The Tradition of Choral Evensong

Welcome to Washington National Cathedral. It is an ancient tradition for the people of God to offer praise and prayer as the day draws to a close. Choral Evensong is a service of sung evening prayer. The text of the service is drawn almost entirely from the Bible. The main purpose is to proclaim the wonderful works of God in human history, and in the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus Christ. Sung psalms and canticles are interwoven with readings from the Old and New Testaments and the recitation of the Apostles' Creed and Lord’s Prayer. Other prayers and hymns are drawn from the many centuries of the Christian Church. The congregation is invited to listen reflectively and prayerfully as the choir offers prayer and praise on their behalf. Many find this frees them to offer to God their own thoughts and prayers.

The people's responses are in bold.

Organ Voluntary

Rhapsody No. 1, Op. 17/1
Herbert Howells (1892–1983)

The people stand as able as the procession enters.

Hymn • 493

O for a Thousand Tongues to Sing

Sung by all.

Azmon

1. O for a thousand tongues to sing my dear Redeemer's praise,
2. My gracious Master and my God, assist me to proclaim
3. Jesus! the Name that charms our fears and bids our sorrows cease;
4. He speaks; and, listening to his voice, new life the dead receive,
5. Hear him, ye deaf; ye voiceless ones, your loosened tongues employ;

1. the glories of my God and King, the triumphs of his grace!
2. and spread through all the earth abroad the honors of thy Name,
3. 'tis music in the sinner's ears, 'tis life and health and peace.
4. the mournful broken hearts rejoice, the humble poor believe.
5. ye blind, be hold, your Saviour comes; and leap, ye lame, for joy!

6. Glory to God and praise and love
   be now and ever given
   by saints below and saints above,
   the Church in earth and heaven.

The Opening Sentences from Holy Scripture
**PRECES**

**Officiant**  O Lord, open thou our lips;  
**Choir** And our mouth shall show 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 Spirit.  
**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 candles are lighted as the choir sings.*

**PHOS HILARON**

*The Phos hilaron is an ancient lamp-lighting hymn. Meaning “gladdening light” in Greek, it is among the earliest-known hymn texts recorded outside of the Bible that is still in use today.*

O gracious Light,  
pure brightness of the everliving Father in heaven,  
O Jesus Christ, holy and blessed!  

Now as we come to the setting of the sun,  
and our eyes behold the vesper light,  
we sing thy praises, O God: Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.  

Thou art worthy at all times to be praised by happy voices,  
O Son of God, O Giver of life,  
and to be glorified through all the worlds.

*The people are seated.*

**PSALM • 114**

*Sung by the choir.*  
**chant:** George Mursell Garrett (1834–1897)

Hallelujah!  
When Israel came out of Egypt,  
the house of Jacob from a people of strange speech,  
Judah became God’s sanctuary  
and Israel his dominion.  
The sea beheld it and fled;  
Jordan turned and went back.  
The mountains skipped like rams,  
and the little hills like young sheep.  
What ailed you, O sea, that you fled?  
O Jordan, that you turned back?  
You mountains, that you skipped like rams?  
you little hills like young sheep?  
Tremble, O earth, at the presence of the Lord,  
at the presence of the God of Jacob,  
Who turned the hard rock into a pool of water  
and flint-stone into a flowing spring.  

Glory to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit:  
as it was in the beginning, is now, and ever shall be, world without end. Amen.
Not to us, O Lord, not to us, but to your Name give glory; because of your love and because of your faithfulness. Why should the heathen say, “Where then is their God?” Our God is in heaven; whatever he wills to do he does. Their idols are silver and gold, the work of human hands. They have mouths, but they cannot speak; eyes have they, but they cannot see; They have ears but they cannot hear; noses, but they cannot smell; They have hands, but they cannot feel; feet, but they cannot walk; they make no sound with their throat. Those who make them are like them, and so are all who put their trust in them. O Israel, trust in the Lord; he is their help and their shield.

O house of Aaron, trust in the Lord; he is their help and their shield. You who fear the Lord, trust in the Lord; he is their help and their shield. The Lord has been mindful of us, and he will bless us; he will bless the house of Israel; he will bless the house of Aaron; He will bless those who fear the Lord, both small and great together. May the Lord increase you more and more, you and your children after you. May you be blessed by the Lord, the maker of heaven and earth. The heaven of heavens is the Lord’s, but he entrusted the earth to its peoples. The dead do not praise the Lord, nor all those who go down into silence; But we will bless the Lord, from this time forth for evermore. Hallelujah!

Glory to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit; as it was in the beginning, is now, and ever shall be, world without end. Amen.

THE FIRST LESSON

After the death of Moses the servant of the Lord, the Lord spoke to Joshua son of Nun, Moses’ assistant, saying, “My servant Moses is dead. Now proceed to cross the Jordan, you and all this people, into the land that I am giving to them, to the Israelites. Every place that the sole of your foot will tread upon I have given to you, as I promised to Moses. From the wilderness and the Lebanon as far as the great river, the river Euphrates, all the land of the Hittites, to the Great Sea in the west shall be your territory. No one shall be able to stand against you all the days of your life. As I was with Moses, so I will be with you; I will not fail you or forsake you. Be strong and courageous; for you shall put this people in possession of the land that I swore to their ancestors to give them. Only be strong and very courageous, being careful to act in accordance with all the law that my servant Moses commanded you; do not turn from it to the right hand or to the left, so that you may be successful wherever you go. This book of the law shall not depart out of your mouth; you shall meditate on it day and night, so that you may be careful to act in accordance with all that is written in it. For then you shall make your way prosperous, and then you shall be successful. I hereby command you: Be strong and courageous; do not be frightened or dismayed, for the Lord your God is with you wherever you go.” Then Joshua commanded the officers of the people, “Pass through the camp, and command the people: ‘Prepare your provisions; for in three days you are to cross over the Jordan, to go in to take possession of the land that the Lord your God gives you to possess.’” To the Reubenites, the Gadites, and the half-tribe of Manasseh Joshua said, “Remember the word that Moses the servant of the Lord commanded you, saying, ‘The Lord your God is providing you a place of rest, and will give you this land.’ Your wives, your little ones, and your livestock shall remain in the land that Moses gave you beyond the Jordan. But all the warriors among you shall cross over armed before your kindred and shall help them, until the Lord gives rest to your kindred as well as to you, and they too take possession of the land that the Lord your God is giving them. Then you shall return to your own land and take possession of it, the land that Moses the servant of the Lord gave you beyond the Jordan to the east.” They answered Joshua: “All that you have commanded us we will do, and wherever you send us we will go. Just as we obeyed Moses in all things, so we will obey you. Only may the Lord your God be with you, as he was with Moses! Whoever rebels against your orders and disobeys your words, whatever you command, shall be put to death. Only be strong and courageous.”

Here ends the lesson.
The people remain seated as the choir sings.

MAGNIFICAT

Evening Service in D major; Herbert Brewer (1865–1928)

The Magnificat is the Blessed Virgin Mary’s song of thanksgiving in response to the fact that she will bear the Son of God, fulfilling the promises of the Old Testament.

My soul doth magnify the Lord,
and my spirit hath rejoiced in God my Savior.
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 Spirit:
as it was in the beginning, is now, and ever shall be, world without end. Amen.

(Luke 1:46-55)

THE SECOND LESSON

Mark 1:21-27

Jesus, Simon and Andrew, James and John, went to Capernaum; and when the sabbath came, Jesus entered the synagogue and taught. They were astounded at his teaching, for he taught them as one having authority, and not as the scribes. Just then there was in their synagogue a man with an unclean spirit, and he cried out, “What have you to do with us, Jesus of Nazareth? Have you come to destroy us? I know who you are, the Holy One of God.” But Jesus rebuked him, saying, “Be silent, and come out of him!” And the unclean spirit, convulsing him and crying with a loud voice, came out of him. They were all amazed, and they kept on asking one another, “What is this? A new teaching—with authority! He commands even the unclean spirits, and they obey him.”

Here ends the lesson.

NUNC DIMITTIS

Evening Service in D major; H. Brewer

The Nunc dimittis is the song of the aged Simeon, who had been promised by the Holy Spirit that he would not die until he had seen the Messiah. Upon taking the infant Jesus into his arms, Simeon utters these words of thanksgiving.

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 Spirit:
as it was in the beginning, is now, and ever shall be, world without end. Amen.

(Luke 2:29-32)
The people stand as able.

THE APOSTLES’ CREED  Said by all, facing the high altar.

The Apostles’ Creed grew from statements of belief made by early Christians at their baptism. The Church continues to confess this same faith in the Holy Trinity: Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.

I believe in God, the Father almighty, creator of heaven and earth.
I believe in Jesus Christ, his only Son, our Lord. He was conceived by the power of the Holy Spirit and born of the Virgin Mary. He suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, died, and was buried. He descended to the dead. On the third day he rose again. He ascended into heaven, and is seated at the right hand of the Father. He will come again to judge the living and the dead.
I believe in the Holy Spirit, 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

Officiant The Lord be with you.
Choir And with thy spirit.
Officiant Let us pray.
Choir Lord, have mercy upon us.
Choir Christ, have mercy upon us.
Choir Lord, have mercy upon us.

THE LORD’S PRAYER  Said by all.

Our Father, who art in heaven, hallowed be thy Name, thy kingdom come, thy will be done, on 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. For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, for ever and ever. Amen.

THE SUFFRAGES  M. Burk

Officiant O Lord, show 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 COLLECTS

The officiant sings a series of prayers, appointed for the day, each followed by a choral Amen.

O Lord, we beseech thee mercifully to receive the prayers of thy people who call upon thee, and grant that they may both perceive and know what things they ought to do, and also may have grace and power faithfully to fulfill the same; through Jesus Christ our Lord, who liveth and reigneth with thee and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and for ever. Amen.

Lord God, whose Son our Savior Jesus Christ triumphed over the powers of death and prepared for us our place in the new Jerusalem: Grant that we, who have this day given thanks for his resurrection, may praise thee in that City of which he is the light; and where he liveth and reigneth for ever and ever. Amen.

O God, who dost manifest in thy servants the signs of thy presence: Send forth upon us the Spirit of love, that in companionship with one another thine abounding grace may increase among us; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

The collects conclude with:

Officiant     Let us bless the Lord.
Choir          Thanks be to God.

The people are seated.

OFFERING

An offering is received to support the Cathedral's ministry of sharing God's love. All are invited to make a gift as the plate is passed, at cathedral.org/support, or by texting the dollar amount you wish to give to 202-856-9005.

ANTHEM

A Hymn for St. Cecilia

Sing for the morning's joy, Cecilia, sing, in words of youth and praises of the Spring, Walk the bright colonnades by fountains' spray, and sing as sunlight fills the waking day; Till angels, voyaging in upper air, pause on a wing and gather the clear sound into celestial joy, wound and unwound, a silver chain, or golden as your hair.

Sing for your loves of heaven and of earth, in words of music, and each word a truth; marriage of heart and longings that aspire, a bond of roses, and a ring of fire.

Your summertime grows short and fades away, terror must gather to a martyr's death; but never tremble, the last indrawn breath remembers music as an echo may.

Through the cold aftermath of centuries, Cecilia's music dances in the skies; lend us a fragment of the immortal air, that with your choiring angels we may share, A word to light us thro' time-fettered night, water of life, or rose of paradise, so from the earth another song shall rise to meet your own in heaven's long delight.

(Ursula Vaughan Williams, 1911–2007)
The people stand as able. Additional prayers and petitions may be said at this point, concluding with The General Thanksgiving.

THE GENERAL THANKSGIVING

Almighty God, Father of all mercies, we your unworthy servants give you humble thanks for all your goodness and loving-kindness to us and to all whom you have made. We bless you for our creation, preservation, and all the blessings of this life; but above all for your immeasurable love in the redemption of the world by our Lord Jesus Christ; for the means of grace, and for the hope of glory. And, we pray, give us such an awareness of your mercies, that with truly thankful hearts we may show forth your praise, not only with our lips, but in our lives, by giving up our selves to your service, and by walking before you in holiness and righteousness all our days; through Jesus Christ our Lord, to whom, with you and the Holy Spirit, be honor and glory throughout all ages. Amen.

THE BLESSING

The officiant blesses the people, and the people respond, Amen.

HYMN • 449

O Love, How Deep, How Broad, How High

1. O love, how deep, how broad, how high, how passing thought and fantasy,
   for us baptized, for us he bore his holy fast and hungered sore;
   for us he prayed; for us he taught; for us his daily works he wrought:
   for us to wick ed hands betrayed, scourged, mocked, in purple robe arrayed,
   for us he rose from death again; for us he went on high to reign;

   that God, the Son of God, should take our mortal form for mortals' sake.
   by words and signs and actions, thus still seeking not himself, but us,
   he bore the shameful cross and death; for us gave up his dying breath.
   for us he sent his Spirit here to guide, to strengthen, and to cheer.

6 All glory to our Lord and God
   for love so deep, so high, so broad;
   The Trinity whom we adore
   for ever and for evermore.

ORGAN VOLUNTARY

Introduction and Fugato

H. Brewer
Thank you for joining us in worship.

The work of this Cathedral is made possible entirely through the support of individuals like you. The gifts of people from across the country and the world are behind every worship service, concert, public program, and the daily work of maintaining this historic landmark and house of prayer for all people.

All are invited to make a gift to support the Cathedral’s ministry of sharing God’s love as the plate is passed, at cathedral.org/support, or by texting the dollar amount you wish to give to 202-856-9005.

Thank you in advance for your generosity. Please know that your participation with us today has been a blessing.


FLOWERS  The flowers throughout the Cathedral are given to the glory of God. In memory of Ella Lanier Aldrich; in honor of Wilma Swanson; in thanksgiving for the baptism of Catherine Anne Maddox and Carrie Maddox Chen; in memory of Helen Pratt Gardner, Colonel Leland Grisier Gardner, and Lieutenant Leland Grisier Gardner, Jr.; in celebration of the marriage of Lauren Elizabeth Patterson and John Andrew Brennan.


All Cathedral worship services are livestreamed via video for our online congregation. By participating in this service you acknowledge that you may be visible on live broadcast or archived video. If you are uncomfortable about the possibility of appearing on video, please see an usher to be reseated in a more private area.