

HOLY TRINITY
CHURCH
STRATFORD-UPON-AVON



Choral Evensong

Welcome to this service of Choral Evensong according to the Book of Common Prayer.

From the earliest times, Christians have gathered at regular hours during each day and night to respond to God's Word with praise on behalf of all creation and with intercession for the salvation of the world. In monastic communities this developed typically into eight occasions of prayer daily. When Thomas Cranmer sought to create a pattern of prayer that could be shared by clergy and laity alike, he wanted all people, not just the 'professionally religious' to follow a disciplined pattern of daily prayer. In the first English prayer book of 1549 he therefore adapted elements of the monastic services to create the two daily 'offices' of Mattins and Evensong. These were re-issued in 1662 as part of the Book of Common Prayer we use tonight.

The daily pattern of prayer based on the Cranmer's work continues each weekday in said Morning and Evening Prayer here at Holy Trinity. On Sundays, Choral Evensong marks this special day when Christians commemorate both the day of Christ's resurrection and the first day of creation. The choir sing for us an Anthem (and sometimes also an Introit), along with part of the Book of Psalms and settings of the canticles taken from Luke's gospel (the Magnificat and Nunc Dimittis). As we listen to these ancient words set to beautiful music, we are drawn into the worship of God without having to be concerned with the sound of our own voice. Instead we are invited to share in the timeless worship of heaven, which as Christians we believe continues night and day whether we are aware of it or not.

A Personal Prayer of Preparation

O Holy Father, give us grace to praise thee not only with our lips,
but also with our ears and minds;
and grant that when our worship is ended
we may continue to glorify thee in our lives,
to the honour of Jesus Christ our Lord.
Amen.

Front Cover: John de Stratford (Archbishop of Canterbury 1333–1348) at prayer with choir. Detail from the Beckett chapel window.
Photo: John Cheal.

***Please stand as the Choir and Clergy enter the church
and process to the stalls***

THE INTROIT may be sung by the Choir

THE PRECES

Cantor O Lord open thou our lips.
Choir And our mouth shall show forth thy praise.

Cantor 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.

Cantor Praise ye the Lord.
Choir The Lord's name be praised.

HYMN

Please sit

THE PSALM(S) sung by the Choir

Please stand for the Gloria:

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

THE OLD TESTAMENT LESSON

Please stand

THE MAGNIFICAT is sung by the Choir

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

LUKE 1.46-55

Please sit

THE NEW TESTAMENT LESSON

Please stand

THE NUNC DIMITTIS is sung by the Choir

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.

LUKE 2.29-32

Please remain standing for:

THE APOSTLES' CREED

All 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 VERSICLES AND RESPONSES

Cantor The Lord be with you.
Choir And with thy spirit.

Cantor Let us pray.

Please kneel or sit

Choir Lord have mercy upon us.
Christ have mercy upon us.
Lord have mercy upon us.

Choir 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, show 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 Collect(s) of the Day

Choir Amen.

The Second Collect, for Peace

Cantor 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.

Choir Amen.

The Third Collect, for Aid against all Perils

Cantor 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.

Choir Amen.

Please sit

THE ANTHEM

Please stand

HYMN

Please sit

THE SERMON

Please remain seated or kneel

THE PRAYERS *concluding with THE GRACE:*

All 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.

Please stand

HYMN during which a collection may be taken

THE BLESSING

THE FINAL RESPONSES may be sung

Cantor The Lord be with you.

Choir And with thy Spirit.

Cantor Let us bless the Lord.

Choir Thanks be to God.

Please remain standing as the Choir and Clergy depart

VOLUNTARY *you are invited to stay and listen until the end of the
voluntary if you wish*