

Our Sunday Service Together

Sunday September 13th 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 When I survey the wondrous cross

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 103.8-13 *We say the psalm aloud*

The Lord is full of compassion and mercy, slow to anger and of great kindness.
He will not always accuse us, neither will he keep his anger for ever.
He has not dealt with us according to our sins, nor rewarded us according to our wickedness.
For as the heavens are high above the earth, so great is his mercy upon those who fear him.
As far as the east is from the west, so far has he set our sins from us.
As a father has compassion on his children, so is the Lord merciful towards those who fear him.
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 14.1-12

Welcome those who are weak in faith, but not for the purpose of quarrelling over opinions. ² Some believe in eating anything, while the weak eat only vegetables. ³ Those who eat must not despise those who abstain, and those who abstain must not pass judgement on those who eat; for God has welcomed them. ⁴ Who are you to pass judgement on servants of another? It is before their own lord that they stand or fall. And they will be upheld, for the Lord is able to make them stand.

⁵ Some judge one day to be better than another, while others judge all days to be alike. Let all be fully convinced in their own minds. ⁶ Those who observe the day, observe it in honour of the Lord. Also those who eat, eat in honour of the Lord, since they give thanks to God; while those who abstain, abstain in honour of the Lord and give thanks to God.

⁷ We do not live to ourselves, and we do not die to ourselves. ⁸ If we live, we live to the Lord, and if we die, we die to the Lord; so then, whether we live or whether we die, we are the Lord's. ⁹ For to this end Christ died and lived again, so that he might be Lord of both the dead and the living.

¹⁰ Why do you pass judgement on your brother or sister? Or you, why do you despise your brother or sister? For we will all stand before the judgement seat of God. ¹¹ For it is written, 'As I live, says the Lord, every knee shall bow to me, and every tongue shall give praise to God.'

¹² So then, each of us will be accountable to God.

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 18.21-35

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.

²¹ Then Peter came and said to him, 'Lord, if another member of the church sins against me, how often should I forgive? As many as seven times?' ²² Jesus said to him, 'Not seven times, but, I tell you, seventy-seven times.

²³ 'For this reason the kingdom of heaven may be compared to a king who wished to settle accounts with his slaves. ²⁴ When he began the reckoning, one who owed him ten thousand talents was brought to him; ²⁵ and, as he could not pay, his lord ordered him to be sold, together with his wife and children and all his possessions, and payment to be made. ²⁶ So the slave fell on his knees before him, saying, "Have patience with me, and I will pay you everything." ²⁷ And out of pity for him, the lord of that slave released him and forgave him the debt. ²⁸ But that same slave, as he went out, came upon one of his fellow-slaves who owed him a hundred denarii; and seizing him by the throat, he said, "Pay what you owe." ²⁹ Then his fellow-slave fell down and pleaded with him, "Have patience with me, and I will pay you." ³⁰ But he refused; then he went and

threw him into prison until he should pay the debt. ³¹ When his fellow-slaves saw what had happened, they were greatly distressed, and they went and reported to their lord all that had taken place. ³² Then his lord summoned him and said to him, "You wicked slave! I forgave you all that debt because you pleaded with me. ³³ Should you not have had mercy on your fellow-slave, as I had mercy on you?" ³⁴ And in anger his lord handed him over to be tortured until he should pay his entire debt. ³⁵ So my heavenly Father will also do to every one of you, if you do not forgive your brother or sister from your heart.'

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 *Revd John Webb writes*

My first training was as an accountant so whenever Jesus talks about money my ears prick up. But, of course, when Jesus refers to debts, he's not giving financial advice but, using it as a metaphor.

In our Gospel reading Jesus talks about a slave having an enormous debt. So large that his hearers would have chuckled at the thought of a slave living such an outrageously extravagant lifestyle to amass such a debt. They would have smiled again at the thought that he could ever be expected to repay it. Even if all his property and even he and his family were sold it would only pay off a fraction of it. But he pleads with his master the king to cancel the debt who then relents and writes off the debt. He writes off every penny and sets him free. No threats, no recriminations, no conditions. Extravagant forgiveness freely given. But the story continues that, as he was coming away, he meets another slave who owes him a trivial sum (which in mathematical terms is actually over half a million times less than he has just been forgiven) and demands immediate repayment. The second slave pleads for time, using almost identical words as the first had used to the king, but his heart is hardened and he has him thrown into the debtors' prison.

We can imagine the reaction Jesus parable would have provoked. Anyone hearing would have been horrified at the massive ingratitude of the first slave. Then Jesus turns the parable on his hearers and by extension onto each one of us. We have all received generously of the grace of God. Life itself, the love of friends and family, support and comfort in times of need, and forgiveness for the many ways in which we have fallen short in our love of those around us. Do we forgive as readily as we should?

We should be reminded of this when we frequently pray 'forgive us our trespasses(sins) as we forgive those who trespass(sin) against us'. Its not easy to forgive those who have wronged us. We may have been deeply hurt so we need to seek the grace of God to overcome it. I'm very sad when we see interviews on the television with those who have lost loved ones in violent incidents say that the perpetrators should be given 'a full life sentence without parole' or 'lock them up and throw away the key'. I pray for those people that they may find a way to forgive and overcome the natural urge for revenge or recrimination.

By contrast I am uplifted by those generous souls who express forgiveness for those who have deeply harmed them, echoing the words of Jesus as he died on the cross 'Father, forgive them'.

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

God of all Humanity, guide the peoples of this world in paths of unity, compassion and grace. May we strive in body, mind and Spirit to create societies where people of all backgrounds can live in harmony with one another. Grant wisdom and justice to all world leaders and guide us in your way of peace.

Lord in your mercy, hear our prayer.

Gracious God, guide your church across the world. May we be communities forged by grace and living out the power of your resurrection love in the world. Pour out your spirit on all church leaders and grant us all the wisdom to listen to your voice and the courage to follow it, wherever it may lead us. We pray for Bishop Peter in his ongoing cancer treatment and for Bishop Ruth and the Archdeacon's taking on extra work at this time of change and challenge for your church here in Somerset.

Lord in your mercy, hear our prayer.

God of all goodness, we pray for all farmers and agricultural workers, for those who work in factories and industries to produce our food. We pray for all those for whom food is scarce, guide and strengthen all those who reach out to them through foodbanks and relief organisations. Help us to plant seeds of hope, to nurture fruits of the spirit and become growers of grace.

Lord in your mercy, hear our prayer.

God of all compassion, we pray for all those who suffer ill health, emotional or spiritual hardship and for all those who grieve the loss of a loved one. Strengthen all those who suffer in body, mind or spirit and fill them with your healing love.

We pray especially for

Lord in your mercy, hear our prayer.

We give thanks for those who are beyond the storms of this world and have come to the haven of your est. grant that we may come to be with your saints in life eternal.

Merciful Father, accept these prayers for the sake of your Son, our Saviour Jesus Christ. 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: Almighty God, whose only Son has opened for us a new and living presence: Give us pure hearts and steadfast wills to worship you in spirit and truth; Through Jesus Christ your Son our Lord, who is alive and reigns with you, in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. **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.