

Our Sunday Service Together

August 15th 2021

Trinity 12



An Acclamation

Alleluia, alleluia. Glory to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit, one God, who was, and who is, and who is to come, the Almighty. Alleluia

Preparation

All: This is the day that the Lord has made.
Let us rejoice and be glad in it.
Through the brokenness of Christ, we become one body
as one body we now gather in the name of Christ to offer our praise and thanksgiving, to receive God's holy word, to pray for the needs of the world,
and to seek the forgiveness of our sins, that by the power of the Holy Spirit
we may give ourselves to the service of God.

Our Confession

Let us come to the light of Christ, confessing our sins in penitence and faith.

All: Jesus Christ, risen Master and triumphant Lord, we come to you in sorrow for our sins, and confess to you our weakness and unbelief.

We have lived by our own strength, and not by the power of your resurrection.
In your mercy, forgive us, hear us and help us.

We have lived by the light of our own eyes, as faithless and not believing.
In your mercy, forgive us, hear us and help us.

We have lived for this world alone, and doubted our home in heaven.
In your mercy, forgive us, hear us and help us.

Be still for a moment in confession and in receiving God's Grace in Christ

All: May Almighty God, who in Jesus Christ has given us a kingdom that cannot be destroyed, forgive us our sins, open our eyes to God's truth, strengthen us to do God's will and give us the joy of his kingdom, through Jesus Christ our Risen Lord. **Amen.**

The opening prayer

All: The night has passed, and the day lies open before us; let us pray with one heart and mind.

Silence is kept.

All: As we rejoice in the gift of this new day, so may the light of your presence, O God, set our hearts on fire with love for you; now and for ever. Amen.

The Psalmody Psalm 111

I will give thanks to the Lord with my whole heart, in the company of the faithful and in the congregation. The works of the Lord are great, sought out by all who delight in them. His work is full of majesty and honour and his righteousness endures for ever. He appointed a memorial for his marvellous deeds; the Lord is gracious and full of compassion. He gave food to those who feared him; he is ever mindful of his covenant. He showed his people the power of his works in giving them the heritage of the nations. The works of his hands are truth and justice; all his commandments are sure. They stand fast for ever and ever; they are done in truth and equity. He sent redemption to his people; he commanded his covenant for ever; holy and awesome is his name. The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom; a good understanding have those who live by it; his praise endures for ever. Glory to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit, as it was in the beginning, is now and ever shall be, world without end. Amen

Scripture Reading Ephesians 5.15-20

¹⁵ Be careful then how you live, not as unwise people but as wise, ¹⁶ making the most of the time, because the days are evil. ¹⁷ So do not be foolish, but understand what the will of the Lord is. ¹⁸ Do not get drunk with wine, for that is debauchery; but be filled with the Spirit, ¹⁹ as you sing psalms and hymns and spiritual songs among yourselves, singing and making melody to the Lord in your hearts, ²⁰ giving thanks to God the Father at all times and for everything in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ.

At the end of the reading we say:

All: This is the word of the Lord. Thanks be to God.

Gloria

All: Glory to God in the highest, and peace to his people on earth.
Lord God, heavenly King, almighty God and Father, we worship you, we give you thanks, we praise you for your glory.
Lord Jesus Christ, only Son of the Father, Lord God, Lamb of God, you take away the sin of the world: have mercy on us; you are seated at the right hand of the Father: receive our prayer.
For you alone are the Holy One, you alone are the Lord, you alone are the Most High, Jesus Christ, with the Holy Spirit, in the glory of God the Father. Amen.

The Gospel John 6.51-58

⁵¹ I am the living bread that came down from heaven. Whoever eats of this bread will live for ever; and the bread that I will give for the life of the world is my flesh.'

⁵² The Jews then disputed among themselves, saying, 'How can this man give us his flesh to eat?' ⁵³ So Jesus said to them, 'Very truly, I tell you, unless you eat the flesh of the Son of Man and drink his blood, you have no life in you. ⁵⁴ Those who eat my flesh and drink my blood have eternal life, and I will raise them up on the last

day; ⁵⁵ for my flesh is true food and my blood is true drink. ⁵⁶ Those who eat my flesh and drink my blood abide in me, and I in them. ⁵⁷ Just as the living Father sent me, and I live because of the Father, so whoever eats me will live because of me. ⁵⁸ This is the bread that came down from heaven, not like that which your ancestors ate, and they died. But the one who eats this bread will live for ever.'

at the end of the reading we say:

All: This is the word of the Lord. Thanks be to God.

A Reflection for the day

This is the third week in which our Gospel reading is from the section of St John's Gospel where Jesus speaks of himself as 'The Bread of Life'. St John lays stress on this idea and those responsible for selecting our readings clearly regard it as very important.

It is quite clear that John intended this as having a deep sacramental significance and perhaps reflecting the worship of the early church with which he would have been familiar. The other evangelists include an account of the last supper and the institution of the Holy Communion in Jesus words 'do this in remembrance of me', but John has this instead with Jesus saying, 'I am the living bread that came down from heaven. Whoever eats of this bread will live for ever and the bread that I will give for the life of the world is my flesh.' It is clear that from the start that the church celebrated the Holy Communion and shared the bread and wine at the Eucharist as we do to-day.

The pandemic has raised some interesting questions about what happens when we are unable to meet to share the sacrament. I have been rather worried by some of the attempts made to get around this which seem silly and even verge on the blasphemous. So how can we understand sacraments in general and the Holy Communion in particular? A sacrament has been defined as 'an outward and visible sign of an inward and spiritual grace given to us'. Many of the things we do have an almost sacramental quality – they have a special significance. When we shake hands or give a hug or send a sympathy card these are physical gestures which contain a deeper meaning - actions speak louder than words. That in simple terms is what the communion is about – but because of the words of Jesus and the ancient practice of the church it is our experience that it is something far more.

Attempts have been made to define precisely what happens when a priest consecrates the bread and wine and we all share it. Why do we refer to the bread and wine as the body and blood of Christ when they still appear to be bread and wine? Unfortunately, some of these explanations have proved confusing and controversial, but most Christians would agree that in some mysterious way it is our experience that Christ is present in the sacrament and we are spiritually nourished by it. Further attempts at definition are fruitless.

So this raises the important question of what we do when for some reason beyond our control we are unable to receive the sacraments – are we somehow denied the grace of God and cut off from him through something outside our control like the lockdown – what about recovering alcoholics or coeliacs who might well have an extra need for the grace of God? The answer must surely be that the love of God isn't somehow restricted by our limitations. He is greater than our understanding and beyond our imagining. I hope that has been your experience during the lockdown – we have been unable to share worship together and the sacraments but we haven't been abandoned and we will be able to worship again with new enthusiasm and understanding. It has been a bit like fasting – it gives us a deeper gratitude for what we may have taken for granted for far too long.

The Creed

All: I believe in God, the Father almighty, creator of heaven and earth.
I believe in Jesus Christ, his only Son, our Lord, who was conceived by the Holy Spirit, born of the Virgin Mary, suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, died, and was buried; he descended to the dead. On the third day he rose again; he ascended into heaven, he is seated at the right hand of the Father, and he will come to judge the living and the dead. I believe in the Holy Spirit, the holy catholic Church, the communion of saints, the forgiveness of sins, the resurrection of the body, and the life everlasting. Amen.

Prayers *We make our intercessions*

O God of peace, who has taught us that in quietness and confidence shall be our strength; help us, as we come into your presence, to be still and know that you are God.

In the power of the Spirit and in union with Christ let us pray to the Father.

We pray for the church that it may continue to work faithfully and patiently for the coming of the Kingdom of God. We pray for Bp Ruth and the diocesan staff as they take on extra responsibilities and prepare for a new Bishop. *Lord in your mercy. Hear our prayer.*

We Pray for Our Queen, Prime Minister, and all World leaders, that they may have the Spirit of wisdom. We pray for the leaders and people of Afghanistan and for a solution to their troubles. *Lord in your mercy. Hear our prayer.*

We pray for all those on holiday and having a break from their work that they may be refreshed and renewed. *Lord in your mercy. Hear our prayer.*

We pray for our families, friends, and neighbours that we may serve Christ in one another and seek the common good. *Lord in your mercy. Hear our prayer.*

We pray for the sick, suffering and dying *Lord in your mercy. Hear our prayer.*

We pray for those who mourn the death of loved ones..... may they find peace. *Lord in your mercy. Hear our prayer.*

Hear us as we remember those who have died..... According to your promises grant them a share in your eternal kingdom. *Lord in your mercy. Hear our prayer.*

Rejoicing in the fellowship of all your saints, we commend ourselves and the whole creation to your unfailing love.

Merciful Father, accept these prayers for the sake of your Son, our Saviour, Jesus Christ. Amen

And may the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with us all, now and for evermore. Amen.

The Collect

All: God of constant mercy, who sent your Son to save us: remind us of your goodness, increase your grace within us, that our thankfulness may grow, through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen

Gathering our prayers and praises into one, let us pray with confidence as our Saviour has taught us

All: Our Father, who art in heaven, hallowed be thy name;
thy kingdom come; thy will be done; on earth as it is in heaven.
Give us this day our daily bread.
And forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive those who trespass against us.
And lead us not into temptation; but deliver us from evil.
For thine is the kingdom, the power, and the glory
for ever and ever. Amen.

The Conclusion

All: Christ, as a light illumine and guide me this day.
Christ, as a shield overshadow me.
Christ under me, Christ over me; Christ beside me on my left and my right.
This day be within and without me. Amen