

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



“And blessed is anyone who takes no offense at me.”
(Matt 11:6)

It's hard not to be offended by Jesus.

He was born in a barn, the child of an unwed mother.
He was driven out of the country and became a refugee in Egypt.

He astounded the learned men of his culture
with his grasp of the most important things in life at the age of 12.

His public mission was announced by his cousin,
a mad man from the wilderness of Galilee,
who was beheaded for his crimes against the state.

He preached a version of Judaism focused on love
that challenged the religious and political elites of his day.

He hung out with working stiffs, prostitutes, the unclean,
foreigners, and rip-off artists.

He disrupted the business of being religious in those days
by chasing money-changers out of the Temple.

He paid for it in the end.

The powers he threatened executed him for offensiveness.

But for the past 2000 years,
people have seen beyond the offensiveness
to the blessed reforms that Jesus encouraged
through his unique triumph over death in all its forms.

In his resurrection, they have found a steadfast source of flourishing
that is very much like the resilient rhythms of jazz in our day.

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.