

St. Faith's Church Choir

NEWSLETTER

FRIDAY 17TH JULY 2020

Welcome to another edition of ramblings from the organist! Is it Friday again? Is it really the middle of July already? I'm finding that writing these newsletters is helping to me keep track of what day it is, plus a bit of structure to the week.

Here is this week's newsletter... as ever, comments, feedback, suggestions welcome!

All about Hymns



Richard McVeigh continues his live request show of hymns and organ music every Sunday evening starting at 5pm via his "Beauty in Sound" YouTube channel. Well done to Richard for continuing these sessions, which generally last over three hours:

<https://www.youtube.com/c/BEAUTYinSOUND/videos>

The Royal School of Church Music are still offering a "hymn for the day" via their YouTube channel:



<https://www.youtube.com/user/RSCMCentre/videos>



Canon Alison Kennedy from Chelmsford Cathedral in Essex continues her "hymn of the week" series. As the church remembered the life and work of the priest, poet and academic John Keble this week, Canon Alison has chosen the evening hymn "Sun of my soul, thou Saviour dear". I liked her suggested recording of it too, with a nice descant for the last verse:

<https://chelmsfordcathedral.org.uk/uploads/sun-of-my-soul.pdf>

Live streamed services

I'm still continuing to enjoy dropping in to various churches for their services! Over the last few months I've developed regulars to visit, but I try to virtually visit at least one new place each week. More on that at the end of the newsletter.

Grimsby Minster had the good taste to copy us and chose to record "Thou visitest the earth"



last Sunday (this would have been our anthem of the week last Sunday). Listen out for their pronunciation of the word "year"!

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=t2FgGEzgnIq>



Members of the choir of Christ Church, Southgate (North London) really pushed the boat out and put together a virtual performance of Henry Purcell's "Hear my prayer" (not to be confused with Mendelssohn's version of "Hear my prayer"; even the words are different). This is a setting of the opening verse of psalm 102. We believe that it was meant to be the opening of a longer anthem, but Purcell never completed it so we'll never know.

What we do have is two minutes of beautiful music, written in eight parts; so two soprano parts, two alto parts, two tenor parts and two bass parts.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xVG4RhyAPBQ>

As places of worship are reopening for private prayer and public worship, the theme for this weeks "choral classics" from St. Stephen's Church in Walbrook is the "Temple of God". Rev Stephen Baxter is back out in the garden again this week to present, with the lovely voices of the choral scholars (who aren't in his garden) singing two hymns with



great tunes plus an anthem by William Harris about tabernacles.

<https://www.facebook.com/ststephenec4n/videos/976976319423041/>



The theme of this weeks "Great Sacred Music" service from St. Martin-in-the-Fields is "mission". Rev Dr Sam Wells presents and St. Martin's Voices provide the music, which includes music two hymns with great tunes, a blessing by John Rutter and a very exciting anthem by Vaughan Williams.

<https://www.facebook.com/stmartininthefields/videos/282929349611815/>

Anthem of the week

The anthem for this Sunday would have been "View me, Lord" composed in 1663 by the British composer and organist Richard Lloyd. As I haven't yet completed a year at St. Faith's yet, I don't know if this would have been a new anthem or not!

Richard Lloyd was born on 25th June 1933 in Stockport and was a chorister at Lichfield Cathedral from 1942 to 1947. He studied at Jesus College, Cambridge where he was organ scholar from 1952 to 1955. From 1957 to 1966, Richard Lloyd was Assistant Organist at Salisbury Cathedral and in 1966 was appointed Organist and Master of the Choristers at Hereford Cathedral (the photo on the right is of Richard Lloyd conducting Hereford Cathedral choir in 1969). In 1974, he moved up north to be Organist and Master of the Choristers at Durham Cathedral until 1985, when he returned to Salisbury to be the Deputy Head at the Cathedral School. Sadly, ill health forced his early retirement from the school in 1988, but since retiring, he has divided his time between composing and examining. In 2010, Richard Lloyd, received a Fellowship from the RSCM.



Although Richard Lloyd might not be a familiar name to you, he has been a prolific composer with over 600 pieces written over a long period! Of these, the choral pieces are probably the best known, particularly his settings of the Evensong canticles (the Magnificat and Nunc Dimittis) dedicated to different Cathedrals, which get regularly sung by Cathedral choirs across the country.

His best known work (I think) is this simple and effective setting of the poem "View me Lord" by the musician, poet and physician Thomas Campion who was born circa 1567 and died in 1619. Much more about Campion is available at good old Wikipedia.



Here is a recording of the anthem... <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=IKtrZigr3vU>

... and here are the words:

View me, Lord, a work of thine!
Shall I then lie down in night?
Might thy grace in me but shine,
I should seem made all of light.

Cleanse me, Lord, that I may kneel
At thine altar pure and white;
They at once thy mercies feel,
Gaze no more on earth's delight.

Worldly joys like shadows fade
When the heavenly light appears;
But the covenants Thou hast made,
Endless, know not days nor years.

In thy word, Lord, is my trust,
To thy mercies fast I fly;
Though I am but clay and dust,
Yet thy grace can lift me high.

Featured Church!

During July, I thought I'd write a bit about the churches that I've been involved with over the last 36½ years. This week, we visit **St. James's Church, West End** which, slightly confusingly, is about four miles east of Southampton!



Like many churches, the current building isn't the first church to be on the site. The original church building on the site was very plain and the parish quickly outgrew it! To complicate matters, the church was struck by lightning in 1875, which made it necessary to pull down most of the spire. Plans for a new church were drawn up and accepted in 1889. The chosen architect was Sir Arthur Blomfield (pictured right), who in 1882, designed the Royal College of Music and in 1887, became architect to the Bank of England. His design for the church was to use a decorated and perpendicular style, with plain Nave arches. The cost of building the church came to just under £7000 and the foundation stone was laid on 22nd October 1890. In 2015, the congregation and the parish had a weekend of celebrations to mark the 125th anniversary of the building of the current church.



The church is slightly unusual in that it has two fonts! In addition to the Victorian font at the west end, the one by the chancel steps is much older and is believed to be from the older church building. It was rescued from the mud in the nearby river! At the East end of the church is a large crucifix made of bog-wood, which once stood outside in the churchyard flanked by figures of Mary and John, which are also now in the church.



On completion of my time at University in 2005, I moved back home. I could have gone back to being part of St. Andrew's Hamble (featured church a fortnight ago) but I decided that it would be a backward step and the musical life of the church had moved on in three years. So I ended up being firstly an occasional worshipper at St. James', before joining the church choir as the only tenor in January 2006. Due to work commitments, I stepped down from singing in the choir at the beginning of 2011 and moved from the chancel to the sanctuary to become an altar server until 2014. I also recall being on the Sunday coffee rota at one point, I ended up washing up for Christmas and summer fetes (I like washing up) and I did two stints on the PCC.



In September 2015, I became director of music at the church. My predecessor was Martin Hall who sadly had Parkinson's disease and had to stand down (the newsletter from 22nd May says a bit more about Martin). Within this role, I was the principal organist for services at the church; generally, I played for two Sundays a month (three when there were five Sundays). The parish was, and still is,

blessed to have other organists who were happy to play occasionally. I had responsibility for leading choir practices. During my three years as Director of Music, I put together many special services and was able to collaborate successfully with other church choirs from the locality. Of particular note were the annual 'Come and Sing' events which took place in October of every year and the Advent Carol Service of 2017 which involved many local church choirs. I was also involved in playing for the innovative 'Church Alive' service, which commenced in January 2016. My time at West End culminated with the choir singing for evensong at Portsmouth Anglican Cathedral in July 2018. I stayed for a bit longer as I played for the final services for the vicar at the beginning of August (I said I was leaving before him) and my final "engagement" was to lead the music at the collation service of his new parish at the beginning of September 2018. I was very lucky to work with lovely clergy during my time at West End, firstly Rev Brian Pickett and Rev Liz Pickett (husband and wife team) until May 2012, then Rev Thomas Wharton from September 2013, who is now vicar of Romsey Abbey.



St. James is another very busy church with lots going on, even during lockdown!

The church website is here: <http://www.stjameswestend.org.uk/>

And finally!

I mentioned earlier that I try to virtually visit a new church every week. I went across the channel this week to the Town Church of St. Peter Port, Guernsey for their choral evensong with admission of church wardens and admission of a new vice dean of Guernsey. **Yes, this really is a full choral evensong in the church building with a large congregation in attendance!** If you don't watch any other links in the newsletters, **please watch this one and sing along!** There are lots of "Havant favourites" in the service. I was quite moved by the procession at the beginning and end of the service, which of course is something we haven't seen for a while. The preacher at the service was the Dean of Guernsey, who I thought looked a bit like the current vicar of St. Faith's, but that might be my eyesight (you have to wait a while before seeing him). <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=zwlGLSBEXd0>

I also enjoyed the explanation of last week's Gospel Reading from St. James', Paddington: <https://www.facebook.com/stjamesusssexgardens/videos/582044196035395/>

That's all for this week folks. Stay safe and keep singing!

Graham