

# St. Faith's Church Choir

# NEWSLETTER

FRIDAY 3<sup>RD</sup> APRIL 2020

**Welcome** to this Friday's ramblings from Graham! I thought I might experiment with putting my rambles in a newsletter format rather than a long worded email. Comments, improvements, suggestions welcome!

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## **Piece of the week**

As we are now in to the season of Passiontide, we are of course about to embark on Holy Week. I can safely say that 2020 will be the quietest Holy Week that I have experienced!

Around this time, there are often performances of settings of the Lamentations of Jeremiah. My favourite setting by far of this text (and one of my all-time favourite choir pieces) is by the composer Edward Bairstow who was born in 1874 and died in 1946. His claim to fame is that he served as organist of York Minster from 1913 until his death. Quite an achievement!

This piece was completed in 1942, using text from the book of Lamentations in the Old Testament selected by the Dean of York at the

time. I particularly love this piece about two thirds of the way in, when the music and text shift from sorrow to hope.

A YouTube version is available here:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-jq6d-Ozm6Y>

I also highly recommend this version from the amazing choir and acoustic of St. Paul's Cathedral. In fact, the whole "Passiontide at St. Paul's" CD is a fantastic listen:

[https://www.hyperion-records.co.uk/dc.asp?dc=D\\_CDH55436](https://www.hyperion-records.co.uk/dc.asp?dc=D_CDH55436)

The album is also available via Amazon.

# Online singing opportunities

I have emailed previously about the opportunities that Richard McVeigh has been offering through the "Beauty in sound" YouTube channel. I hope you have found them useful!

This week I'd like to "flag up" three online singing opportunities that I think you'll enjoy!

The first two are from organist William Saunders who is, amongst other things, a deputy organist at St. Edmundsbury Cathedral.

William is running a "congregational hymn practice" every Saturday morning at 10am (which you could probably catch up with at another time):

<http://william-saunders.info/2020/03/24/hymn-practice-congo-live-on-saturday-mornings/>

St. Edmundsbury Cathedral is also running a virtual come and sing of Stainer's Crucifixion (that piece again!) at 5pm on Good Friday:

<http://william-saunders.info/2020/04/01/virtual-come-and-sing-stainers-crucifixion/>

I'm quite tempted by this one. Personally, I'm very interested to see how people manage to pull off a virtual come and sing!

Thirdly, you may have seen this elsewhere, but St. Paul's Cathedral (second mention for them this week) are running a hymn flash mob! Sadly, we've missed the deadline to participate in the one for Palm Sunday, but another one is being arranged for next week. Full details are here:

<https://www.stpauls.co.uk/worship-music/worship/choir-of-the-nation-join-our-hymn-flash-mob>

I hope you find these links helpful and do let me / us know if you take part in any of them and what you thought of them!

## Live streamed services

I'm very much dipping in and out of live streamed services from across the country at the moment! On Mothering Sunday (so before churches were totally closed) I enjoyed "dropping in" to the RC Mass at St. James, Spanish Place, London where a colleague of mine, Iestyn Evans, is director of music (everyone knows everyone in the music world!)

I love how the choir sings Mozart's Ave verum and I love how they obey social distancing guidance:

<https://youtu.be/nkp0ajH2AnM>

(Ave verum is about 1 hour 5 minutes into the video)

## And finally!

With Mozart's *Ave verum* in mind, I thought you might like to have a bit of a musical challenge! I have put together a mp3 recording of the piano part of *Ave verum* (attached with this email) which I thought you would enjoy singing along to it. I also thought it would be good to get you to record yourselves so I can put a recording together of all your voices singing the piece. So, if you are able, I would love you to send me an audio recording (just the sound, so no video) of you singing your part! You can do this by recording yourself using your mobile phone or other device, it doesn't have to be a fancy recording. You can record yourselves as a duet if you live together, or you could record yourself singing more than one part! The only rule I would ask is, as far as possible, to please record yourselves using headphones so I only get your voices on the recording rather than the backing track. So ideally, listen to the backing track with headphones on one device. On a second device, record yourself singing. Try to ensure there is silence in the background, and that you are not holding the device with which you are recording: set it close by on a table. If you can get your recordings in by Friday 24<sup>th</sup> April then that would be good! Please send your submitted recordings to [music@stfaiths.com](mailto:music@stfaiths.com) You can send your recording by attaching it as an email or you can send it via [www.wetransfer.com](http://www.wetransfer.com) which is a good website for sending big files to people. Best of luck!

## On a personal note

I'm sorry that we are not able to meet together at the moment. I have been asked about virtual choir rehearsals. I have read stories of varying success of these; the main problem is that there appears to be a big time delay, making singing together incredibly hard! I hope that my weekly bulletin with singing links helps to ensure some continuity and I hope our "recording project" will help to enable us to at least hear each other! Technically, I'm probably not meant to be doing any of this, as I am currently on furlough from St. Faith's, which means that I am meant to "*cease all work for the parish, until such time as circumstances have changed*" but I'm keen to keep communication going through the ways that I am doing. In case you're wondering (probably not!), I am also on furlough from my verger duties at the Cathedral, which includes no access to my work emails until further notice.

That's more than enough from me today. Have a good week and stay safe,

*Graham*