

EVENSONG & BENEDICTION

The traditional form of Evening Prayer is used found in the Book of Common Prayer.

The service of Evensong with Benediction is lead by the choir and includes sung Psalms of the day, readings from scripture, Canticles (the Magnificat and Nunc Dimitis), one or more anthems and other prayers.

Evensong is a particularly beautiful service, which engages the aesthetic as well as the spiritual senses. It combines time for quiet reflection with the measured cadences of traditional Prayer Book language and the beauty of choral singing. At St Michael's, the music for this service includes some of the finest works of the English and European Sacred Choral Tradition.

Benediction includes the hymns O Salutaris Hostia and Tantum Ergo, set either to Plainsong or composed. From the earliest church, Christians adopted ceremonial benedictions into their liturgical worship, particularly at the end of a service.

Such benedictions have been regularly practised both in the Christian East and West.

One of the most generally popular services in the Catholic Church is Benediction of the Blessed Sacrament, commonly referred to as Benediction and known in France as Salut and in Germany as Segen. It is also the custom of some Anglo-Catholic churches to hold this service, and at St Michael's it is well beloved of the choir and congregation.

It is ordinarily an afternoon or evening devotion and consists in the singing of certain hymns or litanies, or canticles, before the Blessed Sacrament, which is exposed upon the altar in a monstrance and is surrounded with candles. At the end, the priest or deacon, his shoulders enveloped in a humeral veil, takes the monstrance into his hands and with it makes the sign of the cross in silence over the kneeling congregation.

