight, the battle won:  
lo, our Sun's eclipse is o'er,  
lo, he sets in blood no more.

Vain the stone, the watch, the seal;  
Christ has burst the gates of hell;  
death in vain forbids his rise;  
Christ has opened paradise.

Lives again our glorious King;  
where, O death, is now thy sting?  
dying once, he all doth save;  
where thy victory, O grave?

Soar we now where Christ has led,  
following our exalted Head;  
made like him, like him we rise;  
ours the cross, the grave, the skies.

Hail the Lord of earth and heaven!  
Praise to thee by both be given:  
thee we greet triumphant now;  
hail, the Resurrection Thou!

Charles Wesley (1707-1788)

## **Blessing**

The peace of God, which passeth all understanding,  
keep our hearts and minds in the knowledge and love of God,  
and of his son Jesus Christ our Lord:  
and the blessing of God almighty,  
the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit,  
be amongst us and remain with us always.

**Amen.**

*You are invited to remain standing as the Choir and Clergy depart.  
You are welcome to sit for the organ voluntary, or leave whenever you  
feel ready.*

**Organ Voluntary** Recessional, Grayston Ives

*Thank you for being with us.*

*Our next Choral Evensong is on Sunday 19<sup>th</sup> May.*

*There is no evensong in April.*