

 Civil Service
Choir
SINFONIA
SMITH SQ. Directed by Stephen Hall, OBE

with
BRANDENBURG
SINFONIA



Haydn's *The Creation*

"This choir is one of the
best I've ever heard."
- Jools Holland

Sunday 26th April, 7pm

Smith Square Hall, London, SW1P 3HA

Tickets £30, £23, £15

Book online at www.sinfoniasmithsq.org.uk | Booking fees apply | Booking helpline: 020 7222 1061

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Thank you for celebrating Christmas with...

The Civil Service Choir

Lunchtime Carol Service

Tuesday 16th December, 1pm

St Stephen's Church, Rochester Row, Westminster

Free non-ticketed event, with collection for charity

Livestreamed on the St Stephen's Westminster Facebook page



CHARITY
FOR CIVIL
SERVANTS

Cardinal Hume
Centre
Each Person Matters

Welcome to this special celebration of Christmas in words and music, organised by the Civil Service Choir. We particularly welcome colleagues from the Christians in Government networks in the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government (MHCLG); Department for Transport (DfT); Home Office; and the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (Defra).

This is the 34th annual staff Carol Service to be held at St Stephen's. We should like to express our gratitude to Revd. Graham Buckle for allowing us to use this fine church once again. We are also excited to be returning here on Thursday evening with our chamber choir's *A Christmas Tapestry* concert, exploring Christmas music through the ages and featuring two fascinating masses that are effectively carol medleys.

The Civil Service Choir brings together staff from almost all Government Departments and agencies in Westminster. The choir has a membership of over 200 singers and today's service is the choir's 207th performance since it gave its first concert here in St Stephen's in November 2009 with 25 singers. The choir is supported by SPARTA – the Sports and Recreational Association of the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government and the Department for Transport – and by CSSC Sports and Leisure.

2025 has been another busy year for the choir. We were incredibly honoured to sing at Buckingham Palace in February for a reception hosted by His Majesty the King to celebrate the Civil Service. In March we performed Mozart's *Requiem* in Smith Square Hall, with the Brandenburg Sinfonia. Two weeks later we were back performing as part of Sinfonia Smith Square's Easter Festival. We were back there again in the summer trading major classical works for swing classics, performing our *Celebration in Swing* concert, with a professional jazz orchestra. November brought perhaps our biggest highlight of the year – Carl Orff's *Carmina Burana* and Rutter's *Feel the Spirit* in collaboration with the Whitehall Orchestra and children's Chorus Angelicus at Holy Trinity Sloane Square. Having sold out two weeks before the concert, we were thrilled by the standing ovation at the end. December is always busy, with today being in the middle of a run of six performances in ten days.

Many recordings of the choir's previous performances are available on YouTube, including a carol Advent Calendar. Please visit www.civilservicechoir.org.uk to find out more.

The choir is directed by Stephen Hall OBE. Today's organist is Matthew Warbis.

Through collections and some concerts at which all ticket revenue is donated, the choir has raised over £55,000 for charities.

There will be a retiring collection for our charities below. Please give generously.



Our principal charity is the **Cardinal Hume Centre** – turning lives around to overcome poverty and homelessness – which provides remarkable support to young and other vulnerable people just a short walk from St Stephen's.
www.cardinalhumecentre.org.uk

We are also proud to support St Stephen's Church – the upkeep of this fine building, and the work it supports in this parish and further afield.



Founded in 1886 we support all civil servants, past and present, throughout their lives, with whatever problems they may have.
We can probably help, or we'll know someone who can. So just get in touch. Discover tools, services, news and more www.cfcs.org.uk

Civil Service
Choir

Directed by Stephen Hall, OBE



Celebrate Christmas again with...

The Civil
Service Choir

"A Christmas Tapestry" Concert

Thursday 18th December, 7:30pm

St Stephen's Church, Rochester Row, Westminster

Christmas through the ages, performed by our chamber choir

Tickets available at civilservicechoir.org.uk



Victoria – O magnum mysterium
Charpentier – Messe de minuit pour Noël
Poulenc – Videntes stellam
Corp – A Christmas Mass



Congregational carol. Please stand.

O COME ALL YE FAITHFUL

*Translated by F. Oakley and W. T. Brook (and others)
Composer unknown (probably 18th century), arranged by David Willcocks*

1. O come, all ye faithful,
Joyful and triumphant!
O come ye, O come ye to Bethlehem;
Come and behold him
Born the King of Angels:

2. God of God,
Light of Light,
Lo, he abhors not the Virgin's womb;
Very God,
Begotten, not created: **Chorus**

Please sit.

Choir: Sans Day carol

Traditional Cornish carol, arranged by John Rutter

Please stand for the Blessing.

Congregational carol. Please remain standing.

HARK THE HERALD ANGELS SING

*Words by C. Wesley, T. Whitfield, M. Madan (and others)
Music by Felix Mendelssohn, descant by David Willcocks*

1. Hark the Herald angels sing
"Glory to the new born King,
Peace on earth, and mercy mild,
God and sinners reconciled!"
Joyful all ye nations rise,
Join the triumph of the skies;
With th'angelic host proclaim,
"Christ is born in Bethlehem!"
Hark! the herald angels sing,
"Glory to the new born King!"

Chorus: *O come, let us adore Him,
O come, let us adore Him,
O come, let us adore Him,
Christ the Lord.*

3. Sing, choirs of angels,
Sing in exultation,
Sing, all ye citizens of Heaven above!
Glory to God in the highest: **Chorus**

3. Hail the Heaven-born Prince of Peace!
Hail the Sun of Righteousness!
Light and life to all He brings,
Risen with healing in His wings.
Mild He lays His glory by,
Born that man no more may die,
Born to raise the sons of earth,
Born to give us second birth.
Hark! the herald angels sing,
"Glory to the new born King!"

Congregational carol. Please stand.

ONCE IN ROYAL DAVID'S CITY

*Words by C. F. Alexander
Music by H. J. Gauntlett, harmonised by A. H. Mann, descant by David Willcocks*

Solo:

1. Once in Royal David's city
Stood a lowly cattle shed.
Where a mother laid her baby
In a manger for His bed.
Mary was that mother mild,
Jesus Christ her little child.

Choir only:

2. He came down to earth from Heaven,
Who is God and Lord of all.
And his shelter was a stable,
And his cradle was a stall.
With the poor and mean and lowly,
Lived on earth our Saviour Holy.

Please sit.

The lighting of the advent candle

All sing the chorus:

Christmas is coming, the Church is glad to sing
And let the advent candles brightly burn in a ring.

Bidding Prayer and the Lord's Prayer

Our Father, who art in heaven, hallowed be thy name, thy kingdom come, thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread, and forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive those who trespass against us. Lead us not into temptation but deliver us from evil. For thine is the kingdom, the power and the glory, for ever and ever. Amen.

Reading: The birth of Jesus St Luke Chapter 2

AND it came to pass in those days, that there went out a decree from Cæsar Augustus, that all the world should be taxed. And all went to be taxed, everyone into his own city. And Joseph also went up from Galilee, out of the city of Nazareth, into Judæa, unto the city of David, which is called Bethlehem; (because he was of the house and lineage of David) to be taxed with Mary his espoused wife, being great with child. And so it was, that, while they were there, the days were accomplished that she should be delivered. And she brought forth her firstborn son, and wrapped him in swaddling clothes, and laid him in a manger; because there was no room for them in the inn. This is the word of the Lord.

All: Thanks be to God.

Congregational carol. Please stand.

O LITTLE TOWN OF BETHLEHEM

Words by Bishop Phillips Brooks

English traditional tune, arranged by Ralph Vaughan-Williams, descant by Thomas Armstrong

1. O little town of Bethlehem,
How still we see thee lie!
Above thy deep and dreamless sleep
The silent stars go by.
Yet in the dark street shineth
The everlasting Light;
The hopes and fears of all the years
Are met in thee tonight.

2. O morning stars, together
Proclaim the holy birth;
And praises sing to God, the King
And peace to men on earth;
For Christ is born of Mary;
And gathered all above,
While mortals sleep, the angels keep
Their watch of wondering love.

3. How silently, how silently,
The wondrous Gift is given!
So God imparts to human hearts
The blessings of His Heaven.
No ear may hear His coming;
But in this world of sin,
Where meek souls will receive Him, still
The dear Christ enters in.

4. O holy Child of Bethlehem,
Descend to us, we pray;
Cast out our sin and enter in,
Be born in us today.
We hear the Christmas angels
The great glad tidings tell:
O come to us, abide with us,
Our Lord Emmanuel!

Please sit.

Choir: The Angel Gabriel

Words from a Basque carol, translated by Sabine Baring-Gould

Traditional Basque melody, arranged by Edgar Pettman

Reading: The shepherds go to the manger. St Luke Chapter 2

AND there were in the same country shepherds abiding in the field, keeping watch over their flock by night. And, lo, the angel of the Lord came upon them, and the glory of the Lord shone round about them: and they were sore afraid. And the angel said unto them, Fear not: for, behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy, which shall be to all people. For unto you is born this day in the city of David a Saviour, which is Christ the Lord. And this shall be a sign unto you; Ye shall find the babe wrapped in swaddling clothes, lying in a manger. And suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host praising God, and saying, Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good will toward men. This is the word of the Lord.

All: Thanks be to God

Congregational carol. Please stand.

WHILE SHEPHERDS WATCHED

Words by Nahum Tate

English hymn tune, arranged by Thomas Clark

1. While shepherds watched their flocks by
night,
All seated on the ground,
The angel of the Lord came down,
And glory shone around.

2. "Fear not," said he (for mighty dread
Had seized their troubled mind);
"Glad tidings of great joy I bring
To you and all mankind.

3. "To you in David's town this day
Is born of David's line
A Saviour, who is Christ the Lord;
And this shall be the sign:

4. "The heavenly Babe you there shall
find
To human view displayed,
All meanly wrapped in swathing bands,
And in a manger laid."

5. Thus spake the Seraph; and forthwith
Appeared a shining throng
Of angels praising God, who thus
Addressed their joyful song:

6. "All glory be to God on high,
And to the earth be peace;
Good-will henceforth from heaven to
men; Begin and never cease."

Please sit.

Choir: The Shepherds' Farewell

Words by Paul England

Music by Hector Berlioz

Please stand.

Reading: St John unfolds the great mystery of the Incarnation. St John Chapter 1

IN the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. The same was in the beginning with God. All things were made by him; and without him was not anything made that was made. In him was life; and the life was the light of men. And the light shineth in darkness; and the darkness comprehended it not. There was a man sent from God, whose name was John. The same came for a witness, to bear witness of the light, that all men through him might believe. He was not that light but was sent to bear witness of that light. That was the true light, which lighteth every man that cometh into the world. He was in the world, and the world was made by him, and the world knew him not. He came unto his own, and his own received him not. But as many as received him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on his name: who were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God. And the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us, and we beheld his glory, the glory as of the only be-gotten of the Father, full of grace and truth. This is the word of the Lord.

All: Thanks be to God.

Please sit.

Choir: Nativity carol

Words and music by John Rutter

Address: The Reverend Graham Buckle