

ELTHAM PARISH CHURCH OF ST JOHN THE BAPTIST



**150th Anniversary Festival Evensong
22nd June 2025**

Welcome to Eltham Parish Church of St John the Baptist.
Prayer has been offered in this place for almost a thousand years,
and your participation in today's service is warmly welcomed.

As well as being part of our annual patronal festival for St John the Baptist, this year our service celebrates the 150th anniversary of the consecration of our church. The present 'new' church was built between 1872-1879, on the site of a previous church that had stood here since 1667. On 3rd August 1875 the new church was consecrated in a service presided over by the Bishop of Rochester. Over June we have hosted a variety of events to commemorate the sesquicentennial of the church, the last of which is this special festival evensong. We are most grateful to the Very Reverend Dr Mark Oakley, Dean of Southwark Cathedral, for preaching this evening.

At choral Evensong, much of the service is sung by the choir on our behalf. The congregation participates through presence and listening, and in singing the congregational hymns, that the words and the music might become a prayer within us and lift us to contemplate God's beauty and glory.

Today for this very special service, we are grateful to the many guest singers who have joined us from across Eltham and beyond, to help mark 150 years of worship at St John's. We are also joined by choir director Simon Hiller of St Mark & St Margaret's, Plumstead, and by three 'generations' of St John's organists and former organists.

Amongst the music sung by our combined choirs today is Sir Hubert Parry's famous setting of 'I Was Glad', a text made up of selected verses from Psalm 122. A musical setting of this text has been performed by choirs at every coronation of a British monarch since that of King Charles I in 1626. It is thus a fittingly grand and celebratory anthem to cap our service of thanksgiving today.

The service always includes one or more psalms. These ancient prayers, taken from the Old Testament, reflect the full range of human emotions and experiences; from the depths of anger, resentment, and abandonment to the heights of ecstatic joy and praise. They were used by Jesus and have always been at the heart of the Church's daily prayer.

The canticles *Magnificat* (Luke 1: 46–55) and *Nunc dimittis* (Luke 2: 29–32) reflect two responses to the Incarnation (God becoming fully human in Jesus Christ). Both speak of the fulfilment of God's promises, not just to 'Abraham and his seed', but also 'to be a light to lighten the Gentiles' (all nations). With their themes of fulfilment and completion, these texts have been given central place for many centuries in the Church's prayers for the evening and at the end of the day.

Please join in saying the words and singing the hymns printed in **bold type**. For those unfamiliar with the format of evensong, instructions for when to **sit and to stand** are marked with the symbol ¶.

Clergy:

**Preacher: The Very Reverend Dr Mark Oakley,
Dean of Southwark Cathedral
Presiding: Reverend Caroline Risdon,
Vicar of St John the Baptist Church**

Guests of honour:

**Matt Burrow DL
Cllr Linda Bird
Clive Efford MP**

Choir Directors:

**Theo Lester (organist of St John's),
Simon Hiller (St Mark & St Margaret, Plumstead)
Organist: Herman Jordaan (organist of St John's, 2014 – 2019)**

Our choir today is comprised of singers from:

**St John the Baptist, Eltham
St Mark & St Margaret, Plumstead
The Grove Singers
The St Cecilia's Festival Chorus
Eltham Choral Society**

¶ *Please stand as the choir enters*

Introit – A Prayer of King Henry VI

*Domine, Jesu Christe,
qui me creasti,
redemisti, et preordinasti
ad hoc quod sum,
tu scis quid de me facere vis;
fac de me secundum
voluntatem tuam,
cum misericordia.
Amen*

*Lord Jesus Christ,
who created,
redeemed, and preordained me to be
this that I am,
you know what you wish to do with me;
do with me in accordance
with your will,
with mercy.
Amen*

*Music: Henry Ley (1887-1962)
Text: Henry VI of England (1421 – 1471)*

Opening Hymn

**Ye watchers and ye holy ones,
Bright Seraphs, Cherubim and Thrones,
Raise the glad strain, Alleluia!
Cry out Dominions, Princedoms, Powers,
Virtues, Archangels, Angels' choirs,**

***Alleluia! Alleluia!
Alleluia! Alleluia! Alleluia!***

**O higher than the Cherubim,
More glorious than the Seraphim,
Lead their praises, Alleluia!
Thou Bearer of th' eternal Word,
Most gracious, magnify the Lord,**

Alleluia! Alleluia! ...

**Respond, ye souls in endless rest,
Ye Patriarchs and Prophets blest,
Alleluia! Alleluia!
Ye holy Twelve, ye Martyrs strong,
All Saints triumphant, raise the song:**

Alleluia! Alleluia! ...

**O friends, in gladness let us sing,
Supernal anthems echoing,
Alleluia! Alleluia!
To God the Father, God the Son,
And God the Spirit, Three in One:**

Alleluia! Alleluia! ...

Text: Athelstan Riley (1858-1945)

Tune: 'Lasst uns erfreuen' (German trad. c.1623), arr. R. Vaughan Williams

Confession and Absolution

Remain standing as the officiant introduces the general Confession

Beloved, we are come together in the presence of Almighty God and of the whole company of heaven to offer unto him through our Lord Jesus Christ our worship and praise and thanksgiving; to make confession of our sins; to pray, as well for others as for ourselves, that we may know more truly the greatness of God's love and show forth in our lives the fruits of his grace; and to ask on behalf of all people such things as their well-being doth require. Wherefore let us kneel and keep silence, and remember God's presence with us now.

¶ *Kneel or sit*

**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,
And there is no health in us:
But thou, O Lord, have mercy upon us miserable offenders;
Spare thou them, O God, which confess their faults,
Restore thou them that are penitent,
According to thy promises declared unto mankind
in Christ Jesu 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 officiant gives the Absolution

May the almighty and merciful Lord grant unto you pardon and remission of all your sins, time for amendment of life, and the grace and comfort of the Holy Spirit. **Amen.**

**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.
For thine is the kingdom,
the power, and the glory,
For ever and ever. Amen.**

¶ Stand

Preces

The officiant and choir sing the Responses

O Lord, open thou our lips
And our mouth shall shew forth thy praise.

O God, make speed to save us.
O Lord, make haste to help us.

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.

Praise ye the Lord;
The Lord's name be praised.

Music: Richard Ayelward (1626 – 1669)

¶ **Sit**

Psalm
The choir sings Psalm 82

God has taken his stand in the council of heaven; in the midst of the gods
he gives judgement:

‘How long will you judge unjustly and show such favour to the wicked?

‘You were to judge the weak and the orphan; defend the right of the
humble and needy;

‘Rescue the weak and the poor; deliver them from the hand of the wicked.

‘They have no knowledge or wisdom; they walk on still in darkness: all the
foundations of the earth are shaken.

‘Therefore I say that though you are gods and all of you children of the
Most High,

‘Nevertheless, you shall die like mortals and fall like one of their princes.’

Arise, O God and judge the earth, for it is you that shall take all nations
for your possession.

¶ **Stand**

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.

Tune: Noel Rawsthorne (1929 – 2019)

¶ **Sit**

First Reading

The Worshipful the Mayor of Royal Greenwich, Cllr Linda Bird

A reading from the book of Malachi

For, behold, the day cometh, that shall burn as an oven;
and all the proud, yea, and all that do wickedly, shall be stubble:
and the day that cometh shall burn them up, saith the Lord of hosts,
that it shall leave them neither root nor branch.

But unto you that fear my name shall the Sun of righteousness arise
with healing in his wings; and ye shall go forth,
and grow up as calves of the stall.

And ye shall tread down the wicked; for they shall be ashes under the
soles of your feet in the day that I shall do this, saith the Lord of hosts.

Remember ye the law of Moses my servant, which I commanded unto
him in Horeb for all Israel, with the statutes and judgments.

Behold, I will send you Elijah the prophet before the coming of the great
and dreadful day of the Lord:

And he shall turn the heart of the fathers to the children, and the heart of
the children to their fathers, lest I come and smite the earth with a curse.

¶ Stand

Hymn

**The Church's one foundation
Is Jesus Christ, her Lord;
She is his new creation
By water and the word:
From heaven he came and sought her
To be his holy Bride,
With his own blood he bought her,
And for her life he died.**

**Elect from every nation,
Yet one o'er all the earth,
Her charter of salvation
One Lord, one faith, one birth;
One holy name she blesses,
Partakes one holy food,
And to one hope she presses
With every grace endued.**

'Mid toil, and tribulation,
And tumult of her war,
She waits the consummation
Of peace for evermore;
Till with the vision glorious
Her longing eyes are blest,
And the great Church victorious
Shall be the Church at rest.

Yet she on earth hath union
With God the Three in One,
And mystic sweet communion
With those whose rest is won:
O happy ones and holy!
Lord, give us grace that we
Like them, the meek and lowly,
On high may dwell with thee.

Text: Samuel Stone (1839 – 1900)

Tune: 'Aurelia', Samuel Sebastian Wesley (1810 – 1876)

¶ **Sit**

Magnificat

The choir sings the Song of Mary

My soul doth magnify the Lord : and my spirit hath rejoiced in God my Saviour.

For he hath regarded : the lowliness of his hand-maiden.

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: T. Tertius Noble (1867 – 1953)

Second Reading

*The Representative Deputy Lieutenant for the
Royal Borough of Greenwich, Mr Matt Burrow DL*

A reading from the gospel according to St Matthew

Now when John had heard in the prison the works of Christ,
he sent two of his disciples,
And said unto him, Art thou he that should come, or do we look for
another?

Jesus answered and said unto them, Go and shew John again those
things which ye do hear and see:

The blind receive their sight, and the lame walk, the lepers are cleansed,
and the deaf hear, the dead are raised up, and the poor have the gospel
preached to them.

And blessed is he, whosoever shall not be offended in me.

And as they departed, Jesus began to say unto the multitudes concerning
John, What went ye out into the wilderness to see? A reed shaken with
the wind?

But what went ye out for to see? A man clothed in soft raiment? behold,
they that wear soft clothing are in kings' houses.

But what went ye out for to see? A prophet? yea, I say unto you, and
more than a prophet.

For this is he, of whom it is written, Behold, I send my messenger before
thy face, which shall prepare thy way before thee.

Verily I say unto you, Among them that are born of women there hath not
risen a greater than John the Baptist: notwithstanding he that is least in
the kingdom of heaven is greater than he.

And from the days of John the Baptist until now the kingdom of heaven
suffereth violence, and the violent take it by force.

For all the prophets and the law prophesied until John.

And if ye will receive it, this is Elias, which was for to come.

He that hath ears to hear, let him hear.

But whereunto shall I liken this generation? It is like unto children sitting in
the markets, and calling unto their fellows,

And saying, We have piped unto you, and ye have not danced; we have mourned unto you, and ye have not lamented.
For John came neither eating nor drinking, and they say, He hath a devil.
The Son of man came eating and drinking, and they say, Behold a man gluttonous, and a winebibber, a friend of publicans and sinners.
But wisdom is justified of her children.

Nunc Dimittis

The choir sings the Song of Simeon

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: T. Tertius Noble (1867 – 1953)

Sermon

The sermon is given by the Very Reverend Dr Mark Oakley

¶ Stand

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.

¶ *(Remain standing)*

Responses

*The officiant and choir sing the Lesser Litany, the Lord's Prayer,
and the Responses*

The Lord be with you.
And with thy spirit.

Let us pray.

¶ *Kneel or sit*

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

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.

O Lord, shew thy mercy upon us.
And grant us thy salvation.

O Lord, save The King.
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.

Collects

The officiant sings the Collects;

Of the day

ALMIGHTY God, by whose providence thy servant John Baptist was wonderfully born, and sent to prepare the way of thy Son our Saviour, by preaching of repentance: Make us so to follow his doctrine and holy life, that we may truly repent according to his preaching; and after his example constantly speak the truth, boldly rebuke vice, and patiently suffer for the truth's sake; through Jesus Christ our Lord.

Amen

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.

Amen

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 Saviour, Jesus Christ.

Amen

Anthem

The choir sings the anthem

I was glad when they said unto me : We will go into the house of the Lord.
Our feet shall stand in thy gates : O Jerusalem.
Jerusalem is built as a city : that is at unity in itself.
O pray for the peace of Jerusalem : they shall prosper that love thee.
Peace be within thy walls : and plenteousness within thy palaces.

Music: Sir Hubert Parry (1848 – 1914)

Text: Book of Common Prayer

Intercessions

Kneel or remain seated for the Intercessions

¶ Stand

Final Hymn

*During the hymn, a retiring collection is taken for the work of this Church.
You can donate using the collection bags;
contactless machines; or this QR code:*



**The day thou gavest, Lord, is ended,
the darkness falls at thy behest;
to thee our morning hymns ascended,
thy praise shall sanctify our rest.**

**We thank thee that thy Church unsleeping,
while earth rolls onward into light,
through all the world her watch is keeping,
and rests not now by day or night.**

**As o'er each continent and island
the dawn leads on another day,
the voice of prayer is never silent,
nor dies the strain of praise away.**

The sun that bids us rest is waking
our brethren 'neath the western sky,
and hour by hour fresh lips are making
thy wondrous doings heard on high.

So be it, Lord; thy throne shall never,
like earth's proud empires, pass away;
thy kingdom stands, and grows for ever,
till all thy creatures own thy sway.

Music: Clement Scholefield (1839 – 1904)

Text: John Ellerton (1826 – 1893)

¶ (Remain standing)

Blessing and Dismissal

Great Father of glory,
we praise you for your eternal light,
illuminating the splendour of your creation
and brightening the gloom of our troubled world.
May your unchanging love
inspire your church in all goodness and grace,
so that all your people may dwell in justice, harmony and peace,
for you reign with Christ and the Spirit,
high soaring in heaven, and deep in our hearts. **Amen.**

Go forth into the world,
singing psalms and hymns and spiritual songs among yourselves,
and making the melody to the Lord in your hearts,
and the blessing of the Holy Trinity,
the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit,
be in your hearts and voices now and always. **Amen.**

¶ (Remain standing while the choir processes out)

ORGAN VOLUNTARY

V. Finale, from Sixth Symphony, Op. 42, No. 2
Charles-Marie Widor (1844 – 1937)

**Thank you for joining us for this Festival service to celebrate our
150 years in this Church building!**

A great many people have worked together to make this month of celebration an opportunity to welcome and share our Church with our local community. To all those involved, thank you!



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