



# **PETERBOROUGH CATHEDRAL**



## **A service of Choral Evensong to mark the 20<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Cathedral Fire**

**Sunday November 21st 2021**

**3.30pm**

## Introduction to the service

On the night of Thursday 22<sup>nd</sup> November 2001, fire broke out in Peterborough Cathedral. The impact on the Cathedral building, its community and the entire city was enormous. This service gives thanks for the efforts of so many in saving and restoring the Cathedral, both physically and spiritually.

The order of service includes extracts from personal diaries and reminiscences of the fire. We are very grateful to Mrs Jo Cundy, widow of the then Bishop of Peterborough, and Barry Boreham of Green Watch, Dogsthorpe, for permission to use their material in this way.

### **For everyone's safety, please follow the instructions below:**

- *Please use hand sanitiser as you enter the Cathedral*
- *You are asked to wear a face covering if at all possible.*
- *Please respect the safety of others around you.*

***Thank you for your understanding!***

*The collection will be taken as you leave.  
Please consider giving by contactless card donation.  
Envelopes are available if you don't have a card.*



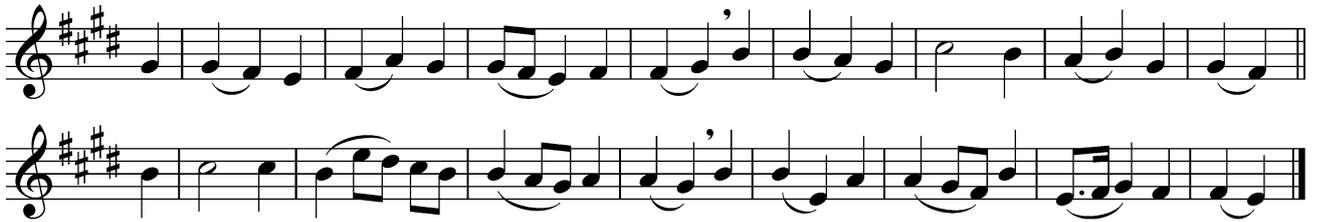
We are very grateful to Ecclesiastical Insurance for their support and sponsorship of this service. As the Cathedral Insurers at the time of the fire, their help was invaluable in being able to undertake vital repair and restoration work.

# Order of Service

## Introduction and Welcome

*The Very Reverend Christopher Dalliston, Dean of Peterborough*

## Hymn



O thou who camest from above,  
the pure celestial fire to impart,  
kindle a flame of sacred love  
on the mean altar of my heart.

There let it for thy glory burn  
with inextinguishable blaze,  
and trembling to its source return  
in humble prayer, and fervent praise.

Jesus, confirm my heart's desire  
to work, and speak, and think for thee;  
still let me guard the holy fire,  
and still stir up thy gift in me.

Ready for all thy perfect will,  
my acts of faith and love repeat,  
till death thy endless mercies seal,  
and make my sacrifice complete.

*Words: Charles Wesley (1707–88)  
Tune: Hereford*

**Please sit**

**Diary extract I**  
*read by Mrs Jo Cundy*

I am alone in the Bishop's Lodging – Ian is in Durham and daughter Liz is babysitting at a house in the Precincts. The phone rings: 'Mum, there's something happening at the Cathedral. I can see fire engines arriving, the west doors are open, and it's dark inside.' It is a chilly November evening, so I put on a warm coat and go outside. People are gathering on the grass area at the west end of the Cathedral and the buzz goes round: 'There's a fire inside, and it's been burning for some time.' The mood is sombre, shocked, and we feel numb with fear, imagining unthinkable scenarios. We are helpless spectators, watching and waiting. The story unfolds – the vergers going home late after Evensong having had to wait for a chorister parent who was delayed; cycling round the Cathedral and seeing the flickering light of flames through the windows of the north aisle; calling the fire brigade and alerting the Dean. But the fire was well established by then, consuming the stack of plastic chairs where it had started, licking up the wooden organ casing, sending more and more heat up towards the unique mediaeval wooden painted ceiling. Dear Lord, save our Cathedral!

*The Precentor and Choir sing the **Preces***

*Precentor:* O Lord, open thou our lips.

*Choir:* *And our mouth shall show forth thy praise.*

*Precentor:* O God, make speed to save us.

*Choir:* *O Lord, make haste to help us.*

*Precentor:* Glory be to the Father, and to the Son,  
and to the Holy Ghost.

*Choir:* *As it was in the beginning, is now and ever shall be:  
world without end. Amen.*

*Precentor:* Praise ye the Lord.

*Choir:* *The Lord's name be praised.*

*Music: Richard Ayleward (1626-1669)*

**Please sit**

*The Choir sings* **Psalm 72:1-8**

GIVE the King thy judgements, O God:  
and thy righteousness unto the King's son.

2 Then shall he judge thy people according unto right:  
and defend the poor.

3 The mountains also shall bring peace:  
and the little hills righteousness unto the people.

4 He shall keep the simple folk by their right:  
defend the children of the poor, and punish the wrong-doer.

5 They shall fear thee, as long as the sun and moon endureth:  
from one generation to another.

6 He shall come down like the rain into a fleece of wool:  
even as the drops that water the earth.

7 In his time shall the righteous flourish:  
yea, and abundance of peace, so long as the moon endureth.

8 His dominion shall be also from the one sea to the other:  
and from the flood unto the world's end.

***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 sit***

## **First Reading / Kings 19: 9-13**

*read by Elizabeth Knight, PA to Dean Michael Bunker*

A reading from the first book of Kings

The word of the LORD came to Elijah, saying, 'What are you doing here, Elijah?' He answered, 'I have been very zealous for the LORD, the God of hosts; for the Israelites have forsaken your covenant, thrown down your altars, and killed your prophets with the sword. I alone am left, and they are seeking my life, to take it away.'

He said, 'Go out and stand on the mountain before the LORD, for the LORD is about to pass by.'

Now there was a great wind, so strong that it was splitting mountains and breaking rocks in pieces before the LORD, but the LORD was not in the wind; and after the wind an earthquake, but the LORD was not in the earthquake; and after the earthquake a fire, but the LORD was not in the fire; and after the fire a sound of sheer silence.

When Elijah heard it, he wrapped his face in his mantle and went out and stood at the entrance of the cave.

Thanks be to God.

***Please stand as the Choir sings The Magnificat***

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.

*Evening Service in C  
Music: Sir Charles Villiers Stanford (1852-1924)*

***Please sit***

Thursday 22nd

Liz alerted me to fire in the cathedral! The rest of the evening was spent in and out, hoping and praying, fielding phone calls, shivering in Minster Precincts, and finally viewing and praying inside the Cathedral at about 11pm. A real miracle that it was not destroyed – 15 minutes away from uncontrollable spread – immense shock.

Friday 23<sup>rd</sup>

Morning Prayer in the Deanery. The press, police, insurers, loss assessors, builders, cleaners, descended on the Cathedral. The Dean spent a lot of time giving interviews – lots of good coverage and support.

Saturday 24<sup>th</sup>

Another day that doesn't feel normal. The action on the choir organ is gone, and other parts will need a rebuild- the pipes are OK, but what about corrosive smoke damage? Clean up went on for tomorrow. One's focus is wholly on the Cathedral.

Sunday 25<sup>th</sup>

Duke and Duchess of Gloucester came, informally, for morning Holy Communion at the Cathedral, and stayed until nearly 1.00pm. Julian the Cathedral Architect says heat sensors in the roof recorded 60 degrees centigrade and the ceiling wood was at 45 degrees – spontaneous combustion happens around 60 degrees!

Monday 26<sup>th</sup>

Ian met interfaith leaders in the Cathedral for a photocall at 9.30am – good response from city people and media coverage is good too.

## **Second Reading / Peter 1: 3-9**

*read by Canon Bill Croft, member of Chapter at the time of the fire*

A reading from the first letter of Peter

Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ! By his great mercy he has given us a new birth into a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, and into an inheritance that is imperishable, undefiled, and unfading, kept in heaven for you, who are being protected by the power of God through faith for a salvation ready to be revealed in the last time.

In this you rejoice, even if now for a little while you have had to suffer various trials, so that the genuineness of your faith—being more precious than gold that, though perishable, is tested by fire—may be found to result in praise and glory and honour when Jesus Christ is revealed. Although you have not seen him, you love him; and even though you do not see him now, you believe in him and rejoice with an indescribable and glorious joy, for you are receiving the outcome of your faith, the salvation of your souls.

Thanks be to God.

***Please stand as the Choir sings Nunc Dimittis***

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.

*Evening Service in C  
Music: Sir Charles Villiers Stanford (1852-1924)*



*The stack of plastic chairs which became the seat of the fire*

***Remain standing to say 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.**

*Precentor:* The Lord be with you.

*Choir:* And with thy spirit.

*Precentor:* Let us pray.

### **Please sit**

*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.*

*○ Lord, shew thy mercy upon us.*

*And grant us thy salvation.*

*○ Lord, save the Queen.*

*And mercifully hear us when we call upon thee.*

*Endue thy ministers with righteousness.*

*And make thy chosen people joyful.*

*○ Lord, save thy people.*

*And bless thine inheritance.*

*Give peace in our time, ○ Lord.*

*Because there is none other that fighteth for us,  
but only thou, ○ God.*

*○ God, make clean our hearts within us.*

*And take not thy Holy Spirit from us.*

## Collects

*Precentor:* O Almighty God, who art a strong tower of defence unto thy servants against the face of their enemies: we yield thee praise and thanksgiving for our deliverance from those great and apparent dangers wherewith we were compassed: we acknowledge it thy goodness that we were not delivered over as a prey unto them; beseeching thee still to continue such mercies towards us, that all the world may know that thou art our Saviour and mighty Deliverer; through Jesus Christ our Lord.

*Choir:* 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.*

*Music: Richard Ayleward (1626-1669)*

## Anthem

The spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he hath anointed me to preach the Gospel to the poor: he hath sent me to heal the broken-hearted, to preach deliverance to the captives, and recovering of sight to the blind, to preach the acceptable year of the Lord; to give unto them that mourn a garland for ashes, the oil of joy for mourning, the garment of praise for the spirit of heaviness, that they might be called trees of righteousness, the planting of the Lord, that he might be glorified. For as the earth bringeth forth her bud, and as the garden causeth the things that are sown in it to spring forth, so the Lord God will cause righteousness and praise to spring forth before all nations as the earth bringeth forth her bud.

*Words: from Isaiah 61*

*Music: from The Apostles by Sir Edward Elgar (1857-1934)*



*Image of the fire crew at the scene on 22<sup>nd</sup> November 2001. Eleven fire appliances attended in total.*

## **My memories of the Cathedral Fire**

by Barry Boreham, Firefighter, Green Watch, Dogsthorpe

read by The Vice-Dean

On that fateful night, we had just started our night shift at 1800 hours. My position that night was Breathing Apparatus team leader, and my partner was Colin Bartlett. The other team members were Jeremy Corney, Darren Thompson and Kevin Stokes.

The mobilising sonics sounded at 1840 hrs, and very unusually all three of the appliance mobilising lights were lit up. That means the incident we were being sent to required the fire appliance, the Rescue Vehicle *and* the turntable ladder. This was something I had never seen before. As we made our way down the fire pole from the upper floor of the Fire Station, a few of the old hands suggested it might be something at the Cathedral or the hospital.

The turn-out slip on the printer confirmed our suspicions; it said *Fire in Choir Aisle, Peterborough Cathedral*. We quickly donned our protective clothing and mounted our designated appliances. Colin and I secured the Breathing Apparatus sets to our backs. As we made our way down Park Road, the general view was that it was likely to be a false alarm.

As we turned into Dean's Court with the Cathedral on our left, Darren Thompson was the first to see large quantities of thick black smoke to the left of the Cathedral. He thought it might be a car fire, but it quickly became obvious it wasn't.

A surreal sight greeted us. The stained glass window on the left hand side of the Cathedral had already failed and huge flames and smoke were billowing out. Probably something I will never forget. We quickly positioned the appliance as close as possible, to allow us to pitch a 9 metre ladder, and run out a hose to direct a water jet into the Cathedral. It was probably the quickest ladder pitch we had ever done. Colin and I were sent to the front of the Cathedral to join the crew from Stanground who had just arrived, so that we could fight the fire internally.

Colin and I donned our face masks and entered the Cathedral via the front door. We were hit immediately by incredibly thick smoke, and knew that it would be very important to rely on our training, experience and procedures.

We knew if we headed down the central aisle and turned left just before where the choir is normally situated, it would put us in rough proximity to the seat of the fire.

When we did turn left by the organ, it was only then that I could see the fire. Approximately 200 plastic chairs were alight, giving off huge amounts of heat and smoke. I was pretty certain the fire had travelled up the rear of the organ and possibly into the roof. Visibility was incredibly challenging as Colin and I worked to put the fire out. The chairs were stacked in piles so eventually we had to try and start pulling them apart to make sure the fire was out. The smoke was very oily, making it very difficult to see through our visors. We worked for about 25 minutes and were joined by Richard and Adrian from Stanground, to make sure the fire was out.

Eventually we had to leave them inside, as Colin and I had a safety warning on our breathing apparatus that our air was running low and we should get out of the risk area. As we made our way out the way we had entered, we were both in awe at the sight of the Cathedral filled from top to bottom with smoke. When we exited many more resources had arrived on scene. It was the start of a very long night.

For me the Cathedral Fire, and the fact that Colin and I were the first firefighters to enter, was a defining moment in my career. I went on to serve another 20 years as an operational firefighter, and the Cathedral Fire is one of the few incidents I will never forget.

The Fire Service really is a team and without the pump operator supplying me inside with water and the Breathing Apparatus control officer monitoring our air consumption and safety from outside, we would not have been as effective or efficient. From my extremely professional colleagues on Green Watch to the unbelievable sights I saw that night, the successful saving of the Cathedral is an incident I will always cherish being involved in.

## Prayers

*led by the Canon in Residence*

Lord of all,  
accept our thanks and praise  
for all those who planned and built this holy place:  
for the painstaking work of so many who saved it from ruin  
on the night of the fire and in its aftermath;  
for the courage and determination of the firefighters;  
for those countless craftsmen in wood, glass and stone,  
who have contributed to its restoration  
and who help to maintain it today;  
in the name of Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

Eternal and infinite God, whose nature is beyond our understanding  
and whose beauty we can neither imagine nor express;  
be gracious to all who delight to make this earthly house  
to be an image of the glory of heaven.  
Through their gifts and labours  
bring them to the joy of the Holy City;  
through Jesus Christ our Lord,  
who with the Father and the Holy Spirit,  
is one God now and for ever. **Amen.**

Almighty God,  
whom the glorious company of the redeemed adore:  
we give thanks for the generosity of those who made it possible  
to repair and restore this house of God;  
and we pray that, strengthened by thy grace  
and inspired by their example,  
we may ever continue to use this Cathedral church  
in the service of thy kingdom,  
through Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

And we join all our prayers in the words of the Grace:

## Hymn



Christ is the King, O friends rejoice!  
Brothers and sisters, with one voice  
make the world know he is your choice:  
Alleluia!

The first apostles round them drew  
thousands of faithful folk and true,  
sharing a faith for ever new:  
Alleluia!

Then magnify the Lord and raise  
anthems of joy and holy praise  
for Christ's brave saints of ancient days:  
Alleluia!

Christ through all ages is the same;  
place the same hope in his great name,  
with the same faith his word proclaim:  
Alleluia!

Let Love's unconquerable might  
God's people everywhere unite  
in service to the Lord of light:  
Alleluia!

Words: George Bell (1883–1958)  
Tune: Vulpus

**Diary extract 3**  
*Mrs Jo Cundy*

What do we faithful Christians do in times of crisis? We pray!

It is a time for thanksgiving as well as mutual support.

And we contemplate the future.

The immediate future is to try and hold a Sunday service in the Cathedral if it can be cleaned up sufficiently. We succeed despite the lingering dust and ash in the air, and the Duke of Gloucester and his wife come to express, as ever, their ongoing support for the Cathedral. Sitting behind them Liz and I find the odd piece of ash settling on our service books.

In retrospect we wonder if it was foolish to invite people inside so soon, but it seemed an important gesture of continuity and resilience in the face of what could have been a complete disaster.

The Cathedral is more than just the building, it is a place where people have worshipped over centuries and generations. That life goes on, and will go on.



***Please stand***

*The Dean of Peterborough gives the **Blessing***

Christ, whose glory is in the heavens,  
fill this house and illuminate your hearts;  
and the blessing of God almighty,  
the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit,  
be among you and remain with you always.

**All: Amen.**

**Organ Voluntary**

Allegro assai vivace (Sonata no. I in F minor)  
*Felix Mendelssohn (1809-1847)*

*If you need to leave before the Voluntary ends, please do so quietly.  
Thank you for your consideration.*

*All are invited to share refreshments in the Cathedral following this service.*



**The Dean says:** The fire reminded us of the vulnerability of even the greatest of structures, but twenty years on, there are perhaps less obvious threats to the Cathedral's mission and ministry. You may wish to consider making a gift to the Cathedral, or joining our Keys programme, to ensure the future sustainability of the Cathedral and its witness. We are very grateful for your support.