

Sing Joyfully

St Swithun's Choir e-newsletter



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June 2017

The program for June

Friday 2 June Service for Christian Unity at 7:30 pm.

The annual week of prayer for Christian unity is an initiative of The World Council of Churches. In Australia it is being 'celebrated' from Sunday 28 May to Sunday 4 June. The theme for 2017 is **Reconciliation – the love of Christ compels us**. At 7:30 pm on Friday 2 June there will be an ecumenical Christian Unity service at Swiz. Choir members are particularly asked to attend and support the congregational singing of five well-known (to us at least) hymns/songs.

Sunday 18 June Huguenot Service at 2 pm

Meg Matthews is the guest director for this service. She has called rehearsals for the full choir as follows:

- | | |
|------------------|--|
| Thursday 1 June | 8:00–8:30pm (first part of normal rehearsal) |
| Thursday 15 June | 7:30–8:30pm (early start to normal rehearsal) |
| Sunday 18 June | 1:00–1:30pm before the service, to run through with Neil Cameron. The service is at 2pm. |

Introit: *La Cévenole* (to be sung in French)

Hymns: *Thine be the glory; Be thou my vision; Guide me O my great redeemer; For all the saints*

Anthem: JS Bach version of *A mighty fortress* (not the words from the hymn book; Meg will supply copies.)

Sunday 25 June Choir Workshop, 12:30 to 3:30 pm.

Bring your lunch for another action-packed afternoon.



The recent past – May

The choir workshop, Sunday 21 May

Alison Morgan introduced us to the relaxed lower jaw, open-mouthed “Duh” and the *i e a o u* vowel progression during the first hour of our May workshop¹. It all seems so simple and easy. Start at *a*. Keeping the lower jaw relaxed and motionless, move only the lips as you move from *a* through *o* and *u*. Still keeping the lower jaw relaxed and motionless, move only the tongue as you move from *a* through *e* to *i*. The aim is to have everyone sounding identical vowels. Simple and easy it may be, but a little harder to overcome the bad habits of a lifetime!

Then she gave her critical appraisal of our performance as we sang the Murrill *Magnificat* and *Nunc Dimittis*. It was a pretty solid three hours work, but the time flew by and we must hope that the excellent tuition has a lasting beneficial result.

There was a bumper turn-out from choristers; we counted just a few short of 40.

Philip Jones' funeral, Wednesday 24 May

The church was full, the lounge was full and there were people actually sitting in the hall for Philip's farewell. Three of Philip's children delivered very confident and illuminating addresses. A very respectable mid-week choir sang *Christ be with me* to Pachelbel's *Canon* and Rutter's *Aaronic Blessing*, and led the congregation in singing three well-known hymns. The congregation and the choir especially enjoyed the first hymn, *How great Thou art*. It is a pity that we don't sing it more often and it is a pity that we don't have an SATB

¹ The phonetic experts might prefer ē(den), ā (name), ä(lmond), ö(range), ũ (wood), but then again

version at hand. To correct this latter deficiency, we publish the music, and a background story about it, towards the end of this issue of *Sing Joyfully*.

Evensong Saturday 27 May

There was another good congregation for the service of Evensong in celebration of Pentecost and the Resurrection. We sang the *Sanctus* from Schubert's *German Mass (Holy, Holy, Holy)* as the introit. Edward Murrill composed the canticles. John Rutter wrote the anthem: *I will sing with the Spirit*. The hymns were all chosen to reflect the spirit of the liturgical season, and Psalm 48, evoking Zion to worshippers in the time of the Sons of Korah, speaks to modern Christians about the New Jerusalem.

Our thanks go to the congregation for its strong support of this traditional service, to all the choir members who supply comestibles for the High Tea afterwards, to our organist and director for their energies and enthusiasm, to the Rector for his commitment to the choir.



The bleak midwinter

The piece was chosen months in advance. The weather forecast during the days leading up to its presentation looked as though the choice would be perfect – chilly with rain threatening. On the day, the second Sunday in May, Louise's small group, directed by Meg Matthews, sang Harold Darke's setting of *In the bleak midwinter* at the 8 am Communion service. The weather stayed quite mild until later in the morning when the forecast became the reality. Nonetheless, the anthem was appropriate to the time of year and to a celebration of Mothers' Day – Christina Rossetti's poem about the birth of the Christ Child sung to the music composed by Harold Darke, student of Charles Villiers Stanford.



“The Patrick Project”

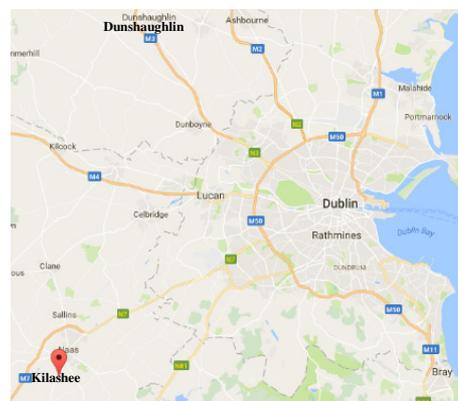
The treasurer has reported that everyone who signed up before Easter last year has now paid for their accommodation at Trinity College. But we still have a small foreign exchange exposure, so if our dollar weakens against the Euro between now and when Trinity College calls for payment, there might be a further small balance payment requested from those concerned.

Invoices have been issued to the smaller group who will join the 8-day Insight tour leaving from Trinity College on Monday 28 August. Those payments are due by 15 June.

The road to Dublin

Chapter 20: The arrival of Christianity in Ireland

“The conversion of the Irish to Christianity was a process and not an event.” So writes Cormac Bourke, Curator of Medieval Antiquities at Ulster Museum in Belfast. Christian communities already existed in 431 when Pope Celestine in Rome sent Palladius to Ireland to be their first bishop. A Christian community had grown in the east and south-east of the island through slave and trading links with Roman Britain and contact with Irish colonies in Wales. Early missionaries are associated with places named after them: Dunshaughlin in Co. Meath and Kilashee in Co. Kildare (see map). Dunshaughlin translates as “the church of Secundinus”; Kilashee translates as “the church of Auxilius”. Another of the early missionaries, and undoubtedly the best known, was Patrick who worked primarily in Armagh, the north eastern corner of the island. The church in Armagh promoted Patrick's name through the seventh century (a long, long time after Patrick had lived) in order to bolster its claim for primacy over the other Irish churches.



The spread of Christianity in the fifth and six centuries was slow and sporadic but, by the seventh century, it was well established and had adapted to the particular needs of the

Irish people. A significant development was the transition from territorial diocese governed by bishops to a network of monasteries in which abbots were the administrators.

The high standard of learning, calligraphy, metalwork and sculpture produced in the monastic schools was widely recognised through Europe.

By the eight century the Irish church was respected, powerful and wealthy. Monasteries controlled church life and dominated the economy. They played important roles in politics and were the most important patrons of all branches of the arts.

The arrival of, first the Vikings, and later the Normans, disturbed but did not impact greatly upon the established order.

The Reformation was the big disrupter, having a very similar effect on the church in Ireland as it did in England.



How Great Thou Art

The history of this hymn begins with Carl Gustaf Boberg (1859-1940). He was a Swedish pastor, editor, and member of the Swedish parliament. Carl and some friends were returning home from an afternoon church service when a thunderstorm suddenly appeared out of nowhere. The author himself gave the following information about his poem:

It was that time of year when everything seemed to be in its richest colouring; the birds were singing in trees and everywhere. It was very warm; a thunderstorm appeared on the horizon and soon there was thunder and lightning. We had to hurry to shelter. But the storm was soon over and the clear sky appeared.



When I came home I opened my window toward the sea. There evidently had been a funeral and the bells were playing the tune of *When eternity's clock calls my saved soul to its Sabbath rest*. That evening, I wrote the song, *O Store Gud (O Great God)*.

The eight-stanza poem was matched to an old Swedish folk tune and sung in public for the first time in a Swedish church in 1888. It was published in 1891 in *Sanningsvitnet (Witness of the Truth)*, the weekly newspaper that Boberg edited. It was later translated into German. In 1927 a Russian version of the German text was published.

Stuart Hine was a British Methodist missionary. He first heard the Russian translation of the German version of the song while on an evangelistic mission to the Carpathian Mountains in Ukraine. Upon hearing it, Hine was inspired to create his English paraphrase of its first three verses and gave his version the title *How Great Thou Art*. He later wrote a fourth verse (*And when I think that God, His Son not sparing, Sent Him to die, I scarce can take it in*) as a triumphant message of life eternal. The hymn we know today has another verse written by Hines (*When Christ shall come with shout of acclamation to take me home, what joy shall fill my heart.*)

Dr. J. Edwin Orr is said to have brought the hymn to America. After hearing it sung in India, he introduced it to various Christian groups in America. *How Great Thou Art* was sung by George Beverly Shea at the London Crusade of the Billy Graham evangelistic team in 1954. He later sang this song during a revival in New York at a Billy Graham Crusade. According to Cliff Barrows (Dr. Graham's longtime associate), "they sang it one hundred times during that campaign because the people wouldn't let them stop."

A four-part harmony setting is appended to this issue of *Sing Joyfully*.



THE HOPE CHOIR from Uganda visits St Swithun's on **Sunday 18 June**.



The choir will sing twice; presenting a concert in the church at noon, then participating in the regular 5 pm service. The choir visited us last year and was enthusiastically received by everyone. Come to the midday concert and stay on for the Huguenot Service afterwards.

Go to www.9now.com.au/today/2017/clip-cj1iz0c44000z0gnztotlqk4q to see the amazing story of Trishelle Sayuuni, the founder of the choir's Ugandan school.



Draft Choir program – 2017

Date	Venue	Time	
2017			
Fri 2 Jun	Swiz	7:30 pm	Christian Unity service
Sun 18 Jun	Swiz	2 pm	Huguenot celebration
Sun 25 Jun	Swiz	12:30 – 3:30 pm	Choir workshop
Fri 14 Jul	All Saints Hunters Hill	6 pm	RSCM Midwinter Dinner
Sat 15 Jul	Swiz	5 pm	Evensong
Sat 5 Aug	Swiz	5 pm	Farewell concert
Sun 6 Aug	Swiz	10 am	Commissioning service
Sun 13 Aug	Swiz	10 am	Last service before Ireland
19 – 20 Aug	Christ Church Cathedral, Dublin		
21 - 27 Aug	St Patrick's Cathedral, Dublin		
Thu 14 Sep	Swiz	8 pm	Rehearsals resume
Sun 17 Sep	Swiz	10 am	First service after the trip
Sat 28 Oct	Swiz	5 pm	Evensong
Sat 25 Nov	Swiz	7 pm	Bach Christmas Oratorio

Please stay continually alert for advice about additions/amendments.



How Great Thou Art

Carl G. Boberg

Stuart K. Hine

Choir

O Lord my God, when I in awe-some won - der con - sid - er
When through the woods and for - est glades I wan - der, I hear the
But when I think that God, His Son not spar - ing, sent Him to
When Christ shall come, with shout of ac - cla - ma - tion, and take me

3

all the works Thy hand hath made, I see the stars, I hear the migh - ty
birds sing sweet - ly in the trees; when I look down from lof - ty moun - tain
die, I scarce can take it in, that on the cross my bur - den glad - ly
home, what joy shall fill my heart! Then I shall bow in hum - ble a - dor -

6

thun - der, Thy pow'r through - out the u - ni - verse dis - played; Then sings my
gran - deur and hear the brook and feel the gen - tle breeze;
bear - ing He bled and died to take a - way my sin;
ra - tion and there pro - claim, "My God, how great Thou art!"

9

soul, my Sav - ior God, to Thee. How great Thou art! How great Thou art! Then sings my

13

soul, my Sav - ior God, to Thee. How great Thou art! How great Thou art!