

Flourishing as the Friends of Jesus (who really like jazz!)



*All this took place to fulfill what had been spoken
by the Lord through the prophet:
“Look, the virgin shall conceive and bear a son,
and they shall name him Emmanuel,
which means, ‘God is with us.’” (Matt 1:23)*

My Advent spiritual disciplines this year
have included a prayerful reading of
Jamie Howison’s book on John Coltrane’s faith,
God’s Mind in That Music (2012).

Howison is an Anglican priest who ministers with
St. Barnabas Table in Winnipeg.
The book emerged from a sabbatical he took some years ago
to immerse himself in the connections he found
between jazz and Christian theology,
especially in the compositions and performances
of John Coltrane.

It’s a book rich in insights and provocations.
What has struck me over and over again
is Howison’s appreciation for the fact
that there are dimensions of God being with us
that cannot be put into words.

Music, especially jazz, is a much better mode of expression for that.
Jazz can reach into and resonate with depths of our souls
in ways that are inaccessible to words along.

I trust you are experiencing ‘God with us’ in the music tonight.

What Is This Evensong Thing?

Evensong is a service of worship,
a means of paying tribute through song and prayer
to the divine energy that we Christians consider
the source of our being.

We come to know the love that inspires this God
most clearly in the life of Jesus,
the One through whom God redeemed
the beloved creation to its original purpose.
That love continues to inspire all of us
through the work of God’s Holy Spirit,
a dynamic we believe is at work in our world
whether we recognize it or not.

Worship is an experience
where this God encounters us with that love
in ways most suited to nourishing our flourishing.

The evensong tradition of worship
can be traced back to the Jewish synagogue,
then through Christian monasteries,
then through the Anglican Prayer Books
of Thomas Cramner (1489-1556).

It has been adapted and improvised on
down through the ages,
but always with the intent of
refreshing the soul and informing the mind.

We trust something of this kind of inspiration
will be yours this evening.

Thank you so much
for blessing us with your presence this evening.