

Advent Processional Service

incorporating the Great Advent 'O' Antiphons

Advent Sunday

30 November 2008

5pm

St Peter's Church, Sowerby

The Choir of St Mary's Church, Cottonstones

Hannah Williams | Sarah McDowell | Naomi Hall | Jo Hodges | Katy Alexander
Jo Pugh | Toby Wardman | Oli Blaiklock | Pete Warman | Matthew Hutchings

Organist: David Hammond

Before the service begins, the lights are extinguished.

The Minister says the opening prayer.

God our Father, source of all beauty and inspiration, you have no need of our praise yet our desire to thank you is in itself your gift. You give us earthly music as the echo of the song of praise which angels sing for ever in your presence. Grant us minds that are eager for the vision of your glory, and hearts that long for your beauty, that learning the song of the blessed here on earth, we may praise you forever in your kingdom. We ask this through Christ our Lord.

All: **Amen.**

All stand as the Choir moves to the west end of the Church.

The Choir sings:

The Matin Responsory

Music by Giovanni Puerluigi da Palestrina

The Minister says:

Dear friends, in this season of Advent, let us hear how God promised to visit and redeem His people, and let us look forward to the fulfilment of all his purposes through Christ. Let us pray for the whole world, and especially for people who live in darkness, evil and fear; and let us re-affirm our determination to reflect in our own lives the light and love of God. We offer our prayers and praises in the words Jesus taught us, saying:

All: Our Father, who art in heaven, hallowed be thy Name. Thy kingdom come, thy will be done, on earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread. And forgive us our trespasses, As we forgive those who 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 Choir sings the first Antiphon:

O Wisdom, which camest out of the mouth of the Most High, and reachest from one end to another mightily, and sweetly ordering all things: come and teach us the way of prudence.

The first reading:

Proverbs 8: 1-4, 10-11

Divine Wisdom makes its appeal

The Choir sings:

Lift up your heads

Music by William Mathias

The Choir sings the second Antiphon:

O Adonai and leader of the House of Israel, who appearedst in the bush to Moses in a flame of fire, and gavest him the law in Sinai: Come and deliver us with an outstretched arm.

The second reading:

Exodus 2:23 - 3:6

Moses encounters the burning bush.

All sing the hymn:

256 Let all mortal flesh keep silence

The Choir sings the third Antiphon:

O Root of Jesse, which standest for an ensign of the people, at whom kings shall shut their mouths, to whom the Gentiles shall seek: Come and deliver us, and tarry not.

The third reading:

Isaiah 11: 1-4, 10

God's Spirit will be upon the one who is to come from the root of Jesse, that is, the royal house of David.

The Choir sings:

Es ist ein Ros' entsprungen

Music by Michael Prætorius

The Choir sings the fourth Antiphon:

O Key of David, that openest and no man shutteth, that shuttest and no man openeth: Come and bring the prisoner out of the prison-house, and him that sitteth in darkness and the shadow of death.

The fourth reading:

Micah 4: 1-5

The promise of an age of peace.

All sing the hymn:

470 Hills of the north, rejoice

The Choir sings the fifth Antiphon:

**O Radiant Dawn, splendour of eternal light and Sun of righteousness:
Come and enlighten him that sitteth in darkness and the shadow of death.**

The fifth reading:

St Luke 1: 57-68

The birth of John the Baptist.

The Choir sings:

Benedictus Dominus Deus Israel

Music by Thomas Tallis

The Choir sings the sixth Antiphon:

O King of the Gentiles, desire of all nations, the cornerstone which maketh both one: Come and save mankind, whom thou formedst of clay.

The sixth reading:

St Mark 1: 4-8

The testimony of John the Baptist to Jesus.

The Choir sings:

Eg vil lofa eina þa

Music by Bára Grímsdóttir

The Choir sings the seventh Antiphon:

O Emmanuel, our King and Lawgiver, the hope of all peoples and their salvation: Come and save us, O Lord our God.

The seventh reading:

St Mark 13: 33-37

Christ exhorts his followers to be vigilant in prayer.

The Choir sings:

In silvery darkness

Music by Carl Rütli

The Prayers

The Advent Collect

All sing the hymn:

28 Lo, he comes with clouds descending

during which a collection will be taken.

The Blessing

The Minister and the Choir recess.

The Choir sings:

The Advent Prose

Plainsong

ADVENT is a time of expectation: the word itself means 'coming'. It recalls ancient Israel's hope for the advent of the Messiah. It also expresses the Christian hope for the fulfilment of God's Kingdom in the Second Coming. It celebrates Christ's coming to lead the world from darkness to light.

PROCESSIONS are akin to religious drama. They re-enact events in the history of the world's creation and its salvation.

The service begins in darkness, representing the darkness before creation as well as the darkness of sin. The procession begins at the west end of the Church. The candlelight, symbolizing Christ the true Light, moves from east (the altar, the direction of the dawn) to west; the procession then moves gradually from west to east, symbolizing our journey of faith towards Christ.

This service is based on the Great Advent Antiphons. 'Antiphon' originally meant something sung alternately by two choirs. It came also to mean a sentence, appropriate to the season of the Church's year, sung before and after the psalms and canticles.

The words and music seek to enable us to worship God, who calls us to do his will and make the world what He created it to be - full of His Glory.

The music is sung by the choir of St Mary's Church, Cottonstones. The Antiphons are sung to a setting by specially composed for this service. All join in the prayers, and in the singing of hymns.