



**BLACKBURN
CATHEDRAL**

Saturday 14 March, 10.30 am

*A service of
Celebration and Thanksgiving
for the life of*



John Bertalot

15 September 1931 – 21 February 2026



The President is
Canon Michael Wedgeworth
Canon Emeritus

The Deacon is
Revd Deacon Rachel Fielding

The Preacher is
The Rt Revd Philip North
Bishop of Blackburn

The service is sung by the
Cathedral Choir
with singers from **Blackburn Chamber Choir**
and former members of **Blackburn Bach Choir**

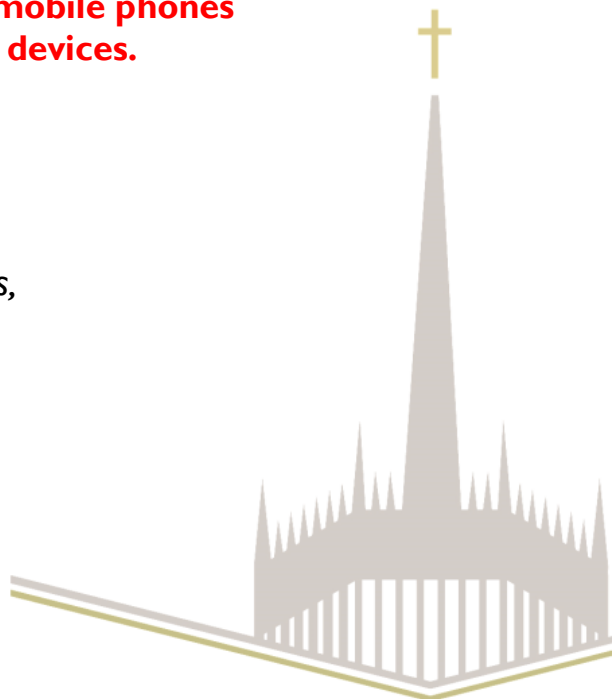
The Director of Music is
John Robinson

The Organists are
James Davy
Assistant Director of Music 2006-2012
David Briggs
Artist-in-residence, St John the Divine, New York
William Fielding
Paris Conservatoire student and former chorister

**The service is being live streamed.
Please do not use mobile phones
or recording devices.**

*Thou hast brought me to great honour:
and comforted me on every side.
Therefore will I praise thee and thy faithfulness,
O God, playing upon an instrument of musick.
Psalm 71.19-20a*

*JB was divinely communicated this verse at a pivotal
moment in his first year as organ scholar of Corpus
Christi College, Cambridge, and also the night before he
was appointed Organist of St. Matthew's Church,
Northampton.*



Before the Service

Organ music played by David Briggs

A recording of *Come, Risen Lord*

Dean Frayne (1992-2001) and Gordon Stewart (Director of Music 1994-1998) commissioned this anthem from JB for Blackburn Cathedral. It is sung here by the choir of Trinity Church, Princeton, conducted by JB and with Scott Dettra, organ.

Come, risen Lord, and deign to be our guest;
nay, let us be **thy** guests; the feast is **thine**;
thyself at thine own board make manifest,
in this our sacrament of bread and wine.

We meet, as in that upper room they met;
thou at the table, blessing, yet dost stand:
'This is my body': so thou givest yet:
faith still receives the cup as from **thy** hand.

One body we, one body who partake,
one Church united in communion blest;
one name we bear, one bread of life we break,
with all thy saints on earth and saints at rest.

One with each other, Lord, for one in thee,
who art one saviour and one living Head;
then open thou our eyes, that we may see;
be known to us in breaking of the bread.

George Wallace Briggs (1875-1959)

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A recording of *Christopher's Carol*

Composed after Philip Hunwick (cathedral choir tenor 1973-2020) had invited JB to be godfather to his first son. When JB visited Joan Hunwick and baby Christopher in hospital the next day they looked just like a Nativity scene, with the baby so small and the father standing there so tall – ah, that rhymes!

Thus was born the wish to compose a Christmas carol for Christopher, with a juxtaposition of opposites in each verse: light/dark, rich kings/poor baby, Jesus is The Lamb of God who is also my Shepherd and to include, in four of the verses, Christopher's name: Christ-over. It is sung here by JB's Princeton Singers.

Little Baby, born at dark midnight,
came from God that we may walk in light,
now a star is in the heavens and Christ on earth,
Christ over us all doth shine: Alleluia.

Loving father standing there so tall,
blessed Mother and the babe so small,
he became a man that I God's child might be,
Christ overwhelms my heart with love:

Mighty monarchs offer gifts so rare,
to a Baby in a stable bare;
Jesus Christ became the King of Kings for me,
Christ over all the world doth reign:

Simple shepherds leave their flock of sheep,
for a baby who is fast asleep,
Jesus Christ became the Lamb of God for me,
and leads me in the pastures green:

In a crib all made of wood he lies,
on a cross all made of wood he dies;
For the Carpenter will rise and set me free,
Christ overcame the grave for me, for ME:
I'll live with Him eternally.

Prelude

Vor deinem Thron tret' ich hiermit BWV 668a
Before thy throne I now appear

J S Bach (1685-1750)

Played by William Fielding, chorister 2006-2013

Dictated by Bach as he lay dying. It is full of Bach's number symbolism (A=1, B=2 etc, in the 24-letter alphabet, with I & J being the same letter; similarly U & V.) Therefore B+A+C+H = 14, and J+S+B+A+C+H = 41 (which is appropriate for a musician who could compose music backwards as well as forwards). This chorale prelude is full of 14s and 41s and the final cadence, with 9, 18 and 2 notes, spells JSB.

Before thy throne I now appear,
O Lord, bow down thy gracious ear,
reject not from thy loving face
a sinner, who now begs for grace.

The Gathering

Please stand as the cortège enters the Cathedral. The coffin is draped with JB's Honorary Doctor's gown.

A recording of *Bring us, O Lord God*

Recorded by JB's Princeton Singers in 1993.



Bring us, O Lord God, at our last awakening
into the house and gate of heaven,
to enter that gate and dwell in that house,
where there shall be no darkness nor dazzling, but one equal light;
no noise nor silence, but one equal music;
no fears nor hopes, but one equal possession;
no ends nor beginnings, but one equal eternity,
in the habitations of thy glory and dominion,
world without end. Amen.

*Text by John Donne (1572-1631), music by Sir William Harris (1883-1973),
Organist of St George's Chapel, Windsor Castle (1933-1961).*

The Greeting

The president greets the people

Grace, mercy and peace from God our Father
and the Lord Jesus Christ be with you
and also with you.

Please sit down.

The president introduces the celebration.

Tribute

*Stewart Hopkinson, JB chorister 1974-1977, chairman of Blackburn Cathedral
Old Choristers Association (BCOCA, now BCCA), 2007-2018*



Jesus, Son of God, so gracious,
take away our worldly sin;
Lamb of God, have mercy on us,
hear our prayer and make us clean;
Lord, enthroned on high above us,
now your gracious work begin.

Jesus, you alone are holy,
Jesus, you alone are Lord;
Jesus with the Spirit Holy,
and the Father are adored;
Glory in the highest heaven,
endless glory be out-poured.
Amen.

*Arranged by JB for Easter 2007 when, in his retirement, he was organist of St Anne's Church,
Fence-in-Pendle 2001-2012.*

The Collect

Let us pray.

Silence is kept – please remain standing

Merciful Father,
hear our prayers and comfort us;
renew our trust in your Son,
whom you raised from the dead;
strengthen our faith
that all who have died in the love of Christ
will share in his resurrection;
who lives and reigns with you,
in the unity of the Holy Spirit,
one God, now and for ever.
Amen.

Please sit down.

The Liturgy of the Word

Old Testament Reading

Read by Revd Philip Chew, JB chorister 1970-1977 (2 Chronicles 5.11-14)

A reading from the second book of Chronicles.

Now when the priests came out of the holy place (for all the priests who were present had sanctified themselves, without regard to their divisions), all the levitical singers, Asaph, Heman, and Jeduthun, their sons and kindred, arrayed in fine linen, with cymbals, harps, and lyres, stood east of the altar with one hundred and twenty priests who were trumpeters, it was the duty of the trumpeters and singers to make themselves heard in unison in praise and thanksgiving to the Lord, and when the song was raised, with trumpets and cymbals and other musical instruments, in praise to the Lord,

‘For he is good,
for his steadfast love endures for ever’,

the house, the house of the Lord was filled with a cloud, so that the priests could not stand to minister because of the cloud; for the glory of the Lord filled the house of God.

This is the word of the Lord.
Thanks be to God.

Please remain seated to listen to

A recording of *Jubilate Deo*

A setting of Psalm 100 which was commissioned from JB to honour the 20th anniversary of leading USA church director of music Hedley E Yost; sung here by the Princeton Singers conducted by JB at a concert in Blackburn Cathedral in 1994.

O be joyful in the Lord, all ye lands:
serve the Lord with gladness,
and come before his presence with a song.

Be ye sure that the Lord he is God:
it is he that hath made us, and not we ourselves;
we are his people, and the sheep of his pasture.

O go your way into his gates with thanksgiving,
and into his courts with praise:
be thankful unto him, and speak good of his Name.

For the Lord is gracious, his mercy is everlasting:
and his truth endureth from generation to generation.

Glory be to the Father and to the Son:
and to the Holy Ghost;

As it was in the beginning, is now, and ever shall be:
world without end. Amen.

New Testament Reading

Read by Noel Hunwick, chorister 1988-1997

(Philippians 4.4-9)

A reading from the letter of Paul to the Philippians.

Rejoice in the Lord always; again I will say, Rejoice. Let your gentleness be known to everyone. The Lord is near. Do not worry about anything, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God. And the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.

Finally, beloved, whatever is true, whatever is honourable, whatever is just, whatever is pure, whatever is pleasing, whatever is commendable, if there is any excellence and if there is anything worthy of praise, think about these things. Keep on doing the things that you have learned and received and heard and seen in me, and the God of peace will be with you.

This is the word of the Lord.
Thanks be to God.

Please stand to sing

Gradual Hymn



When in our music, God is glorified,
and adoration leaves no room for pride,
it is as though the whole creation cried:
Alleluia!

How often, making music, we have found
a new dimension in the world of sound,
as worship moved us to a more profound
Alleluia!

So has the church, in liturgy and song,
in faith and love, through centuries of wrong,
borne witness to the truth in every tongue:
Alleluia!

And did not Jesus sing a psalm that night
when utmost evil strove against the Light?
Then let us sing, for whom he won the fight:
Alleluia!

Let every instrument be tuned for praise!
Let all rejoice who have a voice to raise!
And may God give us faith to sing always:
Alleluia!

Fred Pratt Green (1903-2000)

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The Gospel

The deacon says

(John 15.1-5)

Hear the Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ according to John.
Glory to you, O Lord.

Jesus said "I am the true vine, and my Father is the vine-grower. He removes every branch in me that bears no fruit. Every branch that bears fruit he prunes to make it bear more fruit. You have already been cleansed by the word that I have spoken to you. Abide in me as I abide in you. Just as the branch cannot bear fruit by itself unless it abides in the vine, neither can you unless you abide in me. I am the vine, you are the branches. Those who abide in me and I in them bear much fruit, because apart from me you can do nothing.'

This is the Gospel of the Lord.
Praise to you, O Christ.

Address

The Rt Revd Philip North, Bishop of Blackburn

There is a period of silence after the address for reflection.

Please stand with the president for

The Creed

A recording of Credo

The first chorus of the Credo from J S Bach's B minor Mass, BWV 232. Bach's fondness for number symbolism appears again in this chorus, for Bach sets the Priest's intonation (which had never been done before) to the one word 'CREDO' which appears 43 times, because:

$$C+R+E+D+O = 3+17+5+4+14 = 43$$

Credo in unum Deum

I believe in one God

Sung by the present choir of the Thomaskirche, Leipzig, where Bach was Kapellmeister (1723-1750).

Please kneel or sit down.

Led by the Interim Dean, Canon Andrew Horsfall

God of mercy, Lord of life,
you have made us in your image
to reflect your truth and light:
we give you thanks for John,
for the grace and mercy he received from you,
for all that was good in his life,
for the memories we treasure today.

Silence

Lord in your mercy
hear our prayer.

You promised eternal life to those who believe.
Remember for good this your servant John
as we also remember him.
Bring all who rest in Christ
into the fullness of your kingdom
where sins have been forgiven
and death is no more.

Silence

Lord in your mercy
hear our prayer.

Your mighty power brings joy out of grief
and life out of death.
Look in mercy on all who mourn.
Give them patient faith in times of sadness.
Strengthen them with the knowledge of your love.

Silence

Lord in your mercy
hear our prayer.

You are tender towards your children
and your mercy is over all your works.
Heal the memories of hurt and failure.
Give us the wisdom and grace to use aright
the time that is left to us here on earth,
to turn to Christ and follow in his steps
in the way that leads to everlasting life.

Silence

Lord in your mercy
hear our prayer.

**God of mercy,
entrusting into your hands all that you have made
and rejoicing in our communion
with all your faithful people,
we make our prayers
through Jesus Christ our Saviour.
Amen.**

Please stand with the president for the peace

The Liturgy of the Sacrament

The Peace

The president says

Jesus says:
Peace I leave with you; my peace I give to you.
Not as the world gives do I give you.
Do not let your hearts be troubled,
neither let them be afraid.

The peace of the risen Lord be always with you
and also with you.

The deacon says

Let us offer one another a sign of peace.

Preparation of the Table

The deacon prepares the table.

Please remain standing to sing the offertory hymn.

Offertory Hymn



Fill thou my life, O Lord my God,
in every part with praise,
that my whole being may proclaim
thy being and thy ways.

Not for the lip of praise alone,
nor e'en the praising heart,
I ask, but for a life made up
of praise in every part:

Praise in the common things of life,
its goings out and in;
praise in each duty and each deed,
however small and mean.

Fill every part of me with praise:
let all my being speak
of thee and of thy love, O Lord,
poor though I be and weak.

So shalt thou, Lord, receive from me
the praise and glory due;
and so shall I begin on earth
the song for ever new.

So shall each fear, each fret, each care,
be turned into song;
and every winding of the way
the echo shall prolong.

So shall no part of day or night
unblest or common be;
but all my life, in every step,
be fellowship with thee.

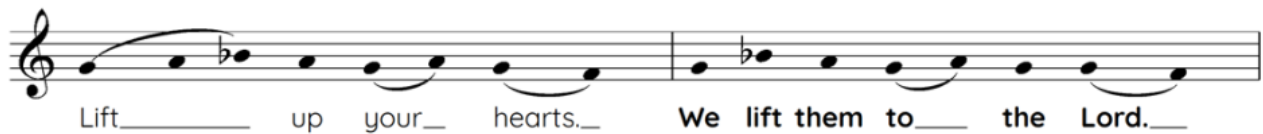
Horatius Bonar (1808-89)

Taking of the Bread and Wine

May all who are called to a place at your table
follow in the way that leads to the unending feast of life.

Amen.

Eucharistic Prayer



Blessed are you, gracious God,
creator of heaven and earth,
giver of life, and conqueror of death.
By his death on the cross,
your Son Jesus Christ offered the one true sacrifice for sin,
breaking the power of evil
and putting death to flight.

Through his resurrection from the dead
you have given us new birth into a living hope,
into an inheritance which is imperishable,
undefiled, and unfading.

The joy of resurrection fills the universe,
and so we join with angels and archangels,
with John and all your faithful people,
evermore praising you and singing:

The choir sings (to the setting in F by Harold Darke, who taught JB):

*Holy, holy, holy, Lord God of hosts,
heaven and earth are full of thy glory.
Glory be to thee, O Lord most high. Amen.*

*Blessed is he that cometh in the name of the Lord.
Hosanna in the highest.*

We praise and bless you, loving Father,
through Jesus Christ, our Lord;
and as we obey his command, send your Holy Spirit,
that broken bread and wine outpoured
may be for us the body and blood of your dear Son.

On the night before he died he had supper with his friends and,
taking bread, he praised you.
He broke the bread, gave it to them and said:
Take, eat; this is my body which is given for you;
do this in remembrance of me.

When supper was ended he took the cup of wine.
Again he praised you, gave it to them and said:
Drink this, all of you;
this is my blood of the new covenant, which is shed for you and
for many for the forgiveness of sins.
Do this, as often as you drink it, in remembrance of me.

So, Father, we remember all that Jesus did,
in him we plead with confidence his sacrifice
made once for all upon the cross.

Bringing before you the bread of life and cup of salvation,
we proclaim his death and resurrection
until he comes in glory.

The deacon says

Great is the mystery of faith:

Christ has died:

Christ is risen:

Christ will come again.

Lord of all life,
 help us to work together for that day
 when your kingdom comes
 and justice and mercy will be seen in all the earth.
 Look with favour on your people,
 gather us in your loving arms
 and bring us with Mary, Paul and all the saints
 to feast at your table in heaven.
 Through Christ, and with Christ, and in Christ,
 in the unity of the Holy Spirit,
 all honour and glory are yours, O loving Father,
 for ever and ever.
Amen.

The Lord's Prayer

Joining our prayers with those of the Church Universal, so we
 say, each in our own language, the prayer our Saviour taught us,

Notre père, qui es aux cieux ... Missierna, li inti fis-smewwiet...
Vater unser im Himmel ... Padre nostro, que estais nos céus...
Padre nostro che sei nei cieli ... Ojczy nasz, któryś jest w niebie...
Otče náš, jenž jsi na nebesích ... ي السَّمَاوَاتِ،
Têve Mūsū, kuris esi danguje! ... Ein Tad, yr hwn wyt yn y nefoedd...
Tatal nostru care esti in ceruri ...

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.

The Breaking of the Bread

The president breaks the consecrated bread, saying:

We break this bread
to share in the body of Christ.
**Though we are many, we are one body,
because we all share in one bread.**

If you are able, please remain standing while the choir sings

O Lamb of God that takest away the sins of the world,
have mercy upon us.

O Lamb of God that takest away the sins of the world,
have mercy upon us.

O Lamb of God that takest away the sins of the world,
grant us thy peace.

The Giving of Communion

The president says

Draw near with faith. Receive the body of our Lord Jesus Christ
which he gave for you, and his blood which he shed for you.

Eat and drink in remembrance that he died for you,
and feed on him in your hearts by faith with thanksgiving.

If you wish to receive Holy Communion, the stewards on duty will guide you.

*If you do not wish to receive Holy Communion but would like to receive a blessing,
please come forward holding your order of service.*

While you are waiting to go for communion you may wish to sit down.

Communion is available in both kinds, and the minister distributing bread will say

The body of Christ.
Amen.

The minister distributing wine will say

The blood of Christ.
Amen.

During communion

A recording of Agnus Dei

from War Requiem, Benjamin Britten (1913-76)

Written to commemorate the war years 1939-1945, during which JB grew from 8 to 14 years old in the south of England. In their house of 3 bedrooms and 2 reception rooms, JB lived with his parents, his maternal grandmother, his aunt (whose husband was an adjutant on Atlantic convoys) and her three children. JB's 9th birthday was on Battle of Britain Day during which there were almost continual air raid sirens. There were many nights of interrupted sleep during those war years and JB often had to sleep under the table in the dining room with its reinforced ceiling, for the house was on the regular pathway for planes from Germany to bomb London. A doodlebug exploded near the house on 5 November 1944, blowing out most of the windows. Mercifully none of the family was killed during that war.

Performed by Peter Pears (tenor), The Bach Choir and LSO Chorus (chorusmaster David Willcocks) with the London Symphony Orchestra, conducted by the composer.

A recording of Steal Away

Arranged by JB for Richard Tanner and the Girls Choir of Blackburn Cathedral for Daily Service, broadcast live on BBC Radio 4 on 10 September 2001, the day before 9/11, with Philippa Hyde (soprano), Anthony Thompson (trumpet) and Greg Morris (organ).

*Steal away, steal away,
steal away to Jesus.
Steal away, steal away home.
I ain't got long to stay here.*

*My Lord, he calls me,
he calls me by the thunder.
The trumpet sounds within-a my soul;
I ain't got long to stay here.*

*Green trees are bending,
the sinner stands a-trembling.
The trumpet sounds within-a my soul;
I ain't got long to stay here.*

*My Lord, he calls me,
he calls me by the lightning.
The trumpet sounds within-a my soul;
I ain't got long to stay here.*

Anonymous Afro-American spiritual

Prayer after Communion

Silence is kept.

The president says

Gracious God,
we thank you that in your great love
you have fed us with the spiritual food and drink of the body and
blood of your Son Jesus Christ
and have given us a foretaste of your heavenly banquet:
grant that this sacrament may be to us
a comfort in affliction
and a pledge of our inheritance
in that kingdom where there is no death,
neither sorrow nor crying,
but fullness of joy with all your saints;
through Jesus Christ our Saviour.
Amen.

**Heavenly Father,
in your Son Jesus Christ
you have given us a true faith and a sure hope.
Strengthen this faith and hope in us all our days,
that we may live as those who believe in
the communion of saints,
the forgiveness of sins
and the resurrection to eternal life;
through Jesus Christ our Lord.
Amen.**

Please stand.

The Commendation

*Two of JB's godsons, Chris & Noel Hunwick (who both joined the cathedral choir as
trebles in 1988), remove JB's Honorary Doctor's gown from the coffin and hand it to
their father, Philip.*

The president sprinkles the coffin with water.

The president says

Let us commend John to the mercy of God,
our maker and redeemer.

A short silence is kept.

God our creator and redeemer,
by your power Christ conquered death
and entered into glory.
Confident of his victory
and claiming his promises,
we entrust John Bertalot to your mercy
in the name of Jesus our Lord,
who died and is alive
and reigns with you,
now and for ever.

Amen.

Please remain standing to sing the final hymn as the cortège prepares to leave the Cathedral.

The old choristers precede the coffin and form an honour guard between the West door and the hearse waiting at the 1953 Coronation tree.

Final Hymn



All my hope on God is founded;
he doth still my trust renew.
Me through change and chance
he guideth,
only good and only true.
God unknown, he alone
calls my heart to be his own.

Human pride and earthly glory,
sword and crown betray his trust;
what with care and toil
he buildeth,
tower and temple, fall to dust.
But God's power, hour by hour,
is my temple and my tower.

God's great goodness aye endureth,
deep his wisdom, passing thought:
splendour, light, and life attend him,
beauty springeth out of naught.
Evermore from his store
new-born worlds rise and adore.

Daily doth th'almighty giver
bounteous gifts on us bestow;
his desire our soul delighteth,
pleasure leads us where we go.
Love doth stand at his hand;
joy doth wait on his command.

Still from earth to God eternal
sacrifice of praise be done,
high above all praises praising
for the gift of Christ his Son.
Christ doth call one and all:
ye who follow shall not fall.

Robert Bridges (1844-1930), based on the German of Joachim Neander (1650-1680).

Music by Herbert Howells in memory of his son, Michael (1926-1935). Howells told JB that he had composed this tune in half an hour. 'If you can't compose a hymn tune in half an hour, it's no good!' he said.

A recording of Tuba Tune

Played by JB on the 5 year-old cathedral organ in 1974, before it was rebuilt and enlarged in 2002. Composer Norman Cocker was Organist and Master of the Choristers at Manchester Cathedral, 1943-1953. JB was keen to suggest that friends and colleagues might reach out their hands to touch the coffin as it passes, as a gesture of farewell.

Voluntaries

Partita on Sei gegrüßet, Jesu gütig BWV 768
Hail to you, kind Jesus, final variation

J S Bach (1685-1750)

Dearest Jesu! Son of brightness,
store of blessing, joy and sweetness.
Let me praise thee, morn and even,
with thy host in highest heaven,
singing ever, Holy, Holy,
let me lose myself in thee.

Final, Symphonie No. 6

Louis Vierne (1870-1937)

Played by William Fielding

There follows a reception in the crypt, provided by the cathedral café.
The committal will take place at Pleasington Crematorium at 1.30 pm.
All are welcome to attend if they so wish. The committal service will be live streamed and will also be available to watch later:
<https://watch.obitus.com> (username maki6445, password 757127)



JB and his choirs



St James the Less, Lancing 1953



St Matthew's, Northampton c.1961



Blackburn Bach Choir, Windsor Hall, Blackburn 1971



Blackburn Cathedral 1982





Princeton Singers before their concert in King's College Chapel, Cambridge 1996



Trinity Church Choir, Princeton 1998 (JB's farewell Choral Evensong)



Fence-in-Pendle Church Choir 2008

“I express my boundless thanks for a life which has been illuminated, graced and enriched by glorious music.....which I am pleased to have shared with friends today.”

More can be found of JB’s exploration of number symbolism in Bach’s music at:
<https://bertalot.org/bach-symbolism>

If you would like to make a donation in memory of John Bertalot, please use the QR code to donate to The Lantern Music Trust, which has been set up to provide valuable support for the tradition of musical excellence at Blackburn Cathedral. Card readers and opportunity for cash donation will also be available as you leave the cathedral. If you are a UK taxpayer, do please use a blue Gift Aid envelope (25% extra goes to the cathedral and at no cost to you). Bank details: sort code 01-00-85; account number 04056663



Cathedral Music Office,
Cathedral Close,
Blackburn BB1 5AA

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