

# Good Friday Readings & Music Service

with Holy Supper, readings from the Gospel of John  
and the teachings of the New Church, and selections  
from Handel's *Messiah*



Jesus is Crucified  
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*Listening notes for each piece will be in italics. Some of these are adapted from a listening guide by Noël Bisson (<https://bit.ly/2GhesS4>). A few notes about Handel's Messiah in general and the recording we are listening to in this service are at the back of this pamphlet.*

## **Preludes**

### **Messiah - Accompagnato: “For behold, darkness shall cover the earth”**

For behold, darkness shall cover the earth,  
and gross darkness the people;  
but the Lord shall arise upon thee,  
and His glory shall be seen upon thee.  
And the Gentiles shall come to thy light,  
and kings to the brightness of thy rising. (Isaiah 60:2-3)

*Notice how the tone is dark and minor at the beginning but turns brighter and major when it gets to “...but the Lord shall arise upon thee....” This technique is called word painting or tone painting and is used a lot by Handel in Messiah.*

### **Messiah - Aria: “The people that walked in darkness”**

The people that walked in darkness  
have seen a great light;  
and they that dwell in the land of the shadow of death,  
upon them hath the light shined. (Isaiah 9:2)

*In this piece as well notice how the music is minor and darker when talking about darkness and warmer, brighter, and major when talking about light. Having the bass soloist (the lowest voice) sing these two pieces also helps convey that darkness.*

## **Opening of the Word**

# Holy Supper Reading

## John 15:1-17 (NKJV)

<sup>1</sup> “I am the true vine, and My Father is the vinedresser. <sup>2</sup> Every branch in Me that does not bear fruit He takes away; and every branch that bears fruit He prunes, that it may bear more fruit. <sup>3</sup> You are already clean because of the word which I have spoken to you. <sup>4</sup> Abide in Me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself, unless it abides in the vine, neither can you, unless you abide in Me.

<sup>5</sup> I am the vine, you are the branches. He who abides in Me, and I in him, bears much fruit; for without Me you can do nothing. <sup>6</sup> If anyone does not abide in Me, he is cast out as a branch and is withered; and they gather them and throw them into the fire, and they are burned. <sup>7</sup> If you abide in Me, and My words abide in you, you will ask what you desire, and it shall be done for you. <sup>8</sup> By this My Father is glorified, that you bear much fruit; so you will be My disciples.

<sup>9</sup> “As the Father loved Me, I also have loved you; abide in My love. <sup>10</sup> 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.

<sup>11</sup> These things I have spoken to you, that My joy may remain in you, and that your joy may be full. <sup>12</sup> This is My commandment, that you love one another as I have loved you. <sup>13</sup> Greater love has no one than this, than to lay down one’s life for his friends. <sup>14</sup> You are My friends if you do whatever I command you. <sup>15</sup> No longer do I call you servants, for a servant does not know what his master is doing; but I have called you friends, for all things that I heard from My Father I have made known to you. <sup>16</sup> You did not choose Me, but I chose you and appointed you that you should go and bear fruit, and that your fruit should remain, that whatever you ask the Father in My name He may give you. <sup>17</sup> These things I command you, that you love one another.”

## **Messiah - Duet: “He shall feed His flock”**

He shall feed His flock like a shepherd;  
and He shall gather the lambs with His arm,  
and carry them in His bosom,  
and gently lead those that are with young. (Isaiah 40:11)

Come unto Him, all ye that labour, come unto Him that are heavy laden, and He will give you rest. Take his yoke upon you, and learn of Him, for He is meek and lowly of heart, and ye shall find rest unto your souls. (Matthew 11:28-29)

*The instrumental introduction to this piece strongly recalls the Pifa or Pastoral Symphony from earlier in the Messiah that introduces the scene where the shepherds are abiding in the fields, keeping watch over their flocks by night. So Handel has created a musical connection between these two pieces that are thematically related. This piece is often performed as a duet, with the alto soloist singing the first section and then the soprano soloist singing the next section in a higher register. In this recording it is sung just by the soprano, in keeping with how it was first performed.*

## **Readings**

### **Secrets of Heaven §1812**

While He lived in the world the Lord was engaged repeatedly in conflicts brought about by temptations, and was repeatedly victorious. ... [T]he Lord was filled repeatedly with an inmost confidence and faith that, because it was pure love out of which He was fighting for the salvation of the whole human race, He could not but be victorious. From the love out of which anyone fights it is known what his faith is. ....

The Lord... in all His conflicts brought about by temptations, never fought out of self-love, that is, for Himself, but for all throughout the universe. He did not fight... to become the greatest in heaven, for that is contrary to Divine love. He scarcely did so to become the least. He fought solely so that all others might become something and be saved....

## John 18:1-23 (NKJV)

<sup>1</sup> When Jesus had spoken these words, He went out with His disciples over the Brook Kidron, where there was a garden, which He and His disciples entered. <sup>2</sup> And Judas, who betrayed Him, also knew the place; for Jesus often met there with His disciples. <sup>3</sup> Then Judas, having received a detachment of troops, and officers from the chief priests and Pharisees, came there with lanterns, torches, and weapons. <sup>4</sup> Jesus therefore, knowing all things that would come upon Him, went forward and said to them, "Whom are you seeking?"

<sup>5</sup> They answered Him, "Jesus of Nazareth."

Jesus said to them, "I am He." And Judas, who betrayed Him, also stood with them. <sup>6</sup> Now when He said to them, "I am He," they drew back and fell to the ground.

<sup>7</sup> Then He asked them again, "Whom are you seeking?"

And they said, "Jesus of Nazareth."

<sup>8</sup> Jesus answered, "I have told you that I am He. Therefore, if you seek Me, let these go their way," <sup>9</sup> that the saying might be fulfilled which He spoke, "Of those whom You gave Me I have lost none."

<sup>10</sup> Then Simon Peter, having a sword, drew it and struck the high priest's servant, and cut off his right ear. The servant's name was Malchus.

<sup>11</sup> So Jesus said to Peter, "Put your sword into the sheath. Shall I not drink the cup which My Father has given Me?"

<sup>12</sup> Then the detachment of troops and the captain and the officers of the Jews arrested Jesus and bound Him.

<sup>13</sup> And they led Him away to Annas first, for he was the father-in-law of Caiaphas who was high priest that year. <sup>14</sup> Now it was Caiaphas who advised the Jews that it was expedient that one man should die for the people.

<sup>15</sup> And Simon Peter followed Jesus, and so did another disciple. Now that disciple was known to the high priest, and went with Jesus into the courtyard of the high priest. <sup>16</sup> But Peter stood at the door

outside. Then the other disciple, who was known to the high priest, went out and spoke to her who kept the door, and brought Peter in. <sup>17</sup> Then the servant girl who kept the door said to Peter, “You are not also one of this Man’s disciples, are you?”

He said, “I am not.” <sup>18</sup> Now the servants and officers who had made a fire of coals stood there, for it was cold, and they warmed themselves. And Peter stood with them and warmed himself.

<sup>19</sup> The high priest then asked Jesus about His disciples and His doctrine.

<sup>20</sup> Jesus answered him, “I spoke openly to the world. I always taught in synagogues and in the temple, where the Jews always meet, and in secret I have said nothing. <sup>21</sup> Why do you ask Me? Ask those who have heard Me what I said to them. Indeed they know what I said.”

<sup>22</sup> And when He had said these things, one of the officers who stood by struck Jesus with the palm of his hand, saying, “Do You answer the high priest like that?”

<sup>23</sup> Jesus answered him, “If I have spoken evil, bear witness of the evil; but if well, why do you strike Me?”

### ***Messiah* - Aria: “He was despised” (excerpt)**

He gave His back to the smiters,  
and His cheeks to them that plucked off the hair:  
He hid not His face from shame and spitting. (Isaiah 53:6)

*This is an excerpt from a longer aria sung by the alto soloist. In this faster section of that aria you can hear the violence of the words echoed in the attack of the harpsichord and strings.*

### **John 18:24-27 (NKJV)**

<sup>24</sup> Then Annas sent Him bound to Caiaphas the high priest.

<sup>25</sup> Now Simon Peter stood and warmed himself. Therefore they said to him, “You are not also one of His disciples, are you?”

He denied it and said, “I am not!”

<sup>26</sup> One of the servants of the high priest, a relative of him whose ear Peter cut off, said, “Did I not see you in the garden with Him?”

<sup>27</sup> Peter then denied again; and immediately a rooster crowed.

## **Messiah - Recitative: “Thy rebuke hath broken His heart”**

Thy rebuke hath broken His heart:

He is full of heaviness.

He looked for some to have pity on Him,

but there was no man,

neither found He any to comfort him. (Psalm 69:20)

*This piece is sung by the tenor soloist and so has a different tone from the pieces sung by the bass. You might also feel a tension and an unsettled quality in the music. (For those that like the technical details) this piece moves from A flat to the key of B major in a very short span of time and, because these keys are not closely related, changing between them takes a lot of work and that change happening helps to create that feeling of instability.*

## **John 18:28-40 (NKJV)**

<sup>28</sup> Then they led Jesus from Caiaphas to the Praetorium, and it was early morning. But they themselves did not go into the Praetorium, lest they should be defiled, but that they might eat the Passover.

<sup>29</sup> Pilate then went out to them and said, “What accusation do you bring against this Man?”

<sup>30</sup> They answered and said to him, “If He were not an evildoer, we would not have delivered Him up to you.”

<sup>31</sup> Then Pilate said to them, “You take Him and judge Him according to your law.”

Therefore the Jews said to him, “It is not lawful for us to put anyone to death,” <sup>32</sup> that the saying of Jesus might be fulfilled which He spoke, signifying by what death He would die.

33 Then Pilate entered the Praetorium again, called Jesus, and said to Him, “Are You the King of the Jews?”

34 Jesus answered him, “Are you speaking for yourself about this, or did others tell you this concerning Me?”

35 Pilate answered, “Am I a Jew? Your own nation and the chief priests have delivered You to me. What have You done?”

36 Jesus answered, “My kingdom is not of this world. If My kingdom were of this world, My servants would fight, so that I should not be delivered to the Jews; but now My kingdom is not from here.”

37 Pilate therefore said to Him, “Are You a king then?”

Jesus answered, “You say rightly that I am a king. For this cause I was born, and for this cause I have come into the world, that I should bear witness to the truth. Everyone who is of the truth hears My voice.”

38 Pilate said to Him, “What is truth?” And when he had said this, he went out again to the Jews, and said to them, “I find no fault in Him at all.

39 “But you have a custom that I should release someone to you at the Passover. Do you therefore want me to release to you the King of the Jews?”

40 Then they all cried again, saying, “Not this Man, but Barabbas!” Now Barabbas was a robber.

## **Messiah - Aria: “Why do the nations so furiously rage together?”**

Why do the nations so furiously rage together,  
and why do the people imagine a vain thing?

The kings of the earth rise up,  
and the rulers take counsel together against the Lord,  
and against His anointed. (Psalm 2:1-2)

*The bass here sings long strings of notes to one syllable (e.g. rage, iMAgine)—to convey a feeling of rage. The tempo and the furious, unrelenting playing of the violins also add to the tension of this aria.*



## John 19:1-16 (NKJV)

<sup>1</sup> So then Pilate took Jesus and scourged Him. <sup>2</sup> And the soldiers twisted a crown of thorns and put it on His head, and they put on Him a purple robe. <sup>3</sup> Then they said, "Hail, King of the Jews!" And they struck Him with their hands.

<sup>4</sup> Pilate then went out again, and said to them, "Behold, I am bringing Him out to you, that you may know that I find no fault in Him."

<sup>5</sup> Then Jesus came out, wearing the crown of thorns and the purple robe. And Pilate said to them, "Behold the Man!"

<sup>6</sup> Therefore, when the chief priests and officers saw Him, they cried out, saying, "Crucify Him, crucify Him!"

Pilate said to them, "You take Him and crucify Him, for I find no fault in Him."

<sup>7</sup> The Jews answered him, "We have a law, and according to our law He ought to die, because He made Himself the Son of God."

<sup>8</sup> Therefore, when Pilate heard that saying, he was the more afraid, <sup>9</sup> and went again into the Praetorium, and said to Jesus, "Where are You from?" But Jesus gave him no answer.

<sup>10</sup> Then Pilate said to Him, "Are You not speaking to me? Do You not know that I have power to crucify You, and power to release You?"

<sup>11</sup> Jesus answered, "You could have no power at all against Me unless it had been given you from above. Therefore the one who delivered Me to you has the greater sin."

<sup>12</sup> From then on Pilate sought to release Him, but the Jews cried out, saying, "If you let this Man go, you are not Caesar's friend. Whoever makes himself a king speaks against Caesar."

<sup>13</sup> When Pilate therefore heard that saying, he brought Jesus out and sat down in the judgment seat in a place that is called The Pavement, but in Hebrew, Gabbatha. <sup>14</sup> Now it was the Preparation Day of the Passover, and about the sixth hour. And he said to the Jews, "Behold your King!"

<sup>15</sup> But they cried out, “Away with Him, away with Him! Crucify Him!”

Pilate said to them, “Shall I crucify your King?”

The chief priests answered, “We have no king but Caesar!”

<sup>16</sup> Then he delivered Him to them to be crucified. So they took Jesus and led Him away.

## **Messiah - Chorus: “Behold the Lamb of God”**

Behold the Lamb of God, that taketh away the sin of the world.  
(John 1:29)

*This is the only chorus we’re listening to in this service. Notice the effect of the different voice parts repeating a phrase one after the other, almost like a crowd of people talking together. Another way of hearing this piece is as depicting the joy and sorrow within this text. It is wonderful that the Lord has come to take away the sin of the world (and you can hear that in the first time that they sing, “...that taketh away the sin of the world.” But by the end of the piece it has also reflected with sorrow on what He is going through to achieve that end.*

## **John 19:17-42 (NKJV)**

<sup>17</sup> And He, bearing His cross, went out to a place called the Place of a Skull, which is called in Hebrew, Golgotha, <sup>18</sup> where they crucified Him, and two others with Him, one on either side, and Jesus in the center. <sup>19</sup> Now Pilate wrote a title and put it on the cross. And the writing was:

JESUS OF NAZARETH, THE KING OF THE JEWS.

<sup>20</sup> Then many of the Jews read this title, for the place where Jesus was crucified was near the city; and it was written in Hebrew, Greek, and Latin.

<sup>21</sup> Therefore the chief priests of the Jews said to Pilate, “Do not write, ‘The King of the Jews,’ but, ‘He said, “I am the King of the Jews.” ’ ”

<sup>22</sup> Pilate answered, “What I have written, I have written.”

<sup>23</sup> Then the soldiers, when they had crucified Jesus, took His garments and made four parts, to each soldier a part, and also the tunic. Now the tunic was without seam, woven from the top in one piece. <sup>24</sup> They said therefore among themselves, "Let us not tear it, but cast lots for it, whose it shall be," that the Scripture might be fulfilled which says:

"They divided My garments among them,  
And for My clothing they cast lots."

Therefore the soldiers did these things.

<sup>25</sup> Now there stood by the cross of Jesus His mother, and His mother's sister, Mary the wife of Clopas, and Mary Magdalene. <sup>26</sup> When Jesus therefore saw His mother, and the disciple whom He loved standing by, He said to His mother, "Woman, behold your son!" <sup>27</sup> Then He said to the disciple, "Behold your mother!" And from that hour that disciple took her to his own home.

<sup>28</sup> After this, Jesus, knowing that all things were now accomplished, that the Scripture might be fulfilled, said, "I thirst!" <sup>29</sup> Now a vessel full of sour wine was sitting there; and they filled a sponge with sour wine, put it on hyssop, and put it to His mouth. <sup>30</sup> So when Jesus had received the sour wine, He said, "It is finished!" And bowing His head, He gave up His spirit.

<sup>31</sup> Therefore, because it was the Preparation Day, that the bodies should not remain on the cross on the Sabbath (for that Sabbath was a high day), the Jews asked Pilate that their legs might be broken, and that they might be taken away. <sup>32</sup> Then the soldiers came and broke the legs of the first and of the other who was crucified with Him. <sup>33</sup> But when they came to Jesus and saw that He was already dead, they did not break His legs. <sup>34</sup> But one of the soldiers pierced His side with a spear, and immediately blood and water came out. <sup>35</sup> And he who has seen has testified, and his testimony is true; and he knows that he is telling the truth, so that you may believe. <sup>36</sup> For these things were done that the Scripture should be fulfilled, "Not one of His bones shall be broken." <sup>37</sup> And again another Scripture says, "They shall look on Him whom they pierced."

<sup>38</sup> After this, Joseph of Arimathea, being a disciple of Jesus, but secretly, for fear of the Jews, asked Pilate that he might take away the body of Jesus; and Pilate gave him permission. So he came and took the body of Jesus. <sup>39</sup> And Nicodemus, who at first came to Jesus by night, also came, bringing a mixture of myrrh and aloes, about a hundred pounds. <sup>40</sup> Then they took the body of Jesus, and bound it in strips of linen with the spices, as the custom of the Jews is to bury. <sup>41</sup> Now in the place where He was crucified there was a garden, and in the garden a new tomb in which no one had yet been laid. <sup>42</sup> So there they laid Jesus, because of the Jews' Preparation Day, for the tomb was nearby.

## **Benediction and Closing of the Word**

### **Postlude**

#### ***Messiah - Aria: "I know that my Redeemer liveth"***

I know that my Redeemer liveth,  
and that He shall stand at the latter day upon the earth.  
And though worms destroy this body,  
yet in my flesh shall I see God. (Job 19:25-26)

For now is Christ risen from the dead,  
the first fruits of them that sleep. (1 Corinthians 15:20)

*This piece has a feeling of hope and trust in the face of loss, conveyed in part by the repetition of the phrase "I know that my Redeemer liveth..." which might bring to mind how we sometimes will repeat a truth to ourselves to remind ourselves of its truth. Listen for the changes in dynamics (how loud the soloist is singing) and how the places where she sings louder and higher convey those moments of clarity and even triumph in the midst of a difficult experience.*

# Notes About Handel's *Messiah* and the Recording

## ***Messiah***

George Frideric Handel composed *Messiah* in 1741, using English text from the Bible compiled by librettist Charles Jennens. Handel composed the work “in an astounding interlude, somewhere between three and four weeks in August and September 1741” (“The Glorious History...”) and “and continued to work on it after its initial performance, finally arriving at the version we know today in 1754” (“Handel - *Messiah*”).

The work is in three parts. Part I begins with prophecies of the Messiah's coming and then tells the story of Jesus' birth. Part II covers Jesus' arrest, crucifixion, resurrection, and ascension. Part III explores Jesus' victory over sin and death, the day of judgment, and ends with text from Revelation about the Lamb receiving blessing, honour, glory, and power.

Although now most often performed at Christmas-time, Handel's *Messiah* was originally written to be performed at Easter and was first performed in Dublin at Easter-time in 1742. Over time it gradually grew in popularity until it is now “one of the best-known and most frequently performed choral works in Western music” (“*Messiah* (Handel)”).

## **Sources**

- “The Glorious History of Handel's *Messiah*” by Jonathan Kandell. *Smithsonian Magazine*. - <http://bit.ly/1RkFYsf>
- “Handel - *Messiah*” Classic FM - <http://bit.ly/1pHYJit>
- “*Messiah* (Handel)” - Wikipedia - <http://bit.ly/1UMA0F1>

## **The Recording**

The recording we are listening to in this service is performed by the Choir of King's College, Cambridge and the Brandenburg Consort, with Stephen Cleobury conducting. The choir is all male, with the soprano part being sung by boy sopranos and the alto part by countertenors.

The soloists are Lynne Dawson (soprano), Hilary Summers (alto), John Mark Ainsley (tenor), and Alastair Miles (bass).

This performance was recorded by Decca and released in 1994. You can find the complete performance on YouTube by searching for Messiah Stephen Cleobury.

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