

## MUSICAL NOTES – ADVENT 2025

The season of Advent often puts me in mind of the story of Martha and Mary, found in Luke 10. Jesus is received at the home of these two sisters, and while Martha bustles around making preparations, Mary simply sits and listens to Jesus. Eventually, Martha complains to Jesus that Mary has left all the work to her, only to be told that Mary had “chosen the better part.”

Advent is an exceptionally busy time of year, of course, and many of us will recognise ourselves in the frantic activity of Martha, particularly in the context of providing hospitality, in the run-up to Christmas. But it is also a time when we seem to be *called* to be busy by other parts of Scripture; we are to keep watch, always be ready, prepare highways in the wilderness, and so forth. How are we to reconcile this with Jesus telling Martha that the only important thing is to sit and listen to him?

There's one key word in the description of Martha that may hold an answer: “distracted”. She is “distracted by her many tasks;” Jesus tells her she is “worried and distracted by many things.” It's not the activity in and of itself that is unimportant, but the fact that she seems to have forgotten its purpose – indeed, she continues in her preparations even after her visitor has arrived! Two stanzas from George Herbert's *The Elixir* come to mind:

*Teach me, my God and King, in all things thee to see;  
and what I do in anything to do it as for thee.*

*A servant with this clause makes drudgery divine;  
who sweeps a room, as for thy laws, makes that and the action fine.*

Full details of the music used in our services over the first part of Advent (which we hope will be neither drudgery nor distraction!) are to be found herein; of particular note is, as usual, our Advent Carol Service on **30<sup>th</sup> November**, which promises to be a wonderful occasion. Our Christmas Carol Service on **14<sup>th</sup> December** will be covered in the next edition of these notes.

Finally, as we near the end of the first term of the academic year, my thanks to our new and returning scholars, Tom, Rosie, Erinna, Sophie, Alex, and Matthew – and indeed to the rest of the choir – for their commitment and hard work, contributing to an excellent start to the year's music-making.

*David Harris, Director of Music*

# Sunday 30<sup>th</sup> November – Advent Sunday

## Parish Eucharist, 11.00am

Anthem: *Matin Responsory*

Music: Giovanni Pierluigi da Palestrina (c.1525 – 1594),

arr. David Willcocks (1919 - 2015)

Text: First Responsory at Matins on Advent Sunday

*I look from afar: and lo, I see the power of God coming, and a cloud covering the whole earth. Go ye out to meet him and say: Tell us, art thou he that should come to reign over thy people Israel? High and low, rich and poor, one with another. Hear, O thou shepherd of Israel, thou that leadest Joseph like a sheep. Stir up thy strength, O Lord, and come. Glory be to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Ghost.*

Voluntary: *Chorale prelude on 'Wachet auf, ruft uns die Stimme', BWV 645*

Johann Sebastian Bach (1685 – 1750)

## Advent Carol Service, 6.00pm

*Advent Prose*

Music: Plainchant, arr. Stephen Cleobury (1948 – 2019)

{R} *Pour down, O heavens from above, and let the skies rain down righteousness.*

*Turn your fierce anger from us, O Lord, and remember not our sins for ever. Your holy cities have become a desert, Zion a wilderness, Jerusalem a desolation; our holy and beautiful house, where our fathers praised you. [R]*

*We have sinned and become like one who is unclean; we have all withered like a leaf, and our iniquities like the wind have swept us away. You have hidden your face from us, and abandoned us to our iniquities. [R]*

*The truth from above*

Music: trad. English, arr. Ralph Vaughan Williams (1872 – 1958)

Text: trad. English

*You are my witnesses, says the Lord, and my servant whom I have chosen, that you may know me and believe me. I myself am the Lord, and none but I can deliver; what my hand holds, none can snatch away. [R]*

*Comfort my people, comfort them; my salvation shall not be delayed. I have swept your offences away like a cloud; fear not, for I will save you. I am the Lord your God, the Holy One of Israel, your redeemer. [R]*

*This is the truth sent from above,  
The truth of God, the God of love,  
Therefore don't turn me from the door,  
But hearken all, both rich and poor.*

*The first thing that I will relate,  
That God at first did man create;  
The next thing which to you I tell  
Woman was made with man to dwell.*

*And we were heirs to endless woes,  
Till God the Lord did interpose;  
And so a promise soon did run:  
That he'd redeem us by his Son.*

### *A spotless Rose*

Music: Herbert Howells (1892 – 1983)

Text: trad. German, tr. Catherine Winkworth (1827 – 1878)

*A spotless Rose is blowing,  
sprung from a tender root,  
Of ancient seers' foreshowing,  
of Jesse promised fruit;  
Its fairest bud unfolds to light  
Amid the cold, cold winter,  
And in the dark midnight.*

*And at this season of the year  
Our blest Redeemer did appear,  
And here did live, and here did preach,  
And many thousands he did teach.*

*Thus he in love to us behaved,  
To show us how we must be saved;  
And if you want to know the way,  
Be pleased to hear what he did say.*

*The Rose which I am singing,  
whereof Isaiah said,  
Is from its sweet root springing  
in Mary, purest Maid;  
For through our God's great love  
and might  
The Blessed Babe she bare us  
in a cold, cold winter's night.*

### *A Distant Star in the Stillness*

David Önaç (b. 1984)

### *Magnificat in E*

Sydney Watson (1903 – 1991)

### *Veiled in darkness*

Music: Glenn Rudolph (b. 1951)

Text: Douglas Letel Rights (1891 – 1956)

– see overleaf

Voluntary: *Chorale prelude on 'Vom Himmel hoch, da komm' ich her'*

Johann Pachelbel (1653 – 1706)

*Veiled in darkness Judah lay,  
Waiting for the promised day,  
While across the shadowy night  
Streamed a flood of glorious light,  
Heavn'ly voices chanting then,  
'Peace on earth, goodwill to men.'*

*Still the earth in darkness lies,  
Up from death's dark vale arise  
Voices of a world in grief,*

*Prayers of men who seek relief;  
Now our darkness pierce again,  
'Peace on earth, goodwill to men.'*

*Light of light, we humbly pray,  
Shine upon Thy world today;  
Break the gloom of our dark night,  
Fill our souls with love and light,  
Send thy blessed word again,  
'Peace on earth, goodwill to men.'*

## **Sunday 7<sup>th</sup> December – Second Sunday of Advent**

### **Parish Eucharist, 11.00am**

*Anthem: This is the record of John*

*Music: Orlando Gibbons (1583 – 1625)*

*Text: John 1: 19-23*

*This is the record of John, when the Jews sent priests and Levites from Jerusalem to ask him, Who art thou? And he confessed and denied not; and said plainly, I am not the Christ. And they asked him, What art thou then? Art thou Elias? And he said, I am not. Art thou the prophet? And he answered, No. Then said they unto him, What art thou? that we may give an answer unto them that sent us. What sayest thou of thyself? And he said, I am the voice of him that crieth in the wilderness, Make straight the way of the Lord.*

*Voluntary: Chorale prelude on 'Nun komm, der Heiden Heiland', BWV 659  
Johann Sebastian Bach (1685 – 1750)*

### **Evening Prayer with Hymns, 6.00pm**

*Voluntary: O come, O come, Emmanuel*

*Trad. arr. Nigel Hess (b. 1953)*

## **Sunday 14<sup>th</sup> December – Third Sunday of Advent**

### **Parish Eucharist, 11.00am**

*Anthem: Long ago, prophets knew*

*Music: Piae Cantiones 1582, arr. Malcolm Archer (b. 1952)*

*Text: Fred Pratt Green (1903 – 2000) – see CP #58*

*Voluntary: Postlude on 'Personent hodie'*

*Rebecca Groom te Velde (b. 1956)*

**Christmas Carol Service, 6.00pm – details to follow.**