

The Temple Church

Wednesday 22 April 2026

CHORAL EVENSONG, 6.00 p.m.

Temple Singers and The Temple Youth Choir

*In Thanksgiving for St George's Day (23 April)
and for Shakespeare (c.23 April 1564 – 23 April 1616)*

Welcome to this service in which we celebrate St George's Day and offer thanksgiving for Shakespeare. We are especially delighted to have the Youth Choir here to sing this evening. We follow the service of the Book of Common Prayer (1662). Much of the service is sung by the Choir alone. We hope that you will enjoy the opportunity to let the music and words take your mind and your heart – with all its regrets and sorrows, hopes and love – into the presence of God.

If you wear a hearing aid please turn its setting to T.

ORGAN PRELUDE

Saraband for the morning of Easter

Herbert Howells (1892-1976)

All stand.

INTROIT

Bleib bei uns,
Denn es will Abend werden,
Und der Tag hat sich geneiget.

*Abide with us,
For it is toward evening,
And the day is far spent.*

*Music: Josef Rheinberger (1839-1901)
Words: Lutheran bible Luke 24. 29*

THE BIDDING PRAYER

And was the holy Lamb of God,
On England's pleasant pastures seen?

William Blake (1757-1827)

This blessed plot, this earth, this realm, this England.

William Shakespeare, Richard II, II.1

We give God heartfelt thanks for our country of England, so ancient and forever new, for the beauty and variety of her land, for her citizens and all their cultures; we pray for the deep springs of her prosperity, her civility and her peace, and for all the fertile rivers of her industry, sciences and arts; and here we give special thanks for the rule of law with which this land is blessed, for the safety and prosperity it provides and for the protection of the rights and freedoms we enjoy.

We give thanks for all those devoted to the service of England, and in particular for the two honourable Societies of this House and their Treasurers, Benchers, members and staff who still from age to age renew our Inns' offering to our students and the law, to our own land and all the nations of the earth.

And this evening, for his imperishable gift from Stratford to ourselves and from England to the world, we give thanks for Shakespeare, sweet swan of Avon, star of poets, the applause, delight and wonder of our stage:

My Shakespeare, rise!
Thou art a monument without a tomb,
And art alive still while thy book doth live
And we have wits to read and praise to give.

Ben Jonson, *To the Memory of My Beloved the Author,
Mr. William Shakespeare*

May God guide, strengthen and bless us as we seek to build a new Jerusalem of wisdom and of justice in England's green and pleasant land.

Heaven take my soul, and England keep my bones!

Shakespeare, *King John* IV.3

HYMN

1.
**Now thank we all our God,
With heart and hands and voices,
Who wondrous things hath done,
In whom his world rejoices;
Who from our mother's arms
Hath blessed us on our way
With countless gifts of love,
And still is ours today.**

2.
**O may this bounteous God
Through all our life be near us,
With ever joyful hearts
And blessed peace to cheer us;
And keep us in his grace,
And guide us when perplexed,
And free us from all ills
In this world and the next.**

3.

**All praise and thanks to God
The Father now be given,
The Son, and him who reigns
With them in highest heaven,
The one eternal God,
Whom heaven and earth adore,
For thus it was, is now,
And shall be evermore.**

Music: Johannes Crüger (1598-1662)

Words: Martin Rinkart (1586-1649), tr. Catherine Winkworth (1829-1878)

I pray and beseech you, as many as are here present, to accompany me with a pure heart, and humble voice, unto the throne of the heavenly grace, saying after me:

All sit or kneel.

CONFESSION AND ABSOLUTION

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 LORD'S PRAYER

Our Father, which art in heaven, Hallowed by 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.

All stand at 'Glory be.....'

THE RESPONSES (*Smith*)

PSALM 145. 1-13 (Garrett)

I will magnify thee, O God, my King:
and I will praise thy Name for ever and ever.
Every day will I give thanks unto thee:
and praise thy Name for ever and ever.
Great is the Lord, and marvellous, worthy to be praised:
there is no end of his greatness.
One generation shall praise thy works unto another:
and declare thy power.
As for me, I will be talking of thy worship:
thy glory, thy praise, and wondrous works;
So that men shall speak of the might of thy marvellous acts:
and I will also tell of thy greatness.
The memorial of thine abundant kindness shall be shewed:
and men shall sing of thy righteousness.
The Lord is gracious, and merciful:
long-suffering, and of great goodness.
The Lord is loving unto every man:
and his mercy is over all his works.
All thy works praise thee, O Lord:
and thy saints give thanks unto thee.
They shew the glory of thy kingdom:
and talk of thy power;
That thy power, thy glory, and mightiness of thy kingdom:
might be known unto men.
Thy kingdom is an everlasting kingdom:
and thy dominion endureth throughout all ages.
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.

All sit.

THE FIRST LESSON
Isaiah 55. 6-12

Seek ye the LORD while he may be found, call ye upon him while he is near:
Let the wicked forsake his way, and the unrighteous man his thoughts: and let
him return unto the LORD, and he will have mercy upon him; and to our God,
for he will abundantly pardon.

For my thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways, saith
the LORD. For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher
than your ways, and my thoughts than your thoughts.

For as the rain cometh down, and the snow from heaven, and returneth not
thither, but watereth the earth, and maketh it bring forth and bud, that it may

give seed to the sower, and bread to the eater: So shall my word be that goeth forth out of my mouth: it shall not return unto me void, but it shall accomplish that which I please, and it shall prosper in the thing whereto I sent it.

For ye shall go out with joy, and be led forth with peace: the mountains and the hills shall break forth before you into singing, and all the trees of the field shall clap their hands.

All stand.

MAGNIFICAT (*Howells in B minor*)

All sit.

THE SECOND LESSON

Ephesians 6. 10-20

Finally, my brethren, be strong in the Lord, and in the power of his might. Put on the whole armour of God, that ye may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil. For we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places.

Wherefore take unto you the whole armour of God, that ye may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all, to stand. Stand therefore, having your loins girt about with truth, and having on the breastplate of righteousness; And your feet shod with the preparation of the gospel of peace; Above all, taking the shield of faith, wherewith ye shall be able to quench all the fiery darts of the wicked. And take the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God: Praying always with all prayer and supplication in the Spirit, and watching thereunto with all perseverance and supplication for all saints; And for me, that utterance may be given unto me, that I may open my mouth boldly, to make known the mystery of the gospel, For which I am an ambassador in bonds: that therein I may speak boldly, as I ought to speak.

All stand.

NUNC DIMITTIS (*Howells in B minor*)

All remain standing and (in the tradition of the Temple Church) face East to say together:

THE 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 Catholick Church; The Communion of Saints; The Forgiveness of sins; The Resurrection of the body, And the Life everlasting. Amen.

All sit or kneel at 'Let us pray...'

THE LESSER LITANY

THE COLLECTS

God of hosts, who so kindled the flame of love in the heart of thy servant George that he bore witness to the risen Lord by his life and by his death: give us the same faith and power of love that we who rejoice in his triumphs may come to share with him the fullness of the resurrection; through Jesus Christ thy Son our Lord, who liveth and reigneth with thee, in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God, now and for ever. *Amen.*

Almighty God, who hast given thine only Son to be unto us both a sacrifice for sin, and also an ensample of godly life: Give us grace that we may always most thankfully receive that his inestimable benefit, and also daily endeavour ourselves to follow the blessed steps of his most holy life; through the same Jesus Christ our Lord. *Amen.*

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.*

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.*

All sit.

THE ANTHEM

Alleluia. I heard a voice as of strong thunderings, saying, Alleluia.
Salvation and glory and honour and power be unto the Lord our God
and to the Lamb for evermore. Alleluia.

Music: Janet Wheeler (b. 1957)

Words: Revelation 5 12-13

PRAYERS

All stand.

HYMN

**And did those feet in ancient time
Walk upon England's mountains green?
And was the holy Lamb of God
On England's pleasant pastures seen?
And did the countenance divine
Shine forth upon our clouded hills?
And was Jerusalem builded here
Among those dark satanic mills?**

**Bring me my bow of burning gold!
Bring me my arrows of desire!
Bring me my spear! O clouds, unfold!
Bring me my chariot of fire!
I will not cease from mental fight,
Nor shall my sword sleep in my hand,
Till we have built Jerusalem
In England's green and pleasant land.**

Music: Sir Charles Hubert Hastings Parry (1848-1918)

Words: William Blake (1757-1827)

All sit.

SONG

Sung by Alastair Merry

It was a lover and his lass,
With a hey, and a ho, and a hey nonino,
That o'er the green cornfield did pass.
In spring time, the only pretty ring time,
When birds do sing, hey ding a ding a ding;
Sweet lovers love the spring.

Between the acres of the rye,
With a hey, and a ho, and a hey nonino,
These pretty country folks would lie,
In spring time, the only pretty ring time,
When birds do sing, hey ding a ding a ding;
Sweet lovers love the spring.

This carol they began that hour,
With a hey, and a ho, and a hey nonino,
How that life was but a flower
In spring time, the only pretty ring time,
When birds do sing, hey ding a ding a ding;
Sweet lovers love the spring.

And therefore take the present time,
With a hey, and a ho, and a hey nonino,
For love is crownèd with the prime
In spring time, the only pretty ring time,
When birds do sing, hey ding a ding a ding;
Sweet lovers love the spring.

Music: Gerald Finzi (1901-1956)

Words: William Shakespeare (1564-1616)

FINAL READING

This royal throne of kings, this sceptred isle,
This earth of majesty, this seat of Mars,
This other Eden, demi-paradise,
This fortress built by Nature for herself
Against infection and the hand of ware
This happy breed of men, this little world,
This precious stone set in the silver sea,
Which serves it in the office of a wall,
Or as a moat defensive to a house,
Against the envy of less happier lands,
This blessed plot, this earth, this realm, this England,
This nurse, this teeming womb of royal kings,
Feared by their breed and famous by their birth,
Renowned for their deeds as far from home,
For Christian service and true chivalry,
As is the sepulchre in distant Jewry,
Of the world's ransom, blessed Mary's Son,
This land of such dear souls, this dear dear land,
England.

William Shakespeare, *Richard II, II.1*

All stand.

THE BLESSING

THE ORGAN VOLUNTARY

Paeon

Herbert Howells (1892-1983)

***We warmly invite you to join us for a glass of wine in the
Round Church after the service.***

A donation to help cover our costs is greatly appreciated. Thank you!

There will be a retiring collection.

SAFEGUARDING

If you have any concerns about safeguarding, the Safeguarding Officer can be contacted confidentially at safeguarding@templechurch.com or 020 7427 5650.