

The Parish Church of Saint George



PARISH MAGAZINE

An open door in the heart of the City



APRIL 2024

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Editorial Team: William Odling-Smee, Selby Nesbitt, Tony Merrick.

From the Rector's Desk



Dear Friends in Christ,

As I write this letter, Easter is almost here and we all look forward to the celebration and to the joy of spring once again.

I would like to give you notice of some future special events/services which will come up in the next couple of months. First of all there is the Parish Annual General Vestry meeting which will take place on Sunday 14th April at 12:30PM in the Parish Hall. It is important that registered General Vestry members attend this meeting and exercise their voting rights. This is your opportunity to elect parish officers or stand for office yourself. It is open to all who are currently registered on the 2024 roll of General Vestry Members. The updated membership list is now posted in the narthex.

There are three services in May that I would like to give special advance notice of. Firstly, Ascension Day this year falls on 9th May and there will be an Order One (Traditional Language) Choral Eucharist at 7:30PM. Secondly, the International Day Against Homophobia will be marked at the 5:00PM Choral Evensong on Sunday 19th May; the speaker will be David Alderdice. Thirdly, on Sunday 26th May we will hold our first ever Farsi (Iranian) language service at 2:30 PM. The celebrant and preacher will be the Rev'd Omid Moludy from the parish of St Aparat, Manchester. Fr Omid will also preach at our 11:00AM Choral Eucharist that morning. Service booklets in Farsi and English will be available for the 2:30PM service. I would encourage as many parishioners as possible to attend this first Farsi service to show solidarity and support for our Iranian congregation.

Please let me know of anyone who cannot get to church to receive Holy Communion and would like to receive the sacrament at home or in hospital. I can be contacted on 07902-792-080. It is incumbent on all members of the Church of Ireland to receive the sacrament of Holy Communion on a regular basis, and it is no more appropriate than during the Easter season.

I hope you have a Holy and happy Easter.

Yours sincerely in Christ

Brian Stewart

PARISH NOTICES

CELEBRATION CONCERT

by

SAINT GEORGE'S SINGERS

to mark 40 years of music-making

Choral works by Bruckner, Joseph and Michael Haydn,
Mendelssohn, Mozart, Palestrina and Parry.

Soloist: Hayley Howe

Music Director : Mark McGrath



Image by Marta Crowe (Creative Commons 2.0 Generic Licence)

WEDNESDAY 17th APRIL 2024

AT 7.45PM

SAINT GEORGE'S CHURCH. HIGH STREET, BELFAST

Tickets £15

available from Choir Members and at Door

or Online: www.saintgeorgessingers.co.uk

PARISH NOTICES

SUNDAY 14TH APRIL, EASTER GENERAL VESTRY

The Easter General Vestry will follow the Choral Eucharist and will take place in the Parish Hall. A sandwich lunch will be provided. Elections to the Select Vestry will be held and also for Parochial Nominators & Diocesan Synod Members. All members of the General Vestry (see narthex noticeboard) are eligible to attend and vote.

FIRE DRILL

There will be a Fire Drill during the 11:00am service on **Sunday 28th April**. Please leave the church when the alarm sounds and follow the directions of the Churchwardens.

SUNDAY REFRESHMENTS

A new rota is underway for preparing the tea, coffee and biscuits which follow the Sunday Choral Eucharist. **We would welcome more volunteers** to join the Rota. This weekly event provides an excellent opportunity to chat to old and new friends before we disappear to our homes, near and far. Please speak to Valerie (07786-128-174) or Judith (07810-471-436) for further information.

LENTEN SOUP AND CHEESE LUNCH

A big thank you to all who supported this event on Sunday 3rd March by attending the lunch, preparing the food and clearing up afterwards. We raised over £1000, including Gift Aid, for the Welcome Organisation and its dedicated work with the homeless in Belfast. Thank you!

CHINESE LUNCH IN SUPPORT OF THE CHOIR TRIP TO BERLIN

A big thank you to all who supported this event on Sunday 24th March by attending the Chinese lunch, and for your generous donations in support of the Choir Trip to Berlin at the end of June. We are most grateful to the choir parents who organised the lunch and to the Macau Chinese Restaurant on the Ormeau Road for providing such delicious food. We raised the magnificent sum of £1870, (excluding Gift Aid) for the Choir Fund. Thank you!

ORGAN FUND

The members of the Organ Committee are pleased to report that our fund now stands at over

£88,000

ECO-CONGREGATION IRELAND GROUP

In the UK, we've already lost 13 species of bees, 35 species are at risk of extinction, and all the 270 UK species face serious threat.



Today, all three orangutan species - the Bornean, Sumatran and the Tapanuli - are critically endangered.



NOT JUST A MEMORY

by Paul McLaughlin



We made guiders, pitched tents, built sheds and did a dozen more daring things that would have terrified our parents. From lighting fires to spending hours each day of our Summer holidays in the heat, dirt and bacteria of the City dump rummaging for....well anything really.

Paint tin lids were recycled as shields that would be burnished until they looked warlike enough. Long strings of iron wire were moulded into fencing epees long before we had even heard of the word. Tea chests, whatever happened to those glorious wooden boxes, lined with metal foil, that shipped tea, a hundredweight at a time, from India and Ceylon to our shores back in the 1950s and 1960s? They were there in abundance back in those days and ideal for the cabs of the more exotic guiders or boxcars as they called them in the English comics.

Broken down prams were cannibalised for wheels and brakes and once again the more expert of the guider makers incorporated them into their designs.

I was pretty useless at most of these things, but I had a grandstand seat among weeds that were nearly as tall and as beautiful as sunflowers as I watched while my pals, none of whom ever criticized me for my ineptness, did them and did them well. So well, in fact that, now into my seventies, I can recall many of those thousands of days with surprising clarity. Schooldays are now the same, filled with memories, good and bad, but always memorable.

The kindness of lady teachers as we called them, who patted heads in comfort and patched many a grazed knee that was in sharp contrast to the masters, the majority of whom dealt with pupils like something out of Dotheboys Hall. Punishment was meted out, often cruelly so, on a daily basis with canes and later leather straps, but an education, that not only included but emphasised good manners, was made available to all.

Given the Nicholas Nickleby reference to learning, it is perhaps ironic that Charles Dickens was one of the writers that impressed me most when I was growing up. He seemed to have something to say about almost everything. Certainly, everything that was important to the eight-year-old me that first read 'A Christmas Carol' in the illustrated version published by Ladybird Books. The same 'Ladybirds' about my heroes like Richard the Lionheart, Bonnie Prince Charlie and Scott of the Antarctic that inspired in me a love of history that helped even in school.

Love, humour, money, friendship and kindness all enjoyed the great man's touch of wisdom, so it is particularly apt as I recall so clearly a boyhood that stretches farther and farther into the past, that that age of innocence that fades all too soon with the years, should feature in one of his more famous quotes.

'A boy's story is the best that is ever told', wrote Dickens and I am not one to argue. My memories of boyhood are of a special time that belongs to me alone now, but that was always shared with family, friends, school mates and even the odd bully.

Memories are always personal and as Dickens said, 'I'm not going to tell you the story the way it happened. I'm going to tell it the way I remember it'.

I find those two things mutually agreeable. Not a day goes past when something or other sparks a memory and a story long-thought forgotten.

How my brother Jimmy might well have been named Claude, after 'Casablanca' star Claude Rains. I watched the film only recently and remembered my mother telling me years ago that it was such an unusual and noble name that it was considered seriously for the second son of our family.

This is the same redoubtable mother who gave me Hobson's choice of **Pius** or **Gregory** for Confirmation rather than the **Joseph** for which I had pleaded.

My brother recoiled in horror, laughing nervously with relief, when I told him the 'Claude' story just recently, saying he was just glad that he had not remembered ever hearing anything about it. Luckily then, that I was on hand to remind him that the 'C' name remains part of his story, like it or not, and not just a memory.

THE HIGH PRIEST – AFTER THE RESURRECTION

by Keith Suckling

One of the most frequently recommended ways of Bible study is to imagine ourselves as being present, even participants, in the story we are reading. In my addresses at the Good Friday Three Hours, I took this approach by asking myself what the lead characters in the drama of the Passion might have been thinking. Out of this came a series of monologues in which we met Pontius Pilate being commissioned by Tiberius Caesar, the High Priest musing over the problems to come at Passover, the disciple John as they all walked with Jesus to the garden, the soldiers who arrested Jesus, the disciples together, and finally, following the reading of the Passion Gospel, the confused thoughts of the disciples when they returned from Jesus' burial.

Of course, the story did not end there. Following the Resurrection, in one more monologue, we see the High Priest was trying to make sense of what was happening. He realised the implications of what had been reported to him. He asked himself many questions and many of them still arise today.

It has turned out worse than I feared. We did have to proceed against Jesus, and we did succeed in getting Pilate to condemn him. That in itself was quite a performance. We had to threaten the Procurator with a charge of disloyalty to Caesar. He had to find a way to save face by releasing Barabbas instead of Jesus. So Jesus was crucified and died, and was buried. Job done. Now it looks as if my spies have not been doing their job. Joseph of Arimathea is a disciple of Jesus – a secret one, but he's come out now by asking Pilate for the body to bury. And, to my surprise, Nicodemus helped with the burial and he is one of our Council. What was he doing? How had he got to know Jesus?

Then some in the Council remembered that Jesus' preaching suggested that he might rise from the dead in three days. Impossible, quite impossible, I know, but just to be sure we had sentries placed by the tomb and we got Pilate's agreement.

But something has happened. We don't know exactly what. It's now the third day since he died and the sentries are found dead, the stone rolled away from the tomb and the body is no longer there. Worse than that, Jesus' friends have found out about it, and it won't be long before they are telling everyone. Luckily for us they are keeping quiet for now. They're still

afraid of us. There may still be time for us to put a lid on the story.

So we've got the spin doctors working. They've got a couple of lines to put out. They are posting on X (formerly Twitter) already. One line is that Jesus was not really dead and has resuscitated and gone away, probably to Galilee. The other is that his friends have stolen the body. I don't think much of either of them really, but you've got to go with the stories you've got. Firstly, the Romans are expert executioners and would not have made a mistake. And for the second story, the stone could not have been rolled away that easily. If we could produce the body and show that he is dead, that would settle matters. But that's just it. We don't have the body to produce. There's a big internal inquiry about what went wrong already started. Have to be confidential, of course. Gagging order on everyone involved. But then, if you think about it, transparency in inquiries won't become commonplace for centuries, if that!

What has happened? I have to admit to myself that I don't know. Publicly we'll have to stick to one of those stories – or both. But we can't prove anything. I'm not sure his friends can either, at least not in a forensic way.

I'm stuck with a pack of what-ifs and they won't go away. Looking at it from a more open point of view, Jesus' teaching was inspirational, properly scriptural, challenging but sympathetic. If only he had not claimed to be the Messiah, what a lot of good he could have done - that's what we all think.

But what if we are wrong? What if Jesus is in some way divine, that he was so close to God that he could have been his son? What if he has risen from the dead? What if his friends see him alive again? What will they do? What will it mean? I can't help thinking that whatever it will be, it's going to be quite a story.

Most of the monologues come from my little book 'Voices around Easter' which is available as a Kindle e-book or paperback.

THE 'TSUNAMI FUND'

A Report by Michael Clendinning

I write on behalf of the Tsunami Fund, to report on the work we completed in Sri Lanka, in January and early February 2024. I took £3380 with me to spend on building and other projects. I thank fellow Scottish dancers and fellow members of St George's Parish Church, Belfast for their generous support. I also thank Priyankara, my Sri Lankan friend and my co-worker, for ensuring that we had all the building supplies we needed for this year's work, and for supervising our team of builders.

In the first four weeks of this year, we completed two building projects, near Galle, in south-west Sri Lanka. The first of these was for the Sunil Santha family. When we first met this family, at the beginning of January, they had been living in the temporary shelter, shown on the left, for almost ten years. Nearby was a house under construction, but still needing some brickwork and a roof to complete the dwelling. On the right, Mr and Mrs Sunil Santha and their teenage son pose for a photograph, on the day we celebrated the completion of all the building work.



Our second house was for Mrs Sumna and her grandson. The boy's mother, and Mrs Sumna's daughter, is profoundly deaf, and lives and works at a laundry some 80 miles away. The picture, on the left, shows the partially built dwelling, whilst the photograph on the right shows Mrs Sumna, her grandson and Priyankara, in front of the house as it nears completion.



With the new school year just a matter of days away, and aware that these families had only meagre resources, Priyankara and I decided to buy school uniforms and school shoes for both boys. In the picture on the left, Mrs Sumna's grandson proudly

shows off his new clothes and shoes. Finally, we also bought beds and mattresses for the Sumna family.

Some years ago, we helped Mr and Mrs Lakshitas and their two children. This family's house has had a very unfortunate history: severely damaged in the tsunami, poorly rebuilt soon after, reroofed by us in 2020, and in 2022, flooded once more. None of the agencies responsible for monitoring the water levels of the nearby lakes, has accepted any of the blame for this recent ingress of water; however, a government agency and a charity have kindly agreed to contribute towards repairing the damaged house (shown on the left). Because Priyankara and I wish to see the Lakshitas rehoused quickly, we have provided the builders with some of the materials they will need to complete this urgent work.



This completes my report of the work we carried out in 2024, and it is also the last report I shall submit on behalf of the Tsunami Fund. For a variety of reasons, including my diminished mobility, Priyankara and I have decided not to continue our work in Galle, beyond the tsunami's 20th anniversary, next December. But we will mark this anniversary, by visiting some of the families we helped in the past, and perhaps by undertaking one final project.

In conclusion, I thank everyone who has supported our work in Galle. Here I include my Dublin friends, Rev'd Canon Desmond Sinnamon and his wife Jennifer, who unwittingly inspired the launch of our Tsunami Fund. When the tsunami struck, Desmond took up a collection in Taney, then his parish church. At that time, I was on holiday in Galle, so he sent the money to me. Coincidentally, a couple of days later, I came across Priyankara, when we both responded to a call for volunteers to help with the tsunami's aftermath. Then, over the next month, we frequently set off together, with the money I had received from Dublin, to look for tsunami victims whom we might help.

In 2004, a few days after the disaster, a Tsunami Relief Fund was launched. This fund attracted world-wide attention from governments and individuals, and quickly received donations totalling \$13.6 billion, or \$7,000 for each person affected by the tsunami. Priyankara and I expected that this money would be used to sustain the homeless, help them with the cost of rebuilding, and ultimately, make us redundant. This would have been a welcome



outcome; but, unaccountably, very little of the Relief Fund money was distributed to Sri Lanka's tsunami victims. In fact, these hapless people have had to rebuild their own houses and bear most, if not all of the cost. This cartoon from 2005, draws attention to the mood of dismay circulating amongst the people who were displaced, and it also alludes to the silence surrounding the question: 'Where did all the money go to?'

Displaced home owners approached the task of rebuilding in 3 stages. First, they provided their family with a temporary shelter; after that, they bought batches of bricks, when they could afford them, and then, with the help of friends and family, they built up the house walls, piecemeal. In nearly every case, it took several years to reach the height of the eaves. But, unlike the walls, a roof cannot be completed in easy stages; it requires a small team of experienced roofers, and all the roof's component parts to be available at the same time. The total cost of a completed roof is £1,000, a sum well beyond the reach of all our clients. Thanks to your contributions, over the past 20 years, our Tsunami Fund has provided more than 100 families with a roof for their house. Consequently, in addition to providing these families with a dry, secure dwelling, we have, I believe, also offered them the opportunity to regain their self-esteem.

Michael Clendinning

MUSIC LIST April 2024

Sunday 7th April

Second Sunday of Easter

11am Choral Eucharist

Parish Choir Holiday

| | | |
|----------------|----------------------------|------------|
| Hymn | Ye choirs of new Jerusalem | 124 |
| Gradual Hymn | Breathe on me | 342 |
| Offertory Hymn | Dear Lord and Father | 353 |
| Hymn | | |

Sunday 14th April

Third Sunday of Easter

11am Choral Eucharist

Parish Choir

| | | |
|-------------------|---------------------------------------|-------------------|
| Processional Hymn | Good Christian men, rejoice | 107 |
| Setting | Ireland in C | |
| Psalm | 4 | |
| Gradual Hymn | The Lord is risen indeed | 118 |
| Offertory Hymn | Lord enthroned splendour | 296 |
| Motet | Insanae et vanae curae - <i>Haydn</i> | |
| Hymn | Christ the Lord is risen again! | 105 (t. i) |

5pm Choral Evensong

Choral Scholars

| | | |
|-----------|--|------------|
| Hymn | Ye choirs of new Jerusalem | 124 |
| Responses | Hunter | |
| Psalm | 142 | |
| Canticles | Dyson in C minor | |
| Anthem | I will lift up mine eyes - <i>Walker</i> | |
| Hymn | Come ye faithful, raise the anthem | 351 |

Sunday 21st April

Fourth Sunday of Easter

11am Choral Eucharist

Parish Choir

| | | |
|-------------------|----------------------------------|-----------------------|
| Processional Hymn | At the Lamb's High feast we sing | 104 |
| Setting | Harris in F | |
| Psalm | 23 | |
| Gradual Hymn | This joyful Eastertide | 121 |
| Offertory Hymn | Ye choirs of new Jerusalem | 124 |
| Motet | Ave Verum - <i>Elgar</i> | |
| Recessional Hymn | The royal banners forward go | 79 (t. 128ii)1 |

5pm Choral Evensong

Chamber Choir

| | | |
|-----------|---|------------|
| Hymn | O worship the King | 433 |
| Responses | Sanders | |
| Psalm | 81: 8-16 | |
| Setting | Sumsion in A | |
| Anthem | And I saw a new Heaven - <i>Bainton</i> | |
| Hymn | Let all the world | 394 |

MUSIC LIST April 2024

Sunday 28th April

Fifth Sunday of Easter

11am Choral Eucharist

Parish Choir

| | | |
|----------------|--|---------------------|
| Hymn | Forth in the peace of Christ | 361 |
| Setting | Darke in E | |
| Psalm | 22: 25-31 | |
| Gradual Hymn | The strife is o'er | 119 (tune 1) |
| Offertory Hymn | All my hope on God is founded | 333 |
| Motet | The Lord is my shepherd - <i>Goodall</i> | |
| Hymn | For the beauty of the earth | 285 |

5pm Choral Eucharist

Parish Men

| | | |
|---------|--|--|
| Setting | Merbecke | |
| Anthem | Mine eyes for beauty pine - <i>Howells</i> | |
| Hymn | 244, 331, 119 | |



CALENDAR April 2024

April 7

THE SECOND SUNDAY OF EASTER

9:30am Eucharist: The Rector

11:00am Choral Eucharist: The Rector

Preacher: The Rector

Readings: Acts 4: 32-35; 1 John 1: 1 – 2: 2; John 20: 19-31

Reader: *Wardens*

Intercessor: *Anne McBride*

Servers: *Laura Brannigan, Steven McQuitty, Mark Claney*

Tea and Coffee: *Valerie Roberts, Howard Fee*

5:00pm Choral Evensong: The Rector

Lessons: Isaiah 26: 1-9, 19; Luke 24: 1-12 (*Paddy Sloan*)

April 10

WILLIAM OF OCKHAM

10:30am Eucharist: The Rector

April 14

THE THIRD SUNDAY OF EASTER

9:30am Eucharist: The Rector

11:00am Choral Eucharist: The Rector

Preacher: The Rector

Readings: Acts 3: 12-19; 1 John 3: 1-7; Luke 24: 36b-48

Reader: *Meisam Khalili*

Intercessor: *George Woodman*

Servers: *Omolewa Akinyele, Agape Laoye, Jonny Calder*

Tea and Coffee: *Eleanor Maynard, Catherine Hunter*

5:00pm Choral Evensong: The Rector

Lessons: Deuteronomy 7: 7-13; Revelation 2: 1-11
(*Janet Sandikli*)

April 17

10:30am Eucharist

CALENDAR April 2024

April 21

THE FOURTH SUNDAY OF EASTER

9:30am Eucharist: Rev'd Robert Henderson

11:00am Choral Eucharist: Fr Keith Suckling

Preacher: Fr Keith Suckling

Readings: Acts 4: 5-12; 1 John 3: 16-24; John 10: 11-18

Reader: *Janet Sandikli*

Intercessor: *Pam Tilson*

Servers: *Banji Akinyele, Mark Claney, Tony Merrick*

Tea and Coffee: *Keith Suckling, Steven McQuitty*

5:00pm Choral Evensong:

Lessons: Exodus 16: 4-15; Revelation 2: 12-17;
(*Fr Graeme Pollock*)

April 24

MELLITUS, BISHOP OF LONDON

10:30am Eucharist: The Rector

April 28

THE FIFTH SUNDAY OF EASTER

9:30am Eucharist: The Rector

11:00am Choral Eucharist: The Rector

Preacher: The Rector

Readings: Acts 8: 26-40; 1 John 4: 7-21; John 15: 1-8

Reader: *Howard Fee*

Intercessor: *Fr Tom Layden*

Servers: *Banji Akinyele, Jonny Calder, Tony Merrick*

Tea and Coffee: *Brenda Claney, Judith Fawcett*

5:00pm Choral Eucharist: The Rector

Lessons: James 1: 17-21; John 16: 23-33:
(*Eleanor Maynard*)

ENDPIECE by Colin Young

A PROUD YORKSHIRE MAN Sir Edward Bairstow (1874 – 1946)

In the past two magazines we have looked at two Irish composers, Stanford and Wood. Having heard St Patrick's and Christchurch Cathedral in Dublin singing music by Sir Edward Bairstow recently, I thought it might be interesting to look at his contribution to Anglican church music.

Bairstow was born in Huddersfield, Yorkshire in 1874, and spent a large part of his life in the County. As a young man he was apprenticed to Frederick Bridge at Westminster Abbey, and he remained there for six years; at the same time, he was organist and choir master at All Saints Norfolk Square in London, moving to Wigan Parish Church in 1899. In 1906 he was appointed to Leeds Parish Church, and then in 1913 he became Organist at York Minster, where he remained until his death in 1946. He was a proud Yorkshire man, born in the West Riding, and he preferred to spend his life in his beloved Minster in the beautiful city of York.

It is often said that the natives of Yorkshire are known for plain speaking; Bairstow himself appears to be like this. When asked if he would follow T T Noble, his predecessor at York, to America he replied that he "would rather go to the devil!" He was not always very kind to other composers of church music, and he was a voluble critic of Sir Arthur Sullivan's religious work; on one occasion at a festival in 1928 he was very irritated at having to listen to Sullivan's 'O love the Lord' by several choirs, and he said "This particular effusion is the feeblest type of Victorian church music. Stupid nonsensical music has driven thousands of people out of church. No intelligent person is going to listen complacently to such music". It must be said that very many people would agree with Bairstow; music for light opera is not necessarily right for singing in church. Sullivan did write some rousing hymn tunes, which are still sung today but Bairstow did not care for these either. This is his view of one popular hymn tune: "the melodic and rhythmic attractiveness of Sullivan's music, taken apart from the words to which it is set, must account for the long reign of such hymn tunes as 'Onward Christian soldiers'. The jolly march rhythm of this may suggest a band of children with paper helmets and wooden swords, but it certainly does not bring forcibly to one's mind the Church of God marching against the forces of evil!" However he did approve of the Savoy Operas: in his view Sullivan's church music was like a Mass composed by Johann Strauss.

When Bairstow first went to York he found the choir in need of rejuvenation, and the Dean was the very elderly Arthur Perceval

Purey-Cust, who was one of those Victorian clergy who possibly owed their preferment to their aristocratic background. He seems to have had better relationships with later Deans, especially towards the end of his life with Eric Milner White, famous as the Dean of King's College Cambridge who introduced the service of Nine Lessons and Carols. Cooperation with Milner White produced Bairstow's Lamentation, to be sung during Lent in place of the Benedicite; I first heard it in St Patrick's Cathedral in Dublin some forty five years ago, and I see it is being sung there on the morning of Good Friday, so I hope to listen to it then. His musical output was mostly liturgical and included a Te Deum and Benedictus and a setting of the Communion Service, none of which I never heard, and a well known evening service in D. He wrote a few pieces for the organ, and a few pieces of chamber music, which apparently have been out of print for years.

Today Bairstow is largely known for his anthems, and deservedly so; they are among the best written in the last century. 'Let all mortal flesh keep silence' is perhaps the best known: his pupil and successor, Francis Jackson writes that "probably he never wrote a more compelling piece of music". Then there is 'Blessed city, heavenly Salem', 'If the Lord had not helped me' sung recently on Radio 3 by Christchurch Dublin, 'Lord, thou hast been our refuge', and the exquisite, 'Save us, O Lord' written when he was twenty six. Francis Jackson speaks of this anthem's "long tender organ introduction and the sweep of its wide arc, to say nothing of the complete suitability of the music and the words". Towards the end of Bairstow's life, in 1943, Dean Milner White asked him to write music for a set of religious poems, and the result was the 'Five Poems of the Spirit', settings of Seventeenth century metaphysical poetry. These are not well known, but there is a good recording by St John's under David Hill, (along with other anthems and services).

Bairstow was younger than Stanford and Parry, and indeed Elgar, and he shows their influence, but his style is personal and distinctive. Stanford and Parry led the way in using the organ not merely as an accompaniment, but as a having its own role to play in an anthem and Bairstow developed this further. Though he was not a prolific composer, much of his work is still sung, certainly in Cathedrals and College Chapels, not perhaps so much in parish churches; a glance at Cathedral and Oxbridge music lists will regularly show music by Bairstow and those who are able to hear his music in a liturgical setting are privileged. Dean Milner White said of his organist that he was a man whose music was essentially Christian, not merely religious and that is a great compliment for any composer. In the world of English church music, he is one of the first in his class.