

# The Chapter Letter



SUNDAY 10 DECEMBER - SUNDAY 24 DECEMBER

## 'What does it mean?'

Over the last few years, I have been undertaking some research into the spiritual experience of music in the liturgy. Whilst this has made me aware anew of the richness of what music offers to us, it has also led me to confront the reality that in our world we tend to approach almost every question from the perspective of the individual – 'what do I feel?' or 'what do I experience?'.

One of the findings of my research was that each individual had a very individual approach to what music meant for them when they heard it or performed it in a church service. Whilst people could be grouped together into some broad types – there was still a huge amount of individuality – the music speaks to each person in its own way. However, when asked what it meant for the wider group within which they heard the music, there was a striking difference – the variety of individual experiences were drawn together in a shared understanding. So it was that some people for whom music held little personal spiritual meaning (particularly if they were singing and were focused on the practicalities of words and music) were vociferous in saying that the music had a deep spiritual purpose – and had a meaning for others that was more than they themselves could experience.

This has highlighted to me the importance of reflecting not just on what something means to me as an individual, but what it means to the groups and organisms of which I am a part – asking not just, 'what does it mean to me?', but also, 'what do we understand?'. So as we journey through Advent, perhaps we might focus not just on 'what does Christmas mean for me?', but also ask 'what do we understand is the reality of the Word becoming flesh and dwelling among us?'. In doing this our Advent journey helps us to connect with the shared sense of meaning – the Patriarchs anchoring us in the story of God's love unfolding across the many generations before Christ, the prophets calling people to recognise the will of God in their midst, John preparing the way for Christ and Mary, by her willing acceptance of God's will, becoming the bearer of God into the world. Connecting to all of this – and more – let us seek to understand what Christmas means for us this year.

NICK BROWN, PRECENTOR

## BIBLE READINGS

**Sunday 10 December**  
*Second Sunday of Advent*

**Eucharist**  
Isaiah 40.1-11  
2 Peter 3.8-15a  
Mark 1.1-8

**Evening Prayer**  
1 Kings 22.1-28 Romans  
15.4-13

**Sunday 17 December**  
*Third Sunday of Advent*

**Eucharist**  
Isaiah 61.1-4, 8-end  
1 Thessalonians 5.16-24  
John 1.6-8, 19-28

**Evening Prayer**  
Malachi 3.1-4; 4  
Philippians 4.4-7

**Sunday 24 December**  
*Fourth Sunday of Advent*

**Eucharist**  
2 Samuel 7.1-11, 16  
Romans 16.25-end  
Luke 1.26-38

**Evening Prayer**  
Zechariah 2  
Revelation 1.1-8

## Worship & Mission

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### Weekly service schedule

The service sheet for the coming fortnight can be [viewed on the cathedral website](#) (click link to visit)

### After hours: Reflective worship

6.45pm, once a month on a Sunday

**10 December** 'After Hours': Walking towards Christmas Reflecting on the Patriarchs, Prophets, John the Baptist, and Mary and ending with Compline.

**21 January** 'After Hours': Sacred Space

**18 February** 'After Hours': Meditative Eucharist with prayers for healing

**17 March** 'After Hours': Sacred Space, explorations of penitence

Each of these occasions seeks to provide a gentle and reflective space with time to wonder, and the chance to experience the unique and serene atmosphere of the Cathedral as the day draws to a close.

### Stillpoint

This is a time of guided silent prayer to be still and aware of the presence of God. All are welcome to join us. Please note the new time for Stillpoint. We meet in the Ringers Chapel from 8.45am - 9.15am on the following Mondays:

8 January 2024

5 February 2024

4 March 2024

### 'Tea at 4' Discussion & Reflection Group

The next meeting takes place at 4pm on Monday 11 December in the Wickham Reading Room. This is a time for reflection and discussion on reading the Gospel Reading for the previous day. There is no need for special preparation "and all are welcome!"

### Choral Mattins

17 December, 9.30am

In the new year, we will be reintroducing more regular services of Choral Mattins on a Sunday morning (not weekly, but at least monthly in the first instance). In anticipation of this, the choir will be singing Choral Mattins at 9.30am on Sunday 17 December.

### Carol Services

23 and 24 December, 4pm

Join us for two of the first Christmas services of readings and music in anticipation of the Great Christian celebration of the incarnation at Christmas, when we remember the creative will and love of God becoming known to us through the birth of Jesus Christ.

### Midnight Mass of Christmas Eve

24 December, 11.30pm

At our first service of Christmas we celebrate the coming of Christ into the world, celebrating the incarnation as we remember the creative will and love of God becoming known to us through the birth of Jesus Christ. In words, music and preaching we remember the message of Christmas – that God's love dwells among us and is a light in our world.

### Christmas Day at Lincoln Cathedral

25 December

You are warmly invited to join us at one of our Christmas Day services which begin at 8am and continue throughout the day with many joyous services as we celebrate the birth of our saviour, Jesus Christ. The list of services for the day are:

8am - Holy Communion for Christmas Day

10.30am - Sung Eucharist for Christmas Day

12.30pm - Eucharist

3.45pm - Festal Evensong for Christmas Day

## Community

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### The funeral of Valerie Nelson

We recently heard the news of the death of Val Nelson a lovely lady who worked at the welcome desk but has also been a congregation member until her mobility became too difficult to attend.

Valerie's daughter has asked that all those who remember the lovely Val and who wish to pay their final respects, to attend her funeral for one final goodbye. Valerie's funeral will be at the Crematorium at 9.50am on the 13 December and then there will be a get-together at The Ark, next door to Hykeham Church.

We hold Val, her family, friends and all who cared for her in our thoughts and prayers.

### Request for iPads or Androids

You may be aware that our choristers usually sing from tablets in rehearsals and services. We currently have a few children without devices, and are therefore asking for donations of new or previously-enjoyed iPads and Android devices. If anyone has one available to us, please let us know at [music@lincolncathedral.com](mailto:music@lincolncathedral.com) or hand it to one of the cathedral musicians. With grateful thanks.

### The new Patron of Lincoln Cathedral

The Revd Canon Dr Simon Jones, Interim Dean of Lincoln, said, "We're delighted that His Royal Highness The Duke of Gloucester has accepted the invitation to become the Cathedral's Patron. Lincoln Cathedral is one of Europe's most significant buildings as well as being an important focal point for the people of Lincolnshire. The Duke of Gloucester's support of our stewardship of this unique place is greatly appreciated. He shares our passion for the care of historic buildings, and we look forward to working with him in the future and welcoming him to the Cathedral."

### LCCA - Shrove Tuesday Pancake Supper 2024

Put in your new diary the date of the annual LCCA Shrove Tuesday Pancake Supper on Tuesday 13 February 2024. As previously, you will enjoy a two-course meal with entertainment. Tickets will be on sale in January and you can reserve yours in advance by emailing Andrea at [lcca@lincolncathedral.com](mailto:lcca@lincolncathedral.com)

## Events

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### Carols by Candlelight

12-13 December, 7pm

Join us in Lincoln Cathedral for a magical evening of popular carols performed by Lincoln Cathedral Choir in the atmospheric surrounding of the candle-lit nave of the Cathedral. Carols by Candlelight is in aid of the Association of the Friends of Lincoln Cathedral. The choir is conducted by Aric Prentice with Jeffrey Makinson playing the Cathedral's renowned Father Willis organ.

### Messiaen's La Nativité du Seigneur

9 January, 7pm

Written in 1935, at age 27 Olivier Messiaen wrote his "personal statement to faith" as the birth of Jesus inspires the nine-movement work. Described as one of the greatest Organ works of our time, our Cathedral Organist, Jeffrey Makinson, will be playing on the spectacular Father Willis Organ in this unmissable concert.

For more details of forthcoming events and to book your tickets, go to our website at [www.lincolncathedral.com/events/](http://www.lincolncathedral.com/events/)