

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 Be Still and Know I am God

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 96.1-9 *We say the psalm aloud*

Sing to the Lord a new song; sing to the Lord, all the earth.

Sing to the Lord and bless his name; tell out his salvation from day to day.

Declare his glory among the nations and his wonders among all peoples.

For great is the Lord and greatly to be praised; he is more to be feared than all gods.

For all the gods of the nations are but idols; it is the Lord who made the heavens.

Honour and majesty are before him; power and splendour are in his sanctuary.

Ascribe to the Lord, you families of the peoples; ascribe to the Lord honour and strength.

Ascribe to the Lord the honour due to his name; bring offerings and come into his courts.

O worship the Lord in the beauty of holiness; let the whole earth tremble before 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 Isaiah 45.1-7

Thus says the Lord to his anointed, to Cyrus, whose right hand I have grasped to subdue nations before him and strip kings of their robes,
to open doors before him— and the gates shall not be closed:

² I will go before you and level the mountains, I will break in pieces the doors of bronze and cut through the bars of iron, ³ I will give you the treasures of darkness and riches hidden in secret places, so that you may know that it is I, the Lord, the God of Israel, who call you by your name. ⁴ For the sake of my servant Jacob, and Israel my chosen, I call you by your name, I surname you, though you do not know me.

⁵ I am the Lord, and there is no other; besides me there is no god.

I arm you, though you do not know me, ⁶ so that they may know, from the rising of the sun and from the west, that there is no one besides me;

I am the Lord, and there is no other. ⁷ I form light and create darkness, I make weal and create woe; I the Lord do all these things.

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 22.15-22

Then the Pharisees went and plotted to entrap him in what he said. ¹⁶ So they sent their disciples to him, along with the Herodians, saying, 'Teacher, we know that you are sincere, and teach the way of God in accordance with truth, and show deference to no one; for you do not regard people with partiality. ¹⁷ Tell us, then, what you think. Is it lawful to pay taxes to the emperor, or not?' ¹⁸ But Jesus, aware of their malice, said, 'Why are you putting me to the test, you hypocrites? ¹⁹ Show me the coin used for the tax.' And they brought him a denarius. ²⁰ Then he said to them, 'Whose head is this, and whose title?' ²¹ They answered, 'The emperor's.' Then he said to them, 'Give therefore to the emperor the things that are the emperor's, and to God the things that are God's.' ²² When they heard this, they were amazed; and they left him and went away.

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

To be the people of God is a calling to be Holy, to be set apart. The people of God have, however always struggled with what being holy and set apart means.

Matthew is collating all of the accounts of Jesus' ministry, all of his sayings, and setting them down just as the early Church is struggling with this concept of 'being set apart, being called to holiness'! 1 Thessalonians, the earliest Christian writings the church holds, exemplifies the struggle; just how can the people be holy in such an un-holy world?

Matthew says the leaders wished to entrap Jesus; they had already decided to kill him back in chapter 12. Now they would use this occasion to secure their aims; 'is it lawful to pay taxes or not?' they ask. The question may sound reasonable for the person seeking holiness, seeking not to handle coinage with an idolatrous image affixed to it (Caesar was talked of as a God), and more which supported systems where the independence and purity of the nation was denied by Roman rule. But Jesus was not there to overthrow in violence, but to reform

the actions of the heart. His wisdom, his calling goes beyond the surface level of questions of church and state; and some have used this argument to call for a separation of the two. Jesus' answer is simple, 'give to Caesar what is his and to God the things that are God's'.

What are 'the things of God?' Surely, a person's entire life - heart, mind, soul and strength; for humanity is from God and will return to God. Caesar and Rome, well they represent the unredeemed world that the church is called to work within. And who knows maybe there would be a time when Caesar would be the agent of God for positive change for his people – just as Isaiah declared Cyrus would be. Here is Holiness, here is the full nature of God revealed, not in separateness from the world in all its fallen nature and mess, but in living within the world, and its structures. In living in the world in such a manner that it would encounter the presence of God in Christ via his Church; which is called to be the body of Christ.

This was the discovery made by the early church as they wrestled with being called to holiness, that as God was made known in Jesus Christ so Christ would be made known through the Church, his body. As the Son imitated the Father in a living, breathing, passion filled life amongst the sinners and tax collectors, so he calls his Church to do likewise (spoiler, this is how Matthew ends his Gospel).

When times of challenge and adversity come the temptation has always been to circle the wagons, to retreat and to opt for self-preservation. Jesus, shows another way, a holy way, one that draws deeper on the Spirit of God, on the written word and through prayer to then venture out, deeper and further into the world and to bring to it redemption. This is the way of Christ and of His Church, to give to God the things that are God's - our hearts, minds, souls and resources.

Today the Church faces its own challenges and adversities in the fallen age it finds itself within, nationally and locally. Might we follow as many have before? Might we call upon the Spirit for both the wisdom she brings and the strength we need to take up our cross and follow Christ? To go out into, to be engaged with, a fallen world in such a manner that we reveal true holiness, the desire of God to redeem all the world through Christ.

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

Father, may we show your love and your salvation in our lives, that the church may order its priorities, that it may grow in holiness and in outreach.

Spirit of God, guide s and strengthen us.

We pray for all who hunger for goodness and righteousness, for all who serve you by serving others. We pray for world leaders at this time of pandemic, for all who influence our future, for those who work in the press or broadcasting, for artists, musicians and writers, for those who seek to care for and improve the environment.

Spirit of God, guide s and strengthen us.

May your church set an example by the way we live. We seek forgiveness for past transgressions, for the support of fallen and corrupt government systems, rather than offering challenge to the. For times when your church has enabled abuse, racism, inequality or violence within the world. We pray for healing, for redemption and for good relationships and honest dealing.

Spirit of God, guide s and strengthen us.

We pray for all who are weak, for the weak willed and weak minded, for all led into crime or vice. We give thanks for and pray for those working for the rehabilitation of addicts or criminals.

Spirit of God, guide s and strengthen us.

We remember those who are anxious at this time for their work, their health, their homes or communities. We pray for those depressed or despairing, for all who have lost vision or hope. For the sick, for those in intensive care through Covid-19, for those facing tests or operations, especially those whose treatment is deferred because of the pandemic's impact on health services. We also pray for all who minister to the sick, the elderly and those in care.

Spirit of God, guide s and strengthen us.

We entrust to your power our friends and loved ones in this world, and those who have departed from our sight. We pray that we may all at the last share in the joy and peace of your kingdom.

Spirit of God, guide s and strengthen us.

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: Faithful Lord, whose steadfast love never ceases and whose mercies never come to an end:
grant us the grace to trust you and to receive the gifts of your love, new every morning, in 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.