

## Music Notes for March 17, 2024

The service music during Lent includes the Presentation Hymn (“What shall I render unto you, O God”, listen [here](#)), the Sanctus by David Hurd, one of the preeminent Black composers of the Episcopal Church (listen [here](#)), and the Fraction Anthem (“Christ our Passover, listen [here](#)). The Psalms during Lent will be sung using simple congregational antiphons, mostly composed by me, with verses sung by the choir to traditional plainsong chants. The psalms will be sung *a capella*, with a simple bell accompaniment to give the pitches.

The service today opens with the Decalogue, a recitation of the Ten Commandments. The inclusion of the Decalogue in the Prayer Book began in 1552. After praying the Lord’s Prayer and the Collect for Purity, the priest would stand and turn to the congregation, reading each commandment, and the people responding “*Lord, have mercye upon us, and encline our heartes to kepe this lawe.*” The Decalogue was a required part of the liturgy at one time, though in our current Prayer Book designates it as an optional part of the Eucharist. We are including it again this year to emphasize the penitential nature of the season of Lent. A cantor chants the commandments, and the congregation responds with the sung response, “Amen. Lord have mercy” to a setting from Healy Willan’s *Missa de Sancta Maria Magdalena* (listen [here](#)).

The sequence hymn today is “When Christ was lifted from the earth,” which is a reflection on the final verses of today’s Gospel lesson. The hymn’s author is Brian Wren, a prolific and internationally published British hymn poet and writer. The tune is “St. Botolph,” named for the parish church in Boston, Lincolnshire, England, where the composer, Gordon Slater, was the organist from 1919 – 1927.

Today’s anthem is “Locus Iste,” (“This place was made by God”) composed by Anton Bruckner. This piece was composed in 1869 for the dedication of the new cathedral in Linz, Austria. The text is appropriate for any time and concentrates on the concept of “sacred place,” based on the Biblical story of Jacob’s ladder (“Surely God is in this place.”) Bruckner was born in September 4, 1824, and so this year is his bicentennial.

The music during communion during Lent will be Taizé-style chants. Today’s is “*Savior of the world.*” As with the chants from some previous weeks, this chant was written by Jacques Berthier, who was the organist at St. Ignace Church in Paris from 1961 until his death in 1994. Berthier is best known, of course, for his extensive output of service music for the Taizé community near Cluny, Burgundy.

The closing hymn is “Jesus, lover of my soul.” This well-known hymn was written by Charles Wesley in 1740 and originally published under the title, “In Temptation.” The theme of the hymn is the sufficiency of Christ to give comfort, power, and grace in any circumstance. The hymn is sung to the Welsh tune, “Aberystwyth,” composed by Joseph Parry, and named for the town where he was professor of music from 1873-1879. Parry wrote over 400 hymn tunes and many other musical works. He is no relation to Sir Hubert Parry, who wrote the famous anthem “I was glad,” sung at coronations of British monarchs since 1902.

Today's prelude is a jazz-inspired reflection on "What wondrous love is this." The postlude also includes jazz-inspired rhythms and harmonies and is based on the American traditional melody, "I am a poor wayfaring stranger."