

Hannah's Mass

A special service of Holy Communion

With mass setting composed by

Philip Sunderland

Sunday 5 October 2025

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St Mary's Church, Saffron Walden

Hannah's Mass was written for my sister, who died from secondary breast cancer six years ago. The Kyrie, Gloria and Sanctus were written immediately but I scrapped the original Agnus Dei and rewrote it this year. The theme of the work is one of celebration and release from pain. It is constructed around a 'Holy Trinity' of notes, the major second, sharpened fourth and major seventh.

The Kyrie opens dramatically with a heartfelt cry for mercy. The answering Christe Eleison is gentler with soaring melodies for the altos on the second and seventh interval. The final Kyrie repeats the opening material.

The Gloria has as its heart a quotation from C S Lewis, "Joy is the serious business of heaven," and is an ecstatic shout of praise. Opening with fanfare like calls from the choir, it is driven rhythmically by frequent changes of metre, heightening the rhythmic drive. A chordal bridge section takes us to the more sombre Domine Deus, darker, but with the rhythmic drive still urging the music forward. The concluding Quoniam tu solus Sanctus is a great blaze of brass and percussion, the Lydian fourth dominating the harmony. The movement ends with the sign of the cross: organ and trumpets crossing each other in cascading triads.

The Sanctus starts with a quiet and reverent statement of "Holy, Holy, Holy," before the triumphant call of "Heaven and Earth are full of thy Glory." The Hosanna is a homage to my sister's frequent trips to listen to my niece performing in her gospel choir. In my mind's eye I saw "The Saints in church glass" leaving their stayed poses and dancing in a great bacchanal of joy! The Benedictus is a quiet and very personal homage.

The Agnus Dei returns to the opening mood of the Kyrie. Loud choral cries interject with quiet calls for mercy as the choir

Please stand for the **Final Hymn**

Christ triumphant, ever reigning,
Saviour, Master, King!
Lord of heaven, our lives sustaining,
hear us as we sing:
Yours the glory and the crown,
the high renown, the eternal name.

Word incarnate, truth revealing,
Son of Man on earth!
power and majesty concealing
by your humble birth:
Yours the glory and the crown,
the high renown, the eternal name.

Suffering servant, scorned, ill-treated,
victim crucified!
death is through the cross defeated,
sinners justified:
Yours the glory and the crown,
the high renown, the eternal name.

Priestly king, enthroned for ever
high in heaven above!
sin and death and hell shall never
stifle hymns of love:
Yours the glory and the crown,
the high renown, the eternal name.

So, our hearts and voices raising
through the ages long,
ceaselessly upon you gazing,
this shall be our song:
Yours the glory and the crown,
the high renown, the eternal name.

Michael Saward (1932-)

'Guiting Power' John Barnard (1948-)

Hobgoblin, nor foul fiend
Can daunt his spirit;
He knows he at the end
Shall life inherit.
Then fancies fly away,
He'll fear not what men say,
He'll labour night and day
To be a pilgrim.

John Bunyan (1628-88)

Tune adapted Ralph Vaughan Williams (1872-1958)

The service continues on page 14 of the green service book

The Choir sings the **Sanctus** and **Benedictus**

The service continues on page 16 of the green service book

The Choir sings the **Agnus Dei**

If you take communion in your own church you are welcome to take communion here. Children and those who are not confirmed are invited to come to the altar for a blessing – please carry a service book to indicate this to the clergy. If you would like to receive communion, but are unable to make your way to the altar, please speak to one of the welcomers.

The service continues on page 21 of the green service book

accompanies a mournful solo trombone. A passing bell begins to chime and the timpani begins a relentless drive as the choir repeats again and again the call for mercy in a sort of Paean to human suffering.

The movement concludes with the end of suffering. As the passing bell continues to chime, the sound-world becomes more ethereal with a trio between the vibraphone, a solo horn and a trombone. Interjected between this, the choir begins a hushed mantra of “Dona nobis Pacem.” A call for peace. A treble solo reiterates the word.

Just before the end, accompanied by luminous vibraphone, a muted horn reiterates the melody of the Hosanna in the Sanctus, perhaps answering the call for peace. The choir gives one more rendition of the Dona Nobis Pacem and the passing bell finishes with its fifty-seventh toll, one chime for each year of Hannah's life.

There will be a retiring collection which is to be divided between Hospice in the Weald and St Mary's Church.

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Please stand for the **Opening Hymn**

How shall I sing that majesty
which angels do admire?
Let dust in dust and silence lie;
sing, sing, ye heavenly choir.
Thousands of thousands stand around
thy throne, O God most high;
ten thousand times ten thousand sound
thy praise; but who am I?

Thy brightness unto them appears,
whilst I thy footsteps trace;
a sound of God comes to my ears,
but they behold thy face.
They sing, because thou art their Sun;
Lord, send a beam on me;
for where heaven is but once begun
there alleluias be.

Enlighten with faith's light my heart,
in flame it with love's fire;
then shall I sing and bear a part
with that celestial choir.
I shall, I fear, be dark and cold,
with all my fire and light;
yet when thou dost accept their gold,
Lord, treasure up my mite.

How great a being, Lord, is thine,
which doth all beings keep!
Thy knowledge is the only line
to sound so vast a deep.
Thou art a sea without a shore,
a sun without a sphere;
thy time is now and evermore,
thy place is everywhere.

Jason Mason (1646-94)

'Coe Fen' Ken Naylor (1931-91)

The service continues on page 6 of the green service book

The Choir sings the **Kyrie** followed by the **Gloria**

First reading, read by Hannah Razzell

Please stand for the **Gospel reading**, read by Vivian Falk

Please sit for the **Sermon** from The Reverend Jeremy Trew

The service continues on page 11 of the green service book

Please stand for the **Offertory Hymn**

Who would true valour see,
Let him come hither;
One here will constant be,
Come wind, come weather
There's no discouragement
Shall make him once relent
His first avowed intent
To be a pilgrim.

Whoso beset him round
With dismal stories,
Do but themselves confound;
His strength the more is.
No lion can him fright,
He'll with a giant fight,
But he will have a right
To be a pilgrim.