



Choral Evensong



5.30pm Sunday 17th May 2026

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.

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 AMNS 4

1 Christ, whose glory fills the skies,
Christ, the true, the only light,
Sun of Righteousness, arise,
triumph o'er the shades of night;
Dayspring from on high, be near;
Daystar, in my heart appear.

2 Dark and cheerless is the morn
unaccompanied by thee;
joyless is the day's return,
till thy mercy's beams I see,
till they inward light impart,
glad my eyes, and warm my heart.

3 Visit then this soul of mine,
pierce the gloom of sin and grief;
fill me, radiance divine,
scatter all my unbelief;
more and more thyself display,
shining to the perfect day.

Please sit or kneel

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:

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.**

Evening Prayer

Please sit

*The Preces and Responses this evening are sung to the setting by
Smith*

Minister O Lord, open thou our lips.
Choir And our mouth shall shew forth thy praise.
Minister O God, make speed to save us.
Choir O Lord, make haste to help us.

Choir 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: 111 (Chant: Grayston Ives)

I will give thanks unto the Lord with my whole heart:
secretly among the faithful and in the congregation.

The works of the Lord are great:
sought out of all them that have pleasure therein.

His work is worthy to be praised and had in honour:
and his righteousness endureth forever.

The merciful and gracious Lord hath so done his marvellous works:
that they ought to be had in remembrance.

He hath given meat unto them that fear him:
he shall ever be mindful of his covenant.

He hath shewed his people the power of his works:
that he may give them the heritage of the heathen.

The works of his hands are verity and judgement:
all his commandments are true.

They stand fast, forever and ever:
and are done in truth and equity.

He sent redemption unto his people:
he hath commanded his covenant forever,
holy and reverend is his name.

The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom:
a good understanding have all they that do thereafter,
the praise of it endures forever.

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: 2 Samuel 23.1–5

These are the last words of David:

The oracle of David, son of Jesse,
the oracle of the man whom God exalted,
the anointed of the God of Jacob,
the favourite of the Strong One of Israel:

² The spirit of the Lord speaks through me,
his word is upon my tongue.

³ The God of Israel has spoken,
the Rock of Israel has said to me:

One who rules over people justly,
ruling in the fear of God,
⁴ is like the light of morning,
like the sun rising on a cloudless morning,
gleaming from the rain on the grassy land.
⁵ Is not my house like this with God?
For he has made with me an everlasting covenant,
ordered in all things and secure.
Will he not cause to prosper
all my help and my desire?

Here ends the first reading

*The canticles this evening are sung to the setting by Willan in E flat.
You are invited to stand as the Choir sings:*

Magnificat: Luke 1

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: Ephesians 1:15-end

St Paul writes:

I have heard of your faith in the Lord Jesus and your love towards all the saints, and for this reason ¹⁶I do not cease to give thanks for you as I remember you in my prayers.

¹⁷I pray that the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, may give you a spirit of wisdom and revelation as you come to know him, ¹⁸so that, with the eyes of your heart enlightened, you may know what is the hope to which he has called you, what are the riches of his glorious inheritance among the saints, ¹⁹and what is the immeasurable greatness of his power for us who believe, according to the working of his great power.

²⁰God put this power to work in Christ when he raised him from the dead and seated him at his right hand in the heavenly places, ²¹far above all rule and authority and power and dominion, and above every name that is named, not only in this age but also in the age to come. ²²And he has put all things under his feet and has made him the head over all things for the church, ²³which is his body, the fullness of him who fills all in all.

Here ends the second reading

You are invited to stand as the Choir sings:

Nunc Dimittis: Luke 2:29

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

**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.**

Minister The Lord be with you.

Choir And with thy spirit.

Minister Let us pray.

Please sit or kneel

Minister Lord, have mercy upon us

Choir Christ, have mercy upon us.

Minister 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.

Minister O Lord, shew thy mercy upon us.

Choir And grant us thy salvation.

Minister O Lord, save the King.

Choir And mercifully hear us when we call upon thee.

Minister Endue thy Ministers with righteousness.

Choir And make thy chosen people joyful.

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

The First Collect: Collect of the Day

Risen, ascended Lord, as we rejoice at your triumph,
 fill your Church on earth with power and compassion,
 that all who are estranged by sin
 may find forgiveness and know your peace,
 to the glory of God the Father. Amen.

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.

Choir Anthem:

Lo, the full final sacrifice, Gerald Finzi (1946)

<i>Lo, the full, final sacrifice</i>	<i>Lift our lean Souls, and set us up</i>
<i>On which all figures fix'd their eyes,</i>	<i>Convictors of thine own full cup,</i>
<i>The ransom'd Isaac, and his ram;</i>	<i>Coheirs of Saints. That so all may</i>
<i>The Manna, and the Paschal lamb.</i>	<i>Drink the same wine; and the same</i>
<i>Jesu Master, just and true!</i>	<i>way.</i>
<i>Our Food, and faithful Shepherd too!</i>	<i>Nor change the Pasture, but the</i>
<i>O let that love which thus makes</i>	<i>Place</i>
<i>thee</i>	<i>To feed of Thee in thine own Face.</i>
<i>Mix with our low Mortality,</i>	

*O dear Memorial of that Death
Which lives still, and allows us
breath!*

*Rich, Royal food! Bountiful Bread!
Whose use denies us to the dead!*

*Live ever Bread of loves, and be
My life, my soul, my surer self to
me.*

*Help Lord, my Faith, my Hope
increase;*

And fill my portion in thy peace.

*Give love for life; nor let my days
Grow, but in new powers to thy
name and praise.*

*Rise, Royal Sion! rise and sing
Thy soul's kind shepherd, thy heart's
King.*

*Stretch all thy powers; call if you can
Harps of heaven to hands of man.
This sovereign subject sits above
The best ambition of thy love.*

*Lo the Bread of Life, this day's
Triumphant Text provokes thy
praise.*

[Sermon]

Prayers

This response may be used:

Lord, in your mercy
Receive our prayer.

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 Ghost,
be with us all evermore. Amen.**

You are invited to stand

*The living and life-giving bread,
To the great twelve distributed
When Life, himself, at point to die
Of love, was his own Legacy.*

*O soft self-wounding Pelican!
Whose breast weeps Balm for
wounded man.*

*All this way bend thy benign flood
To a bleeding Heart that gasps for
blood.*

*That blood, whose least drops
sovereign be*

To wash my worlds of sins from me.

*Come love! Come Lord! and that
long day*

*For which I languish, come away.
When this dry soul those eyes shall
see,*

*And drink the unseal'd source of
thee.*

*When Glory's sun faith's shades shall
chase,*

And for thy veil give me thy Face.

Amen.

Hymn AMNS 532

1 Ye watchers and ye holy ones,
bright Seraphs, Cherubim and Thrones,
raise the glad strain, Alleluia.
Cry out, Dominions, Princedoms, Powers,
Virtues, Archangels, Angels' choirs,
Alleluia, alleluia, alleluia, alleluia, alleluia.

2 O higher than the Cherubim,
more glorious than the Seraphim,
lead their praises, Alleluia.
Thou Bearer of the eternal Word,
most gracious, magnify the Lord.
Alleluia...

3 Respond, ye souls in endless rest,
ye Patriarchs and Prophets blest,
Alleluia, alleluia.
Ye holy Twelve, ye Martyrs strong,
all Saints triumphant, raise the song
Alleluia...

4 O friends, in gladness let us sing,
supernal anthems echoing,
Alleluia, alleluia.
To God the Father, God the Son,
and God the Spirit, Three in One,
Alleluia...

Blessing

...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 invited to sit and listen to the organ voluntary,
or leave whenever you feel ready.*

Organ Voluntary: Prelude in E flat major BWV 552 - Bach

*Thank you for joining us.
Our next evensong will be on 21st June 2026*