

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

Jan 25, 2017



No self-respecting Scot
can let today pass without mentioning
that this is Robbie Burns' birthday.
All around the world,
and I do mean *all* around the world,
people gather to pay tribute
to this poet and collector of folk songs.
They eat a bit of haggis, drink a bit of whiskey,
and sing and dance a lot.

There were two books in my Nana's house
that I remember clearly -
the Bible and the Collected Poems of Robert Burns.
For her, both were filled with 'gumption.'

That's a gritty Scots/English word
that came into common use in the late 1700s.
It means guts, bold initiative, resourcefulness,
resilience, spunk, smarts, and ingenuity.
That's something jazz musicians need
to make it in the business these days.
It's something the Rossi Gang knew they would learn
when they went to New Orleans.
It's something Brentwood is learning in its work
with the jazz community.
And it's something Nana found in both Burns and the Bible.

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.