

St Edmundsbury Cathedral



A thousand years of God's love in Suffolk

The Order for Choral Evensong

throughout the year



A guide to the order of Evensong

Evensong in St Edmundsbury Cathedral is a tiny fragment of something else; it is a part of the worship which is offered to God by Christian people every hour of the day and night, in every part of the world.

When you come to Evensong here, it is as if you were dropping in on a conversation already in progress — a conversation between God and his people which began long before you were born and which will continue long after the end of your life. So, do not be surprised or disturbed if there are some things which you do not understand straight away. For a brief moment, you step into the continual stream of worship which is being offered today and which will be offered to the end of time. You are one with those who worship here on earth and in heaven.

Evensong is drawn almost entirely from the Bible. Its primary purpose is to proclaim the wonderful works of God in history and in the life, death and resurrection of Jesus Christ. Its secondary purpose is to evoke from the worshipper a response of praise, penitence, prayer, and obedience.

Much of the English of the service is the language spoken and written by our ancestors more than four hundred years ago. It may sound old-fashioned but its meaning is not out of date.

The service is in three parts:

The first part prepares the worshipper for the story which is to follow.

The second part is the story of God's redeeming love, beginning with the Old Testament (the psalms and the first reading), proceeding to the New Testament (the Magnificat or Song of Mary, the second reading, and the Nunc Dimittis or Song of Simeon), and reaching its climax in the affirmation of what Christians believe (the Creed).

Finally, the third part is our prayerful response to God who has revealed himself in history, in Jesus Christ, and in the Church.

Choral Evensong

Choral Evensong is sung by St Edmundsbury Cathedral Choir, the St Edmundsbury Singers, the St Cecilia Chorale or a visiting choir.

(An introit anthem may be sung).

All stand as the choir and clergy enter.

On Sundays, the service starts here (on weekdays, it begins on page 4):

The Welcome

The Hymn

An Opening sentence

The Invitation to Confession

All kneel

The Confession

All **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

The Lord's Prayer

All **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.**

All stand

On weekdays, the service starts here:

Cantor O Lord, open thou our lips.
Choir And our mouth shall shew forth thy praise.
Cantor O God, make speed to save us.
Choir 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.

All sit for

The Welcome

The choir sings a psalm or psalms. You may follow the text of the psalms towards the back of the Book of Common Prayer.

At the end of the final psalm, all stand for the Gloria.

All sit for

The Old Testament Lesson

All stand for

The Magnificat or Song of Mary

Choir 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 is 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.

All sit for

The New Testament Lesson

All stand for

The Nunc Dimittis or Song of Simeon

Choir 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.

All face east for

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

Cantor The Lord be with you.

Choir And with thy spirit.

Cantor Let us pray.

All kneel for

The Lesser Litany

Cantor Lord, have mercy upon us.

Choir Christ, have mercy upon us.

Lord, have mercy upon us.

The Lord's Prayer

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

Cantor O Lord, shew thy mercy upon us.
Choir And grant us thy salvation.
Cantor O Lord, save the Queen.
Choir And mercifully hear us when we call upon thee.
Cantor Endue thy ministers with righteousness.
Choir And make thy chosen people joyful.
Cantor O Lord, save thy people.
Choir And bless thine inheritance.
Cantor Give peace in our time, O Lord.
Choir Because there is none other that fighteth for us,
but only thou, O God.
Cantor O God, make clean our hearts within us.
Choir And take not thy Holy Spirit from us.

The Collect of the Day

(There may be two collects in certain seasons).

The Collect for Peace

The Collect for Aid against all Perils

All sit for

The Anthem

All kneel for

Prayers and The Grace

On holy days, a hymn is sung.

The Organ Voluntary

Please sit silently during the organ voluntary or leave the Cathedral as quietly as possible.