

Our Sunday Service Together

Sunday October 11th 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 The King of love my Shepherd is

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 23 *We say the psalm aloud*

The Lord is my shepherd; therefore, can I lack nothing.

He makes me lie down in green pastures and leads me beside still waters.

He shall refresh my soul and guide me in the paths of righteousness for his name's sake.

Though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil; for you are with me;
your rod and your staff, they comfort me.

You spread a table before me in the presence of those who trouble me;

you have anointed my head with oil and my cup shall be full.

Surely goodness and loving mercy shall follow me all the days of my life,
and I will dwell in the house of the Lord 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 Isaiah 25.1-9

O Lord, you are my God; I will exalt you, I will praise your name; for you have done wonderful things, plans formed of old, faithful and sure.

² For you have made the city a heap, the fortified city a ruin; the palace of aliens is a city no more, it will never be rebuilt.

³ Therefore strong peoples will glorify you; cities of ruthless nations will fear you. ⁴ For you have been a refuge to the poor, a refuge to the needy in their distress, a shelter from the rainstorm and a shade from the heat. When the blast of the ruthless was like a winter rainstorm, the noise of aliens like heat in a dry place, you subdued the heat with the shade of clouds; the song of the ruthless was stilled.

⁶ On this mountain the Lord of hosts will make for all peoples a feast of rich food, a feast of well-matured wines, of rich food filled with marrow, of well-matured wines strained clear.

⁷ And he will destroy on this mountain the shroud that is cast over all peoples, the sheet that is spread over all nations; ⁸ he will swallow up death for ever.

Then the Lord God will wipe away the tears from all faces, and the disgrace of his people he will take away from all the earth, for the Lord has spoken.

⁹ It will be said on that day, Lo, this is our God; we have waited for him, so that he might save us. This is the Lord for whom we have waited; let us be glad and rejoice in his salvation.

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 22.1-14

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.

Once more Jesus spoke to them in parables, saying: ² 'The kingdom of heaven may be compared to a king who gave a wedding banquet for his son. ³ He sent his slaves to call those who had been invited to the wedding banquet, but they would not come. ⁴ Again he sent other slaves, saying, "Tell those who have been invited: Look, I have prepared my dinner, my oxen and my fat calves have been slaughtered, and everything is ready; come to the wedding banquet." ⁵ But they made light of it and went away, one to his farm, another to his business, ⁶ while the rest seized his slaves, maltreated them, and killed them. ⁷ The king was enraged. He sent his troops, destroyed those murderers, and burned their city. ⁸ Then he said to his slaves, "The wedding is ready, but those invited were not worthy. ⁹ Go therefore into the main streets, and invite everyone you find to the wedding banquet." ¹⁰ Those slaves went out into the streets and gathered all whom they found, both good and bad; so the wedding hall was filled with guests.

¹¹ 'But when the king came in to see the guests, he noticed a man there who was not wearing a wedding robe, ¹² and he said to him, "Friend, how did you get in here without a wedding robe?" And he was speechless. ¹³ Then the king said to the attendants, "Bind him hand and foot, and throw him into the outer darkness, where there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth." ¹⁴ For many are called, but few are chosen.'

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 John Webb writes

It has often been said that it's not until we lose something that we realise how important it was. And this has certainly been true for many of us during the pandemic. We took it for granted that we could move about freely and meet and talk, not only with our friends and family, but also with anybody we happened to meet but this is now severely restricted and we feel the loss. One area where this has been most keenly felt is weddings – occasions when couples gather together as many friends and family as possible to make their solemn commitment and celebrate. This is now reduced to a mere handful and it's not the same.

Weddings have always been important in Jewish culture. So much so that throughout the old testament and in the teaching of Jesus the royal wedding feast was seen as a model for the coming Kingdom of God as it is in our Gospel reading to-day. In fact, it is used twice because it is really two different parables put together. The first parable is the usual one looking back at Israel, the chosen people of God, called to gather together in the service of God but violently rejecting the message of the prophets and even the Messiah himself. But the second parable is quite different and looks forward not back and is as relevant to-day as it was when Jesus first spoke it. It is about the guest who was invited in off the street but when the King sees him unsuitably dressed, he is very angry and throws him out and sends him to eternal punishment. It all looks illogical, unreasonable, and unfair.

How we dress is important. We wear our smart clothes for a wedding or a funeral out of respect for those we are thinking about. We wear smart, but perhaps different clothes for a job interview, or important business meeting. We wear our overalls or old clothes for gardening and dirty jobs. We think about what we are going to do and dress accordingly. But Jesus isn't giving sartorial advice. He's not really talking about clothes, but about making appropriate preparation for what we are going to do, and specifically preparing to worship. Do we turn up for worship properly prepared or do we turn up in our old clothes?

During the lock down I have been unable to worship and this made me wonder if when we are able to worship again, I would be properly prepared. At my confirmation it was stressed that we should not just turn up to church but prepare carefully beforehand and, as a rector I always prepared conscientiously for worship, but since I retired I have let it slip. So the new normal for me will be to make sure that I am properly prepared when I go to church, not for fear of damnation, but out of respect and awe for the God who I am there to worship and Jesus who died on the cross to show his love. I invite you to join with me in that resolution.

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.

Let us pray for Peter our Bishop and those who care for him in hospital. We pray for Bishop Ruth and all who seek to serve you in this diocese as they take on additional responsibilities May they be filled with the Spirit and serve you as the first disciples.

Lord in your mercy. Hear our prayer.

Let us pray for all those who accept the awesome responsibility of leading the worship in our churches, and for all congregations that they may appreciate the privilege that is theirs.

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 to lead us through this difficult time. May they always use their power for the good of the people and avoid the temptation to personal gain or glory.

Lord in your mercy. Hear our prayer.

We pray for the victims of oppression, discrimination, and bullying. And we pray for the work of the United Nations and NATO in their efforts to create and maintain world peace.

Lord in your mercy. Hear our prayer.

We pray for all our young people whose lives have been disrupted by the coronavirus outbreak and have missed so much at this critical time in their lives.

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 and we give thanks and pray for those who use their skill and risk their lives to care for them.

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. *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 and everlasting God, increase in us the gift of faith that, forsaking what lies behind and reaching out to that which is before, we may run the way of your commandments and win the crown of everlasting joy; 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.