

SOUTHWARK
◆ CATHEDRAL ◆

Choral Evensong

with

Prayers and Blessing

for

Neil and Michael

following their Civil Partnership



Friday 29 August 2025
4.00pm

WELCOME TO SOUTHWARK CATHEDRAL

A MEMBER OF THE



ELECTRONIC DEVICES

Please ensure that all electronic devices are switched to silent.

PHOTOGRAPHY

Photography and video recording of the Choir is not permitted.

You are welcome to take photographs of the Cathedral but please do not take any photographs or videos during the service.

HEARING LOOP

Please switch your device to 'T'.

POSTURE

The instructions in this booklet are not prescriptive. Please sit if that is more appropriate for you.

DONATIONS

to the Al Ahli Anglican Hospital in Gaza

There is no collection during the service today and we have asked for no gifts but we would encourage you to make a gift towards the rebuilding and ongoing work of the Al Ahli Anglican Hospital in Gaza.



You can donate online using the QR code or <https://www.jmeca.org.uk/get-involved/donate/current-appeals-0/archbishops-joint-appeal-diocese-jerusalem>

The hospital is owned and run by the Anglican/Episcopal Diocese of Jerusalem and provides vital medical care for people of all faiths in the ongoing war.

PEACE DOVES

Hanging above you today are the prayers and hopes of over twelve thousand people which form the body of *Peace Doves*. This extraordinary installation is created by the internationally-acclaimed sculptor Peter Walker.

COVER DESIGN

The scallop shell is the symbol of St James and his shrine is in the Basilica at Santiago de Compostella in Spain. Pilgrimage has played a major role in Neil and Michael's journey through life.

MUSIC BEFORE THE SERVICE

He shall feed his flock *from Messiah*

And the glory of the Lord *from Messiah*

Eternal source of light divine *from Ode for the Birthday of Queen Anne*

G. F. Handel (1685-1750)

Ode to Joy in celebration of Europe

Ludwig van Beethoven (1770-1827)

Please stand as the Procession enters.

THE HYMN



Love Divine, all loves excelling,
Joy of heaven, to earth come down,
Fix in us thy humble dwelling,
All thy faithful mercies crown.
Jesus, thou art all compassion,
Pure unbounded love thou art;
Visit us with thy salvation,
Enter every trembling heart.

Come, almighty to deliver,
Let us all thy life receive;
Suddenly return, and never,
Never more thy temples leave.
Thee we would be always blessing,
Serve thee as thy hosts above,
Pray, and praise thee, without ceasing,
Glory in thy perfect love.

Finish then thy new creation,
Pure and spotless let us be;
Let us see thy great salvation,
Perfectly restored in thee,
Changed from glory into glory,
Till in heaven we take our place,
Till we cast our crowns before thee,
Lost in wonder, love and praise!

TUNE: BLAENWERN

William Rowlands (1860-1937)

TEXT:

Charles Wesley (1707-1788)

THE WELCOME

The Very Rev'd Dr Mark Oakley, Dean of Southwark

Dear friends in Christ, we gather with Neil and Michael to celebrate with them their love, faithfulness, and commitment. We come to hear God's holy word, and to surround Neil and Michael with our love and prayer as they seek the blessings of God's kingdom in their life together.

The Choir sings:

THE PRECES

William Byrd (c. 1540-1623)

O Lord, open thou our lips
And our mouth shall shew forth thy praise.

O God, make speed to save us;
O Lord, make haste to help us.

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.

Praise ye the Lord;
The Lord's name be praised.

Please be seated as the Choir sings:

THE PSALM

Psalms 84

C. H. H. Parry (1848-1918)

O how amiable are thy dwellings : thou Lord of hosts!

My soul hath a desire and longing to enter into the courts of the Lord :
my heart and my flesh rejoice in the living God.

Yea, the sparrow hath found her an house, and the swallow a nest where she
may lay her young : even thy altars, O Lord of hosts, my King and my God.

Blessèd are they that dwell in thy house : they will be always praising thee.

Blessèd is the man whose strength is in thee : in whose heart are thy ways.

Who going through the vale of misery use it for a well :
and the pools are filled with water.

They will go from strength to strength :
and unto the God of gods appeareth every one of them in Sion.

O Lord God of hosts, hear my prayer : hearken, O God of Jacob.

Behold, O God our defender : and look upon the face of thine Anointed.

For one day in thy courts : is better than a thousand.

I had rather be a door-keeper in the house of my God :
than to dwell in the tents of ungodliness.

For the Lord God is a light and defence : the Lord will give grace and worship,
and no good thing shall he withhold from them that live a godly life.

O Lord God of hosts : blessed is the man that putteth his trust in thee.

Please stand.

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.

Please be seated.

THE FIRST LESSON

Song of Solomon 2.10-13, 8.6-7

Read by Jayne Roebuck

The First Lesson is written in the second chapter of the Song of Solomon, beginning at the tenth verse.

My beloved speaks and says to me:

'Arise, my love, my fair one,
and come away;

for now the winter is past,
the rain is over and gone.

The flowers appear on the earth;
the time of singing has come,
and the voice of the turtle-dove
is heard in our land.

The fig tree puts forth its figs,
and the vines are in blossom;
they give forth fragrance.

Arise, my love, my fair one,
and come away.'

Set me as a seal upon your heart,
as a seal upon your arm;
for love is strong as death,
passion fierce as the grave.
Its flashes are flashes of fire,
a raging flame.
Many waters cannot quench love,
neither can floods drown it.
If one offered for love
all the wealth of one's house,
it would be utterly scorned.

Here ends the First Lesson.

THE HYMN



God is Love: let heav'n adore Him;
God is Love: let earth rejoice;
let creation sing before Him,
and exalt Him with one voice.

He who laid the earth's foundation,
He who spread the heav'ns above,
He who breathes through all creation:
He is love, eternal love.

God is Love; and He enfoldeth
all the world in one embrace;
with unfailing grasp He holdeth,
ev'ry child of ev'ry race.

And when human hearts are breaking
under sorrow's iron rod,
then they find that selfsame aching
deep within the heart of God.

God is Love, and though with blindness
sin afflicts the human soul,
God's eternal loving-kindness
guides and heals and makes us whole.
Sin and death and hell shall never
o'er us final triumph gain;
God is Love, so Love forever
o'er the universe must reign.

TUNE: ABBOT'S LEIGH
Cyril Taylor (1907-1991)

TEXT:
G. B. Timms (1910-1997)

Please stand as the Choir sings:

THE MAGNIFICAT

Song of Mary • Richard Shephard (1949-2021)

My Lord and Saviour is my song,
he fills my spirit with delight;
To raise me up his arm is strong,
the lowly precious in his sight.
Magnificat anima mea, Dominum. (*My soul magnifies the Lord*)

My name shall live from age to age
and every tongue his servant bless.
For mercy is their heritage,
whose hearts the Holy One confess.
Magnificat anima mea, Dominum.

The proud beguiled by dreams of power,
divided and degraded lie.
He casts them down from throne and tower,
and stoops to lift the humble high.
Magnificat anima mea, Dominum.

He feeds the hungry at his board
and sends the rich unfilled away.
And, mindful of his promised word,
has answered Israel's prayers today.
Magnificat anima mea, Dominum.

With all the elders of our race
and those unborn who seek his birth,
I sing the glory of his grace
who brings eternity to earth.
Magnificat anima mea, Dominum.

Mary Holtby (1925-2021)

Please be seated.

THE SECOND LESSON

John 15.9-17

Read by Janet Hornblower

The Second Lesson is written in the fifteenth chapter of the Gospel according to St John, beginning at the ninth verse.

Jesus said to his disciples, 'As the Father has loved me, so I have loved you; abide in my love. If you keep my commandments, you will abide in my love, just as I have kept my Father's commandments and abide in his love. I have said these things to you so that my joy may be in you and that your joy may be complete.

"This is my commandment, that you love one another as I have loved you. No one has greater love than this, to lay down one's life for one's friends. You are my friends if you do what I command you. I do not call you servants any longer, because the servant does not know what the master is doing, but I have called you friends, because I have made known to you everything that I have heard from my Father. You did not choose me, but I chose you. And I appointed you to go and bear fruit, fruit that will last, so that the Father will give you whatever you ask him in my name. I am giving you these commands so that you may love one another.

Here ends the Second Lesson.

Please stand as the Choir sings:

THE NUNC DIMITTIS

Thomas Tallis (c. 1505-1585)

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 APOSTLES' CREED

**All 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 Catholic Church,
the Communion of Saints,
the Forgiveness of sins,
the Resurrection of the body
and the Life everlasting.
Amen.**

The Minister and Choir sing:

THE LESSER LITANY, LORD'S PRAYER & RESPONSES

The Lord be with you;
And with thy spirit.

Let us pray.

Please be seated or kneel.

Lord, have mercy upon us.
Christ, have mercy upon us.
Lord, have mercy upon us.

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.

O Lord, shew thy mercy upon us;
And grant us thy salvation.

O Lord, save the King;
And mercifully hear us when we call upon thee.

Endue thy ministers with righteousness;
And make thy chosen people joyful.

O Lord, save thy people;
And bless thine inheritance.

Give peace in our time, O Lord;
Because there is none other that fighteth for us,
but only thou, O God.

O God, make clean our hearts within us;
And take not thy Holy Spirit from us.

Followed by:

THE COLLECTS

O Lord, who hast taught us that all our doings without charity are nothing worth: send thy Holy Spirit and pour into our hearts that most excellent gift of charity, the very bond of peace and of all virtues without which whosoever liveth is counted dead before thee; grant this for thine only Son Jesus Christ's sake, who liveth and reigneth with thee, in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God, now and for ever.

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.

Please be seated as the Choir sings:

THE ANTHEM

Ave Maria • Simon Lindley (1948-2025)

Ave Maria, gratia plena:
Dominus tecum.
et benedictus fructus
ventris tui, Jesus.
Sancta Maria, Mater Dei,
nunc et in hora mortis nostrae
ora pro nobis peccatoribus.
Amen.

Hail Mary, full of grace:
The Lord is with thee.
Blessèd is the fruit of your womb,
Jesus.
Holy Mary, Mother of God,
now and in the hour of our deaths,
pray for us sinners.
Amen.

THE HOMILY

The Dean of Southwark

Please remain seated or kneel for:

THE PRAYERS

Led by **The Rev'd Elinor Johansson**
Priest of Örgryte Pastorat, Göteborg, Church of Sweden

God of grace,
whose beauty, ever ancient, ever new,
sings through all creation:
enfold your servants Neil and Michael
with your encouragement, hope, and love.
Fill them with the grace to rejoice always
in their love for one another,
and to follow the Way of holiness and hope
revealed in your Son Jesus Christ.

All **Amen.**

Faithful God,
giver of all good things,
give Neil and Michael wisdom and devotion
in the ordering of their life together.
May they dwell together in love and peace all the days of their life,
seeking one another's welfare,
bearing one another's burdens
and sharing one another's joys;
through Jesus Christ our Lord.

All **Amen.**

Holy and living God,
from whom every family
in heaven and earth is named;
with thanksgiving and gladness
we bring before you the family and friends of Neil and Michael.
We give thanks for the love of Jean and Kevan
and for all whom we love but see no longer.
We thank you for the grace they have received from you,
and for the love and support they give.
May they receive the blessing
of your love as they support and cherish
Neil and Michael now and in the years to come.

All **Amen.**

Neil and Michael say together:

God of all good things,
we offer you our lives,
our hopes and hurts,
our praise and promise,
in a covenant of faith and hope.
Unite our wills in your will,
that we may support one another
and show forth your love
all the days of our lives;
through Jesus Christ our Lord.

All Amen.

The Dean says:

May almighty God
give you grace to persevere with joy,
that he may complete
the work he has begun in you,
through Jesus Christ our Lord.

All Amen.

God of generosity and joy,
with you is the well of life and in your light, we see light:
we give you thanks for Neil and Michael,
for the love and friendship they share,
and for their commitment to one another.
As they come before you this day,
trusting you as the giver of all good gifts,
strengthen their love by your love,
and gladden their hearts with your joy,
that their journey through life
may become a pilgrimage of grace.
By your blessing,
and with you as their companion and guide,
may they rejoice in hope and be sustained in love
all the days of their life and in the age to come,
through Jesus Christ our Lord.

All Amen.

Please stand to sing:

THE HYMN



Guide me, O thou great Redeemer,
Pilgrim through this barren land;
I am weak, but thou art mighty,
Hold me with thy powerful hand:
Bread of heaven,
Feed me till I want no more.

Open now the crystal fountain
Whence the healing stream doth flow;
Let the fire and cloudy pillar
Lead me all my journey through;
Strong deliverer,
Be thou still my strength and shield.

When I tread the verge of Jordan,
Bid my anxious fears subside;
Death of death, and hell's Destruction
Land me safe on Canaan's side:
Songs of praises
I will ever give to thee.

TUNE: CWM RHONDDA
John Hughes (1873-1932)

TEXT:
Welsh, William Williams (1717-1791)
tr. Peter Williams (1727-1796) et al.

THE BLESSING

The Bishop of Southwark

God the Holy Trinity make you strong in faith and love,
defend you on every side, and guide you in truth and peace;
and the blessing of God almighty,
the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit,
be among you and remain with you always.

All Amen.

THE VOLUNTARY

La Réjouissance from Music for the Royal Fireworks • G. F. Handel (1685-1750)

Neil and Michael would love you to join them in the South Transept and Churchyard for celebratory drinks following the service.

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SOUTHWARK

◆ CATHEDRAL ◆

making space for love
with heart, mind, and soul

It is good to welcome you to Southwark Cathedral. Set on the south bank of the River Thames, in one of the most vibrant and diverse communities in London, this building has been a constant witness in a place of change.

The first church was built on this site around the year 606. First a convent, then a monastery, it became in 1106 the Augustinian Priory of St Mary Overie ('over-the-river'). With Westminster Abbey and St Bartholomew the Great in Smithfield, it is one of the three remaining great monastic churches of London. At the Reformation, the Priory became a parish church, and it remains so for the people of Bankside. In 1905, as south London was rapidly expanding, the church was consecrated as the Cathedral for the new Diocese of Southwark.

The Cathedral has a momentous and significant history and has had links with many famous and influential characters including St Thomas Becket, Geoffrey Chaucer, William Shakespeare and Charles Dickens. It has also been a Cathedral for those who feel on the edges of faith or society, our welcome reaching out to all people in their beautiful God-given diversity.

Here, our Christian faith is captured in our vision to 'make space for love: with heart, mind, and soul'. Faith requires our hearts to stand up for social justice, upholding integrity and kindness, and supporting the vulnerable and oppressed. It challenges our thinking, inviting our minds to be enquiring, honest, and generous. Faith also seeks to deepen our inner lives, with the arts and creativity, by sharing in the life of our community, and by learning the arts of prayer and attention. In Jesus Christ we see the human face of God, and our faith in him is our joy and our life.

We really hope you enjoy being here with us today and that we will see you again very soon.

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