

St. James by-the-Sea Episcopal Church to offer free, musical Compline-by-Candlelight series in La Jolla

By STEPHANIE THOMPSON OCT 31, 2018 | 12:00 AM

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current generation have a thirst for spirituality, but coming to Sunday morning worship can be a big commitment. At Compline-by-Candlelight, nothing is required of you to enjoy or participate.

"You don't have to know how to read music or sing or

recite a creed — nothing like that. It's just an opportunity to sit in quiet, pray, and be still and at peace with your own understanding of God."

Although musical Compline services have caught on in Seattle and other cities, St. James in La Jolla is currently the only church in San Diego to offer these evening meditations.

In addition to being the home of concerts by groups such as Bach Collegium

San Diego and San Diego Early Music Society, St. James is known for its Music Series, which is offered as an outreach to the community. Past performers have included the Vienna Boys Choir, the Australian Chamber Orchestra, Anonymous 4, The Tallis Scholars, Westminster Abbey Choir, the Hereford Cathedral Choir, the Venice Baroque Orchestra, and a mainstay, the Grammy Award-winning Chanticleer (returning in 2019).

For more details, call the church at (858) 459-3421 or visit sjbts.org

St. James by-the-Sea will become the first church in San Diego to offer a regular Compline-by-Candlelight service as an opportunity for anyone in the community to spend half an hour in quiet contemplation set to choral singing.

The 7 p.m. Sunday series begins Nov. 4, 2018 and will continue Feb. 10, April 20 and June 2, 2019 at the church, 743 Prospect St., La Jolla.

Compline is a service of evening prayers that forms part of the Christian tradition, traditionally said (or chanted) before retiring for the night.

Over the centuries, various composers have set Compline prayers to music. St. James' Compline-by-Candlelight will offer music from Gregorian Chant and early polyphony, to the contemporary tunes of modern mystics, chosen by the church's director of music Alex Benestelli, and sung by the Schola Cantorum of St. James, an all-professional 12-voice choir.

During the service, the church will be open to all and lit only by candlelight.

"We're excited to continue this tradition of night-prayer as an offering of tranquility for the whole community," Benestelli said. "Many in the