

## Disorganised

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Almighty Father,  
whose Son was revealed in majesty  
before he suffered death upon the cross:  
give us grace to perceive his glory,  
that we may be strengthened to suffer with him  
and be changed into his likeness, from glory to glory.

Our text – verses from Psalm 150:

‘Praise the Lord

Praise him with strings and pipe

Let everything that has breath praise the Lord.’

And so the great work on our Alfred Oldknow Organ – 1894 – has started. I had mixed feelings as Andrew, Julie, Nigel and Kyle worked hard over four days to deconstruct our organ in the penultimate week of January. It was exciting and I felt the thrill that the idea of a major renovation, that was first floated some three years ago, was now actually beginning to take place. But I was sad too at the great hole that has been opened up in this holy place, not unwholesome but wholly necessary if we are to have our organ restored to its former glory.

Why have music as part of our church service ? Simply, to lend something that lifts our hearts and minds and voices in praise God ? Why do we come to church ?

To meet God ? Yes, I know, I appreciate, we do meet other people, that we chat and have a coffee and a biscuit, we laugh, smile, share our troubles but, at the heart of church-going, is a God-encounter and to help us encounter God, we have our service in which music plays its part – an important part, I hope you'll agree.

St Bart's is essentially an Anglican church and, at this time in our history, the singing of hymns and the playing of music is an important, integral part of our communion service. Yes, there are prayers, Bible readings, a sermon and the taking of communion. But there is a chance to sing hymns and to experience the presence of God through the sound of music.

Language is one of the distinguishing marks of being human. We all use words to communicate effectively and the ability to express ourselves means that we are able to live together co-operatively. It is not by chance that one of the Christological titles for Jesus is 'the Word' – Logos. But music can also communicate directly to us. A sense of mood, feeling, atmosphere, can be conveyed by melody, harmony, rhythm, the mixture of sound different instruments or the human voice can convey.

To this end, singing and playing music in church has led to another dimension in our worship. Yes, from my time in England, I do remember and value the quiet dignity of the early Sunday morning service of Holy Communion or the silence during the service of Compline last thing at night. But there is also something wonderful about singing your heart out to a great Welsh hymn or hearing a prelude and fugue by Bach played on our organ.

So we are lucky to have so good an organ as the one Alfred Oldknow made for us at the end of the nineteenth century. It is our privilege at present to be the stewards of the church Oldknow enhanced by installing our organ. And is it not great that we can feel sufficiently confident to restore the organ to its former glory and gift congregations to come at St Bart's with a fully working instrument to enhance the worship ?

And my prayer: one of thanks for the money already raised – over half the sum needed – and one of trust that the rest of the money required to repay the church's capital may be raised to finance this work of grace.

I have spoken in the name of the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit, Amen.

*Preached at the Eucharist*

*St Bartholomew's, Dinard*

*15<sup>th</sup> February, 2015*

G: Sermons 31 : Disorganised

