

Capel y Boro Service
Sun 12 July 2020 at 11am

'I saw Eternity the other night' – A service to celebrate science and discovery



Opening music:
Richard Strauss

Also sprach Zarathustra
(Thus spoke Zarathustra)
(opening)

The opening titles of Stanley Kubrick's *2001: A Space Odyssey* (1968) Berlin Philharmonic Orchestra/Karl Böhm

Henry Vaughan *The World*

Intrada

Huw Rhys-Evans (tenor)

O worship the King all glorious above (Robert Grant)

Derec Llwyd Morgan *Eclips*

Walt Whitman

When I heard the learn'd astronomer

Richard Wagner

Tannhäuser, Wolfram's Aria
'O du, mein holder Abendstern',

Sir Bryn Terfel (bass-baritone);
Metropolitan Opera
Orchestra/James Levine

Salm 111

Tyrd atom ni, O Grëwr pob goleuni

(W Rhys Nicholas, *Berwyn*)

Isaiah 55:10-13

For the fruits of His creation

(F Pratt Green, *Ar hyd y nos*)

Nesta Wyn Jones

Cae o wenith

Matthew 13: 1-9

The parable of the sower

Matthew 13: 18-23

The parable of the sower explained

Duw mawr y rhyfeddodau maith

(Samuel Davies, cyf. J R Jones, *Rhyd-y-Groes*)

Message and Prayers

Gweddi'r Arglwydd / Lord's Prayer

Tydi sy deilwng oll o'm cân

(David Charles, *Godre'r Coed*)

Blessing

Closing music:

Johann Strauss II

An der schönen, blauen Donau

(The Blue Danube) (excerpt)
from Stanley Kubrick's *2001: A Space Odyssey* (1968)

Berlin Philharmonic
Orchestra/Herbert von Karajan



Opening music:

Richard Strauss *Also sprach Zarathustra* (opening)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=e-QFj59PON4>

Henry Vaughan *The World*

I saw Eternity the other night,
Like a great ring of pure and
endless light,
All calm, as it was bright;
And round beneath it, Time in
hours, days, years,
Driv'n by the spheres
Like a vast shadow mov'd; in
which the world
And all her train were hurl'd.
The doting lover in his quaintest
strain
Did there complain;
Near him, his lute, his fancy, and
his flights,
Wit's sour delights,
With gloves, and knots, the silly
snares of pleasure,
Yet his dear treasure
All scatter'd lay, while he his eyes
did pour
Upon a flow'r.

The darksome statesman hung
with weights and woe,
Like a thick midnight-fog mov'd
there so slow,
He did not stay, nor go;
Condemning thoughts (like sad
eclipses) scowl
Upon his soul,
And clouds of crying witnesses
without
Pursued him with one shout.
Yet digg'd the mole, and lest his
ways be found,
Work'd under ground,
Where he did clutch his prey; but
one did see
That policy;
Churches and altars fed him;
perjuries

Were gnats and flies;
It rain'd about him blood and
tears, but he
Drank them as free.

The fearful miser on a heap of
rust
Sate pining all his life there, did
scarce trust
His own hands with the dust,
Yet would not place one piece
above, but lives
In fear of thieves;
Thousands there were as frantic
as himself,
And hugg'd each one his pelf;
The downright epicure plac'd
heav'n in sense,
And scorn'd pretence,
While others, slipp'd into a wide
excess,
Said little less;
The weaker sort slight, trivial
wares enslave,
Who think them brave;
And poor despised Truth sate
counting by
Their victory.

Yet some, who all this while did
weep and sing,
And sing, and weep, soar'd up
into the ring;
But most would use no wing.
O fools (said I) thus to prefer
dark night
Before true light,
To live in grots and caves, and
hate the day
Because it shews the way,
The way, which from this dead
and dark abode
Leads up to God,
A way where you might tread the
sun, and be
More bright than he.
But as I did their madness so
discuss
One whisper'd thus,
"This ring the Bridegroom did for
none provide,
But for his bride."

One of the most important images in 'The World' is that of the ring. Eternity is represented as a ring of light. There is no beginning or end to the ring, a fact which relates to the speaker's overwhelmed reaction to seeing it "the other night." It contrasts in its steadfastness and sheer vastness with his everyday life. Anything he might have previously valued immediately disappears from his mind. It is also important to note how the bright "pure and endless light" resembles the sun and therefore God. Although not mentioned by name till the end of this piece, God is the centre of the entire narrative.



Henry Vaughan (1621 –95) was a Welsh metaphysical poet, author, translator and physician, who wrote in English. He is chiefly known for religious poetry contained in 'Silex Scintillans', published in 1650, with a second part in 1655. He also translated short moral and religious works and two medical works in prose. In the 1650s he began a lifelong practise in medicine. Henry Vaughan was born at Newton by Usk in the parish of Llansantffraed (St. Bridget's), Brecknockshire. Henry Vaughan was acclaimed less in his lifetime than after his death, in 1695, aged 74. He was buried in the churchyard of St Bride's, Llansantffraed, Powys, where he had spent most of his life. The grave is visited by enthusiasts and has been the inspiration for other poets,

including Siegfried Sassoon, Roland Mathias and Brian Morris.

Intrada

Ysbryd y tragwyddol Dduw,
disgyn arnom ni; Ysbryd y
tragwyddol Dduw, disgyn arnom
ni: plyg ni, trin ni, golch ni, cod ni:
Ysbryd y tragwyddol Dduw,
disgyn arnom ni.

*Spirit of the eternal God, descend
upon us; Spirit of the eternal God,
descend upon us:
fold us, treat us, wash us, raise us:
Spirit of the eternal God, descend
upon us.*

**O worship the King all
glorious above,**
and gratefully sing his power and
his love:
our shield and defender, the
Ancient of Days,
pavilioned in splendour and
girded with praise.

O tell of his might and sing of his
grace,
whose robe is the light, whose
canopy space;
his chariots of wrath the deep
thunder-clouds form,
and dark is his path on the wings
of the storm.

The earth, with its store of
wonders untold,
Almighty, your power has
founded of old;
established it fast, by a changeless
decree,
and round it has cast, like a
mantle, the sea.

Your bountiful care, what tongue
can recite?
It breathes in the air, it shines in
the light;

it streams from the hills, it
descends to the plain,
and sweetly distils in the dew and
the rain.

We children of dust are feeble
and frail -
in you do we trust, for you never
fail;
your mercies, how tender, how
firm to the end!
our maker, defender, redeemer,
and friend.
O measureless Might,
unchangeable Love,
whom angels delight to worship
above!
Your ransomed creation, with
glory ablaze,
in true adoration shall sing to
your praise!

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ul9cDJMsnI4>

Derec Llwyd Morgan *Eclips*

Cryndod yn fy asennau
Foreau oer y diawl
A fynn
A fynn mai rhyfyg
Ydoedd yr hyfdra haul
A lacharai â'i lais-newyddion
Fwletin y wawr:
Sicr economi ei olau,
Y pris a ddeil ei aur.

Mae niwl-loer a'i sensora.

Cen ar lygad sydd
Ddi-oddef nawr o wybod
Na ddaw o'r dwyrain ddydd.

Rwy'n llonydd felttgedig,
Ar bigau'r drain run fath –
Does dim all ferwi f'enaid
Â'r fflam fu iddo'n faeth.

A holaf yn y cyntedd
Ar drothwy'r cread du,

Am yr haul, "A ail-wreiddir
Ei dwyll lle bu?"

*The quaking in my ribs on devilish
cold mornings insists that the sun's
audacity flashing with its news-
casting voice the dawn bulletin was
arrogance: The stable economy of
its light, the price its gold retains.*

Mist-moon censors it.

*The scale upon eye is unbearable
now that it is known no day will
come from the east.*

*I am accursedly calm, on thorn
pricks all the same – nothing can
seethe my soul with the flame that
was its nourishment.*

*And I ask in the hallway on the
threshold of the black creation,
concerning the sun, Will the
falsehood where it was be re-
verified?*

Translated by Derec Llwyd Morgan



*Derec Llwyd Morgan (1943-) is a
Welsh academic who is a former
Vice-Chancellor of the University of
Wales, Aberystwyth. Morgan was
educated at Amman Valley
Grammar School, (now Ysgol
Dyffryn Aman) Carmarthenshire,
Wales before studying at the
University College of North Wales,
Bangor, for a Bachelor of Arts
degree. He obtained his doctorate*

*with a thesis entitled A critical study
of the works of Charles Edwards
(1628-1691?) from Jesus College,
Oxford. He was a lecturer at the
University College of Wales,
Aberystwyth from 1969 before
moving back to the Department of
Welsh at Bangor in 1975, rising to
become Reader (1983–1989). He
was also Director of the Research
Centre Wales from 1985 to 1989.
In 1989, Morgan was appointed
Professor of Welsh at Aberystwyth,
also serving as Vice-Principal in
1994–1995. He was then Vice-
Chancellor and Principal from 1995
until 2004, when he became
Professor Emeritus.*

Walt Whitman *When I heard the learn'd astronomer*

When I heard the learn'd
astronomer,
When the proofs, the figures,
were ranged in columns before
me,
When I was shown the charts
and diagrams, to add, divide, and
measure them,
When I sitting heard the
astronomer where he lectured
with much applause in the
lecture-room,
How soon unaccountable I
became tired and sick,
Till rising and gliding out I
wander'd off by myself,
In the mystical moist night-air,
and from time to time,
Look'd up in perfect silence at
the stars.

*"When I Heard the Learn'd
Astronomer" was written by poet,
teacher, and Civil War volunteer
nurse Walt Whitman (1819 –92),
pictured below. First published in
1865 the poem conveys Whitman's
belief in the limits of using science*

to understand nature. Rather, he suggests, one needs to experience nature for true understanding, instead of measuring it.



Richard Wagner
Tannhäuser, Wolfram's Aria
'O du, mein holder
Abendstern'



"Song to the Evening Star" ("O du mein holder Abendstern") is an aria sung by the character Wolfram (baritone) in the third act of Richard Wagner's 1845 opera 'Tannhäuser.'

O du, mein holder Abendstern,
wohl grüsst'ich immer dich so
gern: vom Herzen, das sie nie
verriet, grüsse sie, wenn sie
vorbei dir zieht,

wenn sie entschwebt dem Tal
der Erden,
ein sel'ger Engel dort zu werden!

*O you, my fair evening star,
Gladly have I always greeted you:
Greet her, from the depths of this
heart,
Which has never betrayed her,
Greet her, when she passes,
When she soars above this mortal
vale
To become a holy angel there!*

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=dSPTqUTAhmg>

Salm III

Dw i'n diolch i'r Arglwydd o
waelod calon,
flaen y gynulleidfa o'i bobl
ffyddlon.
Mae'r Arglwydd yn gwneud
pethau mor fawr!
Maen nhw'n bleser pur i bawb
sy'n myfyrio arnyn nhw.
Mae'r cwbl yn dangos ei
ysblander a'i urddas,
a'i fod e bob amser yn ffyddlon.

Mae pawb yn sôn am y pethau
rhyfeddol mae'n eu gwneud!
Mae'r Arglwydd mor garedig a
thrugarog!
Mae e'n rhoi bwyd i'w rai
ffyddlon;
mae bob amser yn cofio'r
ymrwymiad wnaeth e.
Dwedodd wrth ei bobl y byddai'n
gwneud pethau mawr,
a rhoi tir cenedloedd eraill
iddyn nhw.
Mae e wedi bod yn ffyddlon ac yn
gyfiawn.

Mae'r pethau mae'n eu dysgu yn
gwbl ddibynadwy,
ac yn sefyll am byth.
Maen nhw'n ffyddlon ac yn deg.

Mae wedi gollwng ei bobl yn
rhydd,
ac wedi sicrhau fod ei
ymrwymiad yn sefyll bob amser.
Mae ei enw'n sanctaidd ac i gael
ei barchu.
Parchu'r Arglwydd ydy'r cam
cyntaf i fod yn ddoeth.
Mae pawb sy'n gwneud hynny yn
gwneud y peth call.
Mae e'n haeddu ei foli am byth!

*Praise the Lord!
I will give thanks to the Lord with
my whole heart,
in the company of the upright, in
the congregation.*

*Great are the works of the Lord,
studied by all who delight in them.*

*Full of honour and majesty is his
work,
and his righteousness endures for
ever.*

*He has gained renown by his
wonderful deeds;
the Lord is gracious and merciful.*

*He provides food for those who fear
him;
he is ever mindful of his covenant.*

*He has shown his people the power
of his works,
in giving them the heritage of the
nations.*

*The works of his hands are faithful
and just;
all his precepts are trustworthy.*

*They are established for ever and
ever,
to be performed with faithfulness
and uprightness.*

*He sent redemption to his people;
he has commanded his covenant for
ever.
Holy and awesome is his name.*

*The fear of the Lord is the beginning
of wisdom;
all those who practise it have a
good understanding.
His praise endures for ever.*

Tyrd atom ni, O Grëwr pob goleuni,

tro di ein nos yn ddydd;
pâr inni weld holl lwybrau'r daith
yn gloywi
dan lewyrch gras a ffydd.

Tyrd atom ni, O Luniwr pob
rhyw harddwch,
rho inni'r doniau glân;
tyn ni yn ôl i afael dy hyfrydwch
lle mae'r dragwyddol gân.

Tyrd atom ni, Arweinydd
pererinion,
dwg ni i ffordd llesâd;
tydi dy hun sy'n tywys drwy'r
treialon,
O derbyn ein mawrhad.

Tyrd atom ni, O Dad ein
Harglwydd
Iesu, i'n harwain ato ef;
canmolwn fyth yr hwn sydd yn
gwaredu,
bendigaid Fab y nef.

*Come to us, O Creator of all light,
turn your night into day;
let us see all the paths of the
journey glittering
under the glow of grace and faith.*

*Come to us, O Maker of all beauty,
give us the clean gifts;
bring us back to your delight
where the eternal song is.*

*Come to us, Leader of pilgrims,
bring us to the way of salvation;
it is you who leads you through the
trials,
O receive our increase.*

Come to us, O Father of our Lord

*Jesus, to lead us to him;
we praise ever the one who
redeems,
bless the Son of heaven.*

[https://www.youtube.com/watch?
v=Aoj6dSGT9kl](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Aoj6dSGT9kl)

Isaiah 55:10-13

For as the rain and the snow
come down from heaven,
and do not return there until
they have watered the earth,
making it bring forth and sprout,
giving seed to the sower and
bread to the eater,

so shall my word be that goes
out from my mouth;
it shall not return to me empty,
but it shall accomplish that which
I purpose,
and succeed in the thing for
which I sent it.

For you shall go out in joy,
and be led back in peace;
the mountains and the hills
before you
shall burst into song,
and all the trees of the field shall
clap their hands.

Instead of the thorn shall come
up the cypress;
instead of the brier shall come up
the myrtle;
and it shall be to the Lord for a
memorial,
for an everlasting sign that shall
not be cut off.

For the fruits of His creation

thanks be to God;
for his gifts to every nation
thanks be to God;
for the ploughing, sowing,
reaping,
silent growth while we are
sleeping,

future needs in earth's safe
keeping,
thanks be to God.

In the just reward of labour,
God's will is done;
in the help we give our
neighbour,
God's will is done;
in our worldwide task of caring
for the hungry and despairing,
in the harvests we are sharing,
God's will is done.

For the harvests of the Spirit,
thanks be to God;
for the good we all inherit,
thanks be to God;
for the wonders that astound us,
for the truths that still confound
us,
most of all, that love has found
us,
thanks be to God.

[https://www.youtube.com/watch?
v=zbBUFSOkbdM](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=zbBUFSOkbdM)

Nesta Wyn Jones Cae o wenith

Heddiw,
Fe bwysai'r arwyr las
Ar lonyddwch swrth y llwyni.
Wrth flasu mafon
Ar lain o adlodd esmwyth,
Fe wylw'n, dan fy llaw,
Blentyn bach yn simsan-gerdded
I chwilota yn y fasedg fwyd.
Rhyw deimlo a wnes
Pe credwn dy fod di yr ochr
draw
A glas dy lygad ynghŷn
Y cerddwn innau,
Y dawnsiwn fel glöyn byw
Dros bennau crwm llond cae o
wenith
Heb darfu ar glydwch y llygod
Islaw
Yn ddiogel hyd atat.
Ond a thithau ymhell,

B'nawn heddiw,
Bodloni fu raid
Ar ymlacio'n y gwres,
A syllu ar wenithen y dydd
Yn gwywo ar gledr fy llaw,
Fe'l cadwaf, er hynny,
l'w dangos i ti.

Today,
The blue sky pressed down
On the lazy stillness of the
woodland.
Eating blackberries
On a patch of soft cut grass,
I watched, under my hand,
A little child shakily-walking
To explore the basket of food.
I sort of felt
That if I believed you were the other
side
And the blue of your eyes shining
I too would walk,
I would dance like that butterfly
Over the bent heads of a field full of
corn
Without disturbing the snugness of
the fieldmice beneath,
Safely to reach you,
But, with you so far,
This afternoon,
I had to be satisfied
With relaxing in the heat,
Staring at the day's ear of wheat
Wilting in the palm of my hand,
I'll keep it, nevertheless,
To show you.

Translated R Gerallt Jones



Nesta Wyn Jones (1946-) from Abergeirw, Merioneth, won the Welsh Arts Council's young poets competition in 1968 and this poem conveying memories of a wheat field dates from 1969. She is a poet who presents a calm, contemplative personality concerned with personal themes of love and belonging, and drawing, like other contemporary poets from Welsh legend and literature for her imagery.

Matthew 13: 1-9
The parable of the sower

That same day Jesus went out of the house and sat beside the lake. Such great crowds gathered around him that he got into a boat and sat there, while the whole crowd stood on the beach. And he told them many things in parables, saying: 'Listen! A sower went out to sow. And as he sowed, some seeds fell on the path, and the birds came and ate them up. Other seeds fell on rocky ground, where they did not have much soil, and they sprang up quickly, since they had no depth of soil. But when the sun rose, they were scorched; and since they had no root, they withered away. Other seeds fell among thorns, and the thorns grew up and choked them. Other seeds fell on good soil and brought forth grain, some a hundredfold, some sixty, some thirty. Let anyone with ears listen!'

Matthew 13: 18-23
The parable of the sower explained

'Hear then the parable of the sower. When anyone hears the word of the kingdom and does

not understand it, the evil one comes and snatches away what is sown in the heart; this is what was sown on the path. As for what was sown on rocky ground, this is the one who hears the word and immediately receives it with joy; yet such a person has no root, but endures only for a while, and when trouble or persecution arises on account of the word, that person immediately falls away. As for what was sown among thorns, this is the one who hears the word, but the cares of the world and the lure of wealth choke the word, and it yields nothing. But as for what was sown on good soil, this is the one who hears the word and understands it, who indeed bears fruit and yields, in one case a hundredfold, in another sixty, and in another thirty.'

Duw mawr y rhyfeddodau maith

uw mawr y rhyfeddodau maith,
Rhyfeddol yw pob rhan o'th waith,
Ond dwyfol ras, mwy rhyfedd yw
Na'th holl weithredoedd o bob
rhyw:

Pa dduw sy'n maddau fel tydi
Yn rhad ein holl bechodau ni?

O! maddau'r holl gamweddau
mawr
Ac arbed euog lwch y llawr;
Tydi yn unig fedd yr hawl
Ac ni chaiff arall
ran o'r mawl:

Pa dduw sy'n maddau fel tydi
Yn rhad ein holl bechodau ni?

O! boed i'th ras
anfeidrol, gwiw
A gwyrrth dy gariad mawr, O
Dduw,
Orlenwi'r ddaear faith
â'th glod

Hyd nefoedd, tra bo'r byd yn bod:
Pa dduw sy'n maddau fel tydi
Yn rhad ein holl bechodau ni?

*Great God of many wonders,
Wonderful is every part of thy work,
But divine grace, more wonderful is
Than all thy works of every sort:
What god is forgiving like thou
Freely all our sins?*

*O to forgive all the great misdeeds
And to save the guilty dust of the
earth;
Thou alone possess the right
And no other shall have
a part of the praise:
What god is forgiving like thou
Freely all our sins?*

*O let there be to thy immeasurable,
worthy grace
And the miracle of thy great love, O
God,
Overfilling the wide earth
with thy praise
As far as heavens, while the earth
may be:
What god is forgiving like thou
Freely all our sins?*

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=mTz-LnHrrxg>

Message and Prayers

We heard from the reading from the gospel a very familiar story of a man who went out to plant seeds in a field. It described the common way of sowing seeds at the time. Jesus draws parallels between those who hear His teaching and the seed which falls on the path, or on the rocks, in the bushes, or in the good soil where it will grow and mature.

The message of the reading is one of hope to the faithful disciples – that even when the

results are not seen or evident anywhere, there is no cause for despair. God is in charge even when the present superficial evidence is not obvious.

Jesus seems to be encouraging the disciples to remain faithful to their task and not to get distracted by illusory success. The parable focuses on what God is able to do in the world through the ministry of Jesus and the choices set before people. Failure is an indictment of the ground and of the sower and not the seed.

The application may not be the actual words of Jesus, but reflective of the experience of the early Church as it faced the challenges of proclaiming the gospel.

There are elements here of the nature of election and the issue of personal responsibility and the tension between them.

The parable may itself be addressed to the crowd and the explanation is very direct, and addressed only to the disciples themselves. The disciples appear here to have been struggling with the concept of the use of parables to convey the message of Jesus. They are then challenged to hear how the message directly affects them.

They are called to examine their responsibility for their own reactions. Alongside this is the promise of the wonderful harvest, which God and God alone will provide.

The seed, they are assured, is always productive.

The term used to describe the method of sowing in the time of Jesus is now close to one used to describe today's communications technology and that is 'broadcasting'. We are familiar with the term from radio, or television or mobile networks – it reaches everywhere. The term originated in this farming method – casting seed everywhere and it reached, like sound waves, a variety of places. Sound messages and images infiltrate places where they can be ignored, or partially listened to when other issues distract attention, or rivet attention to the message. Much relies upon the recipient, not the quality of the message.

The sower's broadcasting process was not an economically sound method of planting – perhaps this is the point Jesus is making. God is not bound by the rules and invests in the seed and invites the faithful to cast it around the world in the hope and trust that it will take root in some people.

It is not for us to determine where the sowing is to take place. We are not in charge. We are to carry out the task without evaluating the reception it may have in practice.

The farmer in the parable did not intentionally sow seed on the pathway, or in the rocks, or among the weeds and briars. Seed for crops was valuable and not to be wasted. So why use this method? Instead of working on the broad and fertile farms which we often imagine, there were many poor people having, as they still do today, to eke out a living or an existence from

small plots of land disdained by the wealthy who can afford land on the fertile plains. There is often only a short distance from the plots of arable and fertile ground to the rock and weed-infested places that hem them in, or the pathway upon which people travel.

Indeed it is a short distance between places where the word planted in the human mind and spirit may either take root and thrive, or find inhospitable ground and wither and die. Nor should we think those places of fertility and desolations must also be in different individuals; they often exist within the same person.

The twentieth century American theologian Reinhold Niebuhr was astute in pointing out the evil in the best of us and the good mixed with the evil in us. As he expressed it, "All human sin seems so much worse in its consequences than in its intentions."

This is one of a set of parables leading to the parable of the wheat and the tares which, like this one, highlights the quality of the seed, and the sower, or of those who are the recipients of the seed. The main issue is the faithful trust of God and the message that is God's alone. God is generous and almost what we might describe as profligate – or 'prodigal'. God gives and grants grace and truth and extends it to the outcast and the unlikely.

The responsibility is for us to sow. We are not responsible for the growth. There is an invitation to extravagant, time-

consuming action, using an almost hit and miss approach that relies on obedience. We are not to worry about the result; the success of our sowing is not our concern, but that of God.

In New York City, at the corner of 42nd Street and 2nd Avenue, there is a billboard that has a message that may apply: "If your cup runneth over, spill a little". Is that true? We have so many ways in which we can demonstrate that we have heard the promise of God to change our lives, forgive sin and renew a right spirit within us. We can engage with the task of sowing that word of hope and life and love which we have received, in the work of sharing it day by day in ordinary daily living. We have no idea where it might lead, or what might be achieved or whether it may fail, yet we all can be part of the enterprise of hope.

The parable of the sower mentions weeds, which later become very important in a subsequent parable. Weeds were a familiar problem in Palestine, especially in those areas where wheat was grown. The particular weeds in question are the *folium temulentum*, an irritating growth often mistaken for wheat itself but which, unlike true grain, is poisonous. It can cause blindness and even death when its black seeds turn up in the bread dough.

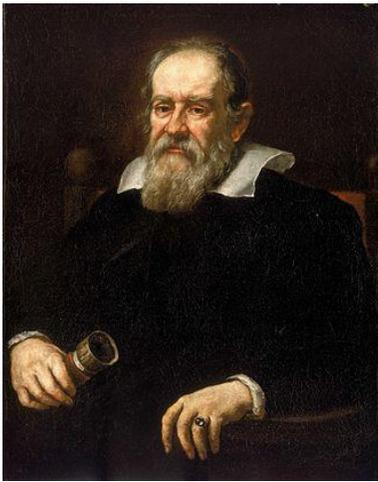
It is not for us to determine the growth, but to ensure that we cast the seed. Our mission and our witness is what is important, and thankfully we are not responsible or held accountable for the harvest.

Evangelism relies on the message being proclaimed, in a variety of forms and methods according to our gift and opportunities. The transforming power of the Gospel is that of God and is not reliant on our abilities or qualities, or on our efficiency or persuasiveness. We take the message and then it is over to God and the individual who receives it and to respond and engage, or reject its power. This is perhaps counter cultural in the era of 'success' and attention to profit margins and impact. Instead, it calls the Church and those who are the disciples of Jesus to be faithful about our mission and not be concerned with what might or might not be seen as success.

The Word grows in fertile soil. The promise of God, as the prophet Isaiah affirms, is sure: "It shall not return to me void, but shall do my will, achieving the end for which I sent it."

But while we cannot determine outcomes of growth having cast the seed, science, of course, has a role in improving the chances of growth and success. But science and the church have always had an uneasy relationship and this has never been more evident with the rise of secularisation and the polemical writings on the adverse effect of faith on science by the likes of scientists such as Richard Dawkins and writers such as the late Christopher Hitchens. But by pitting faith against science as though each is an insuperable ideology is not helpful as each is open to question. In this pandemic how often have we heard 'oh we will listen to the science', as if it were one voice,

and then we find that rarely is the science conclusive and that scientists disagree.



Arguably Bertold Brecht's greatest play *The Life of Galileo* documents career of the great Italian natural philosopher Galileo Galilei (pictured above) and the Galileo affair, in which he was tried by the Roman Catholic Church for the promulgation of his scientific discoveries. The play embraces such themes as the conflict between dogmatism and scientific evidence, as well as interrogating the values of constancy in the face of oppression. In the play Galileo says: "The aim of science is not to open the door to infinite wisdom, but to set a limit to infinite error."

Psalm 111, which we heard earlier, is often called the 'research scientist's psalm'. "Great are the works of the Lord, studied by all who delight in them," it says.

Over the main entrance of the Cavendish Laboratory, the home of the Department of Physics in the University of Cambridge, is an inscription: 'The works of the Lord are great; sought out of all them that have pleasure therein'. This use of a Bible passage in

architecture is somewhat unusual for a university physics laboratory that was built in 1973. You can see the inscription above the door in this photograph of the opening of the building:



The passage was placed there at the suggestion of Andrew Briggs, who was a PhD student at the time. Briggs is now Professor of Nanomaterials at Oxford University. He appreciated the Latin inscription of Psalm 111 verse 2 carved on the doors of the first Cavendish Laboratory, almost certainly at the instigation of the first Cavendish Professor, James Clark Maxwell. He suggested that it should be put up, in English, at the entrance of the new building.



The incident is described by AB Pippard, formerly Cavendish Professor in the University of Cambridge, in the *European Journal of Physics*. He wrote: 'The great oak doors opening on the site of the original building [pictured above] had carved on them, by Maxwell's wish, the text from Psalm 111. Shortly after the move to the new buildings in

1973 a devout research student suggested to me that the same text should be displayed, in English, at the entrance. I undertook to put the proposal to the Policy Committee, confident that they would veto it; to my surprise, however, they heartily agreed both to the idea and to the choice of Coverdale's translation, inscribed here on mahogany by Will Carter.'

This is a great example of how open minded Cambridge science departments can be, and their willingness to recognise the Christian heritage that was so important in the development of modern science.

James Clark Maxwell's successor as Cavendish Professor of Experimental Physics was the Nobel Prize-winning Lord Rayleigh. Rayleigh was also a Christian, and he had the famous verse printed on the front of each volume of his collected papers. Geneticist R.J. Berry writes in the journal *Science & Christian Belief* that Psalm 111 demonstrates wisdom rooted in the study of reality. If verse two is the scientists (and artist's) charter, it needs to be balanced by verse 10:

"The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom; all those who practice it have a good understanding." Verse 10.

God's provision comes on God's terms. In other words, the correct response to a study of nature is 'reverence mingled with delight, gratitude and trust'. This psalm also demonstrates that wisdom is best shared in community: scientists should communicate their findings so

that others can 'delight in them' too.

And Psalm III, line 1 says: "I will give thanks to the Lord with my whole heart, in the company of the upright, in the congregation."

Finally, there is a seamless relationship between history and science. God's creation, his generous provision and his interaction with us are all part of the same story. As R.J. Berry says in *The Research Scientist's Psalm*:

"We are here for God's purposes, on God's terms and in (and for) his world. For Christians, science should be both a religious activity and an intellectual discipline."



The seventeenth-century German astronomer Johannes Kepler (pictured above) may have had Psalm III in mind when he wrote his now famous prayer, which came at the end of his *The Harmony of the World* (1619) And in this Service dedicated to science we really ought to have a scientist's prayer so as we now hear the words of Johannes Kepler, let us pray:

'Lord, If I have been enticed into brashness by the wonderful beauty of your works, or if I have loved my own glory among men, while advancing in work destined for your glory, gently and mercifully pardon me; and finally, deign graciously to cause that these demonstrations may lead to your glory and to the salvation of souls, and nowhere be an obstacle to that. Amen.'

We pray also now for all engaged in science and research, including those who are seeking to develop a vaccine and remedies for coronavirus: grant them wisdom, understanding and effectiveness in their endeavours. Amen.

Gweddi'r Arglwydd / Lord's Prayer

Ein Tad, yr hwn wyt yn y nefoedd,
sancteiddier dy enw.
Deled dy deyrnas.
Gwneler dy ewyllys,
megis yn y nef, felly ar y ddaear hefyd.
Dyro i ni heddiw ein bara beunyddiol.
A maddau i ni ein dyledion,
fel y maddeuwn ninnau i'n dyledwyr.
Ac nac arwain ni i brofedigaeth,
eithr gwared ni rhag drwg.
Canys eiddot ti yw'r deyrnas, a'r nerth, a'r gogoniant yn oes oesoedd.
Amen.

*Our Father, who art in heaven,
hallowed be thy name;
thy kingdom come;
thy will be done;
on earth as it is in heaven.
Give us this day our daily bread.
And forgive us our trespasses,*

*as we forgive those who trespass against us.
And lead us not into temptation;
but deliver us from evil.
For thine is the kingdom,
the power and the glory,
for ever and ever.
Amen.*

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ZzF49HPfQzM>

Tydi sy deilwng oll o'm cân,
Fy Nghrewr mawr a'm Duw;
Dy ddoniau di o'm hamgylch maent,
Bob awr yr wyf yn byw.

Mi glywa'r haul, a'r lloer, a'r sêr,
Yn datgan dwyfol glod;
Tywynu'n ddisglair yr wyt ti,
Drwy bopeth sydd yn bod.

O! na foed tafod dan y rhod
Yn ddystaw am dy waith;
Minnau fynegaf hyd fy medd
Dy holl ddaioni maith.

Diolchaf am dy gariad cu,
Yn estyn hyd fy oes;
Diolchaf fwy am UN a fu
Yn gwaedu ar y groes.

Diolchaf am gysuron gwiw,
Wyf heddiw eu mwynhau;
Diolchaf fwy am ddoniau sy'n
Oes oesoedd i barhau.

*Thou who art worthy of all my song,
My great creator and my God;
Thy gifts around me are,
Every hour I am living.*

*I hear the sun, and the moon, and
the stars,
Declaring divine praise;
Shining brightly thou art,
Through everything which exists.*

*Let not a tongue under the sky be
Silent about thy work;*

*I will declare as far as my grave
Thy whole wide goodness.*

*I will give thanks for thy dear love
Reaching as far as my age;
I will give thanks more for one who
was
Bleeding on the cross.*

*I will give thanks for worthy comforts,
Which today I enjoy;
I will give thanks more for gifts which,
Are to last forever and ever.*

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=BqCBDoiXq7Q>

Blessing

Keep us, good Lord,
under the shadow of your mercy
in this time of uncertainty and
distress.
Sustain and support the anxious
and fearful,
and lift up all who are brought
low;
that we may rejoice in your
comfort
knowing that nothing can
separate us from your love
in Christ Jesus our Lord.
Amen.

Closing music:



Johann Strauss II
An der schönen, blauen Donau
(The Blue Danube) (excerpt)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=0ZoSYsNADtY>



Readers:

Henry Vaughan The World
Joshua Games

Derec Llwyd Morgan Eclips
Glyn Pritchard

Walt Whitman
**When I heard the learn'd
astronomer**
Dewi Griffiths

Isaiah 55:10-13
Mark Salmon

Nesta Wyn Jones
Cae o wenith
Catrin Treharne

Matthew 13: 1-9
The parable of the sower
David Evans

Matthew 13: 18-23
**The parable of the sower
explained**
Rowenna Hughes

Message, Prayers, Blessing
Neil Evans

Producer Mike Williams

Images (from top):

*Outer space; A wheatfield;
Henry Vaughan; Derec Llwyd Morgan;
Walt Whitman;
Illustration, Wolfram sings to the Evening
Star, 'Tannhäuser';
Nesta Wyn Jones; Galileo Galilei;
Opening of the new Cavendish Physics
Laboratory, University of Cambridge, 1973;
Door to the first Cavendish laboratory,
University of Cambridge;
Johannes Kepler;
Film stills from '2001: A Space Odyssey', the
Blue Danube sequence*
