



Choral Evensong

Peachtree Road United Methodist Church
Atlanta, Georgia



Choral Evensong is the service of Evening Prayer with choral music. It is sung in cathedrals and in colleges and churches with choral foundations on a more or less daily basis, and in many parish churches around the world. The Prayer Book of 1662 established the pattern for Choral Evensong which remains in common usage throughout the worldwide Anglican communion. It is this same format which is sung this evening at Peachtree Road.

Since earliest Christian times, the need to mark the passing of time with prayer has been recognized. The monastic cycle of prayer began in the desert with Anthony in the fourth century and continues to this day. By the Reformation, Vespers had become an elaborate musical celebration in the evening. The English Reformation demanded that the vernacular be the language of worship and resulted in the liturgical simplicity of Thomas Cranmer's services of Morning and Evening Prayer. The provision of music for this structure and these words was the task of worship. Choral Evensong is the quintessence of such worship. Following the trail of these composers have come numerous others: Wesley, Stanford, Howells, Sowerby, and Tippett are just a few of the well known names who have been inspired to write music for this service. The canon of music for Evensong continues to grow, with composers from around the world contributing to it.

Unlike the Eucharist, which follows the movement of the Church calendar, and unlike private prayer, which follows the events of our lives, the daily office follows its own rhythm. The readings are done "in course," and are not specifically chosen to make a particular point, and the canticles (*Magnificat* and *Nunc dimittis*) are the same each day. As such, the office provides an objective aspect to our worship and a rhythm to spirituality as a whole.

Dating from the time of the temple in Jerusalem, the choral recitation of the psalms remains one of the oldest forms of worship. By listening and following along with the Psalm, we join with the people of God who waited for the coming of the Kingdom of God. After the Psalm, the first lesson is read. The choir then sings the *Magnificat*, the song that the Blessed Virgin Mary sang in joyful response to the announcement that she would be the mother of our Lord. In this song, all the hopes of the people of God are recounted and Mary proclaims that, in the Incarnation, God has acted and fulfilled all that he promised. We then hear part of the record of that fulfillment when the second lesson, from the New Testament, is read. Following this reading is the *Nunc dimittis*, the song of the aged Simeon which acknowledges the salvation of all nations in Christ Jesus.

In most liturgies, we, the worshipers, must do two things: speak with our lips, and meditate with our hearts. Choral Evensong is one of the rare occasions when the congregation is able to focus solely on the latter, allowing the prayers and praises sung by the choir to be those of the entire faith community, and particularly, of this parish.

Organ Recitalist

Nicholas Johns-Cooper has a Bachelor of Music degree in organ and piano performance from Georgia State University where he was a University Scholar, played the piano with the GSU Symphonic Wind Ensemble, and sang with the University Singers. While at GSU, he studied organ with Sarah Martin and piano with Dr. Geoffrey Haydon, and was the recipient of the Tom Schneider Memorial Scholarship, the Atlanta AGO Scholarship, and the Atlanta Music Club Scholarship.

Nick began his piano studies at the age of five with Martha Melton. Early on in his childhood he developed a curiosity for the pipe organ, and in high school began studying the organ with David Houston. While in high school he conducted orchestras for the musicals *Fiddler on the Roof*, *Hello Dolly*, 1940's *Radio Hour*, and *Les Misérables*. He is a first prize winner of dozens of annual competitions such as the GMEA and GMTA All-State Piano and Chorus competitions, DMEA and DMTA piano competitions, and the Margaret A. Guthman piano competition.

Nick teaches piano at Guitar Decatur and teaches organ lessons around Atlanta. He serves as Director of Music/Organist for Oglethorpe Presbyterian Church and is in his first year as a Master of Music in Choral Conducting student at Georgia State University studying with Dr. Deanna Joseph and Meghan Stoll. Nick is also the keyboard player/backup singer in the Atlanta-based rock band Brother Hawk.

CHORAL EVENSONG

THE TWENTY-FIRST SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST

2 NOVEMBER 2025

4:30 p.m. ~ Prelude

5:00 p.m. ~ Solemn Evensong

Service Participants:

Nicholas Johns-Cooper, *Guest Organist*

Rev. Darren Hensley, *Deacon*

Rev. Leslie Lyons Watkins, *Associate Minister*

Scott H. Atchison, *Director of Music and Organist*

Oak Martin, *Associate Organist and Choirmaster*

David White, *Director, Georgia Boy Choir*

The Chancel Choir

The Georgia Boy Choir

Dan Beale, *Cantor*

Linus Djokoto, *Thurifer*

Jennifer Evans, *Verger*

PROGRAM

Nicholas Johns-Cooper, *organ*

Sinfonia, Wir danken dir, Gott, wir danken dir, BWV 29

J.S. Bach
(1685-1750)

Dupré
(1886-1971)

In Quiet Mood

Florence Price
(1887-1953)

Chorale No. 3

César Franck
(1822-1890)

Elegy

George Thalben-Ball
(1896-1987)


The Choral Introit

Blessed are the poor in spirit: For theirs is the kingdom of heaven. Blessed are they that mourn: For they shall be comforted. Blessed are the meek: For they shall inherit the earth. Blessed are they which do hunger and thirst after righteousness: for they shall be filled. Blessed are the merciful: For they shall obtain mercy. Blessed are the pure in heart: For they shall see God. Blessed are the peacemakers: For they shall be called the children of God. Blessed are they which are persecuted for righteousness' sake: for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. Blessed are ye, when men shall revile you, and persecute you, and say all manner of evil against you falsely, for my sake. Rejoice, and be exceeding glad: For great is your reward in heaven: For so persecuted they the prophets which were before you. Amen.

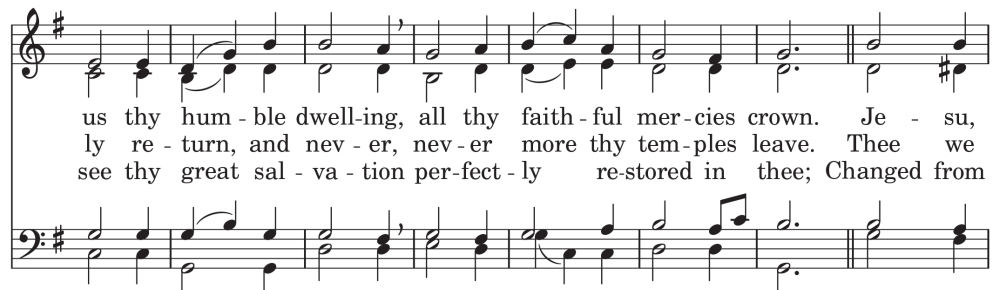
Text: *Matthew 5:3-12*

Music: *Paul Mealor (b. 1975)*

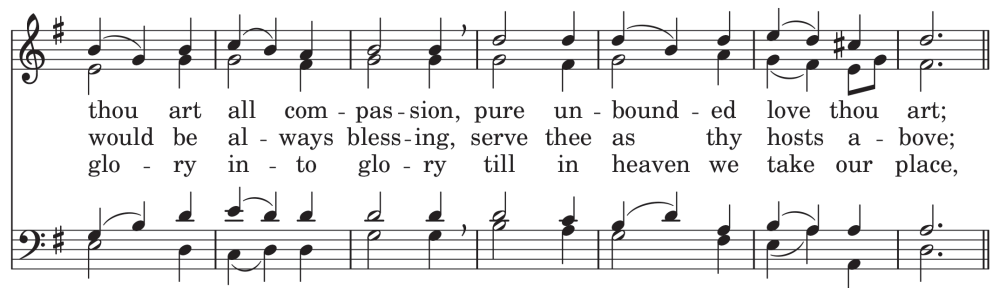
Please stand to sing



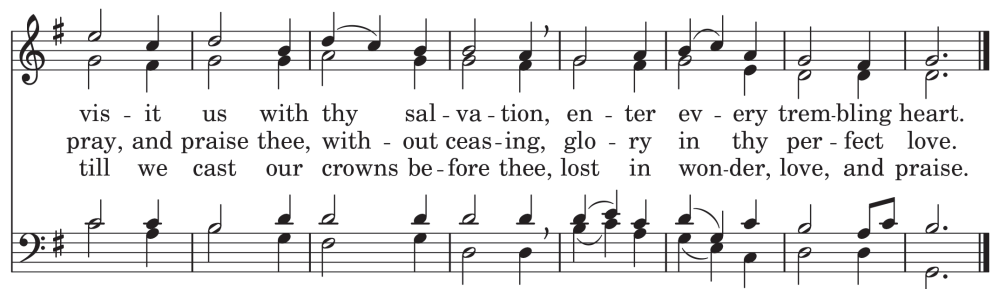
1 Love di-vine, all loves ex-celling, joy of heaven, to earth come down, fix in
2 Come, al-might-y to de-liv-er, let us all thy grace re-ceive; sudden-
3 Fin-ish then thy new cre-a-tion: pure and spot-less let us be; let us



us thy hum-ble dwell-ing, all thy faith-ful mer-cies crown. Je - su,
ly re - turn, and nev - er, nev - er more thy tem-ples leave. Thee we
see thy great sal - va - tion per-fect - ly re-stored in thee; Changed from



thou art all com - pas-sion, pure un - bound - ed love thou art;
would be al - ways bless-ing, serve thee as thy hosts a - bove;
glo - ry in - to glo - ry till in heaven we take our place,



vis - it us with thy sal - va - tion, en - ter ev - ery trem-bling heart.
pray, and praise thee, with - out ceas-ing, glo - ry in thy per - fect love.
till we cast our crowns be-fore thee, lost in won-der, love, and praise.

Text: *Charles Wesley (1747)*

Music: *William Rowlands (1860-1937)*

*The Minister pronounces
the Evening Sentences
and invites the
people to make a
General Confession*

The people sit

Minister: Let us humbly confess our sins unto Almighty God.

Minister and People: 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. But thou, O Lord, have mercy upon us. Spare thou those who confess their faults. Restore thou those who are penitent, according to thy promises declared unto mankind, in Christ Jesus 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.

*The Minister alone
stands and says*

Minister: The Almighty and merciful Lord grant you absolution and remission of all your sins, true repentance, amendment of life, and the grace and consolation of his Holy Spirit. Amen.

The people stand

*Sung by the Officiant
and Choir*

The Invitatory and Psalter

Preces

Richard Shepherd
(1949-2021)

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.*

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.*

O Lord, thou hast searched me out, and known me:
thou knowest my down-sitting, and mine uprising;
thou understandest my thoughts long before.

Thou art about my path, and about my bed:
and spiest out all my ways.

For lo, there is not a word in my tongue:
but thou, O Lord, knowest it altogether.

Thou hast fashioned me behind and before:
and laid thine hand upon me.

Such knowledge is too wonderful and excellent for me:
I cannot attain unto it.

Whither shall I go then from thy spirit:
or whither shall I go then from thy presence?

If I climb up into heaven thou art there:
if I go down to hell thou art there also.

If I take the wings of the morning:
and remain in the uttermost parts of the sea;

Even there also shall thy hand lead me:
and thy right hand shall hold me.

If I say, Peradventure the darkness shall cover me:
then shall my night be turned to day.

Yea, the darkness is no darkness with thee,
but the night is as clear as the day:
the darkness and light to thee are both alike.

For my reins are thine:
thou hast covered me in my mother's womb.

I will give thanks unto thee,
for I am fearfully and wonderfully made:
marvelous are thy works,
and thou my soul knoweth right 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.

The Lessons

A reading from Revelation 21:1-6a

The people stand

Magnificat

Philip Stopford

(b. 1977)

Peachtree Evening Canticles

† *World Premiere*

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, 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.

Luke 1:46-55

The people sit

A reading from John 11:32-44

The people stand

Nunc dimittis

Philip Stopford

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
and sing on
monotone*

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 catholic Church,
the communion of saints,
the forgiveness of sins,
the resurrection of the body,
and the life everlasting. Amen.

The Prayers

*Officiant
Choir
Officiant*

The Lord be with you.
And with thy spirit.
Let us pray.

The people sit

Lord, have mercy upon us. Christ have mercy upon us.
Lord, have mercy upon us.

Choir

*Our Father, Which art in heaven, Hallow'd 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 those who trespass against us,
And lead us not into temptation; But deliver us from evil, Amen.*

The Suffrages

O Lord, show thy mercy upon us.

And grant us thy salvation.

O Lord, save the State.

And mercifully hear us when we call upon Thee.

Endue thy ministers with righteousness.

And make thy chosen people joyful.

O Lord, save thy people.

And bless thine inheritance.

Give peace in our time, O Lord.

Because there is none other that fighteth for us, but only thou, O God.

O God, make clean our hearts within us.

And take not thy Holy Spirit from us.

The Collects

At the Offertory, Anthem

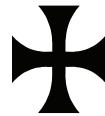
May flights of angels sing thee to thy rest. Remember me, O Lord, when you come into your kingdom. Give rest, O Lord, to your handmaid who has fallen asleep. The choir of saints have found the well-spring of life and door of paradise. Life: a shadow and a dream. Weeping at the grave creates the song. Alleluia. Come, enjoy rewards and crowns I have prepared for you.

Text: *Mother Thekla*

Music: *John Tavener (1944-2013)*

The Blessings

Minister: Beloved, tonight, we mark the final flight of our sacred Centennial installation—these doves that have hovered and danced in our midst as messengers of memory, symbols of peace and reminders of the saints who have gone before us. Each dove carries a name, a story, a grief, and a hope. We also give thanks for these letters written in a sacred act of remembrance and love, to those we have lost yet who remain alive in our hearts. These letters hold the words we still carry: words of gratitude, grief, questions, memories, and love. They are prayers on paper offered to God, written not into silence, but into the eternal communion of saints. Let us offer a blessing over the Doves and the Letters.



Minister and People: God of the Living and the Dead, We thank you for the gift of these doves, made with human hands, but signs of your Spirit and reminders of those we love but see no longer. As these doves make their final flight, we release them with gratitude and reverence. Let them take flight in our hearts—calling us to live as your saints in the world: people of peace, agents of hope, bearers of love. God of all comfort, You have knit together your people across time and eternity. Receive these letters, written in love, sealed with grief, and lifted now into your mercy. May what is spoken in sorrow be transformed by your peace. May what is written in love be caught up in your everlasting Love.

Minister: May all those we remember tonight rest in your light perpetual, until we are reunited in your kingdom where death shall be no more, where all sorrow will cease and where joy never ends. In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit.

All: Amen.

At the Censing, Anthem

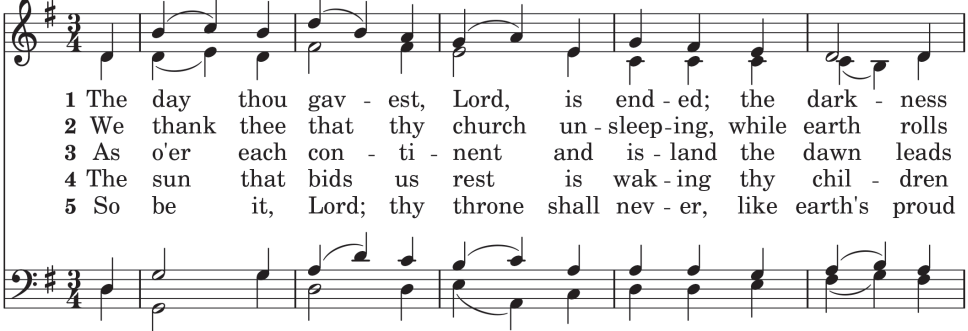
Keep watch, dear Lord, with those who work, or watch, or weep this night, and give your angels charge over those who sleep. Tend the sick, Lord Christ; give rest to the weary, bless the dying, soothe the suffering, pity the afflicted, shield the joyous; and all for your love's sake. Amen.

Text: From Book of Common Prayer


Music: Craig Phillips (b. 1961)

The Chamber Singers


*The people stand
and sing*



1 The day thou gav - est, Lord, is end - ed; the dark - ness
2 We thank thee that thy church un - sleep - ing, while earth rolls
3 As o'er each con - ti - nent and is - land the dawn leads
4 The sun that bids us rest is wak - ing thy chil - dren
5 So be it, Lord; thy throne shall nev - er, like earth's proud



falls at thy be - hest. To thee our morn - ing
on - ward in - to light, through all the world a
on an - oth - er day, the voice of prayer is
'neath the west - ern sky, and hour by hour fresh
em - pires, pass a - way; thy king - dom stands, and



hymns as - cend - ed; thy praise shall hal - low now our rest.
watch is keep - ing and rests not now by day or night.
nev - er si - lent, nor dies the song of praise a - way.
lips are mak - ing thy won - drous do - ings heard on high.
grows for - ev - er un - til there dawns thy glo - rious day.

Text: John Ellerton (1826-1893)

Music: Clement Scholefield (1839-1904)

The Benediction

The Retiring Procession

† Please follow the procession to the Columbarium

The Prayer of Release

Dismissal

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