

# MUSIC AT THE MET

2025-2026



Metropolitan Cathedral  
of Christ the King Liverpool



Archdiocese of Liverpool

MUSIC



# Liverpool Metropolitan Cathedral

One of Liverpool's two iconic cathedrals, the Metropolitan Cathedral sits at the beating heart of the city of Liverpool. Its vast circular space and spectacular lantern tower draw visitors in for an array of services, concerts and events each year. Savour the silence. Join us in prayer. Hear our music. Explore and discover. Whatever shape your visit takes, we would love to welcome you to Liverpool's Metropolitan Cathedral of Christ the King.

## Regular Choral Services in the Cathedral

- Monday–Thursday: Sung Mass at 17.00
- Friday: Sung Mass & Evening Prayer at 17.00
- Sunday: Solemn Mass at 11.00 and Choral Evening Prayer at 15.00

Visit [liverpoolmetrocathedral.org.uk/music](https://liverpoolmetrocathedral.org.uk/music) to view the current Order of Services and Music

Follow us on social media:   @LpoolMetMusic

## Join our mailing list

To join our mailing list, and be the first to hear about forthcoming events, scan this QR code or email [music@metcathedral.org.uk](mailto:music@metcathedral.org.uk)



## Parking

There is pay and display parking available in the Cathedral underground car park. For popular events, further car parks are available at:

- University of Liverpool Pay & Display, Mount Pleasant (1 min walk)
- Paddington Village Car Park, L7 3FA (8 min walk)

## Tickets

Tickets for all paid events can be purchased from [www.ticketsource.co.uk/metcathedral](https://www.ticketsource.co.uk/metcathedral)

## Get in touch

[music@metcathedral.org.uk](mailto:music@metcathedral.org.uk) / 0151 708 7283



# Welcome!

I am delighted to welcome you to our 'Music at the Met' concert series for 2025-2026.

Recently, the Department for Culture, Media and Sport awarded the Metropolitan Cathedral of Christ the King Grade I listed status, following advice from Historic England, recognising it as a building of the highest architectural and historical interest. The cathedral functions as a religious building and a place of culture, welcoming thousands of people through its door each year.

Music has played an important role in the life of the cathedral since its consecration in 1967, with the Cathedral Choir and Grand Organ at the heart of our religious and cultural life. We are delighted to present a variety of musical offerings (many of which are free to attend) throughout the year.

During this jubilee year when we focus on the cathedral's role as a 'Pilgrim of Hope', it is a great joy to welcome our colleagues from Liverpool Cathedral at the other end of Hope Street for our annual Two Cathedrals Messiah on Saturday 11 October. A unique Liverpool tradition, celebrating our ecumenical relationship the choirs are joined by the Liverpool Mozart Orchestra and fantastic soloists, under the baton of Richard Lea, Organist of the Metropolitan Cathedral.

The liturgical seasons of Advent, Christmas, Lent and Easter feature a wide variety of special services and musical offerings taking place on Sunday afternoons, all of which are free to attend. On offer are carol services, Bach cantatas, French oratorios and English Renaissance polyphony, and a lot more in between!

Our Grand Organ plays a central role in many events in the cathedral. Built by the English organ builders J W Walker & Sons, with a distinctive façade designed by the cathedral architect Sir Frederick Gibberd, a once-in-a-generation refurbishment was carried out by Harrison & Harrison of Durham between 2021-2023. During the coming season there will be a number of opportunities to hear the organ in a solo role, including a rare complete performance of Olivier Messien's 'Livre du Saint-Sacrement' given by Tom Bell on 3 June and our annual free Summer Sunday Organ Recitals in August.

In addition to the concerts and events described in this booklet, the Metropolitan Cathedral Choir sings seven choral services each week during term time. Whether you attend a service or concert or an event, we very much look forward to welcoming you here at Liverpool Metropolitan Cathedral and hope you enjoy your visit.

**Dr Christopher McElroy**  
*Director of Music*



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# TWO CATHEDRALS MESSIAH

Saturday 11 October - 7:30pm  
Liverpool Metropolitan Cathedral

**Featuring:**

Choirs of Liverpool Cathedral &  
Liverpool Metropolitan Cathedral

Liverpool Mozart Orchestra

*Kelsey Thomas - Soprano*

*Danny Townley - Countertenor*

*Stefan Kennedy - Tenor*

*Joe Murphy - Bass*

*Richard Lea - Conductor*



Metropolitan Cathedral  
of Christ the King Liverpool



Liverpool  
Cathedral

**Tickets £15/£20**

[www.ticketsource.co.uk/metcathedral](http://www.ticketsource.co.uk/metcathedral)

# Advent

## Advent Sequence

**Sunday 30 November | 17.00**

*Admission free, retiring collection*

As the season of Advent begins, the Metropolitan Cathedral Choir and clergy offer a sequence of music and readings to prepare us for the journey, including choral works by Briggs, Jackson and Guerrero.

## Bach & Handel

**Sunday 7 December | 15.00**

*Admission free, retiring collection*

Music by Bach (Cantata 140, *Wachet auf, ruft uns die Stimme*) and Handel (selections from Part I of *Messiah*) for the Advent/Christmas season performed by Liverpool Metropolitan Cathedral Choir. Soloists include Barbara Ruzsics (soprano), David Lee (tenor) and Jonne Quint (bass).

## A Celebration of Christmas

**Saturday 13 December | 19.00**

Tickets (£10) available from [www.ticketsource.co.uk/metcathedral](http://www.ticketsource.co.uk/metcathedral)

A magical night of Christmas carols and seasonal favourites featuring the Metropolitan Cathedral Choir and special guests.

## Britten & Saint-Saëns

**Sunday 14 December | 15.00**

*Admission free, retiring collection*

The cathedral choristers sing Benjamin Britten's famous carol sequence, 'A Ceremony of Carols', followed by a rare performance of Saint-Saëns' *Christmas Oratorio*, with special guest Elizabeth McNulty (harp) and soloists Barbara Ruzsics (soprano), Annamarie (mezzo soprano) Danny Townley (alto), David Lee (tenor) and Stuart O'Hara (baritone).

## Festival Carol Service & *La Nativité du Seigneur* - Messiaen

**Sunday 21 December | 17.00**

*Admission free, retiring collection*

Join the Metropolitan Cathedral Choir and clergy for a mix of seasonal music, readings and congregational carols. Immediately following the Carol Service, there will be a performance of Olivier Messiaen's monumental organ work *La Nativité du Seigneur* given by Cathedral Organist, Richard Lea. In composing the nine meditations, Messiaen was inspired by the Nativity narrative, mountains and stained glass windows.

# Christmas

*Celebrate the joy of the Nativity at the Metropolitan Cathedral*

## First Vespers of the Nativity

**Wednesday 24 December | 15.00**

Our atmospheric first service of the Christmas season begins with an extended procession accompanied by the singing of the 15th-century song of the Nuns of Chester *Qui creavit caelum*. The solo treble intones 'Once in royal David's city' before the singing of the psalmody. The service concludes at the crib with the communal singing of 'Away in a manger'.

## Midnight Mass

**Thursday 25 December | 00.00**

A congregation of over 2000 gathers in the stillness of the night to celebrate the birth of Jesus Christ. The Mass is led by the Most Rev John Sherington, Archbishop of Liverpool. The choir sings Widor's *Messe à deux chœurs et deux orgues* alongside the luscious harmonies of Morten Lauridsen's *O magnum mysterium* and the emotion of Adolphe Adam's 'O Holy night'.

## Solemn Mass of Christmas Day

**Thursday 25 December | 11.00**

We celebrate Christmas day with Schubert's joyful *Mass in G* alongside arrangements of popular Christmas Carols by Wilberg (Ding dong!), Gavaert (Angels we have heard on high) and Gjeilo (Away in a manger).

*Additional Christmas Masses are celebrated at 18.00 on Wednesday 24th (Vigil Mass) and 9.00 (cathedral) and 10.00 (crypt) on Christmas morning.*

## Epiphany Carol Service

**Sunday 18 January | 15.00**

A journey following the star in words and music with music by Stopford, Whitacre and Britten.



# Lent

## 'He trusted in God' – Lenten portion of Handel's *Messiah* Sunday 1 March | 15.00

The text of Handel's most famous oratorio was written by Charles Jennens, and is an extended reflection in three parts of Jesus' life, spanning his birth, death and resurrection. The movements contained in the second part focus on the passion and death of the Messiah, and include some of the famous choruses such as 'All we like sheep' and 'Behold the Lamb of God'. Soloists include Danny Townley (alto) and David Lee (tenor).



## Les Sept Paroles du Christ en Croix - Franck Sunday 8 March | 15.00

The composer César Franck is best known today for his *Panis Angelicus*. The *Seven Last Words* is a devotional work written in 1859, but never performed until the work was discovered in 1977. Franck was not the only composer to set the seven last words of Jesus (actually, sentences, not words!) but Franck was unusual in that he sought to expand on the brief text by supplementing other biblical and liturgical texts, reflecting the fact that he was a parish church organist steeped in the Catholic liturgical tradition. Soloists include Connor Cobb (bass).

## *Stabat Mater* - Pergolesi Sunday 15 March | 15.00

We mark Mothering Sunday with Pergolesi's *Stabat Mater Dolorosa*. The text of the *Stabat Mater* is a 13th-century hymn reflecting on Mary's suffering during the crucifixion of her son. The powerful words have inspired many composers to set the text to music, including the 18th-century Italian composer Giovanni Battista Pergolesi. Pergolesi's musical setting alternates movements sung by the full choir with sections sung by soloists. The singing is accompanied by two violins and chamber organ.



## *Lamentations of Jeremiah* - Tallis Sunday 22 March | 15.00

The biblical text (drawn from the first five verses of the book of Lamentations) was originally set for the Holy Week office of Tenebræ. Tallis' composition is extraordinarily impassioned music written during the turbulent Tudor period, capturing the longing of the text alongside the hope inspired by its concluding statement: 'Jerusalem, Jerusalem, return unto the Lord your God'.

## Tenebræ Sunday 29 March | 19.30

The responsories will be sung to musical settings by Tomás Luis de Victoria, and Psalm 50, *Miserere Mei*, being sung to the spine-tingling setting by Gregorio Allegri. Hearing this piece in the Metropolitan Cathedral is a sublime experience: the soloists sing from one of the high galleries, with the sound of a small group of singers filling the cathedral as if from the heavens.



# Holy Week & Easter

*The journey of Holy Week is the apex of the liturgical year*

## **Palm Sunday | 29 March**

11.00 Solemn Mass and Procession

Holy Week begins with the procession of palms from outside the cathedral (weather permitting), leading into the singing of the Passion to a special musical setting by Philip Duffy (Master of the Music in the cathedral from 1966-1996), alongside motets by Gibbons, Anerio and Byrd.

19.30 Tenebrae

See page 9.

## **Chrism Mass | Wednesday 1 April | 19.30**

A capacity congregation from across the Archdiocese of Liverpool gathers to witness the Archbishop bless the holy oils. The choir and congregation sing a special setting of the Gloria written for the cathedral by Colin Mawby that makes use of our unique liturgical layout.

## **Maundy Thursday | 2 April**

**10.00 Office of Readings**

Sung psalmody and motets by Pergolesi

**19.30 Mass of the Lord's Supper**

On the night we celebrate the Last Supper, the choir sings the *Mass in G minor* of Vaughan Williams, alongside motets by Martin Baker, Duruflé, Byrd and de Séverac. Before the Mass begins the organist sets the scene with a performance of *Le Banquet Céleste* by Messiaen.

## **Good Friday | 3 April**

**10.00 Office of Readings**

Sung psalmody and motets by Victoria and Anerio.

**15.00 Celebration of the Lord's Passion**

Marking the day of Jesus' death, the choir sings music from the rich corpus of Passiontide music including *The Reproaches* by Colin Mawby and William Byrd's *Civitas sancti tui*.





## Holy Saturday | 4 April

**10.00 Office of Readings**  
Sung psalmody and motets by Victoria and Anerio.

**20.00 Easter Vigil**  
Starting in the darkness outside the cathedral, congregation and choir gradually bring the light into the cathedral as we celebrate the first Mass of the Resurrection. Featuring joyful choral music by Dove, Handel and Palestrina.

## Easter Sunday | 5 April

### 11.00 Solemn Mass

We celebrate Easter Sunday Mass with music by Mozart and Widor.

### 15.00 Baptismal Evening Prayer

Holy Week draws to a close with a baptismal procession followed by the singing of Choral Evening Prayer with music by Byrd, Handel and Aichinger.

*Additional Easter Sunday Masses are celebrated at 9.00 (cathedral), 10.00 (crypt) and 19.00 (crypt)*



## Eastertide Carol Service Sunday 26 April | 15.00

The Metropolitan Cathedral Choir leads a carol service for Eastertide, including movements from Part III of Handel's *Messiah*.



# Pictures at an Exhibition

Wednesday 20 May | 19.00

*Admission free, retiring collection*

Metropolitan Cathedral Organist Richard Lea presents Modest Mussorgsky's Pictures at an Exhibition. Written in 1874 the composition is a musical depiction of a tour of an exhibition of works by architect and painter Viktor Hartmann. Originally a piano suite, the work has become widely known through orchestrations and arrangements. Tonight's performance will also include 'pictures' by Debussy (*La cathédrale engloutie*) Guillou (*Saga VI Icarus*) and Vierne (*Naiades & Claire de Lune*).

Richard studied at the Royal Northern College of Music in Manchester and Christ's and Notre Dame College in Liverpool, and was Organ Scholar at Liverpool Metropolitan Cathedral studying with Noel Rawsthorne, Terence Duffy and Philip Duffy. He has made numerous broadcasts and has recorded three discs of the music of Lefébure-Wély, the complete organ works of William Mathias and the world premiere recording of Sir John Tavener's Requiem with the Royal Liverpool Philharmonic Orchestra and Choir conducted by Vasily Petrenko.



# Livre du Saint-Sacrement

*Event kindly sponsored by Dr Simon Fisher*

Wednesday 3 June | 19.00

*Admission free, retiring collection*

Organist Tom Bell presents Messiaen's monumental meditation on the Eucharist, *Livre du Saint-Sacrement*. First performed in 1986, the work is in 18 movements, each headed by a quotation from a biblical or theological source and drawing heavily on the composer's Catholic faith.

Tom Bell was born in Liverpool and studied with Kevin Bowyer at the Royal Northern College of Music, with Ann Elise Smoot in London, and with Jacques van Oortmerssen in Amsterdam. One of the leading performers of his generation, Tom has performed extensively across mainland Europe and the USA. Tom is Artistic Director to the London Organ Day, teaches the organ for the Royal College of Organists and the Royal Hospital School in Suffolk, and has led or participated in many outreach projects. Tom is the Royal College of Organists' Director for the North of England, North Wales and the Isle of Man.

# Take him, earth, for cherishing

**Sunday 5 July | 15.00**

*Admission free, retiring collection*

Liverpool Cathedral Choir & Liverpool Metropolitan Cathedral Choir  
Stephen Mannings, Christopher McElroy – conductors

To mark American Independence Day weekend, the joint cathedral choirs sing Herbert Howells' motet 'Take him, earth, for cherishing', written for the memorial service of President John F Kennedy in 1964, alongside works by Morten Lauridsen and Eric Whitacre.



## Summer Sunday Organ Recitals

**All start at 14.00**

*Admission free, retiring collection*

A series of organ recitals on Sunday afternoons lasting 40 minutes by performers from around the UK.

**2 August - Stephen Hargreaves (Liverpool)**

**9 August - Freddy Harvey (Liverpool Cathedral)**

**16 August - Ivan Linford (Oakham)**

**23 August - Alan McGuinness (Llandudno)**

**30 August - Simon Leach (Edinburgh)**

# Cathedral choir in the parishes

As well as singing for regular choral services in the cathedral, the Metropolitan Cathedral Choir also presents Parish Choral Offerings and other musical events in churches throughout the archdiocese.

## Parish Choral Offering at St Basil's Church, Widnes (WA8 4SZ)

Friday 26 September | 19.00

The Metropolitan Cathedral Choir join together with the Widnes Catholic Children's Choir to present a programme of choral music including Mozart's *Missa Brevis in Bb*.

## Parish Choral Offering at St Margaret Mary's Church, Huyton (L14 0JG)

Friday 14 November | 19.00

The Metropolitan Cathedral Choir joins together with the Knowsley Catholic Children's Choir to present a programme of choral music, including Schubert's *Mass in G*.

## A Ceremony of Carols at St Anthony of Padua (L18 8AY)

Thursday 11 December | 13.00

The choristers of the Metropolitan Cathedral Choir perform *A Ceremony of Carols* by Benjamin Britten.

## Parish Choral Offering at St Mary's Church, Woolton (L25 5JF)

Friday 6 February | 19.00

The cathedral choir presents a programme of choral music, including works by MacMillan, Howells and Cousins.

## Parish Choral Offering at St Bartholomew's Church, Rainhill (L35 6NY)

Friday 15 May | 19.00

The Metropolitan Cathedral Choir presents a programme of choral music, including works by Britten, MacMillan and de Cristo.



**Choral Evening Prayer** (sung vespers) takes place on Sundays during term time at 15.00.

During the seasons on Advent and Lent, this service is usually replaced by special musical offerings.

*See pages 6-7 for special services during the seasons of Advent and Christmas*

<b>Date</b>	<b>Music includes</b>
<b>7 September</b> <i>Presentation of leadership medals and induction of new probationers</i>	Ecce sacerdos - Bruckner A Hymn to the Virgin - Britten
<b>14 September</b> <i>Exaltation of the Holy Cross</i>	Solus ad victimam - Leighton Christus factus est - Anerio
<b>28 September</b>	Coronation Te Deum - Walton Magnificat in G - Stanford
<b>5 October</b>	Ich lasse dich nicht - Bach Like as the hart - Howells
<b>12 October</b>	Te lucis ante terminum - Tallis Ave Maria - Elgar
<b>19 October</b>	Magnificat 'Jesus College' - Mathias Salve Regina - Poulenc
<b>9 November</b> <i>Dedication of the Lateran Basilica</i>	Locus iste - Bruckner I was glad - Parry
<b>16 November</b>	Media vita - Briggs Alleluia, Amen - Leighton
<b>23 November</b> <i>Christ the King</i>	Rejoice in the Lamb - Britten Magnificat in G minor - Purcell
<b>25 January</b> <i>With Liverpool Cathedral Choir</i>	O nata lux - Tallis Magnificat in G minor - Purcell
<b>1 February</b>	A Child's Prayer - MacMillan Magnificat 'St Paul's' - Howells
<b>8 February</b>	Senex puerum portabat - Byrd Videte miraculum - Tallis





*See pages 8-12 for special services during the seasons of Lent and Easter*

<b>Date</b>	<b>Music includes</b>
<b>3 May</b>	Sicut cervus - Palestrina Let all mortal flesh keep silence - Bairstow
<b>10 May</b>	A New Song - MacMillan Regina cæli - de Cristo
<b>17 May</b>	Seek him that maketh the seven stars - Dove Magnificat in E minor - Purcell
<b>24 May</b> <i>Pentecost</i>	Two Cathedrals Walk
<b>7 June</b> <i>Corpus Christi</i>	Ave verum - Byrd Tantum ergo - Bruckner
<b>14 June</b> <i>Be a chorister for a day</i>	Psalm 150 - Mawby Dextera Domini - Cousins
<b>21 June</b>	Lo, the full, final sacrifice - Finzi Magnificat in A - Stanford
<b>28 June</b> <i>Ss Peter &amp; Paul</i>	Tu es Petrus - Perosi O quam gloriosum - Victoria
<b>12 July</b> <i>Valediction of choristers</i>	Lux gloriæ - Wood Zadok the priest - Handel





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