



ST. THOMAS'S EPISCOPAL CHURCH

A Service of Choral Evensong

September 11, 2016: The Feast of St. Thomas the Apostle (trans.)

Welcome to St. Thomas's Episcopal Church and to this service of Choral Evensong. The ancient liturgy is drawn from both the English 1662 Book of Common Prayer and the American 1979 Book of Common Prayer. We hope that you will enter into a time of quiet reflection by letting the voices of the choir lift your thoughts and prayers to the throne of God's grace. While the choir will be singing most of the responses and canticles on your behalf, you are invited to participate heartily in the singing of the hymns. If you would like to make an offering, you will find an offering plate located near the rear doors of the church. All donations will go toward making services such as Evensong a constant in this community.

Prelude Prelude on 'Iam sol recedit igneus' Bruce Simonds (1895-1989)

The people stand as the choir enters in procession.

Preces and Responses (*sung by the choir*) Nathaniel Adam (b. 1985)

Officiant O Lord, open thou our lips.
Choir And our mouth shall shew forth thy praise.
Officiant O God, make speed to save us.
Choir O Lord, make haste to help us.
Officiant 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.
Officiant Praise ye the Lord.
Choir The Lord's name be praised.

The people sit.

Psalm 27 (*sung by the choir*) Chant by Ivor Atkins (1869-1953)

1 The Lord is my light, and my salvation; whom then shall I fear *
the Lord is the strength of my life; of whom then shall I be afraid?
2 When the wicked, even mine enemies, and my foes, came upon me to eat up my flesh *
they stumbled and fell.
3 Though an host of men were laid against me, yet shall not my heart be afraid *
and though there rose up war against me, yet will I put my trust in him.
4 One thing have I desired of the Lord, which I will require *
even that I may dwell in the house of the Lord all the days of my life,
to behold the fair beauty of the Lord, and to visit his temple.
5 For in the time of trouble he shall hide me in his tabernacle *
yea, in the secret place of his dwelling shall he hide me, and set me up upon a rock of stone.
6 And now shall he lift up mine head *
above mine enemies round about me.
7 Therefore will I offer in his dwelling an oblation with great gladness *
I will sing, and speak praises unto the Lord.
8 Hearken unto my voice, O Lord, when I cry unto thee *
have mercy upon me, and hear me.

9 My heart hath talked of thee, Seek ye my face *
 Thy face, Lord, will I seek.

10 O hide not thou thy face from me *
 nor cast thy servant away in displeasure.

11 Thou hast been my succour *
 leave me not, neither forsake me, O God of my salvation.

12 When my father and my mother forsake me *
 the Lord taketh me up.

13 Teach me thy way, O Lord *
 and lead me in the right way, because of mine enemies.

14 Deliver me not over into the will of mine adversaries *
 for there are false witnesses risen up against me, and such as speak wrong.

15 I should utterly have fainted *
 but that I believe verily to see the goodness of the Lord in the land of the living.

16 O tarry thou the Lord's leisure *
 be strong, and he shall comfort thine heart; and put thou thy trust in the Lord.

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 First Lesson

Isaiah 43:8-13

Bring forth the people who are blind, yet have eyes, who are deaf, yet have ears! Let all the nations gather together, and let the peoples assemble. Who among them declared this, and foretold to us the former things? Let them bring their witnesses to justify them, and let them hear and say, "It is true." You are my witnesses, says the Lord, and my servant whom I have chosen, so that you may know and believe me and understand that I am he. Before me no god was formed, nor shall there be any after me. I, I am the Lord, and besides me there is no savior. I declared and saved and proclaimed, when there was no strange god among you; and you are my witnesses, says the Lord. I am God, and also henceforth I am He; there is no one who can deliver from my hand; I work and who can hinder it?

Reader The Word of the Lord.

People **Thanks be to God.**

The people stand.

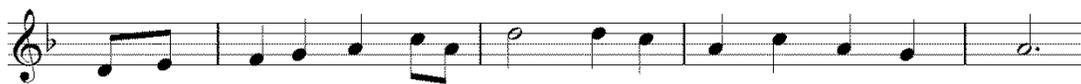
Office Hymn (*sung by all*)

By all your saints still striving

Hymn 231 (*King's Lynn*)



1 By all your saints still striv - ing, for all your saints at rest,
 2 (*Insert the stanza appropriate to the day*)
 3 Then let us praise the Fa - ther and wor - ship God the Son



your ho - ly Name, O Je - sus, for ev - er - more be blessed.
 and sing to God the Spi - rit, e - ter - nal Three in One,

You rose, our King vic - tor - ious, that they might wear the crown
 till all the ran-somed num - ber who stand be - fore the throne
 and ev - er shine in splen - dor re - flect - ed from your throne.
 a - scribe all power and glo - ry and praise to God a - lone.

VERSE 2

All praise, O Lord, for Thomas
 whose short-lived doubtings prove
 your perfect two-fold nature,
 the depth of your true love.
 To all who live with questions
 a steadfast faith afford;
 and grant us grace to know you,
 made flesh, yet God and Lord.

The people sit.

Magnificat (*sung by the choir*)

Evening Service in C

C.V. Stanford (1852-1924)

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.

The Second Lesson

John 14:1-7

“Do not let your hearts be troubled. Believe in God, believe also in me. In my Father’s house there are many dwelling places. If it were not so, would I have told you that I go to prepare a place for you? And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and will take you to myself, so that where I am, there you may be also.

And you know the way to the place where I am going.” Thomas said to him, “Lord, we do not know where you are going. How can we know the way?” Jesus said to him, “I am the way, and the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me. If you know me, you will know my Father also. From now on you do know him and have seen him.”

Reader The Word of the Lord.

People **Thanks be to God.**

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.

The people stand.

The Apostles' Creed (*intoned by 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 Catholick Church; the Communion of saints; the Forgiveness of sins; the Resurrection of the body, and the Life everlasting. Amen.

Officiant The Lord be with you.
Choir And with thy spirit.
Officiant Let us pray. (*At the words, "Let us pray", the people sit or kneel, as able*)
Choir Lord, have mercy upon us.
 Christ, have mercy upon us.
 Lord, have mercy upon us.

The Lord's Prayer (*intoned by all*)

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.

Responses (*sung by the choir*)

Adam

Officiant O Lord, shew thy mercy upon us;
Choir And grant us thy salvation.
Officiant O Lord, save the State;
Choir And mercifully hear us, when we call upon thee.
Officiant Endue thy Ministers with righteousness;
Choir And make thy chosen people joyful.
Officiant O Lord, save thy people;
Choir And bless thine inheritance.
Officiant Give peace in our time, O Lord;
Choir Because there is none other that fighteth for us, but only thou, O God.
Officiant O God, make clean our hearts within us;
Choir And take not thy Holy Spirit from us.

The Collect for St. Thomas the Apostle

Everliving God, who didst strengthen thine apostle Thomas with sure and certain faith in thy Son's resurrection: Grant us so perfectly and without doubt to believe in Jesus Christ, our Lord and our God, that our faith may never be found wanting in thy sight; through him who liveth and reigneth with thee and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and for ever. Amen.

The 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 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 Savior. Amen.

The 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 Savior, Jesus Christ. Amen.

The people sit.

Anthem *(sung by the choir)*

Justorum animae

Stanford

*Justorum animae in manu Dei sunt,
et non tanget illos tormentum mortis.
Visi sunt oculis insipientium mori,
illi autem sunt in pace.*

The souls of the just are in the hand of God,
and the torment of death shall not touch them.
In the sight of the unwise they seemed to die;
but they are in peace.

Text: Wisdom 3:1-2a, 3b

The Homily

The people stand.

Hymn *(sung by all)*

Dear Lord, we long to see your face (*Das neugeborne Kindelein*)

1 Dear Lord, we long to see your face, to know you
2 Dear Friend, we do not know the way, nor clear - ly
3 We find it hard, Lord, to be - lieve. Long hab - it
4 You come to us, our God, our Lord. You do not

ris - en from the grave, but we have missed the joy and
see the path a - head; so of - ten, there - fore, we de -
makes us want to prove: to see, to touch, and thus per -
show your hands and side, but give, in - stead, your best re -

grace of see - ing you, as oth - ers have; yet in your
 lay and doubt your power to raise the dead; yet we with
 ceive the truth and per - son whom we love; yet when in
 ward as in your prom - ise we a - bide. By faith we

com - pa - ny we'll wait, and we shall see you, soon or late.
 you will firm - ly stay— you are the truth, the life, the way.
 fel - low - ship we meet, you come your - self, each one to greet.
 know and grow and wait to see and praise you, soon or late.

The people sit.

Prayers of Intercession *(led by the Officiant)*

A Prayer of St. Chrysostom *(said by all)*

Officiant

Let us pray.

Almighty God, who hast given us grace at this time with one accord to make our common supplications unto thee; and dost promise that when two or three are gathered together in thy Name thou wilt grant their requests: Fulfill now, O Lord, the desires and petitions of thy servants, as may be most expedient for them; granting us in this world knowledge of thy truth, and in the world to come life everlasting. Amen.

The Grace *(said by the Officiant)*

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.**

Final Responses *(sung by the choir)*

Edward Woodall Naylor (1867-1934)

Officiant The Lord be with you:
Choir And with thy Spirit.
Officiant Let us bless the Lord:
Choir Thanks be to God.

The people stand as the choir processes out.

Postlude

Hymn Prelude on 'King's Lynn'

Percy Whitlock (1903-1946)

The Office of Choral Evensong

Evening Prayer, or Evensong (as it is often referred to when it is sung), was instituted in the reigns of King Henry VIII (1509-1547) and his son, King Edward VI (1547-1553), following England's disestablishment from the Church of Rome, and the creation of the Church of England. Evensong evolved through a series of reformed Prayer Books during the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, and at St. Thomas's, the liturgy is drawn from the English 1662 Book of Common Prayer, as well as from subsequent traditions in the Anglican Communion. Evensong is essentially an adaptation and fusion of the older Latin rites of Vespers and Compline; rituals that go back in time to the very earliest centuries of the Church.

In America, the beloved English service survived dissociation of the colonial Anglican Church from the Church of England during the War of Independence (1775-1783). As the nascent Episcopal Church grew and thrived in the new nation, so too did its reverence for and cohesion to much of the forms and liturgies of the erstwhile "mother" Church. Therefore, the tradition of Choral Evensong—a staple of the Anglican rite—has flourished and spread across the American landscape over the past two centuries.

In the present day, Choral Evensong holds special resonance for regular churchgoers, as well as those of other faith traditions or none at all. Whatever the reason for attending, all respond to the beauty, richness, and tradition of the music and language, and for many, a sense of connectedness binding present to ancient past becomes an experience approaching holy awe.

St. Thomas the Apostle

The Gospel according to John records several incidents in which Thomas appears, and from them we are able to gain some impression of the sort of man he was. When Jesus insisted on going to Judea, to visit his friends at Bethany, Thomas boldly declared, "Let us also go, that we may die with him" (John 11:16). At the Last Supper, he interrupted our Lord's discourse with the question, "Lord, we do not know where you are going; how can we know the way?" (John 14:5). And after Christ's resurrection, Thomas would not accept the account of the other apostles and the women, until Jesus appeared before him, showing him his wounds. This drew from him the first explicit acknowledgment of Christ's Godhead, "My Lord and my God!" (John 20:28).

Thomas appears to have been a thoughtful if rather literal-minded man, inclined to scepticism; but he was a staunch friend when his loyalty was once given. The expression "Doubting Thomas," which has become established in English usage, is not entirely fair to Thomas. He did not refuse belief: he wanted to believe, but did not dare, without further evidence. Because of his goodwill, Jesus gave him a sign, though Jesus had refused a sign to the Pharisees. His Lord's rebuke was well deserved: "Blessed are those who have not seen and yet believe" (John 20:29). The sign did not create faith; it merely released the faith which was in Thomas already.

According to an early tradition mentioned by Eusebius and others, Thomas evangelized the Parthians. Syrian Christians of Malabar, India, who call themselves the Mar Thoma Church, cherish a tradition that Thomas brought the Gospel to India. Several apocryphal writings have been attributed to him, the most prominent and interesting being the "Gospel of Thomas."

Thomas' honest questioning and doubt, and Jesus' assuring response to him, have given many modern Christians courage to persist in faith, even when they are still doubting and questioning.

— From *Lesser Feasts and Fasts* (The Church Hymnal Corporation of the Episcopal Church)

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