

## **EVENSONG NOTES - LONG VERSION**

Evensong, or Evening Prayer, was created by Archbishop Thomas Cranmer (1489-1556) for the new English Prayer Book of 1549. It is based on a combination of the two monastic offices (liturgies) of *Vespers* and *Compline*. We join with others throughout the world in the daily recitation of this particular service, forming part of a continuous chain of prayer and praise.

It is not a 'popular' style service for the uninitiated but more an art form like a great symphony and it may take years before we can express our worship through it. Even if the language may seem archaic or technical it is not mere 'jargon'. If so, it would not have stood the test of time.

The point of the service is to make us look first of all at God – not ourselves. We trace humankind's search for God and God's revelation of himself to us. After a penitential introduction, this works out as follows:

The *Responses* are a mutual exhortation between Cantor and people to worship God. The *Psalm* represents the Old Testament hymn book and shows the reaching out to God before the coming of the Messiah. The 'Gloria' at the end is a short Christian hymn of praise and gives the Christian stamp to the psalm. This is followed by the *First Lesson* from the Old Testament.

The *Magnificat* is the big moment! The Old Testament days disappears before the dazzling light of the arrival of Christ. We re-live the moment when Mary receives the good news and this is then followed by the *Second Lesson* from the New Testament. The Song of Simeon, or *Nunc Dimittis*, is a song of thankfulness and contentedness after Christ's coming.

As a result of what we have heard we then proclaim our faith in the words of the *Creed*. The *Lord's Prayer*, which follows, is the model of all Christian prayer, looking at God's will first, ourselves last.

In the *Responses* and *Collects* that follow we now look at the world around us and ourselves. The *Anthem* is an optional extra item through which the choir can express different words of worship on behalf of all present. Although the formal part is now over, final prayers, a sermon and a hymn may conclude the service.

## **EVENSONG NOTES - SHORT VERSION**

Evensong, or Evening Prayer, is a celebration of the Incarnation. Based on Scripture it bridges the Old and New Testaments. It was created by Archbishop Thomas Cranmer (1489-1556) for the new English Prayer Book of 1549, based on a combination of the two monastic offices (liturgies) of *Vespers* and *Compline*.

After a penitential introduction, the *Responses* are a mutual exhortation to worship God. The *Psalms* represents the Old Testament hymn book and shows the reaching out to God before the coming of the Messiah. This is followed by a reading from the Old Testament.

At the *Magnificat* we re-live the moment when Mary receives the good news that she is to bear the Messiah and this is followed by a reading from the New Testament. The *Song of Simeon*, or *Nunc Dimittis*, is a song of thankfulness and contentedness after Christ's coming.

As a result of what we have heard we then proclaim our faith in the words of the *Creed*. The *Lord's Prayer*, which follows, is the model of all Christian prayer, looking at God's will first, ourselves last.

In the *Responses* and *Collects* that follow we now look at the world around us and ourselves. The *Anthem* is an optional extra item through which the choir can express different words of worship on behalf of all present. Although the formal part is now over, final prayers, a sermon and a hymn may conclude the service.