

EVENING PRAYER – VESPERS

Boe Memorial Chapel — Sunday, October 6th

EVERLASTING

St. Olaf Chapel Choir — Christopher Aspaas '95, *conductor*

Notes from the conductor

Our theme this evening is inspired by Kenneth Jennings' iconic choral work, *The Lord is the Everlasting God*. His provocative setting of Isaiah generates images and feelings of timelessness, presence, assurance, and promise. Dr. Jennings' composition (a favorite of mine and of many) stirred me to ponder God's constancy through our lives, and the different ways in which we interact with the Divine and the world. As our St. Olaf community has been confronted with prolific losses in recent days and months, my hope is that our journey this evening can be one of comfort and hope.

We begin with a setting of words by Rabindranath Tagore, a Bengali poet whose work won him the Nobel Prize for literature in 1913 — the first non-European to do so. His words tell a story about a novice singer that is noticed by someone of great importance, even though there are many “masters” around and “songs are sung there at all hours.” Craig Hella Johnson's setting of these words captures their mystery, wonder and timelessness.

As we enter the liturgy of Vespers, we are confronted with more timeless imagery: the first light of creation; sun, moon and stars set in the heavens; the pillar of fire guiding the people Israel through the desert; and, the light of Christ as “a light to our path.” We share in the singing of Psalm 141, “Let my prayer rise before you as incense,” a song of forgiveness and protection to enter the evening hours.

The *Pilgrim's Hymn* of Minnesota composer, Stephen Paulus, is one of his most well known works for a cappella choir. This almost hymn-like setting of poetry by Michael Dennis Browne captures the simplicity and understanding of unceasing love, trust, and endless grace “beyond all mortal dream.” On July 4th of this year, Stephen suffered a stroke that has left him in an unresponsive state, and I chose this piece as a prayer for him and his family in a time of great unknowing.

Felix Mendelssohn-Bartholdy (1809-1847) made significant contributions to music used in worship, including his setting of Psalm 43, *Richte mich, Gott* written for Passion Sunday, 1844. The work bears several striking similarities to the motets of J. S. Bach: written for double chorus; there are extreme contrasts of texture, tempo, and affect between different sections of text — you will hear significant changes between the strong opening section in 4/4, the dance-like second section, the strong and pleading “Was betrübst du dich meine Seele,” and the final fanfare, “Harre auf Gott;” and, perhaps most importantly, this piece delivers a message of hope and joy despite rather dark circumstance. Mendelssohn, like Bach, finds a way to raise our spirits, even when we face separation and sorrow.

The Lord is the Everlasting God was written in honor of Weston Noble's fifty years of service to Luther College. Its mysterious and challenging beginning sounds like echoes of Isaiah being read and prayed over the centuries, with each voice part expressing a line of text before weaving itself back into the fabric of sound. The first section stunningly resolves before moving into the promise, “The Lord is the everlasting God ...” Finally, after strong words of reassurance, the piece ends as it begins: with the question, “Have you not known?” inviting us to understand what we have always known, but often forget in the flurry of life.

Our final anthem, *Softly and Tenderly*, is an arrangement of the beloved hymn by Will L. Thompson published in 1880. This setting uses the first and last verse of this hymn, capturing the image of Jesus “waiting and watching” in the now, and the “wonderful love He has promised,” from the past and for the future. The words, “Come home, come home,” are an invitation for us all, even as we depart in peace, to open our hearts and be welcomed again and again to our everlasting home in God's love.

† Indicates stand if you are able

CHORAL INTROIT *Gitanjali Chants*

Craig Hella Johnson

– Rabindrinath Tagore

† SERVICE OF LIGHT

Je-sus Christ is the Light of the world, the light no darkness can over-come.

Stay with us, Lord, for it is eve-ning, and the day is almost o-ver.

Let your light scat-ter the dark-ness, and illumine your Church.

† HYMN OF LIGHT

† THANKSGIVING FOR LIGHT

The Lord be with you. And al - so with you.

Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.

It is right to give our thanks and praise.

We give you thanks, O God, for in the beginning you called light into being ... Now and forever, AMEN.

please be seated

Both now and forever

REFLECTION A Pilgrimage

ANTHEM *Pilgrim's Hymn*

Stephen Paulus

– Michael Dennis Browne

† **HYMN** ELW 779 Amazing Grace

NEW BRITAIN

REFLECTION The Present Pilgrimage

ANTHEM *Richte mich, Gott*

*Richte mich, Gott, und führe meine Sache
wider das unheilige Volk,
und errette mich von den falschen und bösen Leuten.
Denn du bist der Gott meiner Stärke,
warum verstößest du mich?
Warum lässest du mich so traurig geh'n,
wenn mein Feind mich drängt?
Sende dein Licht und deine Wahrheit,
daß sie mich leiten zu deinem heiligen Berge,
und zu deiner Wohnung,
daß ich hineingehe zum Altar Gottes, zu dem Gott,
der meine Freude und Wonne ist,
und dir, Gott, auf der Harfe danke, mein Gott.
Was betrübst du dich, meine Seele,
und bist so unruhig in mir?
Harre auf Gott! denn ich werde ihm noch danken,
daß er meines Angesichts Hülfe, und mein Gott ist.*

Felix Mendelssohn-Bartholdy

Vindicate me, O Lord, and plead my cause
against an ungodly nation,
deliver me from the deceitful and unjust people.
For thou art the God of my strength,
why dost thou cast me off?
Why go I mourning
because of the oppression of the enemy?
O send out thy light and thy truth,
let them lead me, let them bring me unto thy holy hill
and to thy tabernacles,
then I will go unto the altar of God, unto God,
my exceeding joy;
upon the harp will I praise thee, O God my God.
Why art thou cast down, O my soul,
and why art thou disquieted within me?
Hope in God; for I shall yet praise him,
who is the health of my countenance, and my God.

– Psalm 43

† **GOSPEL CANTICLE** ELW pp. 314-315 sung by All

please be seated

Unison 1. Chil - dren of the heav'n - ly Fa - ther Safe - ly in his bo - som gath - er;
Harmony 2. God his own doth tend and nour - ish, In his ho - ly courts they flour - ish.
Harmony 3. Nei - ther life nor death shall ev - er From the Lord his chil - dren sev - er;
Harmony 4. Though he giv - eth or he tak - eth, God his chil - dren ne'er for - sak - eth;

Nest ling bird or star - in heav - en Such a ref - uge ne'er was giv - en.
 From all e - vil things he spares them, In his might - y arms he bears them.
 Un to them his grace he show - eth, And their sor - rows all he know - eth.
 His the lov - ing pur - pose sole - ly To pre - serve them pure and ho - ly.

Everlasting God

REFLECTION A Glimpse of God

ANTHEM *The Lord is the Everlasting God*

Kenneth Jennings

Have you not known? Have you not heard? Have you not seen?

Has it not been told you from the beginning?

Have you not understood from the foundations of the earth?

It is God who sits above the circle of the earth, who stretches out the heavens like a curtain,
 and spreads them like a tent to live in.

To whom then will you compare me, or who is my equal? Says the Holy One.

Lift up your eyes and see: Who created these?

God who brings out their host and numbers them, calling them all by name:

Not one is missing.

Have you not known? Have you not heard?

... The Lord is the everlasting God, the Creator of the ends of the earth,
 who does not faint or grow weary; whose understanding is unsearchable.

God gives power to the faint, and strengthens the powerless.

Even youths will faint and be weary, and the young will fall exhausted;

But those who wait for the Lord shall renew their strength,

they shall mount up with wings like eagles, they shall run and not be weary, they shall walk and not faint.

Have you not heard? Have you not known?

— *Isaiah 40:21-22, 25-26, 28-31 alt.*

† THE LORD'S PRAYER

Our Father in heaven,
hallowed be your name,
your kingdom come,
your will be done,
on earth as in heaven.
Give us today our daily bread.
Forgive us our sins
as we forgive those who sin against us.
Save us from the time of trial
and deliver us from evil.
For the kingdom, the power, and the glory are yours,
now and forever. Amen.

† BLESSING ELW page 319

† HYMN ELW 629 Abide With Me

EVENTIDE

READING The Hope of Tomorrow

ANTHEM *Softly and Tenderly*

Softly and tenderly Jesus is calling,
Calling for you and for me;
See, on the portals He's waiting and watching,
Watching for you and for me.

Will L. Thompson, arr. Christopher Aspaas

O for the wonderful love He has promised,
Promised for you and for me!
Though we have sinned, He has mercy and pardon,
Pardon for you and for me.

Come home, come home,
You who are weary, come home;
Earnestly, tenderly, Jesus is calling,
Calling, O sinner, come home!
– Will L. Thomson

Leaders in the Liturgy

Organist – Cathy Rodland; **Cantors, Readers, Candle Bearers** – members of
the St. Olaf Chapel Choir, Christopher Aspaas, *conductor*

Acknowledgments

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Vespers

Vespers, or evening prayer, has been a part of Christian worship for centuries. In 525 A.D. Saint Benedict established his Rule, which included the hours of the Divine Office, and specifically the order of the Divine Office at Night. This service, also known as *lucernarium*, was marked by the ceremonial lighting of lamps.

In the 1549 edition of the Book of Common Prayer, Lauds (Morning Prayer) and Evensong (Evening Prayer) share the same liturgical structure of psalms, scripture and prayer with the main variants being the proper texts and canticles. No formal provision for the anthem was included until the 1662 revision of the Book of Common Prayer, confirming the earlier practice of singing anthems or antiphons at the end of the Office.

The tradition of Vespers/Evensong is alive and well in England and across the United States. This evening's liturgy intends to combine the musical vibrancy of that tradition with the contributions of our modern Lutheran practice. With these intentions, and guided by the words of Saint Benedict, "Let us stand to sing the psalms in such a way that our minds are in harmony with our voices."

The St. Olaf Chapel Choir

Founded by Oscar Overby as the St. Olaf Church Choir in 1925, the St. Olaf Chapel Choir began as one of two mixed choruses at St. Olaf College following the dissolution of the Choral Union. The Choir led worship weekly at one of the two Sunday services at St. John's Lutheran Church in Northfield, and participated in many of the on-campus music festivals held every year in addition to concerts of choral/orchestral masterworks. Sigurd Fredrickson, Miles Johnson, Kenneth Jennings, and Robert Scholz all led the ensemble before the arrival of its current conductor, Christopher Aspaas, in 2005.

Specializing in the performance of oratorio and larger works, the St. Olaf Chapel Choir frequently collaborates with the St. Olaf Orchestra as well as instrumentalists and soloists from the St. Olaf community. Recent repertoire includes the Fauré *Requiem*, Louis Vierne's *Messe Solennelle*, W. A. Mozart's *Te Deum*, Samuel Barber's *Prayers of Kierkegaard*, Bernstein's *Chichester Psalms*, the Howells *Requiem*, Mendelssohn's *Psalm 42* and the grand oratorio, *Elijah*, Johannes Brahms' *Ein Deutsches Requiem*, and most recently, Benjamin Britten's *War Requiem*.

Each fall, the Chapel Choir leads a service of Vespers, sometimes in collaboration with high school and community ensembles like the Northfield Youth Choirs Chorale and Troubadours, Elements of Sound from Shattuck-St. Mary's, and the Northfield High School Concert Choir. The St. Olaf Chapel Choir performs on the annual St. Olaf Christmas Festival, and has been broadcast nationally in movie theaters, television and radio. Additionally, the Chapel Choir leads worship for the St. Olaf Student Congregation several Sundays per semester.

ST. OLAF CHAPEL CHOIR

CHRISTOPHER ASPAAS, CONDUCTOR

SOPRANO I

Christina Andeweg, *Urbandale, Iowa*
Amanda Disney, *Billings, Mont.*
Gillian Koch, *Valrico, Fla.*
Jesse Landa, *Excelsior, Minn.*
Kristin Lange, *Topeka, Kan.*
Laura Newton, *Plattsmouth, Neb.*
Jaynee Purchase, *North Richland Hills, Texas*
Leah Voigt, *Plymouth, Minn.*
Sarah Wineman, *St. Paul, Minn.*
Emma Youngquist, *Champlin, Minn.*

SOPRANO II

Sophia Butler, *Burnsville, Minn.*
Eva Carlson, *Pendleton, Ore.*
Ellen Christensen, *Minneapolis, Minn.*
Laurelle Foster, *Golden, Colo.*
• Hannah Hanssen, *Burnsville, Minn.*
Rachel Hoverstad, *Waseca, Minn.*
Katie Miller, *Plymouth, Minn.*
Stina Nesbit, *Northfield, Minn.*
Hannah Olson, *Newark, Ohio*
Kailee Oram, *Lakeville, Minn.*
Helen Paolo, *Lenexa, Kan.*
Cassie Paulsen, *Eden Prairie, Minn.*
• Johnna Purchase, *North Richland Hills, Texas*
Natalia Romero, *Katy Texas*
Greta Shull, *Washington, Ill.*

ALTO I

Shannon Cordes, *Roseville, Minn.*
B Crittenden, *Dekalb, Ill.*
Claire Cummins, *Stillwater, Minn.*
Kelsey Fleming, *Austin, Minn.*
Rebecca Frank, *Seattle, Wash.*
Emily Haller, *Centennial, Colo.*
Katherine Kennedy, *Vienna, Va.*
Sarah Kretschmann, *Verona, Wis.*
Nicole Newell, *Clive, Iowa*
Bridget Novak, *Iowa City, Iowa*
Ariane Olsen, *Fort Collins, Colo.*
Christa Schmidt, *Farmers Branch, Texas*
Madeleine Stephens, *Gig Harbor, Wash.*

ALTO II

Rebecca Cooper, *Florence, Mass.*
Abigail Enockson, *Fargo, N.D.*
Halle Foss, *Plymouth, Minn.*
Xuan He, *Shenzhen, China*
Katie Hindman, *Pullman, Wash.*
Anna Horner, *Wichita, Kan.*
Annie Ketcham, *Red Wing, Minn.*
Anna Krainc, *Downers Grove, Ill.*
Emily Nelson, *Portland, Ore.*
Jessie Price, *Murrieta, Calif.*
Hannah Sorrells, *Weaverville, N.C.*
Amy Turner, *Plymouth, Minn.*
Annie Weinheimer, *River Forest, Ill.*
Olivia Wiedenhoft, *Beaver Dam, Wis.*

TENOR I

Nick Bohrer, *Eau Claire, Wis.*
Daniel Bynum, *Salt Lake City, Utah*
Thomas Case, *Philadelphia, Pa.*
• David Gottfried, *Roseville, Minn.*
Carl Graefe, *Bemidji, Minn.*
• Gregory Hilleren, *Willmar, Minn.*
Tyler Johnston, *Long Lake, Minn.*
Mac Leydon, *Highlands Ranch, Colo.*
Andy Olson, *Minneapolis, Minn.*
Memo Rodriguez, *McAllen, Texas*
Erik Springer, *Golden Valley, Minn.*

TENOR II

Josh Blauert, *Sidney, Neb.*
John Bruer, *Wayzata, Minn.*
Andy Curtis, *Springfield, Mo.*
Drew Dittmann, *Stillwater, Minn.*
Andrew Hoisington, *Bloomfield Hills, Mich.*
Aaron Kohrs, *Northbrook, Ill.*
Eric Lander, *Tulsa, Okla.*
Zach Rice, *North Oaks, Minn.*
Thomas Scott, *La Grange, Ill.*
Jon Socha, *St. Paul, Minn.*
Jocque Warner, *New Richmond, Wis.*
Zach Wood, *Duluth, Minn.*

BARITONE

David Anderson, *Oak Park, Ill.*
Brandon Berger, *Worthington, Minn.*
Eric Broker, *St. Cloud, Minn.*
Alex Gerleman, *Marion, Iowa*
Alex Girardot, *Washington, D.C.*
William Haines, *Golden Valley, Minn.*
Spencer Hodgson, *Anchorage, Alaska*
Lucas Judson, *Beaverton, Ore.*
Nick Kovach, *Zionsville, Ind.*
Traveon Rogers, *Houston, Texas*
Calvin Streit, *Oak Park, Ill.*
Christopher Zander, *Novato, Calif.*

BASS

Sam Benson, *Willmar, Minn.*
Sam Bosak, *White Bear Lake, Minn.*
Philip Claussen, *Apple Valley, Minn.*
Jon Erik Haines, *Golden Valley, Minn.*
Matt Harikian, *Fresno, Calif.*
Alex Kirstukas, *Ames, Iowa*
Robert Lehmann, *Rapid City, S.D.*
Josh Martin, *Decorah, Iowa*
Patrick McWilliams, *Northfield, Minn.*
Zachary Meer, *Albany, Minn.*
David Niccolai, *Burlington, Wis.*
Sam Peters, *Eau Claire, Wis.*
Cole Swanson, *Sioux Falls, S.D.*
Matthew Terhaar, *Minneapolis, Minn.*

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