

The Church of St Mary the Virgin, Nottingham

Order of Service for Evensong

The service of Evensong was drawn up several centuries ago by Archbishop Thomas Cranmer, based on monastic traditions. It begins by inviting us to confess our sins to God and to seek his forgiveness. The choir then sings one of the 150 psalms found in the Old Testament – sometimes called ‘God’s hymnbook’. After a reading from the Old Testament, the choir sings the ‘Magnificat’; these are the words spoken by the Blessed Virgin Mary on being told that she would give birth to the Son of God, and are a celebration of Christ’s coming to earth. The New Testament reading then helps us to reflect upon the life and work of Christ, and the ‘Nunc Dimittis’, sung by the choir, is the song of the elderly Simeon on being shown the baby Jesus. Like the Magnificat, it is a thanksgiving for the birth of Christ. We then declare our faith in the words of the Creed; responses and collects (special texts which draw together the prayers of the Church) follow, and the choir sings an anthem. Evensong concludes with additional prayers and, normally, a sermon, final hymn, and blessing.

Please stand as the choir and clergy enter

Introduction

General Confession

Kneel or sit

All are invited to confess their failings and shortcomings to God, saying:

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 Absolution *words of God’s forgiveness*

The Lord’s Prayer

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.

The Preces

Minister O Lord, open thou our lips

Choir And our mouth shall shew forth thy praise.

Minister O God, make speed to save us.

Choir O Lord, make haste to help us.

All stand

Minister Glory be to the Father, and to the Son: and to the Holy Ghost;

Choir As it was in the beginning, and is now: and ever shall be, world without end, Amen.

Minister Praise ye the Lord.

Choir The Lord’s name be praised.

The Psalm *sung by the choir*

Remain standing

First Reading

Sit

Office Hymn

Stand

Magnificat

Remain standing

The choir sings the ‘Magnificat’, Mary’s song of praise

My soul doth magnify the Lord: and my spirit hath rejoiced in God my Saviour. For he hath regarded: the lowliness of his hand-maiden. 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 in 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.

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.

Second Reading

Sit

Nunc Dimittis

Stand

The choir sings the 'Nunc Dimittis', the words spoken by Simeon on seeing the baby Jesus presented in the Jerusalem temple by Mary and Joseph

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. 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 Creed

Turn to stand facing the altar

The Christian declaration of faith

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.

The Lesser Litany

Minister The Lord be with you

Choir And with thy spirit

Minister Let us pray

Kneel

Minister Lord, have mercy upon us

Choir Christ, have mercy upon us

Minister Lord, have mercy upon us

The Lord's Prayer sung by the 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.

The Responses

Minister O Lord, show 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

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 all 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.

The Anthem sung by the choir

Sit

The Prayers led by the minister, and ending with

Kneel

The Grace

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.

Notices

Sit

Hymn

Stand

Sermon

Sit

Hymn during which the collection will be received

Stand

Blessing