

A New Song for the Season of Creation

Singers of all kinds will have a new song this year

Words by Malcolm Guite Music by Ian Stephens

Following their successful Plastic Free Lent campaign in 2018, the Choir of St Bride's Church, Fleet Street were approached to help produce a song for the Season of Creation (1 September – 4 October) which has been commissioned by the C of E's Environment Working Group. Malcolm Guite's words have been set to music by Ian Stephens in a number of arrangements suitable for choirs and singing groups of all ages, ranges and sizes all of which fit together and can be performed simultaneously. There is also an arrangement for congregations.

A Song for the Season of Creation will have its premiere at St Bride's. The song will be performed on 26th May, Rogation Tide, at the 5:30pm Evensong in the presence of its writer and composer, members of the Church of England's Environmental Working Group and representatives of faith-based environmental organisations. The six arrangements will be available as a free download from www.stbrides.com so that all potential performers will have it available to rehearse before September.

It is hoped that **A Song for the Season of Creation** will be performed in churches throughout the country, even in those where there is no choir, either as part of Season of Creation services or Harvest Festivals. Service and prayer materials are available at www.creationtide.com

The Rector of St Bride's Revd Canon Dr Alison Joyce said "The choir of St Bride's has done an amazing job in helping to raise our awareness of how we can all respond positively to the environmental challenges that we face – and their initiative has been the more effective because it has emerged from within the heart of our worshipping community. The idea of a specially commissioned Song for the Season of Creation is an inspired way of encouraging other choirs to spread the word, too."

Rt Revd Bishop of Salisbury, Lead Bishop for the Environment said, "We can see the urgency to care for God's earth, our common home. Music and worship give form to our Christian lives. This is a song for God's creation we can all sing this Season of Creation".

Director of the Royal School of Church Music, Hugh Morris, said "Using music to celebrate the richness of God's creation is something all churches can do, and this new Song for the Season of Creation offers an open, flexible way of resourcing and encouraging churches to lift up their voices in praise".

NOTES FOR EDITORS: In 1989 the Ecumenical Patriarch of Constantinople suggested to all Churches to observe September 1, for the Orthodox Churches the first day of the ecclesiastical year, as a day 'of the protection of the natural environment' and to offer 'prayers and supplications to the Maker of all, both in thanksgiving for the gift of creation and in petition for its protection and salvation'. Ten years later the European Christian Environmental Network (ECEN) widened this proposal, urging churches to adopt a Time for Creation stretching from 1 September to 4 October the feast day of St Francis.

Everything Holds Together *Based on Colossians 1:15-17*

Everything holds together, everything,
From stars that pierce the dark like living sparks,
To secret seeds that open every spring,
From spanning galaxies to spinning quarks,
Everything holds together and coheres,
Unfolding from the center whence it came.
And now that hidden heart of things appears,
The first-born of creation takes a name.

And shall I see the one through whom I am?
Shall I behold the one for whom I'm made,
The light in light, the flame within the flame,
Eikon tou theou, image of my God?
He comes, a little child, to bless my sight,
That I might come to him for life and light.

MALCOLM GUTE is a poet and singer-songwriter living in Cambridge, where he also works as a priest and academic. In addition to his books of theology and literary criticism he has published five collections of his own poetry and two critical anthologies. He has played in a rock'n'roll band, a trad jazz outfit and is currently front man for Cambridge rockers Mystery Train. He has collaborated and recorded with composer/saxophonist Kevin Flanagan and his poems have also been set to music. His CDs *The Green Man*, *Dancing Through the Fire*, and *Songs and Sonnets* are out on iTunes and Amazon.

IAN STEPHENS is a composer of vocal, chamber and orchestral music and is based near Liverpool, where he takes a full part in the musical life of the city and the region as a composer, performer, lecturer and teacher. Ian's music has been widely performed in the UK and further afield by orchestras, choirs, and ensembles. He combines life as a freelance composer with various other musical and music-educational commitments. He is a double bassist, regularly plays the cello in orchestral and chamber music and also sings bass in Manchester Chamber Choir.

St Bride's Church, Fleet Street is known worldwide as the Journalists' Church offering a spiritual home to all who work in the media. St Brides ministry extends to everyone who lives and works within the parish within the City of London and to the thousands of visitors who visit this beautiful Wren church which has been a place of peace and a spiritual haven for Christian worship for 1500 years. **St Bride's Choir** consists of 4 sopranos, 2 altos, 3 tenors and 3 basses all of whom are full-time professionals. Every service is recorded bringing it a wide audience around the world and the *St Bride's Live* recording label helps to preserve the best live performances and expand its recording catalogue.

FURTHER INFORMATION: David Shreeve, Environmental Adviser, The Archbishops' Council, The Church of England david.shreeve@churchofengland.org 07831 387745