**Organ and choral music for Passiontide**

3 April (Passion Sunday)

\*Prelude: *Benedictus, from the Armed Man: A Mass for Peace*, by Karl Jenkins (arr. William McVicker)

Anthem: ‘Wir setzen uns’ *(from St Matthew Passion)*, by J. S. Bach

Voluntary: *‘Dona nobis pacem’ (from the B Minor Mass)*, by J. S. Bach (arr. W. T. Best)

Today’s music reflects both the start of Passiontide and our current concern at the impact of conflict on the world. The words of the anthem translate as ‘Here at thy grave, we all sit weeping’, while the organ music is offered as a prayer for peace. We are reminded that soldiers were instrumental in the crucifixion of Christ, and that the tears of the world continue to flow for all victims of war.

10 April (Palm Sunday) Mass

Anthem: *A Palm Sunday Antiphon*, by David Morgan

\*Voluntary: *Meditation on Love Unknown,* by Francis Jackson

Today’s anthem echoes the Gospel account of Jesus riding triumphantly into Jerusalem to shouts of ‘Hosanna to the Son of David’. The voluntary takes a more meditative turn, using John Ireland’s hymn tune to today’s Offertory hymn, ‘My song is love unknown’, as its inspiration. Samuel Crossman’s text reminds us how the crowd’s fickle adulation quickly turned to vitriolic shouts of ‘crucify’, but also that it is ultimately through the cross that God’s love is shown to the whole world.

10 April (Evening Service of Music & Readings)

\*Prelude: *Erbarme Dich, Mein Gott (from St Matthew Passion)*, by J. S. Bach (arr. Righetti/Cipkin)

\*Voluntary: *Agnus Dei*, by Frank Martin

Tonight’s music is offered as a meditation on the Passion of our Lord and Saviour, Jesus Christ. Before the service, we hear an adaptation of one of the most moving laments ever written. The text of the original aria translates as ‘Have mercy on me, O Lord, regard my bitter weeping’ echoing both the Lenten Litany and the Kyrie of the Mass. The closing voluntary is transcribed from the closing movement of Frank’s Mass for unaccompanied double choir. Martin was inspired to compose after hearing Bach’s *St Matthew Passion*. As we begin the most solemn week of the liturgical year, our prayer to the sacrificial Lamb of God is both to have mercy on us and grant us peace.

14 April (Maundy Thursday)

\*Prelude: Olivier Messiaen, *Le Banquet Céleste*

Anthem : *Ubi Caritas*, by Ola Gjeilo

Messiaen’s music is, like the deep faith which inspired it, often difficult, but ultimately rewarding. *Le Banquet Céleste* (the Heavenly Banquet) introduces tonight’s commemoration of the Last Supper, while also looking ahead to the eternal reward of heaven. The piece is prefaced by John 6:56: “He that eateth my flesh and drinketh my blood dwelleth in me and I in him". It conveys a tension between the temporal and eternal. Mysterious, slowly changing chords portray timelessness, but these are punctuated by stabbing pedal notes representing drops of Christ’s blood which constantly bring the listener back to the present. It is only in the final, unresolved, chord that we are left with the eternal implication of Christ’s Passion.

**\*Note: for copyright reasons, some pieces cannot be livestreamed.**