



# Worth Abbey

## ORGAN VOLUNTARIES

January 2021

In the present time when mass sheets will not be printed details of the organ voluntaries will be posted a month at a time on the Parish website in this PDF form.

During current circumstances we have to forego the major voluntaries which would normally conclude the masses; instead we will have shorter pieces that offer cover for the procession to leave the altar (hence the alternative word of 'Recessional' to the more usual 'Voluntary') and for those attending to leave the Abbey as required. As such these offerings form a kind of musical exclamation mark, or full stop, marking the conclusion of the service; a brief burst of joy or a dramatic gesture affirming what has happened... (The music for the Entrance, Offertory and Communion, which are frequently improvised and dependant on whether a cantor(s) are singing, are not necessarily detailed here.)

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### Saturday 2 & Sunday 3

<i>Communion</i>	<b>Chorale Prelude: Das alte Jahr vergangen ist, BWV614</b>	<b>J. S. Bach (1685-1750)</b> <i>(The old year has passed away; We thank Thee, our God, that Thou hast kept us safe through the year.)</i>
<i>Recessional</i>	<b>Chorale Prelude: In dir ist freude, BWV615</b>	<b>J. S. Bach (1685-1750)</b> <i>(In Thee is gladness... Hallelujah!)</i>

Two extracts from Bach's *Orgelbüchlein*, a collection of 46 preludes, based on chorales which chart the Lutheran liturgical year. Alongside his purpose that it be *summa theologica*, Bach intended the pieces themselves for the education and use of his pupils. For countless years, it has been widely regarded as a cornerstone for anyone learning to play the organ.

At communion we hear the one for New Year's Eve – which expresses both a wistful look back on the year gone as well as hope for the one to come. By contrast, the one for New Year's Day (the recessional) is full of vigour, confidence and joy – expressed in the general feel, glittering trills (joy) and a radiant tonality.

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### Epiphany Vigil Tuesday 5

<i>Offertory</i>	<b>Prélude sur l'Introit de l'Epiphanie</b>	<b>Maurice Duruflé (1902-1986)</b>
<i>Communion</i>	<b>Tierce en taille from Magnificat</b>	<b>Jean-François Dandrieu (1682-1738)</b>
<i>Voluntary</i>	<b>Prelude from Prelude &amp; Fugue in C, BWV545</b>	<b>J. S. Bach (1685-1750)</b>

The beautifully limpid meditation on the Introit for Epiphany from the genius Duruflé, expressing perfectly the flexibility of the Gregorian introit chant; the 17<sup>th</sup> century Dandrieu's refined expression in the *Tierce* sounds just as improvised...

Bach wrote three preludes and fugues in C for the organ. Although musically straightforward, the history of this one (BWV545) is complex and Bach made several revisions, finally happy with it in Leipzig in 1730. Both prelude and fugue are grand, decisive and have an 'open' nature. The Prelude is based on two elements (descending arpeggio motif; an ascending figure).

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### Saturday 9 & Sunday 10

<i>Communion</i>	<b>Tierce en taille from Suite du deuxième ton</b>	<b>Jean Guilain (1680?-1739)</b>
<i>Recessional</i>	<b>Fugue from Prelude &amp; Fugue in C, BWV545</b>	<b>J. S. Bach (1685-1750)</b>

An beautiful meditation from his collection of *Pièces d'orgue pour le Magnificat* (1706) by Guilain; an almost exact contemporary of Bach, he was born in German as Jean Adam Wilhelm Freinsberg but moved to France sometime before 1702, at which time he assumed the name he has been known by ever since. A pupil of Marchand in Paris, he assimilated perfectly the French style and manners of the day.

The fugue of Bach's BWV545 (see last week) opens with the declaration of a clean and bright melodic subject which is based and uses the first five notes of the scale – one similar to the subject of Fugue in C from Book I of the '48'. Whilst under its façade of simplicity and a straight-forward freshness, Bach weaves several elements – a motif often used to express the Holy Ghost (an arpeggiated figure), tonal structure (tonic > dominant > tonic) which expresses a circle of the Universe, the idea of the Cross. But, with his unequalled genius, Bach presents us with a seemingly uncluttered canvass of optimism.

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## Saturday 16 & Sunday 17

<i>Communion</i>	<b>Subdue us by Thy goodness</b>	<b>J. S. Bach (1685-1750)</b>
<i>Recessional</i>	<b>A stronghold sure is Our God</b>	<b>J. S. Bach (1685-1750)</b>

Two pieces from a collection of *Twelve Transcriptions from Vocal Scores* of Bach made by Harvey Grace (1874-1944); published by Oxford University Press in 1934, the set was dedicated to the then doyen of English organists, George Thalben-Ball (1896-1987). Grace was a distinguished musician of his times – editor of *The Musical Times*, a commissioner of the Royal School of Church Music, and, until disagreements with the clergy forced his move, Organist of Chichester Cathedral. He spent the years of the Second World War as Organist of St Swithun's in East Grinstead.

Bach wrote almost 200 cantatas, the composition of these being an almost weekly requirement during one period of his employment as a church musician; we hear today contrasting movements from two of these. ***Subdue us by Thy goodness; awake us by The grace*** (it is also known as ***Mortify us by Thy grace***) comes from his 22nd Cantata, BWV22, written for Quinquagesima. Grace sets the chorale, in a manner often done by Bach, in the pedals at higher pitch.

The stirring chorus ***A Stronghold Sure*** comes from the 80th cantata, and was actually the first of any to be published (yet only 1821). Grace sets the chorale melody sung by the chorus in the original here in the feet, whilst the hands play the elaborate orchestral parts. In the ever-radiant tonality of D Major, this is a typical example of Bach faith set in music – energy, joy and affirmation being its hallmarks and rejoicing in God's ever-guiding love.

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## Saturday 23 & Sunday 24

<i>Communion</i>	<b>Andante from Sonata No.4 in D minor, Op.61</b>	<b>Alexandre Guilmant (1837-1911)</b>
<i>Recessional</i>	<b>Finale (Adagio-Allegro vivace con fuoco) from Sonata No.4 in D minor, Op.61</b>	<b>Alexandre Guilmant (1837-1911)</b>

Alongside Widor, Guilmant was the most important French organist of his day; both are considered the 'fathers' of the modern French virtuoso school. Tireless as performer (even in the USA), teacher and pedagogue, prolific composer, editor (it is to him we owe many early editions of Baroque organ music), Guilmant devoted himself to his art with selfless modesty. A man of greatly respected character and generous spirit, revered by his pupils (who referred to him affectionately as '*père Guilmant*'), he was Organist of the Trinity church in Paris for many years.

He wrote his fourth (of eight) organ sonatas in 1884. It's slow movement, heard at Communion, is a lyrical meditation typical of Guilmant's: unlike others composing at the time, he didn't seek to be ground-breaking harmonically, just to write honest, practical music that was 'usable' in a way that might elevate musical standards (often rather low at the time) in churches. The *Finale* starts a trick start - a sombre melodic strain punctuated by doleful chords; but this makes way for the 'real' finale – an energetic piece typical of its ever-dignified and genteel composer. A brief chorale-like interlude is interrupted by the opening material and the work ends splendidly.

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## Saturday 30 & Sunday 31

<i>Communion</i>	<b>Chant de Paix from Neuf Pièces, Op.41</b>	<b>Jean Langlais (1907-1991)</b>
<i>Recessional</i>	<b>Toccata</b>	<b>Thierry Pallesco (b. 1962)</b>

A peaceful reflection of Langlais stands in marked contrast to the fiery and somewhat threatening *Toccata* of his much younger countryman Thierry Pallesco. Pallesco was a pupil of Rolande Falcinelli at the Paris Conservatoire and now concerns himself with composition. This *Toccata* was only completed earlier in January; it receives here its first airing in England.



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