FESTAL EVENSONG
to celebrate
JOHN WESLEY
Preparing for Worship

In June 1720, John Wesley entered Christ Church as an undergraduate, matriculating formally on 18 July. He graduated in 1724, and was ordained deacon on 19 September 1725 in this cathedral before taking up a Fellowship at Lincoln College in 1726. After a brief spell as his father’s curate in Epworth, Lincolnshire and priestly ordination in 1728, Wesley returned to Lincoln College in 1729, where he – along with his brother Charles and a circle of Oxford friends – began the concentrated study, prayer and discipline which would flower into the Methodist movement.

We pray this evening according to the Book of Common Prayer of 1666, offering an Evensong very similar to the services in which Wesley participated at Christ Church during his time in Oxford. Music is from archive recordings by the Cathedral Choir and the Cathedral Singers of Christ Church, and by the musicians of Wesley Memorial Methodist Church, Oxford; largely using music from the early eighteenth century and connected with the Wesley family. The reflection is given by the Revd Dr Martin Wellings, Superintendent Minister of the Oxford Methodist Circuit and an honorary canon of this cathedral.

Entering into worship through audio broadcast is more familiar to some of us than to others. If this is new to you, try to actively share in the service, not just have it on in the background; and join in the words in bold. Find a comfortable position that helps you to pray, and to receive the love of God in your heart. As we listen, we are united in worship and prayer despite the distance between us.

You can find regular audio services, alongside other resources for worshipping at home, at www.chch.ox.ac.uk/onlineworship. Please do get in touch with the cathedral if you would like us to pray for or support you. May God bless you as we worship him together.

Music before the service

*recorded by the Restoration Consort in 2019, under the direction of James Morley Potter*

Instrumental Suite (Music for the Oxford Act 1682)

*Henry Aldrich (1648–1710)*
God’s love has been poured into our hearts through the Holy Spirit that has been given to us.

_Romans 5: 5_

_The Dean, the Very Revd Professor Martyn Percy, welcomes the congregation and introduces the service._

**Hymn**

*recorded by the musicians*  
of Wesley Memorial Methodist Church, Oxford,  
*for this service.*

Love divine, all loves excelling,  
Joy of heav’n to earth come down:  
fix in us thy humble dwelling,  
all thy faithful mercies crown:  
Jesus, thou art all compassion,  
pure, unbounded love thou art;  
visit us with thy salvation,  
enter ev’ry trembling heart.

Come, Almighty to deliver,  
let us all thy life receive;  
suddenly return, and never,  
evermore thy temples leave.  
Thee we would be always blessing,  
serve thee as thy hosts above,  
pray and praise thee without ceasing,  
glory in thy perfect love.

Finish, then, thy new creation;  
pure and spotless let us be:  
let us see thy great salvation  
perfectly restored in thee;  
changed from glory into glory,  
‘til in heav’n we take our place,  
‘til we cast our crowns before thee,  
lost in wonder, love, and praise.

*Words:* Charles Wesley (1707–1788)  
*Music:* Hyfrydol, Rowland Pritchard (1811–1887)
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 shew forth in our lives the fruits of his grace; and to ask on behalf of all such things as their well-being doth require. Wherefore let us keep silence, and remember God’s presence with us now.

All

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.
ALMIGHTY God, the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who desireth not
the death of a sinner, but rather that he may turn from his wickedness,
and live; and hath given power, and commandment, to his Ministers, to
declare and pronounce to his people, being penitent, the Absolution and
Remission of their sins:
He pardoneth and absolveth all them that truly repent, and unfeignedly
believe his holy Gospel.
Wherefore let us beseech him to grant us true repentance, and his Holy
Spirit, that those things may please him, which we do at this present; and
that the rest of our life hereafter may be pure, and holy; so that at the last
we may come to his eternal joy; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

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.
For thine is the kingdom, the power, and the glory,
for ever and ever. Amen.
Minister  O Lord, open thou our lips
         and our mouth shall shew forth thy praise.

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

Minister  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.

Minister  Praise ye the Lord.
         The Lord’s Name be praised.

Psalm 100

read by Alison Butler,
Mission & Heritage Officer at Wesley Memorial Church

Make a joyful noise to the Lord, all the earth.
Worship the Lord with gladness;
come into his presence with singing.

Know that the Lord is God.
It is he that made us, and we are his;
we are his people, and the sheep of his pasture.

Enter his gates with thanksgiving,
and his courts with praise.
Give thanks to him, bless his name.

For the Lord is good;
his steadfast love endures for ever,
and his faithfulness to all generations.
Joseph went and told Pharaoh, ‘My father and my brothers, with their flocks and herds and all that they possess, have come from the land of Canaan; they are now in the land of Goshen.’ From among his brothers he took five men and presented them to Pharaoh. Pharaoh said to his brothers, ‘What is your occupation?’ And they said to Pharaoh, ‘Your servants are shepherds, as our ancestors were.’ They said to Pharaoh, ‘We have come to reside as aliens in the land; for there is no pasture for your servants’ flocks because the famine is severe in the land of Canaan. Now, we ask you, let your servants settle in the land of Goshen.’ Then Pharaoh said to Joseph, ‘Your father and your brothers have come to you. The land of Egypt is before you; settle your father and your brothers in the best part of the land; let them live in the land of Goshen; and if you know that there are capable men among them, put them in charge of my livestock.’

Then Joseph brought in his father Jacob, and presented him before Pharaoh, and Jacob blessed Pharaoh. Pharaoh said to Jacob, ‘How many are the years of your life?’ Jacob said to Pharaoh, ‘The years of my earthly sojourn are one hundred and thirty; few and hard have been the years of my life. They do not compare with the years of the life of my ancestors during their long sojourn.’ Then Jacob blessed Pharaoh, and went out from the presence of Pharaoh. Joseph settled his father and his brothers, and granted them a holding in the land of Egypt, in the best part of the land, in the land of Rameses, as Pharaoh had instructed. And Joseph provided his father, his brothers, and all his father’s household with food, according to the number of their dependants.
Magnificat
Henry Aldrich (1648–1710),
recorded by the Cathedral Singers of Christ Church
in 2019, under the direction of James Morley Potter

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.

(Luke 1:46–55)

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.
We appeal to you, brothers and sisters, to respect those who labour among you, and have charge of you in the Lord and admonish you; esteem them very highly in love because of their work. Be at peace among yourselves. And we urge you, beloved, to admonish the idlers, encourage the faint-hearted, help the weak, be patient with all of them. See that none of you repays evil for evil, but always seek to do good to one another and to all. Rejoice always, pray without ceasing, give thanks in all circumstances; for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus for you. Do not quench the Spirit. Do not despise the words of prophets, but test everything; hold fast to what is good; abstain from every form of evil.

May the God of peace himself sanctify you entirely; and may your spirit and soul and body be kept sound and blameless at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ. The one who calls you is faithful, and he will do this. Beloved, pray for us.

Greet all the brothers and sisters with a holy kiss. I solemnly command you by the Lord that this letter be read to all of them.

The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you.
Nunc Dimittis

Henry Aldrich (1648–1710),
recorded by the Cathedral Singers of Christ Church
in 2019, under the direction of James Morley Potter

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.

(Luke 2:29–32)

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 Lesser Litany and Responses
recorded by the Clerks of the Choir
to a plainsong setting

Minister The Lord be with you.
Choir And with thy spirit.

Minister Let us pray.
Choir Lord, have mercy upon us.
Christ, have mercy upon us.
Lord, have mercy upon us.

Choir 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.

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

Minister O Lord, save the Queen.
Choir And mercifully hear us when we call upon thee.

Minister Endue thy ministers with righteousness.
Choir And make thy chosen people joyful.

Minister O Lord, save thy people.
Choir And bless thine inheritance.

Minister Give peace in our time, O Lord.
Choir Because there is none other that fighteth for us,
but only thou, O God.

Minister O God, make clean our hearts within us.
Choir And take not thy Holy Spirit from us.
The Collect of the Day

Most merciful God, as thou didst inspire John Wesley with zeal for thy Gospel and the gift of preaching; Grant unto all people that same boldness to proclaim thy word and ever to rejoice in thy praises; through Jesus Christ our Lord, who liveth and reigneth with thee in the unity of the Holy Ghost, one God for ever and 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 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.

The Collect for Aid against 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.

Reflection
given by the Revd Dr Martin Wellings, Superintendent Minister of the Oxford Methodist Circuit

Prayers
led by the Revd Canon Sarah Foot, Regius Professor of Ecclesiastical History.

The prayers conclude with the Grace; please join in as we pray:

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.
Let us, with a gladsome mind,
Praise the Lord, for He is kind.
For His mercies aye endure,
Ever faithful, ever sure.

Let us blaze His Name abroad,
For of gods He is the God.
For His mercies aye endure,
Ever faithful, ever sure.

He with all commanding might
Filled the new made world with light.
For His mercies aye endure,
Ever faithful, ever sure.

He the golden tressèd sun
Caused all day his course to run.
For His mercies aye endure,
Ever faithful, ever sure.

And the horned moon by night;
‘Mid her spangled sisters bright.
For His mercies aye endure,
Ever faithful, ever sure.

All things living he doth feed,
His full hand supplies their need.
For His mercies aye endure,
Ever faithful, ever sure.

Let us, with a gladsome mind,
Praise the Lord, for He is kind.
For His mercies aye endure,
Ever faithful, ever sure.

Words: John Milton (1608–1674)
Music: Monkland, John Antes (1740–1811)
Blessing
given by the Dean

May Christ, who called John Wesley to his service and to preach the good news by word and example, strengthen you to witness to his grace and love; and the blessing of God almighty, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit, be among you and remain with you always. Amen.

Music after the service
recorded by the Organist, Professor Steven Grahl

Prelude and Fugue in D (BWV 850)  

JS Bach (1685-1850)


Images from Christ Church Cathedral, photography by Ralph Wilkinson.