

Capel y Boro
Sun 29 Nov 2020 11am

The Lord of the Dance
A celebration of
movement and faith

Advent Sunday Service
A time to prepare,
a time to dance



Opening music:
Alvin Ailey
Excerpts, Revelations
Alvin Ailey American Dance
Theater

Intrada

Ecclesiastes 3: 1-4

Malachi 4: 2-3

The Lord of the Dance
(Sydney Carter)

Salm 30

Psalm 149

Alvin Ailey
Revelations

**“Rock’a my soul to the bosom
of Abraham”**
Alvin Ailey American Dance
Theater

2 Samuel 6: 12-17

C S Lewis
Dance and the Holy Trinity

Eric Jones
(words by W Rhys Nicholas)
Fe Gawn Ddawnsio
Côr Llanddarog

A talk on dance and the
Advent carol by John Jones:

Film Excerpt, *Elizabeth*
(Shekhar Kapur, 1998)

John Gardner
*Tomorrow shall be
my dancing day*
Choir of King's College,
Cambridge/Sir Stephen Cleobury

John Rutter
*Tomorrow shall be
my dancing day*
Winchester Cathedral Choir

Traditional
The First Nowell

T S Eliot
Four Quartets
Excerpt, “Burnt Norton” I
Read by Kathleen Chalfant and
filmed in Burnt Norton,
Gloucestershire

T S Eliot
Four Quartets
A ballet (2018) – introductory film

T S Eliot
Excerpt, *Four Quartets*
A ballet
from “Burnt Norton” II
Pam Tanowitz (Choreography)
Kaija Saariaho (Music); Brice
Marden (Images); Kathleen
Chalfant (reader); Dancers; The
Knights; The Bard Fisher Center

T S Eliot
Four Quartets
Excerpts, “Burnt Norton,”
II, V

© Estate of T S Eliot, Faber and Faber

Gabriel Fauré
Requiem
“Pie Jesu”
Sir Kenneth Macmillan
Requiem (choreography)

Leanne Benjamin (dancer);
Laura Wright (soprano);
Orchestra of the Royal Ballet,
Covent Garden

Luke 1: 26-38

*The angel Gabriel prepares
Mary for the birth of Jesus:*

An Advent message from
Parch Peter Dewi Richards

Lord's Prayer/Gweddi
Arglwydd

Os gwelir fi, bechadur
(Harri Siôn, Dafydd Morris,
Hannah Joshua, *Clawdd Madog*)

Blessing

Closing music:
Middlebrooks and Belland
Arranged, Alwyn Humphreys
*What would I do
without my music*
Monmouth Male Voice Choir



Opening music:

Alvin Ailey

Excerpts, Revelations

Alvin Ailey American Dance Theater



<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=tNqaixKbrjs>

Intrada

Ysbryd y tragwyddol Dduw,
disgyn arnom ni; Ysbryd y
tragwyddol Dduw, disgyn arnom
ni: plyg ni, trin ni, golch ni, cod ni:
Ysbryd y tragwyddol Dduw,
disgyn arnom ni.

*Spirit of the eternal God, descend
upon us; Spirit of the eternal God,
descend upon us:*

*fold us, treat us, wash us, raise us:
Spirit of the eternal God, descend
upon us.*

Good morning and welcome

to our service from Capel y Boro for this first Sunday in Advent, a time where we traditional prepare, in the same way the angel Gabriel prepared Mary for the birth of Jesus. And this is the start of our celebrations towards Christmas. How can we being to celebrate such a momentous occasion? We can rejoice in words and in song and in paintings and altarpieces in churches and in the Welsh chapel tradition we are very familiar with words, music, singing and

hymns, all inextricably linked with our expressions of faith.

But what about dance? Of all the art forms there has been, perhaps, an uneasy relationship between this most physical of the creative forms with our churches. We are going to see a bit later the Pie Jesu from Faure's beautiful *Requiem* danced in a ballet created in the 1970s by Sir Kenneth MacMillan (1929 –1992) who wanted to set a requiem to dance in memory of his friend the choreographer John Cranko who had recently died. But when he approached the Royal Ballet there were those who were against the staging of a ballet at Covent Garden with a religious text as its theme. So MacMillan had the work premiered abroad. But of course when it did eventually come to the Royal Opera House *Requiem* was widely acclaimed as one of MacMillan's great ballets.

If you look at the Bible you could argue that there is a deep spiritual expression of faith, of supplication and of prayer, that is possible in movement and dance. John Jones in his revelatory talk later will have some surprises in store for us on the dance roots of some of our most beloved Advent carols.



American choreographer Alvin Ailey (1931-89)

We have just seen the wonderful Alvin Ailey American Dance

Theatre company perform their signature work premiered in 1960 of dances to spirituals, *Revelations*, which they have performed around the world including visits last year to Cardiff and London.

You can see from their performance the way whole bodies are expressed in *giving* when we dance, Is it any wonder that the Bible has a few potent stories of people dancing to show their love, faith and devotion to God? And we will hear some of those passages today starting with an excerpt from a much-loved passage from Ecclesiastes.

Ecclesiastes 3: 1-4

To every thing there is a season, and a time to every purpose under the heaven:
A time to be born, and a time to die; a time to plant, and a time to pluck up that which is planted; A time to kill, and a time to heal; a time to break down, and a time to build up; A time to weep, and a time to laugh; a time to mourn, and a time to dance.

Malachi 4: 2-3

See, the day is coming, burning like an oven, when all the arrogant and all evildoers will be stubble; the day that comes shall burn them up, says the Lord of hosts, so that it will leave them neither root nor branch. But for you who revere my name the sun of righteousness shall rise, with healing in its wings. You shall go

out leaping like calves from the stall. And you shall tread down the wicked, for they will be ashes under the soles of your feet, on the day when I act, says the Lord of hosts.

I danced in the morning

When the world was begun,
And I danced in the moon
And the stars and the sun,
And I came down from heaven
And I danced on the earth,
At Bethlehem
I had my birth.

Dance, then, wherever you may
be,
I am the Lord of the Dance, said
he,
And I'll lead you all, wherever
you may be,
And I'll lead you all in the Dance,
said he

I danced for the scribe
And the pharisee,
But they would not dance
And they wouldn't follow me.
I danced for the fishermen,
For James and John
They came with me
And the Dance went on.

Dance, then, wherever you may
be,
I am the Lord of the Dance, said
he,
And I'll lead you all, wherever
you may be,
And I'll lead you all in the Dance,
said he

I danced on the Sabbath
And I cured the lame;
The holy people
Said it was a shame.
They whipped and they stripped
And they hung me on high,

And they left me there
On a Cross to die.
Dance, then, wherever you may
be,
I am the Lord of the Dance, said
he,
And I'll lead you all, wherever
you may be,
And I'll lead you all in the Dance,
said he
I danced on a Friday
When the sky turned black
It's hard to dance
With the devil on your back.
They buried my body
And they thought I'd gone,
But I am the Dance,
And I still go on.

Dance, then, wherever you may
be,
I am the Lord of the Dance, said
he,
And I'll lead you all, wherever
you may be,
And I'll lead you all in the Dance,
said he

They cut me down
And I leapt up high;
I am the life
That'll never, never die;
I'll live in you
If you'll live in me -
I am the Lord
Of the Dance, said he.



Sydney Carter, writer of *Lord of the Dance*

"Lord of the Dance" is a hymn written in 1963 by English songwriter Sydney Carter (1915–2004.) The melody is from the American Shaker song "Simple Gifts" famous set in the music of American composer Aaron Copland. The song follows the idea of the traditional English carol "Tomorrow Shall Be My Dancing Day", which John Jones will include in his talk later. It tells the gospel story in the first-person voice of Jesus of Nazareth with the device of portraying Jesus' life and mission as a dance.

Salm 30

Dyrchafaf di, O Arglwydd, am iti
fy ngwaredu,
a pheidio â gadael i'm gelynion
orfoleddu o'm hachos.
O Arglwydd fy Nuw, gwaeddais
arnat, a bu iti fy iacháu.
O Arglwydd, dygaist fi i fyny o
Sheol,
a'm hadfywio o blith y rhai sy'n
disgyn i'r pwll.

Canwch fawl i'r Arglwydd, ei
ffyddloniaid,
a rhowch ddiolch i'w enw
sanctaid.
Am ennyd y mae ei ddig, ond ei
ffafr am oes;
os erys dagrau gyda'r hwyr, daw
llawenydd yn y bore.

Yn fy hawddfyd fe ddywedwn,
"Ni'm symudir byth."
Yn dy ffafr, Arglwydd, gosodaist
fi ar fynydd cadarn,
ond pan guddiaist dy wyneb,
brawychwyd fi.
Gelwais arnat ti, Arglwydd,
ac ymbiliais ar fy Arglwydd am
drugaredd:

"Pa les a geir o'm marw os
disgynnaf i'r pwll?
A fydd y llwch yn dy foli ac yn
cyhoeddi dy wirionedd?
Gwrando, Arglwydd , a bydd
drugarog wrthyf;
Arglwydd , bydd yn gynorthwywr
i mi."

Yr wyt wedi troi fy ngalar yn
ddawns,
wedi datod fy sachliain a'm
gwisgo â llawenydd,
er mwyn imi dy foliannu'n ddi-
baid.

O Arglwydd fy Nuw, diolchaf i ti
hyd byth!

*I will extol you, O Lord, for you have
drawn me up,
and did not let my foes rejoice over
me.*

*O Lord my God, I cried to you for
help,
and you have healed me.*

*O Lord, you brought up my soul
from Sheol,
restored me to life from among
those gone down to the Pit.[a]*

*Sing praises to the Lord, O you his
faithful ones,
and give thanks to his holy name.*

*For his anger is but for a moment;
his favour is for a lifetime.
Weeping may linger for the night,
but joy comes with the morning.*

*As for me, I said in my prosperity,
'I shall never be moved.'*

*By your favour, O Lord,
you had established me as a strong
mountain;
you hid your face;
I was dismayed.*

*To you, O Lord, I cried,
and to the Lord I made supplication:*

*"What profit is there in my death,
if I go down to the Pit?
Will the dust praise you?
Will it tell of your faithfulness?*

*Hear, O Lord, and be gracious to
me!
O Lord, be my helper!*

*You have turned my mourning into
dancing;
you have taken off my sackcloth
and clothed me with joy,*

*so that my soul may praise you and
not be silent.
O Lord my God, I will give thanks to
you for ever.*

Psalm 149

Praise the Lord!
Sing to the Lord a new song,
his praise in the assembly of the
faithful.

Let Israel be glad in its Maker;
let the children of Zion rejoice in
their King.

Let them praise his name with
dancing,
making melody to him with
tambourine and lyre.

For the Lord takes pleasure in his
people;
he adorns the humble with
victory.

Let the faithful exult in glory;
let them sing for joy on their
couches.

Let the high praises of God be in
their throats
and two-edged swords in their
hands,

to execute vengeance on the
nations
and punishment on the peoples,

to bind their kings with fetters
and their nobles with chains of
iron,

to execute on them the
judgement decreed.
This is glory for all his faithful
ones.
Praise the Lord!

Alvin Ailey Revelations "Rock'a my soul the bosom of Abraham"

Alvin Ailey American Dance
Theater



<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=RWBel7J4lzs>

2 Samuel 6: 12-17

David Brings the Ark to Jerusalem

It was told King David, 'The Lord
has blessed the household of
Obed-edom and all that belongs
to him, because of the ark of
God.' So David went and brought
up the ark of God from the
house of Obed-edom to the city
of David with rejoicing; and when
those who bore the ark of the
Lord had gone six paces, he
sacrificed an ox and a fatling.

David danced before the Lord with all his might; David was girded with a linen ephod. So David and all the house of Israel brought up the ark of the Lord with shouting, and with the sound of the trumpet.

As the ark of the Lord came into the city of David, Michal daughter of Saul looked out of the window, and saw King David leaping and dancing before the Lord; and she despised him in her heart.

They brought in the ark of the Lord, and set it in its place, inside the tent that David had pitched for it; and David offered burnt-offerings and offerings of well-being before the Lord.

The writer and theologian C S Lewis said: "The most valuable thing the Psalms do for me is to express the same delight in God which made David dance." And so here now to show just how important dance was to C S Lewis in his relationship with God, here are excerpts from Lewis's writings on the Holy Trinity.

C S Lewis ***Dance and the Holy Trinity***



When people say "God is love" they seem not to notice that the words 'God is love' have no real meaning unless God contains at least two persons. If God was a single person, then before the world was made, He was not love. They believe that the loving dynamic activity of love has been going on in God forever. God is a dynamic, pulsating activity, a life, almost a kind of drama. Almost, if you will not think me irreverent, a kind of dance. The union between the Father and the Son is such a live concrete thing that this union itself is also a person. It is as if a sort of communal personality came into existence.

The whole dance or drama or pattern of this three-Personal life is being played out in each one of us: or putting it the other way round, each of us has got to enter that pattern, take his place in that dance. There is no other way to the happiness for which we are made.

Good things as well as bad, you know, are caught by a kind of infection. You want to be warm, you must stand near a fire: if you want to be wet, you must get in the water. If you want joy, power, peace, eternal life, you must get close to, or even into, the thing that has them. They are a great fountain of energy spurting up out of the very centre of reality. If you are close to it, the spray will wet you: if you are not you will remain dry. Once a man is united to God, how could he not live forever? Once separated from God, what can he do but wither and die?

© Estate of C S Lewis, C S Lewis Company

Eric Jones

(words by W Rhys Nicholas)

Fe Gawn Ddawnsio

Côr Llanddarog

"Fe Gawn Ddawnsio" by Eric Jones to words by W Rhys Nicholas is performed by Côr Llanddarog. This joyous composition has a feeling of a dance and sings of praising and worshipping the Saviour.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=A4eXEBNuawg>

A talk on dance and the Advent carol by John Jones:

Today I am going to give you something of a music lesson. But don't worry, it isn't going to take long.

The church has always had a bit of a problem with dancing. Something associated with the fair and carefree living.

Consider this:

"Dancing is a horrible vice", said Philip Stubbes, an Elizabethan pamphleteer and poet back in 1583. In *The Anatomie of Abuses*, he railed against the "kissing and bussing, smooching and slabbering; what filthy groping and unclean handling is not practised everywhere in these dances. For dancing provoketh lust and the fires of lust." He certainly didn't hold back. Stubbes lived at the time of Shakespeare and Elizabeth I, a Protestant at a time of flux who published a number of semi-devotional works of a Puritan nature.

Here's a short clip from the film, *Elizabeth* to illustrate what I mean:

Film excerpt, *Elizabeth*
(Shekhar Kapur, 1998)



Cate Blanchett as Elizabeth I and Joseph Fiennes as Dudley in the film *Elizabeth*

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=nx002D9N6qU>

I'm beginning to see what Stubbes meant. Lewd, that's what it is.

Yet, dancing was a common part of worship from the earliest times, as a non-verbal expression of devotion and praise. There are references to dancing in the Old Testament for instance, King David dancing in front of the Ark of the Covenant in the Book of Samuel. Yet, there were also Christian prohibitions, citing the connection with paganism.

Nowhere is the influence of the dance more prominent than in the works of JS Bach, surprisingly. Having been a part of music making for centuries, dance rhythms became a natural part of Bach's style and influences, bouncing rhythms and so on, from Gavottes to Sarabandes and Minuets.

And there are a number of hymns that reference dance, notably *Lord of the Dance* and *Tomorrow shall be my dancing day*.

There's a popular version of this written for St. Paul's Girls School in Hammersmith by its once Director of Music, John Gardner, also by another St. Paul's Director of Music, Gustav Holst, and also one by Stravinsky. But here is John Gardner's wonderful setting:

John Gardner
Tomorrow shall be my dancing day

Choir of King's College,
Cambridge/Sir Stephen Cleobury
(2007)

*Tomorrow shall be my dancing day;
I would my true love did so chance
To see the legend of my play,
To call my true love to my dance;*

*Chorus (sung after each verse):
Sing, oh! my love, oh! my love, my
love, my love,
This have I done for my true love.
Then was I born of a virgin pure,
Of her I took fleshly substance
Thus was I knit to man's nature
To call my true love to my dance.*

*In a manger laid, and wrapped I
was
So very poor, this was my chance
Betwixt an ox and a silly poor ass
To call my true love to my dance.*

*Then afterwards baptized I was;
The Holy Ghost on me did glance,
My Father's voice heard I from
above,
To call my true love to my dance.*

*Into the desert I was led,
Where I fasted without substance;
The Devil bade me make stones my
bread,
To have me break my true love's
dance.*

*The Jews on me they made great
suit,
And with me made great variance,
Because they loved darkness rather
than light,
To call my true love to my dance.*

*For thirty pence Judas me sold,
His covetousness for to advance:
Mark whom I kiss, the same do
hold!
The same is he shall lead the dance.*

*Before Pilate the Jews me brought,
Where Barabbas had deliverance;
They scourged me and set me at
nought,
Judged me to die to lead the dance.*

*Then on the cross hanged I was,
Where a spear my heart did glance;
There issued forth both water and
blood,
To call my true love to my dance.
Then down to hell I took my way
For my true love's deliverance,
And rose again on the third day,
Up to my true love and the dance.*

*Then up to heaven I did ascend,
Where now I dwell in sure
substance
On the right hand of God, that man
May come unto the general dance.*

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=OiNktUBcvNs>

Now here is an interesting thing. *Tomorrow shall be my dancing day* is an old English carol, but is impossible to date for certain but believed perhaps to be 14th century and of Cornish origin. Up to the 19th century, carol singing normally involved visiting people's houses, singing and dancing along the way, and not part common Christian worship.

“To see the legend of my play” hints at origins in the Medieval mystery plays. The verses progress through the story of Jesus told in his own voice, his life repeatedly characterized as a dance. Christ describes his incarnation as a Dancing Day. It’s an exhortation calling people to join him in rapture and celebration.

And here is an arrangement of the traditional tune by John Rutter.

John Rutter
Tomorrow shall be my dancing day

Winchester Cathedral Choir
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=jRitP2EB9QA>

Now here’s the thing ...
(improvised demonstration)

Little would you think that *The First Nowell* was originally a descant sung over the Dancing Day tune. What appears to have happened is that, when carols became increasingly popular in church services throughout the 19th century, Dancing Day, with its problematic content, quickly fell out of fashion and the descant became what we know as *The First Nowell*, first published in 1833 with words by Davies Gilbert, a Cornish engineer and politician.

And let’s not forget that the first service of *Nine Lessons and Carols* took place in Truro Cathedral in 1880. So there was clearly a strong tradition of carols in Cornwall for centuries.

So we’ll sing now *The First Nowell*. You’ll never think about this carol in quite the same way again.

Traditional
The First Nowell

The first Nowell the angel did say
was to certain poor shepherds in fields as they lay;
in fields where they lay keeping their sheep
on a cold winter’s night that was so deep.
Nowell, nowell, nowell, nowell,
born is the King of Israel.

They looked up and saw a star shining in the east beyond them far;
and to the earth it gave great light,
and so it continued both day and night.
Nowell, nowell, nowell, nowell,
born is the King of Israel.

And by the light of that same star three wise men came from country far;
to seek for a king was their intent,
and to follow the star wherever it went.
Nowell, nowell, nowell, nowell,
born is the King of Israel.

This star drew nigh to the north-west:
o’er Bethlehem it took its rest;
and there it did both stop and stay,
right over the place where Jesus lay.
Nowell, nowell, nowell, nowell,
born is the King of Israel.

Then entered in those wise men three,

full reverently upon their knee,
and offered there, in his presence,
their gold and myrrh and frankincense.
Nowell, nowell, nowell, nowell,
born is the King of Israel.

Then let us all with one accord sing praises to our heavenly Lord who hath made heaven and earth of nought,
and with his blood mankind hath bought.
Nowell, nowell, nowell, nowell,
born is the King of Israel.

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/p08mdg2s>

T S Eliot
Four Quartets and dance



T S Eliot and Emily Hale who visited Burnt Norton together. She became an inspiration for the poem and a close friend - they exchanged thousands of letters across the Atlantic during the war

You might not think that one of the most profound, much loved, but arguably abstruse, complex and spiritual works of twentieth-century poetry T S Eliot’s *Four Quartets* would lend itself very easily to a ballet. But a ballet was created in 2018 with an actor narrating the complete cycle of

poems. Aside from the ideas and philosophies Eliot explored in these poems, which were written in the Second World War when Eliot was a volunteer auxiliary firefighter during the blitz by night. These works are incantatory and full of rhythms and throughout he is very interested in dance and movement and the of course the absence of dance and movement, the stillness. And he asks us to really think about that. How still is still and is there not always some movement in the stillness? In a moment we will hear a bit more about how this ballet was put together. But first the actor who was asked to narrate the sequence in the ballet, Kathleen Chalfant, will read from the first part of Eliot's first poem in the cycle of four poems "Burnt Norton." The poem's title refers to the manor house in the Cotswolds whose grounds Eliot visited, or actually trespassed into, with a close friend and possible lover, the American Emily Hale.

The manor's garden served as an important image within the poem. The central discussion within the poem is on the nature of time and salvation. Eliot emphasises the need of the individual to focus on the present moment and to know that there is a universal order. By understanding the nature of time and the order of the universe, mankind is able to recognise God and seek redemption. The poem begins like a lecture or treatise, before it magically changes register and it is though we have all fallen down a rabbit hole like Alice in *Alice in Wonderland* – and

we are somewhere else, joining Eliot and his guest in the grounds of this stately home. The poet opens the *Four Quartets* sequence (opening of "Burnt Norton") by saying:

"Time present and time past
Are both perhaps present in time future,
And time future contained in time past.
If all time is eternally present
All time is unredeemable.
What might have been is an abstraction
Remaining a perpetual possibility
Only in a world of speculation.
What might have been and what has been
Point to one end, which is always present...."

The verse continues in this film with "Footfalls echo in the memory..."

T S Eliot
Four Quartets
Excerpt, "Burnt Norton" I
Read by Kathleen Chalfant and filmed in Burnt Norton, Gloucestershire



Footfalls echo in the memory
Down the passage which we did not take
Towards the door we never opened
Into the rose-garden. My words echo
Thus, in your mind.

But to what purpose
Disturbing the dust on a bowl of rose-leaves
I do not know.

Other echoes
Inhabit the garden. Shall we follow?
Quick, said the bird, find them, find them,
Round the corner. Through the first gate,
Into our first world, shall we follow
The deception of the thrush? Into our first world.
There they were, dignified, invisible,
Moving without pressure, over the dead leaves,
In the autumn heat, through the vibrant air,
And the bird called, in response to
The unheard music hidden in the shrubbery,
And the unseen eyebeam crossed, for the roses
Had the look of flowers that are looked at.
There they were as our guests, accepted and accepting.
So we moved, and they, in a formal pattern,
Along the empty alley, into the box circle,
To look down into the drained pool.
Dry the pool, dry concrete, brown edged,
And the pool was filled with water out of sunlight,
And the lotos rose, quietly, quietly,
The surface glittered out of heart of light,
And they were behind us, reflected in the pool.
Then a cloud passed, and the pool was empty.

Go, said the bird, for the leaves
 were full of children,
 Hidden excitedly, containing
 laughter.
 Go, go, go, said the bird: human
 kind
 Cannot bear very much reality.
 Time past and time future
 What might have been and what
 has been
 Point to one end, which is always
 present.



<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9h9XmxUA0ps>

T S Eliot
Four Quartets

A ballet (2018) – introductory film

And now here is London-born Gideon Lester, from Herne Hill, to talk about the world premiere of the 2018 ballet based on Eliot's "Four Quartets" which he commissioned as artistic Director for Theater and Dance at the Richard B. Fisher Center for the Performing Arts at Bard College, New York.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=kKmQ9pn4fjY>

And so now we will watch a short excerpt from the ballet created in collaboration, as we have heard with other distinguished artists, by the New York-based choreographer Pam Tanowitz, and with the actor we heard earlier Kathleen Chalfant reading to the left of the stage and this is again from "Burnt Norton" the first poem of the cycle:

T S Eliot
Excerpt, Four Quartets
A ballet
 from "Burnt Norton" II

Pam Tanowitz (Choreography)
 Kaija Saariaho (Music); Brice Marden (Images); Kathleen Chalfant (reader); Dancers; The Knights; The Bard Fisher Center



from "Burnt Norton", II:

At the still point of the turning
 world. Neither flesh nor fleshless;
 Neither from nor towards; at the
 still point, there the dance is,
 But neither arrest nor movement.
 And do not call it fixity,
 Where past and future are
 gathered. Neither movement from
 nor towards,
 Neither ascent nor decline. Except
 for the point, the still point,
 There would be no dance,...

<https://www.facebook.com/marq ueetyv/videos/four-quartets-pam-tanowitz/2646437715387930/>

T S Eliot
Four Quartets, Excerpts,
"Burnt Norton," II, V

.... and there is only the dance.

from "Burnt Norton", V:

Words move, music moves
 Only in time; but that which is
 only living
 Can only die. Words, after
 speech, reach

Into the silence. Only by the
 form, the pattern,
 Can words or music reach
 The stillness, as a Chinese jar still
 Moves perpetually in its stillness.
 Not the stillness of the violin,
 while the note lasts,
 Not that only, but the co-
 existence,
 Or say that the end precedes the
 beginning,
 And the end and the beginning
 were always there
 Before the beginning and after
 the end.
 And all is always now.

from "Burnt Norton", II

.... Except for the point, the still
 point,
 There would be no dance, and
 there is only the dance.

© Estate of T S Eliot, Faber and Faber

Gabriel Fauré
Requiem "Pie Jesu"
Sir Kenneth Macmillan
Requiem (choreography)

Leanne Benjamin (dancer); Laura Wright (soprano); Orchestra of the Royal Ballet, Covent Garden



<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=wPorFSEcTAY>

Luke 1: 26-38

The Birth of Jesus Foretold



Sandro Botticelli, *The Cestello Annunciation*, 1489 (Uffizzi, Florence)

In the sixth month the angel Gabriel was sent by God to a town in Galilee called Nazareth, to a virgin engaged to a man whose name was Joseph, of the house of David. The virgin's name was Mary. And he came to her and said, 'Greetings, favoured one! The Lord is with you.' But she was much perplexed by his words and pondered what sort of greeting this might be. The angel said to her, 'Do not be afraid, Mary, for you have found favour with God. And now, you will conceive in your womb and bear a son, and you will name him Jesus. He will be great, and will be called the Son of the Most High, and the Lord God will give to him the throne of his ancestor David. He will reign over the house of Jacob for ever, and of his kingdom there will be no end.' Mary said to the angel, 'How can this be, since I am a virgin?' The angel said to her, 'The Holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the Most

High will overshadow you; therefore the child to be born will be holy; he will be called Son of God. And now, your relative Elizabeth in her old age has also conceived a son; and this is the sixth month for her who was said to be barren. For nothing will be impossible with God.' Then Mary said, 'Here am I, the servant of the Lord; let it be with me according to your word.' Then the angel departed from her.

The angel Gabriel prepares Mary for the birth of Jesus **A message from Parch Peter Dewi Richards followed by the Lord's Prayer/Gweddi arglwydd**

Luke 1: 26-38

*Yr Angel yn paratoi Mair /
The angel Gabriel preparing Mary
for the birth of Jesus*

Rwy am ddechrau y neges y bore yma trwy ofyn cwestiwn Faint ohonoch sydd wedi bod yn gwylio y rhaglen 'I'm a celebrity: Get me out of here'? Wel, fe edrychais ar y rhaglen yr wythnos diwethaf am y tro cynt fa hynny am fod y rhaglenni wedi eu lleoli yng nghastell Gwrych Ger Abergele.

My reaction to the programme was this. 'Rather than me'.

I feel we are these days obsessed by a celebrity culture and this reminds me of something I heard years ago on 'Thought of the Day'. There were no celebrities at that first Christmas and yet Mary, if not having a celebrity status, has become such an

important figure in the Christmas story.

What we find in the verses of my text is the angel Gabriel preparing Mary for her role in the birth of Jesus.

Preparation.

Paratoi a dyna yw ystyr yr Adfent Paratoi argyfer dathlu genedigaeth yr Arglwydd Iesu.

Mae yr Adfent yn ein hatgoffa i roi lle dyladwy i Duw ac i fod yn agored i'r annisgwyl.

Advent reminds us that nothing should come between us from discovering the true message of Christmas. It is being open to God; open to the unexpected as we read in the experience of Mary. Our task as Christians is to think deeply on how to make Christmas more relevant to today's society.

This year Christmas will be different for many of us but the salient truth of that first Christmas is still relevant. The Birth of Jesus, the Immanuel, which means 'God with us' and knowing that God is with us at this worrying time will give us strength and peace to face the unexpected as Mary discovered when the angel spoke to her.

Mary had a central role in that first Christmas and although some might argue that for some Christians she has become a 'celebrity' we should never forget that her experience is to remind us that her message is not routine – it is full of endless surprises.

Mae ganddi neges bwysig sydd yn ein hatgoffa i beidio ei gosod yn uwch na'r Iesu na chwaith ar y llaw arall anghofio mai hi yw Mam yr Iesu ac fe gafodd rol arbennig yng nghynllun Duw.

Llyfr y cefais flas o'i ddarllen peth amser yn ol oedd llyfr a ysgrifennwyd gan Sarah Maitland.

The book written by Sarah Maitland was called *A big enough God* and the central theme is that God is the perfect learner. Not that God is forgetful but that God is always open and receptive to our needs.

Rhai blynyddoedd yn ol ysgrifennodd J B Phillips - hwn yw y gwr a ddywedodd fod darllen y Testament Newydd fel profi fflach o drydan yn ein corff.

The title of his book is **YOUR GOD IS TOO SMALL** and suggests that we want to keep God to our own level. A God who is always predictable and fitting in to our understanding. The Advent experience tells us that is not so. He is the Unexpected God reaching out to us in ways we do not expect.

Mae Duw yn gweithredu trwy'r annisgwyl a dyna paham na fedrwn byth ei gyfyngu i'n deallusrwydd ni. May wrth ein hymyl ac yn ein cyfarfod mewn manau annisgwyl ac mewn ffyrdd annisgwyl. Mae yn adlewyrchu Natur ein Duw.

We know from our own experiences, that is the Immanuel - God with us' and reminds again that God came not only as a frail baby born in a manger but a God

who is involved in the world around us. He meets us where we are.

He meets us where we are on life's journey. What does this mean? It tells us of the opportunities He gives us to participate with Him as we face the challenges of life. Mary's mission is to remind us not only to walk with God but to work with Him and for Him. Our God is involved in the whole process of life and the challenge for us is to see beyond the birth of Christ and see a Saviour who calls on us to use the gifts we have to shape our communities for the better.

Yn yr hanes yn Efengyl Luc darllenwn fod Mair wedi iddi gael y neges gan Gabriel iddi deithio i weld Elisabeth ac aros gyda hi am ychydig fisoedd gan ei bod hithau yn feichiog gyda loan.

Mary stayed for three months or more with Elizabeth and her husband Zachariah. Here we are reminded of hospitality and family life.

Christmas is a time when families come together but let us not forget those people who have no families to share in celebrating Christmas. Jesus can be there with them, through us, giving different ways to make their Christmas a time of Good Will.

This means allowing the young baby Jesus to grow up within us and share Him with others.

Hyn sydd yn ein galluogu i Newid ein bywyd a darganfod y cyfoeth a'r llawnder sydd yng Nghrist.

On Advent Sunday, tradition sees churches lighting a candle the first of those candles that will be lit leading up to Christmas. As I have shared with you this morning about hospitality and community and family life it would nice if we could all light a candle during our service next Sunday to remind ourselves that we are part of the family of Christ and the community of believers throughout the world.

Fel llawer ohonoch chi rwyf wedi gorfod ynysu fy hun yn ystod yr wythnosau diwethaf ac er mwyn treio bod yn bositif yn troi at ambell i lyfr a'i ddarllen.



During the lockdown I began to read again the autobiography of Nelson Mandela. In the book he shares with us his experience of when he decided as President of South Africa to return to Robyn Island where he had had been detained for 27 years of which 18 years were in one cell. As he entered that cell for the first time since his release he lit a candle signifying the need for reconciliation if peace was to happen in his country.

Mewn ffilm sydd yn adlewyrchu gwelwn y pwyslais ar heddwch a rhyddid.

The film on Nelson Mandela was called *The Road to freedom*.

What is advent? It reminds us of the freedom we find in Jesus; freedom from the

darkness of our sins to the light of Christ's suffering to the light of Jesus's sacrifice on the cross.

Pan oeddwn mewn carchar tywyll
du rhoist inni oleuni nefol.
And now we say together in our
Heart language the Lord's Prayer
be that in Welsh or English:

Ein Tad, yr hwn wyt yn y
nefoedd,
sancteiddier dy enw.
Deled dy deyrnas.
Gwneler dy ewyllys,
megis yn y nef, felly ar y ddaear
hefyd.
Dyro i ni heddiw ein bara
beunyddiol.
A maddau i ni ein dyledion,
fel y maddeuwn ninnau i'n
dyledwyr.
Ac nac arwain ni i brofedigaeth,
eithr gwared ni rhag drwg.
Canys eiddot ti yw'r deyrnas, a'r
nerth, a'r gogoniant yn oes
oesoedd.
Amen

Os gwelir fi bechadur,
ryw ddydd ar ben fy nhaith
rhyfeddol fydd y canu
a newydd fydd yr iaith
yn seinio buddugoliaeth
am iachawdwriaeth lawn
heb ofni colli'r frwydyr
na bore na phrynhawn.

Fe genir ac fe genir
yn nhragwyddoldeb maith
os gwelir un pererir
mor llesg ar ben ei daith
a gurwyd mewn tymhestloedd
a olchwyd yn y gwaed
a gannwyd ac a gadwyd
drwy'r iachawdwriaeth rad.

Os dof fi drwy'r anialwch

rhyfeddaf fyth dy ras,
a'm henaid i lonyddwch
'r ôl ganwaith golli'r maes;
y maglau wedi eu torri
a'm traed yn gwbl rydd:
os gweilir fi fel hynny,
tragwyddol foli a fydd.

*If I am seen, a sinner,
Some day at the end of my journey,
Marvellous will be the singing
And new will be the language
Resounding "Victory"
For full salvation
Without fear of losing the battle
In neither morning nor afternoon.*

*It will be sung and it will be sung
Throughout eternity
If one pilgrim is seen
So weary at the end of his journey,
Beaten in tempests,
Washed in the blood
Born and kept
Through the salvation free of cost.*

*If I come through the desert
I will marvel forever at thy grace,
And my soul to stillness
After a hundred times losing the
field;
The snares having been cut,
And my feet completely free:
If I am seen thus,
Eternal praise will be.*

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=JL3C03Lpgvk>

Closing music:
Middlebrooks and Belland
Arranged, Alwyn Humphreys
**What would I do without my
music**
Monmouth Male Voice Choir

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2i4AVMphfIU>

Readers:

Ecclesiastes 3: 1-4
Wyn Davies

Malachi 4: 2-3
David Evans

Salm 30
Megan Evans

Psalm 149
Mark Salmon

2 Samuel 6: 12-17
Neil Evans

C S Lewis
Dance and the Holy Trinity
Sir Simon Hughes

**A talk on dance and the Advent
carol by John Jones**
John Jones

T S Eliot
Four Quartets
Excerpt, "Burnt Norton," II, V
Neil Evans

Luke 1: 26-38
Rowenna Hughes

**The angel Gabriel prepares Mary
for the birth of Jesus**
A message from Parch Peter
Dewi Richards
Peter Dewi Richards

**Lord's Prayer/Gweddi Arglwydd
and Blessing**
Peter Dewi Richards

Producer Mike Williams
