

Capel y Boro
Sun 28 Nov 2021 at 11am

Hark! The Herald Angels Sing

A Service for
the first Sunday of
Advent with music and
Bible passages set by
Felix Mendelssohn

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/85941786751?pwd=azNFU3BuLzliRzJCVmZCYnBWZ0FuUT09>



Opening music:
Felix Mendelssohn-Bartholdy
Auf Flügeln des Gesanges
(On Wings of Song)
Dame Kiri Te Kanawa (soprano);
Sir James Galway (flute);
West Australian Symphony
Orchestra/John Hopkins
Leeuwin Estate, Australia, 1990

Intrada and welcome

O ddirgelwch mawr duwioldeb
(Gwilym Hiraethog, tune Welsh
melody c1784, *Ar hyd y nos*)

Felix Mendelssohn-Bartholdy
Elijah – “O rest in the Lord”
David Wigram (treble)

Deuteronomium 4: 15-29

Felix Mendelssohn-Bartholdy
*Elijah – “Ye people, rend your
hearts...If with all your hearts
you truly seek him”*

Andrew Haji (tenor);
Orchestre symphonique de
Montréal/Graeme Jenkins
Concours musical international de
Montréal Voice 2018 Final

Matthew 13: 24-30, 36-43

The Parable of the Weeds

Felix Mendelssohn-Bartholdy
*Elijah – “Then shall the
righteous shine forth”*
(sung in Welsh)

Huw Ynyr (tenor);
Jeffrey Howard (piano)

Psalm 121

Felix Mendelssohn-Bartholdy
Elijah – “Lift thine eyes”
St Pauls Cathedral Choristers

Hills of the north, rejoice
(Charles E Oakley, tune Martin
Shaw, *Little Cornard*)
Guildford Cathedral Choir

Salm 55

Felix Mendelssohn-Bartholdy
*Hör' mein Bitten – “Konnt Ich
Fliegen Wie Tauben Dahin”*
(Hear my Prayer – “O for the
wings of a dove”)
Aled Jones (treble)

Prayers and reflections for the
first Sunday in Advent

Gweddi'r Arglwydd

Dragwyddol, hollalluog lôr
(R J Derfel, tune Frederic Weber,
also attrib. Lowell Mason, *Weimar*)
Côr Meibion Maelgwn

Felix Mendelssohn-Bartholdy
Hebrides Overture
(*Fingal's Cave*) (introduction)
Czech Philharmonic
Orchestra/Gaetano Delogu

A talk by John Jones on *Hark!
the Herald Angels Sing* and
Mendelssohn in Wales:

Felix Mendelssohn-Bartholdy
*Songs without Words, Op. 30:
No. 5 in D Major, 'A Rivulet'*
Annie d'Arco (piano)

Clywch lu'r nef yn seinio'n un
(*Hark! The Herald Angels Sing*)
(Charles Wesley, alterer. George
Whitefield cyf. Pedr Fardd (1),
Anad. (2) Elis Wyn o Wyrfaï (3),
tune Felix Mendelssohn,
Mendelssohn)

Blessing

Closing music:
*Mine eyes have seen the glory of
the coming of the Lord*
(Julia Ward Howe tune attrib.
William Steffe,
Battle Hymn of the Republic)



Felix Mendelssohn 1809–47

Opening music:
Felix Mendelssohn-Bartholdy
Auf Flügeln des Gesanges
(On Wings of Song)
Dame Kiri Te Kanawa (soprano);
Sir James Galway (flute);
West Australian Symphony
Orchestra/John Hopkins
Leeuwin Estate, Australia, 1990

Our opening music this morning is from an open-air concert at the Leeuwin Estate of wine manufacturers, south of Perth in Western Australia, back in 1990. We heard Dame Kiri Te Kanawa and Sir James Galway performing an arrangement of one of Mendelssohn's best loved songs "Auf Flügeln des Gesanges" ("On Wings of Song.")



Dame Kiri Te Kanawa

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=t_PbhIFxUhA (0:25-3:18)

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 Capel y Boro and our service today for the first Sunday in Advent. The hook for our service is one of the most popular Christmas carols *Hark! the Herald Angels Sing* with words by Charles Wesley but the tune is by the great German nineteenth century composer Felix Mendelssohn. Just how it came to be by Mendelssohn John Jones will tell us later in his fascinating talk on the composer.

Well known as Queen Victoria's favourite composer who immortalised Scotland's scenic heritage in the famous *Hebrides overture* or *Fingal's Cave*, a part of which we shall hear later, Mendelssohn was also a fan of Wales, and indeed stayed there. Exactly where, John will also tell us later.

Felix Mendelssohn may not be the first person we think of when it comes to Welsh life, music and culture. But his revival of the Bach Passions and of course his own oratorios most notably *Elijah* were quickly translated and became Welsh favourites in the concert hall and in the chapel. So beautiful and heartfelt were his settings of some of the most important and most comforting of the psalms and scriptures we thought we would play some of them this morning and each aria or chorus is preceded for context with a reading of the fuller Biblical text that inspired the composer.

Woven into this service looking at the faith, career and travels of Mendelssohn culminating with the Welsh translation of *Hark! The Herald Angels Sing* we shall also sing a selection of English

and Welsh Advent hymns and we start with *O ddirgelwch mawr duwioldeb*, words by Gwilym Hiraethog, and sung to the tune *Ar hyd y nos*.

O ddirgelwch mawr duwioldeb,

Duw'n natur dyn!
Tad a Brenh'n trag'wyddoldeb
Yn natur dyn.
O holl ryfeddodau'r nefoedd,
Dyma'r mwyaf ei dyfnderoedd,
Testyn mawl diderfyn oesoedd,
Duw'n natur dyn!

Ar y ddaear bu'n ymdeithio,
Ar agwedd gwas,
Heb un lle i orphwys ganddo,
Ar agwedd gwas:
Daeth er mwyn ein cyfoethogi
Uchelder gwlad goleuni,
Yma i ddyfnder
gwarth a thlodi,
O ryfedd ras!

*O great mystery of divinity,
God in human nature!
The eternal Father and King
In human nature.
Of all the wonders of the heavens,
Here is the one of greatest depths,
A matter of endless praise of ages,
God in human nature.*

*On the earth he did journey,
With the attitude of a servant,
Having no place to rest,
With the attitude of a servant,
In order to make us rich, came
The Highness of the land of light,
Here to the depths of
disgrace and impoverishment,
O amazing grace!*

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

Felix Mendelssohn-Bartholdy Elijah – “O rest in the Lord”

David Wigram (treble)

Now we begin our reflection on the scriptures that inspired Mendelssohn's great oratorio “Elijah” and here is the chorister David Wigram as the Angel in one of the most popular arias from “Elijah,” which draws on Psalm 37 and urges us to: “Fret not thyself because of evildoers, neither be thou envious against the workers of iniquity. For they shall soon be cut down like the grass, and wither as the green herb.” The psalm goes on to tell us to trust, delight, commit our way unto the Lord and “rest in the Lord and wait patiently for him.” And then “the meek shall inherit the earth; and shall delight themselves in the abundance of peace.”



<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=BB3oyo0VEuc>

Deuteronomium 4: 15-29

Gwahardd Eilunaddoli



Idolatry such as the Golden calf is forbidden and outlined in this passage from Deuteronomy

Gan na welsoch unrhyw ffurf, y dydd y llefarodd yr Arglwydd

wrthych o ganol y tân yn Horeb, gofawch beidio â gweithredu'n llygredig trwy wneud i chwi eich hunain ddelw ar ffurf unrhyw fath ar gerflun, na ffurf dyn na gwraig, nac unrhyw anifail ar y ddaear, nac unrhyw aderyn sy'n hedfan yn yr awyr, nac unrhyw beth sy'n ymlusgo ar y ddaear, nac unrhyw bysgodyn sydd yn y dŵr dan y ddaear. Gwylia hefyd na fyddi'n codi dy olwg i'r nefoedd ac edrych ar yr haul, y lleud neu'r sêr, holl lu'r nefoedd, a chael dy ddenu i ymgrymu iddynt a'u haddoli; neilltuodd yr Arglwydd dy Dduw y rhain ar gyfer yr holl bobloedd dan y nefoedd. Ond cymerodd yr Arglwydd chwi, a daeth â chwi allan o'r ffwrnais haearn, o'r Aifft, i fod yn bobl sy'n etifeddiaeth iddo'i hun, fel yr ydych heddiw. Yr oedd yr Arglwydd yn ddig wrthyf o'ch achos chwi, a thyngodd na chawn groesi'r lorddonen, na mynd i mewn i'r wlad dda y mae'r Arglwydd dy Dduw yn ei rhoi yn feddiant iti. Byddaf fi yn marw yn y wlad hon, ac ni chaf groesi'r lorddonen, ond byddwch chwi yn croesi ac yn meddiannu'r wlad dda hon. Byddwch ofalus rhag anghofio'r cyfamod a wnaeth yr Arglwydd eich Duw â chwi, a gwneud i chwi eich hunain ddelw gerfiedig ar ffurf unrhyw beth a waharddodd yr Arglwydd dy Dduw. Oherwydd tân yn ysu yw'r Arglwydd dy Dduw; y mae ef yn Dduw eiddigus.

Pan fydd gennych blant ac wyrion, a chwithau wedi mynd yn hen yn y wlad, os byddwch yn gweithredu'n llygredig trwy wneud delw gerfiedig ar unrhyw ffurf, ac yn gwneud drwg yng ngolwg yr Arglwydd eich Duw ac ennyn ei ddig, yna yr adeg honno byddaf yn galw ar y nefoedd a'r ddaear i dystio yn eich erbyn, a

byddwch yn sicr o ddiflannu'n gyflym o'r wlad yr ydych wedi croesi'r lorddonen i'w meddiannu; ni chewch aros yno'n hir, ond fe'ch difethir yn llwyr. Bydd yr Arglwydd yn eich gwasgaru ymhlith y bobloedd, ac ni adewir ond ychydig ohonoch ymhlith y cenedloedd y bydd yr Arglwydd yn eich arwain atynt. Yna byddwch yn addoli duwiau o waith dwylo dynol, duwiau o bren a cherrig, nad ydynt yn gweld nac yn clywed nac yn bwyta nac yn arogl. Os byddwch yn ceisio'r Arglwydd eich Duw yno, ac yn chwilio amdano â'ch holl galon ac â'ch holl enaid, byddwch yn ei gael.

Idolatry forbidden

You saw no form of any kind the day the Lord spoke to you at Horeb out of the fire. Therefore watch yourselves very carefully, so that you do not become corrupt and make for yourselves an idol, an image of any shape, whether formed like a man or a woman, or like any animal on earth or any bird that flies in the air, or like any creature that moves along the ground or any fish in the waters below. And when you look up to the sky and see the sun, the moon and the stars—all the heavenly array—do not be enticed into bowing down to them and worshiping things the Lord your God has apportioned to all the nations under heaven. But as for you, the Lord took you and brought you out of the iron-smelting furnace, out of Egypt, to be the people of his inheritance, as you now are.

The Lord was angry with me because of you, and he solemnly swore that I would not cross the Jordan and enter the good land the Lord your God is giving you as your inheritance. I will die in this land; I

will not cross the Jordan; but you are about to cross over and take possession of that good land. Be careful not to forget the covenant of the Lord your God that he made with you; do not make for yourselves an idol in the form of anything the Lord your God has forbidden. For the Lord your God is a consuming fire, a jealous God.

After you have had children and grandchildren and have lived in the land a long time—if you then become corrupt and make any kind of idol, doing evil in the eyes of the Lord your God and arousing his anger, I call the heavens and the earth as witnesses against you this day that you will quickly perish from the land that you are crossing the Jordan to possess. You will not live there long but will certainly be destroyed. The Lord will scatter you among the peoples, and only a few of you will survive among the nations to which the Lord will drive you. There you will worship man-made gods of wood and stone, which cannot see or hear or eat or smell. But if from there you seek the Lord your God, you will find him if you seek him with all your heart and with all your soul.

**Felix Mendelssohn-Bartholdy
Elijah – “Ye people, rend
your hearts...If with all your
hearts you truly seek him”**

Andrew Haji (tenor);
Orchestre symphonique de
Montréal/Graeme Jenkins
Concours musical international de
Montréal Voice 2018 Final

Another well-loved aria from
“Elijah,” “If with all your hearts you
truly seek him” a line taken from
the passage we have just heard,
reassuring us following the warning

against all forms of idolatry, from
Deuteronomy.



Mendelssohn conducts the premiere of
Elijah in Birmingham Town Hall in 1846

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=yjgZmh4ghXQ>

Matthew 13: 24-30, 36-43
The Parable of the Weeds

Jesus told them another parable:
“The kingdom of heaven is like a
man who sowed good seed in his
field. But while everyone was
sleeping, his enemy came and
sowed weeds among the wheat,
and went away. When the wheat
sprouted and formed heads, then
the weeds also appeared.

“The owner’s servants came to
him and said, ‘Sir, didn’t you sow
good seed in your field? Where
then did the weeds come from?’

“‘An enemy did this,’ he replied.

“The servants asked him, ‘Do
you want us to go and pull them
up?’

“‘No,’ he answered, ‘because
while you are pulling the weeds,
you may uproot the wheat with
them. Let both grow together
until the harvest. At that time I
will tell the harvesters: First
collect the weeds and tie them in
bundles to be burned; then
gather the wheat and bring it into
my barn.’”

Then he left the crowd and went
into the house. His disciples
came to him and said, “Explain to
us the parable of the weeds in
the field.”

He answered, “The one who
sowed the good seed is the Son
of Man. The field is the world,
and the good seed stands for the
people of the kingdom. The
weeds are the people of the evil
one, and the enemy who sows
them is the devil. The harvest is
the end of the age, and the
harvesters are angels.

“As the weeds are pulled up and
burned in the fire, so it will be at
the end of the age. The Son of
Man will send out his angels, and
they will weed out of his
kingdom everything that causes
sin and all who do evil. They will
throw them into the blazing
furnace, where there will be
weeping and gnashing of teeth.
Then the righteous will shine like
the sun in the kingdom of their
Father. Whoever has ears, let
them hear.

**Felix Mendelssohn-Bartholdy
Elijah – “Then shall the
righteous shine forth”
(sung in Welsh)**

Huw Ynyr (tenor);
Jeffrey Howard (piano)



Tenor Huw Ynyr sings from *Elijah* in
Welsh

Our next tenor aria from “Elijah” is “Then shall the righteous shine forth in the Kingdom of the Father” here sung in Welsh translation. The text comes from the passage we just heard in English, the Parable of the Weeds from Matthew 13.

<http://www.harlequin-agency.co.uk/index.php?page=12&action=details&id=130>

(link to the video is in the left-hand panel of this web page)

Psalm 121

I will lift up mine eyes unto the hills, from whence cometh my help.

My help cometh from the Lord, which made heaven and earth.

He will not suffer thy foot to be moved: he that keepeth thee will not slumber.

Behold, he that keepeth Israel shall neither slumber nor sleep.

The Lord is thy keeper: the Lord is thy shade upon thy right hand.

The sun shall not smite thee by day, nor the moon by night.

The Lord shall preserve thee from all evil: he shall preserve thy soul.

The Lord shall preserve thy going out and thy coming in from this time forth, and even for evermore.

Felix Mendelssohn-Bartholdy *Elijah* – “Lift thine eyes”

St Pauls Cathedral Choristers



<https://www.facebook.com/RememberMeMemorialBook/videos/298014537872345/>



Choristers at St Paul's Cathedral sang Mendelssohn's setting of Psalm 121 from *Elijah* “Lift thine eyes” to raise awareness of their plans to build a memorial shrine to Covid victims

Mendelssohn and his faith



Felix Mendelssohn by Eduard Magnus © Berlin State Library

Felix Mendelssohn was born in 1809 in Hamburg Germany. On the paternal side, Mendelssohn was the grandson of the 18th-century Jewish philosopher Moses Mendelssohn (1729–

1786), but was not raised in the Jewish faith.

On March 21, 1816 – as it happened, the birthday of Bach – he was baptized, along with his three siblings, as a Lutheran. His parents, Abraham and Lea Mendelssohn, were baptized a few years later.

To acknowledge their new spiritual identity, the family adopted a second surname, so that Felix Mendelssohn became Felix Mendelssohn Bartholdy. Abraham intended that eventually his family would omit the Mendelssohn name altogether. His son never did so, however, and continued to sign his letters and publish his music under his dual name.

The issues of religious identity and intra-faith tolerance are critical to our understanding of the composer's life and work. Of Moses Mendelssohn's six children who survived into adulthood, two preserved their Jewish faith, while two converted to Lutheranism, and two to Catholicism.

Given this family history, it is telling that Mendelssohn set sacred texts for a variety of faiths, not just Lutheran, but Anglican and Catholic texts (*Tu Es Petrus*, *Lauda Sion*).

He wrote a short hymn setting for the Huguenot church, and towards the end of his life was in correspondence with the Neues Tempel of Hamburg, which commissioned him to compose several cantata-like psalm settings, ultimately unfulfilled. Though Christian by virtue of his baptism and practising faith,

Mendelssohn remained in the eyes of many a Jew. His family's wealth partially insulated him from antisemitic sentiments of the time; but after his death, Wagner attacked the composer's memory in a racist essay published anonymously in 1850.

Wagner maintained that as a Jew, Mendelssohn could only imitate the profundities of Bach and Beethoven; his music was derivative and ultimately superficial.

The rise of the Third Reich in the 20th century did further, seemingly irreparable damage to Mendelssohn's reputation. The Nazis tore down his statue that had stood before the Leipzig Gewandhaus. The Nazis banned Mendelssohn's music but left his grave unscathed in the Trinity Cemetery of Berlin, liquidated the family banking house and banned his music.

But they were unable to expunge Mendelssohn completely from German culture. When Richard Strauss was asked to write new music for *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, (which, of course, has the famous Wedding March,) he replied that he could not improve on Mendelssohn's music.

Hills of the north, rejoice;

river and mountain spring,
hark to the advent voice;
valley and lowland, sing;
though absent long, your Lord is nigh;
he judgment brings and victory.

Isles of the southern seas,
deep in your coral caves
pent be each warring breeze,
lulled be your restless waves:

he comes to reign with boundless sway,
and makes your wastes his great highway.

Lands of the East, awake,
soon shall your sons be free;
the sleep of ages break,
and rise to liberty.
On your far hills, long cold and gray,
has dawned the everlasting day.

Shores of the utmost West,
ye that have waited long,
unvisited, unblessed,
break forth to swelling song;
high raise the note, that Jesus died,
yet lives and reigns, the Crucified.

Shout, while ye journey home;
songs be in every mouth;
lo, from the North we come,
from East, and West, and South.
city of God, the bond are free,
we come to live and reign in thee!

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

Salm 55



"Oh! that I had the wings of a dove,"
Psalm 55

Gwrando fy ngweddi, O Dduw ;
ac nac ymguddia rhag fy neisyfiad.

Gwrando arnaf, ac erglyw fi:
cwynfan yr ydwyf yn fy ngweddi,
a thuchan,

Gan lais y gelyn, gan orthrymder
yr annuwiol: oherwydd y maent
yn bwrw anwiredd arnaf, ac yn fy
nghasáu yn lliidiog.

Fy nghalon a ofidia o'm mewn: ac
ofn angau a syrthiodd arnaf.

Ofn ac arswyd a ddaeth arnaf, a
dychryn a'm gorchuddiodd.

A dywedais, O na bai i mi
adenydd fel colomen! yna yr
ehedwn ymaith, ac y gorffwyswn.

Wele, crwydrwn ymhell, ac
arhoswn yn yr anialwch. Sela.

Brysiwn i ddianc, rhag y gwynt
ystormus a'r dymestl.

Dinistria, O Arglwydd , a gwahan
eu tafodau: canys gwelais
drawster a chynnen yn y ddinas.

Dydd a nos yr amgylchant hi ar ei
muriau: ac y mae anwiredd a
blinder yn ei chanol hi.

Anwireddau sydd yn ei chanol hi;
ac ni chilia twyll a dichell o'i
heolydd hi.

Canys nid gelyn a'm difenwodd;
yna y dioddefaswn: nid fy
nghasddyn a ymfawrygodd i'm
herbyn; yna mi a ymguddiaswn
rhagddo ef:

Eithr tydi, ddyn, fy nghydradd, fy
fforddwr, a'm cydnabod,

Y rhai oedd felys gennym
gydgyfrinach, ac a rodiasom i dŷ
Dduw ynghyd.

Rhuthred marwolaeth arnynt, a
disgynnant i uffern yn fyw: canys
drygioni sydd yn eu cartref, ac yn
eu mysg.

Myfi a waeddaf ar Dduw ; a'r
Arglwydd a'm hachub i.

Hwyr a bore, a hanner dydd, y
gweddiaf, a byddaf daer: ac efe a
glyw fy lleferydd.

Efe a waredodd fy enaid mewn
heddwch oddi wrth y rhyfel oedd
i'm herbyn: canys yr oedd llawer
gyda mi.

Duw a glyw, ac a'u darostwng
hwynt, yr hwn sydd yn aros
erioed: Sela: am nad oes
gyfnewidiau iddynt, am hynny nid
ofnant Dduw .

Efe a estynnodd ei law yn erbyn y
rhai oedd heddychlon ag ef: efe a
dorrodd ei gyfamod.

Llyfnach oedd ei enau nag
ymenyn, a rhyfel yn ei galon:
tynerach oedd ei eiriau nag olew,
a hwynt yn gleddyfau noethion.

Bwrw dy faich ar yr Arglwydd ,
ac efe a'th gynnal di: ni ad i'r
cyfiawn ysgogi byth.

Tithau, Dduw , a'u disgynni
hwynt i bydew dinistr: gwŷr
gwaedlyd a thwyllodrus ni
byddant byw hanner eu dyddiau;
ond myfi a obeithiaf ynot ti.

Psalm 55

*Listen to my prayer, O God,
do not ignore my plea;
hear me and answer me.*

*My thoughts trouble me and I am
distraught*

*because of what my enemy is
saying,*

*because of the threats of the
wicked;*

*for they bring down suffering on me
and assail me in their anger.*

My heart is in anguish within me;

*the terrors of death have fallen on
me.*

*Fear and trembling have beset me;
horror has overwhelmed me.*

*I said, "Oh, that I had the wings of
a dove!*

I would fly away and be at rest.

I would flee far away

and stay in the desert:[c]

*I would hurry to my place of shelter,
far from the tempest and storm."*

*Lord, confuse the wicked, confound
their words,*

*for I see violence and strife in the
city.*

*Day and night they prowl about on
its walls;*

malice and abuse are within it.

*Destructive forces are at work in the
city;*

*threats and lies never leave its
streets.*

*If an enemy were insulting me,
I could endure it;*

*if a foe were rising against me,
I could hide.*

*But it is you, a man like myself,
my companion, my close friend,
with whom I once enjoyed sweet
fellowship*

*at the house of God,
as we walked about
among the worshippers.*

*Let death take my enemies by
surprise;*

*let them go down alive to the realm
of the dead,
for evil finds lodging among them.*

*As for me, I call to God,
and the Lord saves me.*

*Evening, morning and noon
I cry out in distress,*

and he hears my voice.

*He rescues me unharmed
from the battle waged against me,
even though many oppose me.*

*God, who is enthroned from of old,
who does not change—*

*he will hear them and humble them,
because they have no fear of God.*

*My companion attacks his friends;
he violates his covenant.*

His talk is smooth as butter,

yet war is in his heart;

*his words are more soothing than
oil,*

yet they are drawn swords.

*Cast your cares on the Lord
and he will sustain you;*

he will never let

the righteous be shaken.

*But you, God, will bring down the
wicked*

into the pit of decay;

*the bloodthirsty and deceitful
will not live out half their days.*

But as for me, I trust in you.

**Felix Mendelssohn-Bartholdy
Hör' mein Bitten – "Konnt Ich
Fliegen Wie Tauben Dahin"
(Hear my Prayer – "O for the
wings of a dove")**

Aled Jones (treble)



Aled Jones

One of Mendelssohn's most
popular settings, "O for the Wings

of a Dove" is taken from Psalm 55 which we have just heard. It is sung here in Mendelssohn's original German in an early recording by Aled Jones.

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4TBI1hG5_O0 (show words on attached sheet with English translation)

Prayers and reflections for the first Sunday in Advent



Let us start by praying for all those who perished in the channel crossing this week, people desperate for a better life, who will take the risk of making such a dangerous crossing for fear of the alternatives. Help us to understand their plight and their despair. Let us pray for the humanitarian relief agencies now working to give those who have died some kind of funeral to have the resources they need to help their families. Let us pray for governments to work together to end this tragic loss of life at sea and to find solutions and to end the people smuggling operations.

We pray for those who have died in the last two days as a result of Storm Arwen and to those suffering the effects of frightening weather conditions. Let us pray for all those who are ill or suffering as we think about Advent and preparation for Christmas – that we must keep all those who need our help and

our support in the forefronts of our minds. We think of Peter Dewi Richards who preached to us last week at what has been a very difficult time for his family as his grandson Jacob was in intensive care. He is now out of hospital but we pray for Jacob and for his speedy recovery and for God's blessing.

And our Advent prayer:

O come, O come Emmanuel,
And sit with us as we wait;
Filled with anticipation and longing.
Waiting for a pandemic to end,
For a weight to be lifted,
And the reminder that you are within our midst.

O come, O come Light of the World,
And shine into the darkness;
Bring hope to the hopeless,
And make clear a path for justice.
Give us guidance as we seek your kingdom,
Shine brightly through us as we do your work.

O come, O come Christ Jesus,
And walk with us through each day.
We bring you our fears and desires,
As an offering of all that we are.
We wait with yearning,
To see the world reconciled to you.

For weeping to cease,
The hungry fed,
Wounds healed,
Widows and orphans cared for,
And mercy delivered.

O come, O come Emmanuel,
Hear our prayer.
Amen.

Gweddi'r Arglwydd

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

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.
And 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.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ZzF49HPfQzM>

Dragwyddol, hollalluog Iôr,
Creawdwr nef a llawr,
O gwrando ar ein gweddi daer
Ar ran ein byd yn awr.

Yn erbyn pob gormeswr cryf
O cymer blaid y gwan;
Darostwng ben y balch i lawr
A chod y tlawd i'r lan.

Bendithia holl dylwythau dyn

Â rhyddid pur a hedd,
A gad i bawb gael byw heb ofn
Dan nawdd
dy ddwyfol wedd.

Ymostwng atom yn dy ras,
O gwrando ar ein cri,
Ac mewn trugaredd, Arglwydd
lôr,
Yn dirion ateb ni.

*Eternal, almighty Lord,
Creator of heaven and earth,
O listen to our earnest prayer
On behalf of our world now.*

*Against every strong oppressor
O take the side of the weak;
Bring down the head of the proud
And raise up the poor.*

*Bless all the tribes of man
With freedom pure and peace,
And grant that all may live without
fear
Under the protection
of thy heavenly countenance.*

*Condescend to us in thy grace,
O listen to our cry,
And in mercy, Lord Master,
Tenderly answer us.*

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=QhOBxb-KZPU>

Felix Mendelssohn-Bartholdy
Hebrides Overture
(Fingal's Cave) (introduction)
Czech Philharmonic
Orchestra/Gaetano Delogu

The opening of Mendelssohn's celebrated "Hebrides overture" ("Fingal's Cave") and on this video we can see some film of the wonderful Fingal's Cave with its geological formations looking like massive organ pipes. Just listen to how Mendelssohn evokes the sea in this tone poem.



Staffa, *Fingal's Cave* by J M W Turner, 1832 © Yale University Art Gallery (Yale University), New Haven, CT, USA

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=zyZ5cHUaiBI> (fade at c3:27)

A talk by John Jones on *Hark! the Herald Angels Sing* and Mendelssohn in Wales:



Felix Mendelssohn

Hark! the Herald Angels Sing has a most interesting history. The original text was written as a "Hymn for Christmas Day" by Charles Wesley for a collection of his brother's *Hymns and Sacred Poems* published in 1739. His original hymn began with the opening line "Hark how all the Welkin rings/Glory to the King of Kings", welkin being an old English word for clouds, by the way. But this was changed by George Whitefield to the version we now know for his collection *Hymns for Social Worship* (1754.)

Wesley imagined the carol being sung to the same tune as his Easter hymn *Christ the Lord is Risen today* but it was also used with a tune from Handel's *Judas Maccabeus*, "Thine be the Glory,"

but they never really caught on. It was a hymn without a tune, you might say.

But the only tune we all know nowadays is by Mendelssohn, who had rather an interesting connection with Wales. Not only was he a favourite of Queen Victoria, he came over to Britain a number of times during his short life.



Mendelssohn with Queen Victoria and Prince Albert

It's well-known that Mendelssohn's visit to Scotland inspired his *Hebrides Overture* with started this talk, but details of his time in Wales a few weeks later have been almost entirely overlooked. He made a total of ten trips to the UK in fact and, during his first, in April 1829, he was introduced to a friend of his father's, through London society circles. John Taylor was a mining engineer and entrepreneur from Devon, who rented Coed Du Hall in Rhydymwyn, near Mold, as a holiday home for his family.



Coed Du Hall in Rhydymwyn, near Mold

In August, when bad weather frustrated the composer's plans to sail to Ireland following his

Scottish tour, he altered his itinerary to stay with the Taylor family in North Wales instead.

Mendelssohn's first impression of Welsh folk music, however, was not very positive: in a letter he wrote from his inn in Llangollen:

"Ten thousand devils take all national music! Here I am in Wales, and, heaven help us! A harper sits in the hall of every reputable tavern incessantly playing so-called folk melodies – that is to say, dreadful, vulgar, out-of-tune trash with a hurdy-gurdy going at the same time! It has given me toothache already."

Thankfully Mendelssohn's impressions of Wales improved and after a few days sight-seeing and sketching. He arrived at Coed Du which he described as "a country house on an expansive cut lawn surrounded by flowers."

The 20-year-old composer was instantly inspired by his surroundings and the company of Taylor's three daughters, and threw himself into family life, using Coed Du Hall as a base for further explorations of Wales.

Thanks to his letters we know Mendelssohn made visits to Bangor, Caernarfon, Corwen, the Vale of Ffestiniog, Valle Crucis Abbey and Holywell. He jotted down some musical motifs at Beddgelert and Capel Curig while his sketchbooks include pencil drawings of Conwy Castle.

The family atmosphere in Coed Du Hall clearly suited him as he set to work on a number of compositions, including three piano pieces, dedicated to each of the girls, as a leaving present

and as a token of his gratitude for the hospitality of the Taylor family. The three pieces were inspired by the flowers, walks and horseback rides across the estate. This particular piece, *The Rivulet*, was inspired by the River Alyn which flows through the village of Rhydymwyn.

Felix Mendelssohn-Bartholdy
Songs without Words, Op. 30:
No. 5 in D Major, 'A Rivulet'
Annie d'Arco (piano)



The River Alyn, which runs through Rhydymwyn, inspired Mendelssohn to compose his piano piece *The Rivulet*

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=R7ZG55JstOY>

50 years after his visit, one of the Taylor daughters, Anne, recorded her memories of the composer's stay:

"My father's birthday happened while Mr Mendelssohn was with us. There was a grand expedition to a distant mine, up among the hills; a tent carried up there, a dinner to the miners. We had speeches, and health-drinkings, and Mendelssohn threw himself into the whole thing, as if he had been one of us."

Mendelssohn suffered from poor health in the final years of his life, probably aggravated by nervous problems and overwork. A final tour of England left him exhausted and ill, and the death of his sister, Fanny, in 1847,

caused him further distress. Less than six months later, on November 4, aged 38, Mendelssohn died in Leipzig after a series of strokes. Today he is still remembered in Rhydymwyn with a plaque marking his stay in the little Flintshire village.



A plaque marks Mendelssohn's stay in the little Flintshire village of Rhydymwyn

In 1855, a British musician, William Hayman Cummings who, as a teenager, had been one of the choristers when Mendelssohn conducted his oratorio *Elijah* at Exeter Hall, opposite the Savoy Hotel on the Strand in 1847 and was familiar with much of his music.



Leipzig, Germany, where Mendelssohn wrote his *Gutenberg Festgesang*, with an anthem that was later to become the setting for *Hark! The Herald Angels Sing*

Seventeen years earlier, Mendelssohn, then living and working in Leipzig, had written a work to mark the 400th anniversary of the invention of the printing press by Johannes Gutenberg. *The Gutenberg Cantata*, or *Festgesang*, was performed in the marketplace in Leipzig in on 24th June 1840 to mark the occasion before the cantata disappeared into

obscurity, being a one off written for a particular public event.

Cummings, meanwhile, came up with an ingenious solution and adapted one of the main anthems from Mendelssohn's Leipzig *Festgesang*, "Vaterland in deinen Gauen," into a tune to accompany Charles Wesley's carol into what has become universally known as *Hark! the Herald*, one of the most popular carols of the Christmas season; a great marriage of words and music, I think you'll agree.



Bronzino *Worship of the Shepherds*, 1539

Clywch lu'r nef yn seinio'n un,

Henffych eni Ceidwad dyn:
Heddwch sydd rhwng nef a llawr,
Duw a dyn sy'n un yn awr.
Dewch, bob cenedl is y rhod,
Unwch a'r angylaidd glod,
Bloeddiwch oll a llawen drem,
Ganwyd Crist ym Methlehem:

Clywch lu'r nef yn seinio'n un,
Henffych eni Ceidwad dyn!

Crist, Tad tragwyddoldeb yw,
A disgleirdeb wyneb Duw:
Cadarn lŵr a ddaeth ei hun,
Gwnaeth ei babell gyda dyn:
Wele Dduwdod yn y cnawd,
Dwyfol Fab i ddyn yn Frawd;

Duw yn ddyn, fy enaid, gwŷl
Iesu, ein Emanwel!

Henffych, T'wysog heddwch yw;
Henffych, Haul Cyfiawnder gwiw:
Bywyd ddwg, a golau ddydd,
Iechyd yn ei esgyll sydd.
Rhoes i lawr ogoniant nef;
Fel na threngom ganwyd ef;
Ganwyd ef,
O ryfedd drefn,
Fel y genid ni drachefn!

*Hark! The herald angels sing,
"Glory to the newborn 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 newborn King!"*

*Christ, by highest Heav'n adored;
Christ the everlasting Lord;
Late in time, behold Him come,
Offspring of a virgin's womb.
Veiled in flesh the Godhead see;
Hail th'incarnate Deity,
Pleased with us in flesh to dwell,
Jesus our Emmanuel.*

*Hail the heav'nly Prince of Peace!
Hail the Sun of Righteousness!
Light and life to all He brings,
Ris'n 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 them second birth.*

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6JyK8AiMI_4

Blessing

Almighty God, give us grace that
we may cast away the works of

darkness, and put upon us the
armour of light, now in the time
of this mortal life, in which your
Son Jesus Christ came to visit us
in great humility; that in the last
day, when he shall come again in
his glorious Majesty, to judge
both the quick and the dead, we
may rise to the life immortal;
through him who lives and reigns
with you and the Holy Ghost,
now and ever. Amen.

Closing music:

***Mine eyes have seen the glory
of the coming of the Lord***
(Julia Ward Howe tune attrib.
William Steffe, *Battle Hymn of the
Republic*)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=OO2C2zgLawA> (up to 3:21)

Readers:

Deuteronomium 4: 15-29
Sioned Bowen

**Matthew 13: 24-30, 36-43/
Prayers and reflections for the
first Sunday in Advent, Blessing**
Neil Evans

Psalm 121
Rowenna Hughes

Salm 55
Glyn Pritchard

**A talk by John Jones on Hark!
the Herald Angels Sing and
Mendelssohn in Wales**
John Jones

Producer Mike Williams
