

ST EDMUND HALL

Choral Evensong

Vigil before the Conversion of St Paul



‘Wonder and Calling’
Speaker: The Chaplain

24 January 2021

5.30 pm

Evensong in our time: Epiphany and Lent during lockdown

Evensong is one of the Church of England's ancient services. It provides an open and generous space for quiet and reflection, for song and speech and prayer, as it draws from biblical readings, canticles, and the Church's long tradition of hymns.

Our Evensong series this term, 'Wonder and...', takes its cue from the seasons in the Church year. We begin in the season of Epiphany, a time for reflecting on the wonders of God: great events in the life of Christ, the marvels of nature, the miracle of divine activity among the saints of the past and among us today. We will also enter the season of Lent before long, when Christians have typically reflected on 'going back to basics': thinking afresh about faith, hope, love, and other fundamentals; returning to disciplines of prayer, fasting, and charity.

This all takes place in the context of lockdown and illness, with its isolation, frustrations, sadness, difficulties, and many strange qualities. The Psalmist in exile said, 'How can we sing the Lord's song in a foreign land?' Perhaps we feel the same. How can we still wonder, still believe, amid these crushing realities? Perhaps Epiphany and Lent have something to teach us. We shall find out together.

*We are nearly all on Zoom. We invite everyone to join in, as they are able, by listening attentively to the choir, readers, and ministers, and by saying together (on mute) those prayers that are marked in **bold**: the Lord's Prayer, the Grace, and the Amens. We would encourage you to sing along, too (on mute).*

Zoom link at:

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/87112377996?pwd=bm9zMWZreEl4M1RiK2toOXNvNW9aZz09>

The cover image is a detail of from a stained glass of St Paul's Conversion in the chapel of St John's College, Oxford. Photo by Fr Lawrence Lew, OP.

ORGAN VOLUNTARY

SENTENCE (Isaiah 42:6):

“I the LORD have called thee in righteousness, and will hold thine hand, and will keep thee, and give thee for a covenant of the people, for a light of the Gentiles.”

The chaplain offers words of welcome, followed by the **PRECES & RESPONSES:**

Choir: O Lord, open thou our lips,
and our mouth shall shew forth thy praise.

Choir: O God make speed to save us.
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.

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

Music: Plainsong

The choir sings **PSALM 66:1-7:**

1 O BE joyful in God, all ye lands :
sing praises unto the honour of his Name,
make his praise to be glorious.

- 2 Say unto God, O how wonderful art thou in thy works :
through the greatness of thy power shall thine enemies
be found liars unto thee.
- 3 For all the world shall worship thee :
sing of thee, and praise thy Name.
- 4 O come hither, and behold the works of God :
how wonderful he is in his doing toward the children of men.
- 5 He turned the sea into dry land :
so that they went through the water on foot;
there did we rejoice thereof.
- 6 He ruleth with his power for ever; his eyes behold the people :
and such as will not believe shall not be able to exalt themselves.
- 7 O praise our God, ye people :
and make the voice of his praise to be heard.

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.

Music: James Turle (1802-1882)

The **FIRST LESSON** (Genesis 28:10-22):

Jacob left Beer-sheba and went toward Haran. He came to a certain place and stayed there for the night, because the sun had set. Taking one of the stones of the place, he put it under his head and lay down in that place. And he dreamed that there was a ladder set up on the

earth, the top of it reaching to heaven; and the angels of God were ascending and descending on it.

And the LORD stood beside him and said, “I am the LORD, the God of Abraham your father and the God of Isaac; the land on which you lie I will give to you and to your offspring; and your offspring shall be like the dust of the earth, and you shall spread abroad to the west and to the east and to the north and to the south; and all the families of the earth shall be blessed in you and in your offspring. Know that I am with you and will keep you wherever you go, and will bring you back to this land; for I will not leave you until I have done what I have promised you.” Then Jacob woke from his sleep and said, “Surely the LORD is in this place—and I did not know it!” And he was afraid, and said, “How awesome is this place! This is none other than the house of God, and this is the gate of heaven.”

So Jacob rose early in the morning, and he took the stone that he had put under his head and set it up for a pillar and poured oil on the top of it. He called that place Bethel; but the name of the city was Luz at the first. Then Jacob made a vow, saying, “If God will be with me, and will keep me in this way that I go, and will give me bread to eat and clothing to wear, so that I come again to my father’s house in peace, then the LORD shall be my God, and this stone, which I have set up for a pillar, shall be God’s house; and of all that you give me I will surely give one-tenth to you.”

*The choir sings the **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 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.

Music: Gregorian chant, Tone 3ii

The **SECOND LESSON** (Acts 22:3-16):

“I am a Jew, born in Tarsus in Cilicia, but brought up in this city at the feet of Gamaliel, educated strictly according to our ancestral law, being zealous for God, just as all of you are today. I persecuted this Way up to the point of death by binding both men and women and putting them in prison, as the high priest and the whole council of elders can testify about me. From them I also received letters to the brothers in Damascus, and I went there in order to bind those who were there and to bring them back to Jerusalem for punishment.

“While I was on my way and approaching Damascus, about noon a great light from heaven suddenly shone about me. I fell to the ground and heard a voice saying to me, ‘Saul, Saul, why are you persecuting me?’ I answered, ‘Who are you, Lord?’ Then he said to

me, 'I am Jesus of Nazareth whom you are persecuting.' Now those who were with me saw the light but did not hear the voice of the one who was speaking to me. I asked, 'What am I to do, Lord?' The Lord said to me, 'Get up and go to Damascus; there you will be told everything that has been assigned to you to do.' Since I could not see because of the brightness of that light, those who were with me took my hand and led me to Damascus.

“A certain Ananias, who was a devout man according to the law and well spoken of by all the Jews living there, came to me; and standing beside me, he said, 'Brother Saul, regain your sight!' In that very hour I regained my sight and saw him. Then he said, 'The God of our ancestors has chosen you to know his will, to see the Righteous One and to hear his own voice; for you will be his witness to all the world of what you have seen and heard. And now why do you delay? Get up, be baptized, and have your sins washed away, calling on his name.'

The **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.

Music: Gregorian chant, Tone 3ii

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 **LESSER LITANY:**

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

Let us pray.
Lord, have mercy upon us.
Choir: Christ, have mercy upon us.
Lord, have mercy upon us.

Our Father,
All: **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.
Choir: And grant us thy salvation.

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

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

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

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

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

COLLECT OF THE DAY:

O GOD, who, through the preaching of the blessed Apostle Saint Paul, hast caused the light of the Gospel to shine throughout the world: Grant, we beseech thee, that we,

having his wonderful conversion in remembrance, may shew forth our thankfulness unto thee for the same, by following the holy doctrine which he taught; through Jesus Christ our Lord.

Choir: Amen.

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.

Choir: Amen.

COLLECT FOR AID AGAINST 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.

Choir: Amen.

Music: Plainsong

The **ADDRESS**

“Wonder and Calling”
The Chaplain

The **INTERCESSIONS** *may include this response:*

All: Lord, in thy mercy
hear our prayer.

Prayers conclude 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.**

*The Chaplain gives NOTICES and the choir then sings the Hymn JESUS CALL
US O'ER THE TUMULT (NEH 200), omitting v. 2:*

Jesus calls us! O'er the tumult
Of our life's wild restless sea
Day by day his voice is sounding,
Saying, 'Christian follow me':

Jesus calls us from the worship
Of the vain world's golden store,
From each idol that would keep us,
Saying, 'Christian, love me more'.

In our joys and in our sorrows,
Days of toil and hours of ease,
Still he calls, in cares and pleasures,
'Christian, love me more than these'.

Jesus calls us! By thy mercies,
Saviour, may we hear thy call,
Give our hearts to thy obedience,
Serve and love thee best of all.

Words: C.F. Alexander (1818-1895)
Music: *St Andrew* by E.H. Thorne (1834-1916)

The **BLESSING**

The **ORGAN VOLUNTARY**

Helft mir Gottes Güte preisen', J.S. Bach (1685-1750)

The **COLLECTIONS** this term will go to the charity Shelter, providing relief to those hit hardest by the Covid-19 outbreak. We invite all who can to give generously.

Chapel Activities Online

Evening Prayer, Monday-Thursday (6pm)

Zoom link:

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/87112377996?pwd=bn9zMWZreEl4M1RiK2toOXNvNW9aZz09>

Credo, Wednesdays (4:30pm)

A short enquirers' course for those preparing for baptism or confirmation, and those interested in learning more about Christian faith. Please contact the Chaplain if you're interested in joining.

Night Prayer at Nine, led by Oxford chaplaincies and the University Church

Every night at 9pm except Saturday. Broadcast from the University Church's [Facebook page](#).