

---

## *Summer Uncorked*

**An article from the *Cathedral Times*  
By the Rev. Canon George Maxwell**

*Time, time, time. There are all kinds of time. There is a time to get up in the morning. There is a time to go to bed... There is a time to work, and there is a time to play.*

This is the way that the Godly Play story about the church year begins. Borrowing the familiar rhythms of the third chapter of Ecclesiastes, the story, called “The Circle of the Church Year,” tells about how we move through a circle of memory and expectation to open ourselves to the elusive presence of God.

I felt that elusive presence last Friday night.

The Cathedral choirs put on a show called “Choirs Uncorked” to raise money for their pilgrimage to England next year. They are scheduled to sing Evensong at St. Paul’s and Winchester Cathedrals for two weeks in August of 2021.

The choirs took the stage to “It’s a Grand Night for Singing” and closed the show, as they always do, with “Climb Every Mountain.” In between, they treated us to tunes ranging in style from the Broadway musical *South Pacific* to the popular operas *La traviata* and *Candide*, and displayed remarkable talent on the piano. We even got variations on the Jeopardy theme in the style of several famous composers!

But, it wasn’t the music that moved me on Friday night; it was the people.

I’m used to our choir in formal settings where they appear vested, solemn, and focused. I see them most often processing down the aisle singing a hymn or standing in a transept singing a carol. Sometimes, as is the case when they are singing the weekly offertory anthems, I hear them without really seeing them at all!

On Friday night, though, they came alive as individuals.

Each person seemed to have a different energy. It was as if they were each free to tell us something about themselves through the characters they were playing, the songs they were singing, and the pieces they were performing. And, they took great joy in it.

They were sharp. They were smart. And, at times, they were even a little sassy!

We stood on our feet when they were finished and applauded, grateful for the gift that they had given us – not just of their music, but also of themselves.

I might have also learned something about how to approach the summer.

The summer falls into the season of the church year we call “Ordinary Time.” It begins after Pentecost when the days begin to lengthen and continues until Advent when the days begin to shorten and a new year begins. But, despite its length, it lacks the mystery and excitement of the other seasons.

There is no Christmas, Epiphany, Lent, Easter, or Pentecost in this season. There is only what the Godly Play story calls the “great, green, growing Sundays.”

It occurs to me that we might use this season just to see what emerges.

We might try, for example, to pay attention to who we are without trying to change anything.

We might try to be gentle with ourselves and to accept ourselves just as we are (even our desire to change).

We might try to let go of our expectations and be thankful for the surprises that life gives us.

I’m thinking I’ll call this spiritual practice “Summer Uncorked.”

And, I’m thinking it might create some space for the elusive presence of God.

---

© *The Cathedral of St. Philip. All rights reserved.*