

# Our Sunday Service Together

## Advent Sunday, November 28<sup>th</sup> 2021



### An Acclamation for the Season

All: Alleluia, alleluia. Prepare the way of the Lord, make his paths straight, and all flesh shall see the salvation of God. Alleluia, 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

*God the Father forgives us in Christ and heals us by the Holy Spirit. Let us therefore put away all anger and bitterness, all slander and malice, and confess our sins to God our redeemer.*

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 25.1-10 *We say the psalm aloud*

To you, O Lord, I lift up my soul; O my God, in you I trust;  
let me not be put to shame; let not my enemies triumph over me.  
Let none who look to you be put to shame, but let the treacherous be shamed and frustrated.  
Make me to know your ways, O Lord, and teach me your paths.  
Lead me in your truth and teach me, for you are the God of my salvation; for you have I hoped all the day long.  
Remember, Lord, your compassion and love, for they are from everlasting.  
Remember not the sins of my youth or my transgressions,  
but think on me in your goodness, O Lord, according to your steadfast love.  
Gracious and upright is the Lord; therefore shall he teach sinners in the way.  
He will guide the humble in doing right and teach his way to the lowly.  
All the paths of the Lord are mercy and truth to those who keep his covenant and his testimonies.  
For your name's sake, O Lord, be merciful to my sin, for it is great.  
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 1 Thess 3.9-13

<sup>9</sup>How can we thank God enough for you in return for all the joy that we feel before our God because of you? <sup>10</sup>Night and day we pray most earnestly that we may see you face to face and restore whatever is lacking in your faith.

<sup>11</sup>Now may our God and Father himself and our Lord Jesus direct our way to you. <sup>12</sup>And may the Lord make you increase and abound in love for one another and for all, just as we abound in love for you. <sup>13</sup>And may he so strengthen your hearts in holiness that you may be blameless before our God and Father at the coming of our Lord Jesus with all his saints.

*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.

<sup>25</sup> 'There will be signs in the sun, the moon, and the stars, and on the earth distress among nations confused by the roaring of the sea and the waves. <sup>26</sup> People will faint from fear and foreboding of what is coming upon the world, for the powers of the heavens will be shaken. <sup>27</sup> Then they will see "the Son of Man coming in a cloud" with power and great glory. <sup>28</sup> Now when these things begin to take place, stand up and raise your heads, because your redemption is drawing near.'

<sup>29</sup> Then he told them a parable: 'Look at the fig tree and all the trees; <sup>30</sup> as soon as they sprout leaves you can see for yourselves and know that summer is already near. <sup>31</sup> So also, when you see these things taking place, you know that the kingdom of God is near. <sup>32</sup> Truly I tell you, this generation will not pass away until all things have taken place. <sup>33</sup> Heaven and earth will pass away, but my words will not pass away.

<sup>34</sup> 'Be on guard so that your hearts are not weighed down with dissipation and drunkenness and the worries of this life, and that day does not catch you unexpectedly, <sup>35</sup> like a trap. For it will come upon all who live on the face of the whole earth. <sup>36</sup> Be alert at all times, praying that you may have the strength to escape all these things that will take place, and to stand before the Son of Man.'

*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

Just how do you make some sense of, and put into words, what is happening in the world and with it the hope you have in your faith?

Israel had always been a problem for Rome; for any empire for that matter. Each Passover they would dispatch the whole garrison from Caesarea, with the governor, to ensure that the fanatics who wanted their own nation and king in place, their kingdom renewed, could be silenced or dealt with, removed from the scene if needs be. So it was at the time of Jesus and for every year since, but now some 70 years later everything has gone wrong.

The followers of Christ abroad in the empire hear of the war now raging in Judea and the siege of Jerusalem. Also of the death of emperor Nero. His successor Galba is rumoured murdered and civil war is expected in the empire. All the fixed points, the norms, the things you look to that say 'all is OK' are suddenly in question, what words can you find to make sense of this?

*'There will be signs in the sun, the moon, and the stars, and on the earth distress among nations confused by the roaring of the sea and the waves. People will faint from fear and foreboding of what is coming upon the world, for the powers of the heavens will be shaken.'*

You don't really mean the sun and moon and stars will be signs or that the seas will engulf the whole empire. But it does feel like this, it is destabilising, confusing, it is everywhere – universal.

*'Then they will see "the Son of Man coming in a cloud" with power and great glory.'*

No one really thinks Jesus will return flying on fluffy clouds (do they?). But here is hope, that in the midst of the turmoil the kingdom you pray for each day, to come to earth as in heaven, can be realised in and through these times.

*'Now, when these things begin to take place, stand up and raise your heads, because your redemption is drawing near.'*

Jerusalem did not come out well from all of this; Rome had her vicious and murderous ways and the city was torn down, it's people killed. The empire got a new ruler and 30 years or so on it is warming slowly to the ways

of the Lord. The church is better established and there is now time to reflect on what was and seek better understanding. Possibly, there is a new dawn on the horizon, a Christian dawn.

We reflect today, not 20 or 50 years after these events, but almost 2000 years later. Two millennia have passed during which the Lord's people have prayed each day 'your kingdom come and your will be done here on earth as in heaven', of crying out 'Maranatha – come Lord Jesus'.

We see signs of the kingdom, and we hope that today or tomorrow he will come once more with justice, peace and healing for the nations and all the earth. This is his promise to us, that he will return. This is our hope in and our prayer in Advent that as he once came to us, God with us, one with us, so he will come once more to establish his kingdom. To establish his Kingdom on the earth, but more to establish his Kingdom in the earth, in our hearts and minds so we might be the signs, not of the world's destruction but of its redemption.

Maranatha – Come Lord Jesus!

## 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*

Watchful at all times, let us pray for strength to stand with confidence before our Maker and Redeemer.

*Silence is kept.*

Almighty God, as your blessed Son Jesus Christ first came to seek and to save the lost;  
so may he come again to find in us the completion of his redeeming work;  
for he is now alive and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, God for ever and ever.  
Amen.

Come Lord, your wounded world is yearning for you to come again.  
Come Lord, your weary world is crying out for you to lift us up out of our despair, our hunger, our thirst for something better, our need for the food that will last.  
Come Lord, come again, we need to begin again. *Lord in your mercy hear our prayers*

God of hope, we cling to you, for your renewal of the face of the earth.  
Through the gift of your Son, our Lord Jesus, we follow you on the path of dawn.  
Enlightened by your love and wisdom, help us to lead each other and all creatures back to your open arms.  
*Lord in your mercy hear our prayers*

God of Salvation, Wake us up Lord! The night is nearly over.

May this Advent journey see our globalised world of inequality and exploitation transformed into your Kingdom of righteousness and mercy.

May we see a transformed world, where peace is built on understanding not weapons, the poor are empowered to live their lives to the full, and your Creation is nurtured not abused.

*Lord in your mercy hear our prayers*

Maranatha! Open our eyes to the dignity of all people and our ears to the cries of the earth.

Maranatha! Let us walk in solidarity with the poor and cleanse our world from oppression.

Maranatha! Let us shout out for justice for all and renew our hope for change.

Maranatha! The Lord is coming, let us share the Good News! Amen.

## The Collect

All: Almighty God, give us grace to cast away the works of darkness and to put on the armour of light, now in the time of this mortal life, in which your Son Jesus Christ came to us in great humility; that on the last day, when he shall come again in his glorious majesty to judge the living and the dead, we may rise to the life immortal; through him who is alive and reigns with you, in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God, now and for ever. 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.