

# Our Sunday Service Together

## Sunday July 26<sup>th</sup> 2020



*Almighty and eternal God, revealed for all time and to all the world as one God, yet three persons, Father, Son and Holy Spirit, living in the unity of love. We now join the Saints of the ages, together yet apart and 'make a Spiritual Communion, rejoicing in the grace of God come to us in fullness through Christ our Lord and Saviour, by the will of the Father and through the presence of The Spirit with us, now and for ever.*

### An Acclamation for the Season

All: Alleluia, alleluia! It is our duty and our joy, always and everywhere to give you thanks, holy Father, almighty and eternal God. For you have revealed the glory of your eternal fellowship of love with your Son and with the Holy Spirit, three persons equal in majesty, undivided in splendour, yet one God, ever to be worshipped and adored. Alleluia!

Hymn Father, hear the prayer we offer

### 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 119.129-136 *We say the psalm aloud*

Your testimonies are wonderful; therefore, my soul keeps them.

The opening of your word gives light; it gives understanding to the simple.

I open my mouth and draw in my breath, as I long for your commandments.

Turn to me and be gracious to me, as is your way with those who love your name.

Order my steps by your word, and let no wickedness have dominion over me.

Redeem me from earthly oppressors so that I may keep your commandments.

Show the light of your countenance upon your servant and teach me your statutes.

My eyes run down with streams of water, because the wicked do not keep your law.

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 Romans 8.26-39

<sup>26</sup> Likewise the Spirit helps us in our weakness; for we do not know how to pray as we ought, but that very Spirit intercedes with sighs too deep for words. <sup>27</sup> And God, who searches the heart, knows what is the mind of the Spirit, because the Spirit intercedes for the saints according to the will of God.

<sup>28</sup> We know that all things work together for good for those who love God, who are called according to his purpose. <sup>29</sup> For those whom he foreknew he also predestined to be conformed to the image of his Son, in order that he might be the firstborn within a large family. <sup>30</sup> And those whom he predestined he also called; and those whom he called he also justified; and those whom he justified he also glorified.

<sup>31</sup> What then are we to say about these things? If God is for us, who is against us? <sup>32</sup> He who did not withhold his own Son, but gave him up for all of us, will he not with him also give us everything else? <sup>33</sup> Who will bring any charge against God's elect? It is God who justifies. <sup>34</sup> Who is to condemn? It is Christ Jesus, who died, yes, who was raised, who is at the right hand of God, who indeed intercedes for us. <sup>35</sup> Who will separate us from the love of Christ? Will hardship, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword? <sup>36</sup> As it is written, 'For your sake we are being killed all day long; we are accounted as sheep to be slaughtered.'

<sup>37</sup> No, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him who loved us. <sup>38</sup> For I am convinced that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor rulers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor powers, <sup>39</sup> nor height, nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord.

*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 Matthew 13.31-33 and 44-52

*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.*

<sup>31</sup> He put before them another parable: 'The kingdom of heaven is like a mustard seed that someone took and sowed in his field; <sup>32</sup> it is the smallest of all the seeds, but when it has grown it is the greatest of shrubs and becomes a tree, so that the birds of the air come and make nests in its branches.'

<sup>33</sup> He told them another parable: 'The kingdom of heaven is like yeast that a woman took and mixed in with three measures of flour until all of it was leavened.'

<sup>44</sup> 'The kingdom of heaven is like treasure hidden in a field, which someone found and hid; then in his joy he goes and sells all that he has and buys that field.

<sup>45</sup> 'Again, the kingdom of heaven is like a merchant in search of fine pearls; <sup>46</sup> on finding one pearl of great

value, he went and sold all that he had and bought it.

<sup>47</sup> 'Again, the kingdom of heaven is like a net that was thrown into the sea and caught fish of every kind; <sup>48</sup> when it was full, they drew it ashore, sat down, and put the good into baskets but threw out the bad. <sup>49</sup> So it will be at the end of the age. The angels will come out and separate the evil from the righteous <sup>50</sup> and throw them into the furnace of fire, where there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth.

<sup>51</sup> 'Have you understood all this?' They answered, 'Yes.' <sup>52</sup> And he said to them, 'Therefore every scribe who has been trained for the kingdom of heaven is like the master of a household who brings out of his treasure what is new and what is old.'

*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.*

## A Reflection for the day

Jesus told his parables to a people filled with great hope and a yearning for the Kingdom of God to come. These were kingdom people through and through and they knew from their history with God that the kingdom would be restored. They join with their psalm singing king of old, David, and declare to Jesus "Your testimonies are wonderful, he opening of your word gives light; it gives understanding to the simple." And they ask him "Order our steps by your word, and let no wickedness have dominion over us". They sought him out to redeem them from their earthly oppressors, the Romans and the puppet Herodian kings. Jesus if he is the messiah will restore the Kingdom of God's people.

When Jesus says "the kingdom of God is like" ears must have listened up, but I wonder if heads dropped and hearts sank at the kingdom he talked of. For his talk was not about a mighty overthrowing in power, it wasn't even talk of removing the oppressors. Jesus instead talks of a quiet revolution, of a slow burn change, an organic work that takes careful watching and searching for – yeast worked into flour, a small seed planted to grow, and of a treasure when found and its worth is realised you will do all you can to retain.

Change theory says people experience change imposed from outside, most often short lived (if the Romans had been deposed how long before another despotic regime replaced them is this really why God said to the people in the first instance 'you don't need to be like the other nations and have a King for no good will come of it?') and change that happens from within people or organisations; a slow and lasting change of the heart. The kingdom change many sought from Jesus was one of external overthrow of the present powers, what Jesus offers is an internal, long lasting work.

Paul is a man who sought as a young man the overthrow of Rome, of all that stood in opposition to Israel, and by violent means. Then began a journey of heart change after he met with Jesus on the Damascus road.

For any who seek the establishment of the Kingdom his words in Romans would seem strange: "In all these things we are more than conquerors through him who loved us. For I am convinced that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor rulers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor powers, nor height, nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord."

Paul is convinced, even though he been imprisoned, beaten, shipwrecked, imprisoned again, rejected, verbally abused, ostracised, faced dark spiritual forces and torments that in all of this the love of God remains true, and he knows for many he sounds mad and is to be pitied. However, the death, resurrection and intercession of Jesus the Messiah meant Paul could look all the oppressors of the age about him square in the face.

Faith, hope and love are the ways of the Kingdom, but they are not just the deductions Paul makes from his experiences in life; they are rooted in God's faithfulness, God's purposes, and above all in God's love, seen and known in Jesus and in the strange presence of the Spirit who dwells with us all, in all times and for all time!

As in Paul's day so today, as we look upon the broken world about us, it may be hard to think there will ever be the possibility of the Kingdom of God come here on earth as in heaven. Jesus himself knows such despair filled the hearts of many before him; how would they ever be free and fully be the people of God again? But the tiny seed will grow, the yeast will work through the flour, the treasure is there to be found if people would search for it the Kingdom of God is coming and has come!

In suggesting the people prayed 'Your kingdom come and your will be done here in earth as in heaven' Jesus offered a prayer for the people that chimed with their deepest heartfelt concerns; he knew their hearts! And he knew that it was their hearts and lives that needed the slow work of the kingdom to bring redemption, to bring a kingdom presence that would mean no oppressor could triumph.

And Jesus' prayer and his imagery of the kingdom hold true today as much as they did 2,000 years ago for oppression ends when hearts are redeemed by love and lives are lived for justice, healing, righteousness. When we yearn to see oppression end in the world we need to pray 'your kingdom come' and in so doing know that "the Spirit helps us in our weakness; for we do not know how to pray as we ought, but that very Spirit intercedes with sighs too deep for words. And God, who searches the heart, knows what is the mind of the Spirit, because the Spirit intercedes for the saints according to the will of God."

Let us pray, "Spirit of God, in our weakness be our strength. When we do not know how to pray for the world we live in, hear our hearts. Change our lives by your redeeming power and may your Kingdom come, here in earth as in heaven. Amen"

## 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*

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

Lord, as you have called us to fulfil your purpose, work in us and through us to do your will.

*Lord you will be done, your Kingdom come in us.*

Make us the people you want us to be, guide us to do what you would have us do.

*Lord you will be done, your Kingdom come in us.*

We pray for all suffering hardship or persecution, for all in peril or danger. Strengthen all who seek to work for peace, justice, liberty; for the UN, for diplomats and aid agencies.

*Lord you will be done, your Kingdom come in us.*

We remember places of war and tyranny, oppressive societies about the world, China, Afghanistan, Iran, Iraq, Israel, Syria, Zimbabwe, Yemen, Sudan, Libya, Saudi Arabia, Russia; all nations where people are persecuted for faith, gender, age, sexuality.

*Lord you will be done, your Kingdom come in us.*

We pray for those injured through accidents, for all fallen into sickness or disability, for those losing agility or mobility, and for their healers and comforters.

*Lord you will be done, your Kingdom come in us.*

We give thanks that in Christ we are more than conquerors. We pray for the saints and the faithful departed that one day we may all be one in your eternal kingdom.

Amen.

## A Prayer during the Covid-19 Pandemic

All:     Keep us, good Lord, under the shadow of your mercy  
          in this time of uncertainty and distress.  
          Sustain and support the anxious and fearful,  
          and lift up all who are brought low;  
          that we may rejoice in your comfort  
          knowing that nothing can separate us from your love  
          in Christ Jesus our Lord.  
          Amen.

## The Collect

All:     Creator God you made us all in your image:  
          may we discern you in all that we see,  
          and serve you in all that we do;  
          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.