

## Evening Prayer for Lent

*with sacred music for meditation and devotion*

*from Handel's 'Messiah'*

15<sup>th</sup> March 2026, 4pm

# *Welcome to Coventry Cathedral*

During the season of Lent, our usual pattern of Choral Evensong gives way on these Sundays to a quieter form of Evening Prayer, shaped by music offered by the Cathedral Choir. In these weeks, sacred music becomes a companion to the liturgy, helping us to listen more deeply to scripture and to the still, small voice of God.

The music you will hear this evening is offered not as a performance but as prayer. Through the gift of sung prayer, the Choir carries the words of faith, lament, hope, and devotion on behalf of us all. You are warmly invited simply to rest in the beauty of the music, to allow the words and harmonies to speak to the heart, and to be held by the rhythm of prayer that has echoed in cathedrals and churches for centuries.

Whether you come in faith, curiosity or quiet seeking, may this time of prayer and music offer space for reflection, peace and a deeper awareness of God's presence among us.

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*The image on the front cover is a detail from 'Christ in the Wilderness', painted in 1872 by Ivan Kramskoi (1837–1887), The State Tretyakov Gallery, Moscow, Russia.*

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*The Congregation are invited to be seated in the stalls in the chancel.*

## **Introduction**

*The Reverend Su McClellan, presiding, says;*

Dearly beloved in Christ,  
in this holy season of Lent we are called again to walk with our Lord in the way of penitence, renewal, and hope. This evening's service gives place for a time of listening and stillness; wherein sacred music shall be our teacher and our prayer.

For music has ever served the Church not only to adorn our worship, but to deepen it: to give voice to grief we cannot name, to longing we scarcely understand, and to the promise of redemption set before us in Christ Jesus.

Tonight, we are invited to listen and to dwell: to let these sacred sounds of our worship shape our thoughts, still our hearts, and draw us more fully into the mystery of these days that lead us towards Holy Week and the Cross.

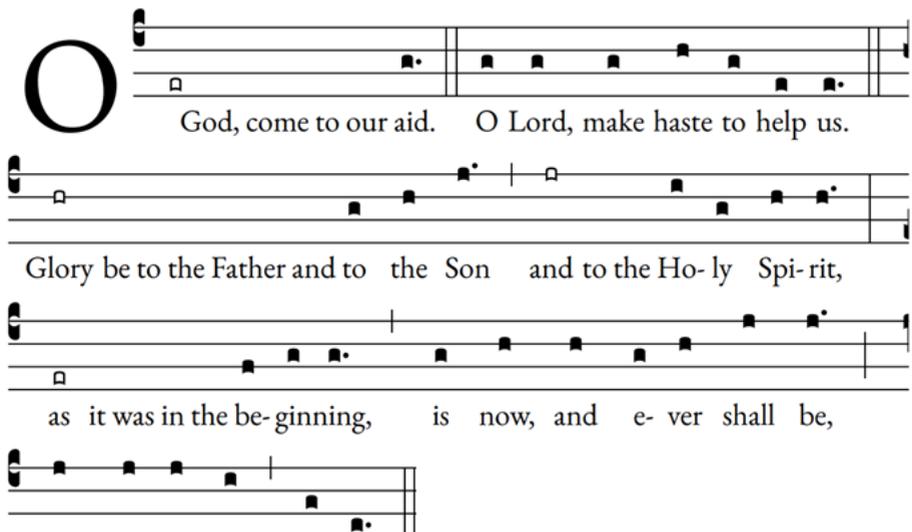
Through these Lenten excerpts from *Messiah*, we behold both the suffering servant and the sure hope of God's salvation, held together in music that speaks of sorrow and glory in one breath.

Let us therefore keep silence before the Lord,  
and receive this offering of music as prayer,  
that our hearts may be prepared for the passion of Christ.  
and our lives renewed in his mercy.

*We keep a moment of silence.*

## Opening Responses

We *STAND*. All join in singing;



**O** God, come to our aid. O Lord, make haste to help us.  
Glory be to the Father and to the Son and to the Ho-ly Spi-rit,  
as it was in the be-gin-ning, is now, and e-ver shall be,  
world without end. A-men.

We *SIT*.

### Psalm 31: 1-16

1. In Thee, O Lord, have I put my trust ♦  
let me never be put to confusion, deliver me in thy righteousness.
2. Bow down thine ear to me ♦  
make haste to deliver me.
3. And be thou my strong rock, and house of defence ♦  
that thou mayest save me.
4. For thou art my strong rock, and my castle ♦  
be thou also my guide, and lead me for thy Name's sake.
5. Draw me out of the net that they have laid privily for me ♦  
for thou art my strength.
6. Into thy hands I commend my spirit ♦  
for thou hast redeemed me, O Lord, thou God of truth.

7. I have hated them that hold of superstitious vanities ♦  
and my trust hath been in the Lord.
8. I will be glad and rejoice in thy mercy ♦  
for thou hast considered my trouble,  
and hast known my soul in adversities.
9. Thou hast not shut me up into the hand of the enemy ♦  
but hast set my feet in a large room.
10. Have mercy upon me, O Lord, for I am in trouble ♦  
and mine eye is consumed for very heaviness;  
yea, my soul and my body.
11. For my life is waxen old with heaviness ♦  
and my years with mourning.
12. My strength faileth me, because of mine iniquity ♦  
and my bones are consumed.
13. I became a reproof among all mine enemies,  
but especially among my neighbours ♦  
and they of mine acquaintance were afraid of me;  
and they that did see me without conveyed themselves from me.
14. I am clean forgotten, as a dead man out of mind ♦  
I am become like a broken vessel.
15. For I have heard the blasphemy of the multitude ♦  
and fear is on every side, while they conspire together against me,  
and take their counsel to take away my life.
16. But my hope hath been in thee, O Lord ♦  
I have said, Thou art my God.

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.

## Reading

*The Reverend Su McClellan reads from the precentor's stall.*

A reading from the Book of the Prophet Isaiah.

<sup>1</sup> Who has believed what we have heard?

And to whom has the arm of the Lord been revealed?

<sup>2</sup> For he grew up before him like a young plant  
and like a root out of dry ground;

he had no form or majesty that we should look at him,  
nothing in his appearance that we should desire him.

<sup>3</sup> He was despised and rejected by others;

a man of suffering and acquainted with infirmity,  
and as one from whom others hide their faces  
he was despised, and we held him of no account.

<sup>4</sup> Surely he has borne our infirmities  
and carried our diseases,

yet we accounted him stricken,  
struck down by God, and afflicted.

<sup>5</sup> But he was wounded for our transgressions,  
crushed for our iniquities;

upon him was the punishment that made us whole,  
and by his bruises we are healed.

<sup>6</sup> All we like sheep have gone astray;  
we have all turned to our own way,

and the Lord has laid on him  
the iniquity of us all.

*Isaiah 53: 1-6*

Here ends the lesson.

We *STAND*. The choir sing;

## Magnificat, Tone I

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 showed 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.

## Prayers of Intercession

*We SIT or KNEEL. The president says,*

Gracious God,

you sent your Son to be the servant of all and the healer of our wounds:

give us grace to behold his suffering,

that we may learn repentance, patience, and trust in your redeeming love;

through Jesus Christ our Lord.

**Amen.**

Lord Jesus Christ,

rejected and yet raised in glory:

teach us to bear one another's burdens,

and to walk the way of the Cross with humility and faith,

that our lives may show forth your mercy in a wounded world.

**Amen.**

Merciful God,

upon your Son you laid the brokenness of us all:

forgive what we have been,

renew what we are,

and shape what we shall become;

that we may delight in your will and walk in your ways,

to the glory of your holy name.

**Amen.**

God of consolation and hope,

you speak peace to your people in their sorrow:

receive the prayers of your Church,

and make our listening a true offering of the heart,

that, comforted by your promises,

we may live as servants of your kingdom;

through Jesus Christ our Lord.

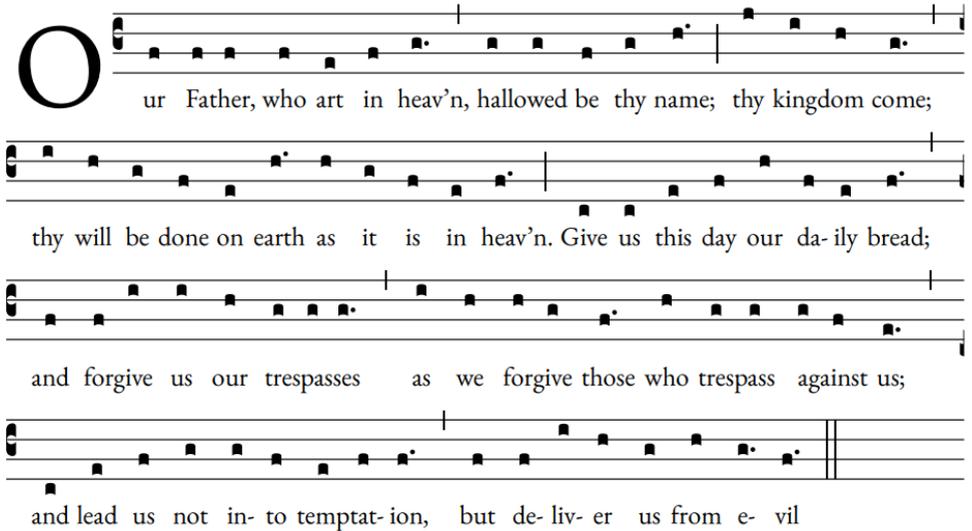
**Amen.**

**The Lord's Prayer**

*The president says;*

Gathering our prayers into one,  
as Christ has taught, we are bold to pray:

*All join in singing;*



**O**ur Father, who art in heav'n, hallowed be thy name; thy kingdom come;  
thy will be done on earth as it is in heav'n. Give us this day our da-ily bread;  
and forgive us our trespasses as we forgive those who trespass against us;  
and lead us not in- to temptat- ion, but de- liv- er us from e- vil

## The Collect

Grant, we beseech thee, Almighty God, that we, who from our evil deeds do worthily deserve to be punished, by the comfort of thy grace may mercifully be relieved; through our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ.



**A- men.**

## Introduction to the sacred music meditation

*The president says;*

This evening, we listen in the light of the prophet's words: "He was despised and rejected... a man of sorrows and acquainted with grief." In these selected movements from Handel's *Messiah*, the music gives voice to Isaiah's vision of the Suffering Servant, bearing the wounds of the world and the hope of God's redemption. Let this be for us not performance but a sung prayer, a space for stillness and reflection, as we turn our hearts towards the Passion of Christ and prepare for the way that leads to Holy Week.

### **Sacred Music Meditation – Lenten Movements from 'Messiah'**

*Though often associated with Christmas, much of Handel's Messiah was written for Lent and Easter. These excerpts focus on Christ's Passion, sacrifice, and the promise of redemption. Through reflective arias and choruses drawn from Scripture, the music invites quiet contemplation and prepares us for the journey toward Easter.*

His yoke is easy, and His burden is light.

*Matthew 11:30*

"Behold the Lamb of God, that taketh away the sin of the world.

*John 1:29*

He was despised and rejected of men; a man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief. He gave His back to the smiters, and His cheeks to them that plucked off the hair: He hid not His face from shame and spitting.

*Isaiah 53:3, John 1:6*

Surely He hath borne our griefs and carried our sorrows; He was wounded for our transgressions, He was bruised for our iniquities; the chastisement of our peace was upon Him.

*Isaiah 53:4–5*

And with His stripes we are healed.

*Isaiah 53:5*

All we, like sheep, have gone astray, we have turned ev'ry one to his own way; and the Lord hath laid on Him the iniquity of us all.

*Isaiah 53:6*

Thy rebuke hath broken His heart; He is full of heaviness; He looked for some to have pity on him, but there was no man, neither found He any to comfort Him.

*Psalms 69:20*

Behold, and see if there be any sorrow like unto His sorrow.

*Lamentations 1:12*

He was cut off out of the land of the living; for the transgression of Thy people was He stricken.

*Isaiah 53:8*

But Thou didst not leave His soul in hell; nor didst Thou suffer thy Holy One to see corruption.

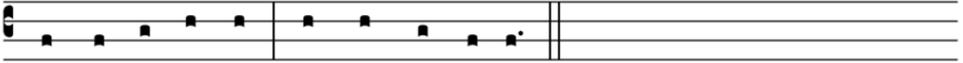
*Psalms 16:10*

The Lord gave the word; great was the company of the preachers.

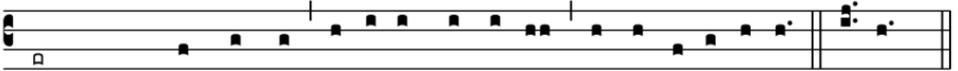
*Psalms 68:11*

*A brief moment of silence is observed, before the president stands to pronounce the blessing.*

# Blessing



The Lord be with you. **And with thy Spi-rit.**



May almighty God bless you, the Father, and the Son, and the Ho-ly Spi-rit. **A-men**



Go in the peace of Christ. **Thanks be to God.**

We **STAND** as the Ministers and Choir process out in silence.

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*If you would like to make a one-off donation to the Cathedral via your phone, or set up a recurring donation, please use the QR code below. There are also contactless donation points and collection boxes near the entrance.*

*Thank you for your support.*



## **Daily Services at the Cathedral:**

Regular services at the Cathedral follow this pattern. For special services and up-to-date information about one-off cancellations of the services below, please check the calendar on the Cathedral website:

<https://www.coventrycathedral.org.uk/full-calendar>

### **Monday - Friday**

8:30 – 9:00am: *Morning Prayer & Holy Communion*

12 – 12:10pm: *The Litany of Reconciliation*

(followed on Thursdays by BCP Holy Communion)

4 – 4:30pm: *Evening Prayer*

(or Wednesday and Thursday during school terms: *Choral Evensong, 5:15 - 6pm*)

### **Saturday**

12 – 12:10pm: *The Litany of Reconciliation*

### **Sunday**

10:30 – 11:45am: *The Cathedral Eucharist*

4 – 5pm: *Choral Evensong*

## **JOINING OUR CHOIRS**

Boys and girls between the ages of 7 and 11 are welcome to audition for our Cathedral Choir. Do you know a child who loves to sing? There are many benefits to joining the choir – new friends, a free, world-class music education, choir pay, singing services and at special events in amazing places, choir tours, broadcasts, recordings and social events too. If you or someone you know might be interested in joining the choir, please be in touch with the Acting Director of Music to arrange a meeting. Email:

[Music.Administrator@CoventryCathedral.org.uk](mailto:Music.Administrator@CoventryCathedral.org.uk)

### ***Cathedral Chamber Choir***

The Cathedral Chamber Choir sing voluntarily at various services throughout the year and are currently open for auditions on all voice parts. Rehearsals usually take place on occasional Thursday evenings in the lead up to a service. If you would be interested in joining our Chamber Choir, please get in touch with Liam Condon, Assistant Director of Music, for an audition.

Email: [Liam.Condon@coventry.anglican.org](mailto:Liam.Condon@coventry.anglican.org)

## **Coventry Cathedral Chorus**

The Chorus is one of the Midlands' leading amateur choirs, bringing together around 60 singers to perform a wide range of choral music in and beyond Coventry.

Founded shortly after the consecration of Coventry Cathedral in 1963, the Chorus continues a rich tradition of singing in notable venues across the UK and Europe.

Rehearsals take place at the Cathedral on Tuesday evenings, 7.15–9.30pm. New singers are always welcome. To find out more or arrange to attend a rehearsal, visit [coventrycathedralchorus.com](http://coventrycathedralchorus.com) or contact the Membership Secretary at [membership@coventrycathedralchorus.com](mailto:membership@coventrycathedralchorus.com). Follow Coventry Cathedral Chorus on Facebook and [@CovCathChorus](#) on X.

## **Safeguarding at Coventry Cathedral**

We are committed to the safeguarding of all people. For details, please visit <https://www.coventrycathedral.org.uk/safeguarding>

Our Safeguarding Team are:



**Canon Kate**  
Chapter  
Safeguarding  
Lead



**Jane Williams**  
Cathedral  
Community  
Safeguarding  
Officer



**Jo Brake**  
Safeguarding  
Lead for Policy  
and Process

You can report a concern to our Safeguarding Team by emailing [cathedral.safeguarding@coventrycathedral.org.uk](mailto:cathedral.safeguarding@coventrycathedral.org.uk) or phoning 02476 52 1360

Alternatively, you can contact the Diocesan Safeguarding Team led by Sarah Price by phoning 024 7652 1345 or emailing [safeguarding@coventry.anglican.org](mailto:safeguarding@coventry.anglican.org)

## **COMMUNITY NEWS**

### **Lenten Course: Testament**

This Lent, join us for a thought-provoking course built around *Testament*, the contemporary Christian series that brings the opening chapters of the Book of Acts vividly to life. Together we will explore the first ten chapters of Acts and reflect on what the birth of the Church might mean for faith and discipleship today.

***The course will meet every Tuesday evening in Lent at 7pm in St Michael's House.***

To sign up, or for further details, please speak to Rob Halligan, Canon Nitano or Revd. Gillian Roberts.

### **Cathedral AGM**

*Sunday 19<sup>th</sup> April, immediately following the Eucharist in JLC*

In advance of this anyone that considers the Cathedral to be their place of worship is encouraged to join the Electoral Roll so that they might take part in proceedings, as well as be nominated for any of the roles that require the meeting's approval. At the meeting we will be approving the roles of Churchwarden, members of the Deanery Synod, and members of St. Michael's Committee. Have a chat with Canon Kate or Canon Nitano if you want to know more about what the roles entail.

### **Dean John's Farewell Celebration**

As we prepare to give thanks for Dean John's ministry among us, all members of the congregation are warmly invited to his Farewell Do on Saturday, 9 May. This will be a joyful moment to gather, share stories, and offer our appreciation for his leadership and friendship.

Dean John's final Eucharist service will be on Sunday, 17 May at 10.30am and his final Choral Evensong at 4pm, where he will preach and preside. If you wish to attend either or both of these, please scan this QR code to register your attendance.

There are lists at the back of the nave, should you prefer to register that way. We hope many of you will join us for this special occasion.



## **COMING SOON**

### **Passion Service**

*Wednesday, 18<sup>th</sup> March, 7.30pm*

Step into Passiontide through our Passion Service, part of our monthly *Wonder* gathering. Curated and led by Dean John, this reflective and engaging service invites us to explore the passion of Christ with open hearts and questioning minds. Through scripture, silence, music and prayer, we will journey towards the cross together, creating space for wonder, honesty and transformation as we prepare for Holy Week.

### **Choral Evening Prayer for Lent**

With sacred music for meditation and devotion from *Pergolesi – Stabat Mater*  
*Sunday, 22<sup>nd</sup> March 2026, 4pm*

Next week, within Choral Evening Prayer, we hear excerpts from Pergolesi's *Stabat Mater*, a setting of the medieval hymn that reflects on Mary standing at the foot of the Cross. Written shortly before the composer's death in 1736, the music expresses sorrow, compassion, and faith with remarkable tenderness.

Offered in the context of prayer, these movements invite us to listen in stillness and to enter more deeply into the mystery of Christ's Passion during this Lenten season.

## **HOLY WEEK AT THE CATHEDRAL**

Holy Week invites us to walk with Christ through the final days of his earthly ministry, from the joy of Palm Sunday to the light of Easter morning. Through worship, music and prayer, we enter the heart of the Christian story together.

### **PALM SUNDAY, 29<sup>th</sup> March**

#### **Cathedral Eucharist with Procession – 10.30am**

*The beginning of Holy Week, marking Christ's entry into Jerusalem and the opening of the Passion narrative.*

#### **Choral Evening Prayer with the *Lamentations of Jeremiah* – 4pm**

*A solemn and reflective service shaped by ancient words of grief and hope.*

## **HOLY MONDAY TO HOLY WEDNESDAY**

### **Compline Sermon Series – 8pm**

*Night prayer during the first days of Holy Week, with addresses by Dean John Witcombe on the “Farewell Discourses” from St John’s Gospel.*

## **MAUNDY THURSDAY, 2<sup>nd</sup> April**

### **Chrism Eucharist – 10.30am**

*A diocesan celebration in which the holy oils are blessed and clergy and licenced lay ministers renew their ministerial vows.*

### **Maundy Thursday Evening Eucharist – 7.30pm**

*The Holy Eucharist with Foot-washing and the Stripping of the Altar, recalling Christ’s commandment of love and the gathering darkness of the Passion.*

## **GOOD FRIDAY, 3<sup>rd</sup> April**

### **Liturgy of the Day – 9am**

*A solemn service of prayer and reflection at the foot of the Cross, this will be followed by a Walk of Witness in the City Centre (Broadgate) to Holy Trinity Church at 10.30am*

### **Stainer: The Crucifixion - 6pm**

*Join Coventry Cathedral Chorus for a moving performance of The Crucifixion by John Stainer, a much-loved meditation on the Passion combining reflective choruses, recitatives and congregational hymns.*

*Tickets: £15 adults | £5 young adults (18–25) | Children free.*

*Book at [coventrycathedralchorus.com](http://coventrycathedralchorus.com), or contact [tickets@coventrycathedralchorus.com](mailto:tickets@coventrycathedralchorus.com) | 01676 532436.*

## **EASTER DAY, 5<sup>th</sup> April**

### **Dawn Eucharist – 6am**

*The Service of Light with Baptism and Confirmation, proclaiming Christ’s Resurrection at first light.*

### **Cathedral Festal Eucharist – 10.30am**

*A joyful celebration of the resurrection with word, sacrament and song.*

### **Festal Choral Evensong – 4pm**

*The Easter Day story is crowned with choral prayer and praise as the light of Resurrection lingers into the evening.*

**All are warmly invited to share in this sacred journey from the Cross to the empty tomb, and into the hope and joy of Easter.**