

SUNDAYS AT FOUR

February 2nd – April 27th 2025



Music at the Cathedral
Evensongs and Special Choral Music



THE CATHEDRAL CHURCH OF ALL SAINTS 1330 CATHEDRAL LANE HALIFAX

NOTES ON EVENSONG BY GUY HAYWARD, TRUSTEE AND FOUNDER OF “CHORAL EVENSONG TRUST”

Choral Evensong is a 45-min long peace-inducing church service in which the song of voices sounding together in harmony is heard at the even point between the active day and restful night, allowing listeners time for contemplation – church members, agnostics and atheists alike. It is both free of charge and free from requirement of religious commitment, and its 470-year-old choral music tradition – established around 1549 – is performed live and often to a very high standard throughout the Anglican Communion. Evensong does not demand belief or any kind of affiliation to the Church. The service allows people to engage with it in their own way.

The origins of Evensong can be found in the services that Jesus himself would have led with his disciples, at a time when Jews would pray at certain times of day. The service thus has a direct lineage back to the very beginning of Christianity, and even beyond that to the older Judaic tradition. Perhaps one of the reasons Evensong is so effective is that it packs so much of this deep history into 45 minutes, in an elegantly simple form.

Evensong dates back to the time of the Reformation, using elements of the old monastic Offices of Vespers and Compline. The form the Church uses to this day was first established in Archbishop Cranmer’s Book of Common Prayer, which appeared in 1549. The music took shape a few decades later, in the reign of Queen Elizabeth I, with great composers like William Byrd and Thomas Tallis developing exquisite polyphonic choral music specifically for this new service, and in each subsequent generation new composers have added masterworks of classical choral music to the repertoire of Evensong, right up to the present day.

The fact that Evensong has had such a long evolution means that one has a powerful sense of connecting present with past, of tapping into something much greater than ourselves. As we come together in a church building at the end of the day we join a vast community enduring both through time and place. The service follows the wording of the Book of Common Prayer. Although the definitive version was published in 1662, it includes much of the original 1549 version, including the translation of the psalms by Myles Coverdale, which precedes the translation in the King James Bible of 1611.

Cranmer’s Evensong starts with the chanting of the Old Testament psalms, written by King David, with his harp. Their mantra-like repetition often helps create a peaceful atmosphere, but one that is soon interrupted by the exuberant burst of the Magnificat - the song of a young woman, Mary, rejoicing at the prospect of the birth of her child, Jesus – and then made solemn by the Nunc Dimittis – the song of an old man, Simeon, gently facing his death, now his life has been fulfilled by seeing “the Light of the Gentiles”. A major aspect of the genius of the service is the balance between female and male, young and old, and Old and New Testaments. An anthem follows that fits the mood of the day, and the service finishes with a hymn. Afterwards the church resonates with the playing of the organ, often one of the great organ works of Bach.

Whatever we may believe, choral evensong is a beautiful tradition just waiting to be experienced that can give respite and inspiration during our busy modern lives. © Guy Hayward 2022

Choral Evensong services have been gaining in popularity over the last 20 years. Services at Cathedrals and particularly Collegiate Chapels are seeing dramatically increasing numbers in attendance, particularly of young people. BBC Radio 3’s “Choral Evensong” is the longest continuously running on-location broadcast in history, begun in 1926 and currently broadcast live on Wednesdays and repeated on Sundays, from locations across the UK and around the world.



Music at the Cathedral

SUNDAYS AT FOUR

EVENSONGS & SPECIAL CHORAL SERVICES

February 2nd – April 13th 2025

Every Sunday at 4:00 p.m. from February 2nd through April 13th there will be an Evensong or special choral music at the Cathedral.

The Cathedral Choir sings at the 11:00 a.m. Choral Eucharist each Sunday.

Sunday	Feb. 2	4:00 p.m.	Evensong Sung by <i>Capella Regalis</i> Men & Girls & Boys Choir	Candlemas
Sunday	Feb. 9	4:00 p.m.	Evensong Sung by the Cathedral Choir	5th Sunday after Epiphany
Sunday	Feb. 16	4:00 p.m.	Evensong Sung by <i>Capella Regalis</i> Men & Boys Choir	Septuagesima
Sunday	Feb. 23	4:00 p.m.	Evensong Sung by <i>Capella Regalis</i> Men & Girls Choir	Sexagesima
Sunday	Mar. 2	4:00 p.m.	Evensong Sung by <i>Capella Regalis</i> Men & Girls & Boys Choir	Quinquagesima
Wednesday	Mar. 5	7:00 p.m.	Eucharist Sung by the Cathedral Choir Music by Allegri, Byrd, Purcell and Bach	Ash Wednesday
Sunday	Mar. 9	4:00 p.m.	Evensong Sung by the Cathedral Choir	1st Sunday in Lent
Sunday	Mar. 16	4:00 p.m.	Evensong Sung by the male voices of <i>Capella Regalis</i> & the Cathedral Choir	2nd Sunday in Lent
Sunday	Mar. 23	4:00 p.m.	Evensong Sung by the Cathedral Choir	3rd Sunday in Lent
Sunday	Mar. 30	4:00 p.m.	Evensong Sung by <i>Capella Regalis</i> Men & Girls Choir	4th Sunday in Lent

Sunday	Apr. 6	4:00 p.m.	Evensong Sung by <i>Capella Regalis Men & Boys Choir</i>	Passion Sunday
Sunday	Apr. 13	4:00 p.m.	Evensong Sung by the Cathedral Choir	Palm Sunday

Choral Services for Holy Week & Easter at the Cathedral

Tuesday	Apr. 15	7:00 p.m.	The Great Litany Sung by the Cathedral Choir Music by Victoria and Brahms	Tuesday in Holy Week
Thursday	Apr. 17	7:00 p.m.	Eucharist with Foot-Washing Sung by the Cathedral Choir Music by Bach, Duruflé, Howells and Sheppard	Maundy Thursday
Friday	Apr. 18	12:00 p.m.	Meditations on the Cross Sung by the Cathedral Choir Music by Victoria, di Lasso, Blow and John of Portugal	Good Friday
Saturday	Apr. 19	7:30 p.m.	The Great Vigil of Easter Sung by the Cathedral Choir Music by Darke, Harris, Halley and Alain	Easter Eve
Sunday	Apr. 20	11:00 a.m.	Choral Eucharist: Jazz Easter Sung by the Cathedral Choir and Capella Regalis Men & Boys & Girls Choirs The <i>Resurrection Mass (Jazz Easter)</i> with sax, drums, bass, percussion, piano, organ and choirs joining in a festive and joyful celebration.	Easter Day
Sunday	Apr. 27	THERE WILL NOT BE A CHORAL SERVICE AT 4 P.M. TODAY		

The Choir of All Saints Cathedral
www.cathedralchurchofallsaints.com

Capella Regalis Choirs
www.capellaregalis.com