

Our Service Together

January 2nd 2022



An Acclamation for the Season

All: Alleluia, alleluia. The people who walked in darkness have seen a great light. For to us a child is born to us a Son is given. His name will be called Wonderful counsellor, mighty God, the everlasting Father, the Prince of Peace. Glory to God in the highest and peace to his people on earth. 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

The sun of righteousness has dawned with healing in his wings. Let us come to the light of Christ, confessing our sins in penitence and faith.

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 147.12-20 *We say the psalm aloud*

But the Lord delights in those who fear him, who put their trust in his steadfast love.

Sing praise to the Lord, O Jerusalem; praise your God, O Zion;

For he has strengthened the bars of your gates and has blest your children within you.

He has established peace in your borders and satisfies you with the finest wheat.

He sends forth his command to the earth and his word runs very swiftly.

He gives snow like wool and scatters the hoarfrost like ashes.

He casts down his hailstones like morsels of bread; who can endure his frost?

He sends forth his word and melts them; he blows with his wind and the waters flow.

He declares his word to Jacob, his statutes and judgements to Israel.

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 Ephesians 1.3-14

Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us in Christ with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places, just as he chose us in Christ before the foundation of the world to be holy and blameless before him in love. He destined us for adoption as his children through Jesus Christ, according to the good pleasure of his will, to the praise of his glorious grace that he freely bestowed on us in the Beloved. In him we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of our trespasses, according to the riches of his grace that he lavished on us. With all wisdom and in sight he has made known to us the mystery of his will, according to his good pleasure that he set forth in Christ, as a plan for the fullness of time, to gather up all things in him, things in heaven and things on earth. In Christ we have also obtained an inheritance, having been destined according to the purpose of him who accomplishes all things according to his counsel and will, so that we, who were the first to set our hope on Christ, might live for the praise of his glory. In him you also, when you had heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation, and had believed in him, were marked with the seal of the promised Holy Spirit; this is the pledge of our inheritance towards redemption as God's own people, to the praise of his glory.

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 John 1.10-18

¹⁰ He was in the world, and the world came into being through him; yet the world did not know him. ¹¹ He came to what was his own, and his own people did not accept him. ¹² But to all who received him, who believed in his name, he gave power to become children of God, ¹³ who were born, not of blood or of the will of the flesh or of the will of man, but of God.

¹⁴ And the Word became flesh and lived among us, and we have seen his glory, the glory as of a father's only son, full of grace and truth. ¹⁵ (John testified to him and cried out, 'This was he of whom I said, "He who comes after me ranks ahead of me because he was before me."') ¹⁶ From his fullness we have all received, grace upon grace. ¹⁷ The law indeed was given through Moses; grace and truth came through Jesus Christ. ¹⁸ No one has ever seen God. It is God the only Son, who is close to the Father's heart, who has made him known.

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

I wonder, do you have a Christmas Cactus, we have a couple. They always strike me at odds with the time of year – winter I mean, not Christmas. Things are not supposed to flower in December in the northern hemisphere, this is the fallow time; a time when life is least expected. I am actually OK with the cactus, after all its kept indoors. However, we have a very large bush in the garden which acts as it should in losing all its leaves in the autumn and then, just as it is getting cold and there are no pollinators about it bursts into flower, and sits there hoping for pollination until the spring when the leaves grow again.

Winter is not the season for signs of new life, but at its depth the New Year brings hopes of life and warmth and summer flowers galore.

Supposedly we should be reading Ephesians 1.3-14 in a single breath because, in the Greek it is a single sentence. It is a Christian version of the old Jewish prayer 'blessed be the God who...'. Instead of affirmations about the people of God in the land of promise it is filled with affirmations about the people of God 'in Christ' by the presence and power of the Spirit.

We still find themes of being chosen, rescued from a slavery, God's purpose to bless the world through his people, and the offer, and advance guarantee of an inheritance. This is Israel's story summed up in the Messiah's story and as such made available to those who are 'in him'.

If Ephesians seeks to put into words what has just sprung into blown, the opening words of John's gospel go further, add more, and more! First century Judaism sought to answer the question 'how would the creator God of the heavens act within and for the benefit of that creation?'

The answer was by his wisdom, his word, his law, his Spirit, and his glory. John gives us a meditation on Jesus in these specific categories; it is as if he says 'you were watching and waiting for a certain flower to bloom, and look it did, and it looked like this' – and what a shame it is that so many did not see it and rejected the blossom come forth unexpectedly before them.

But flowers do come 'out of season' they do blossom unexpectedly. It would seem that the knack is to be expectant. It would seem that the people of God are to be expectant of 'new flowers', come by the power of the Spirit to fulfil the purposes of God in the world, through His people.

As we enter a New Year I wonder if we can be expectant people, those who are on the lookout for the new things of the Kingdom, for the blossoms of new life within God's people, and more, I wonder if we might be

those who go to be the new life of God in our communities and nation – which, after all looks a bit dead at the moment and in need of new life!

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.

As we start a new year let us open our hearts and minds to receive anew the gift of Jesus into our lives. Let us give thanks that in baptism we started our journey and continue to live in faith.
Lord in your mercy hear our prayer

Strengthen Bishop Ruth and all laity and clergy who seek to serve you in this diocese. May they be filled with the Spirit and serve you as the first disciples.
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 difficult times.
Lord in your mercy hear our prayer.

We pray for our legal system – those who make our laws that they may have wisdom, and those who enforce them that they may have compassion.
Lord in your mercy hear our prayer.

We pray for the hungry and starving, that the available food may be used for the benefit of all.
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 our schools, the children, teachers, and support staff as they return to the classroom next week.
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. And may the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with us all, now and for evermore. Amen.

The Collect

All: Almighty God, in the birth of your Son you have poured on us the new light of your incarnate Word, and shown us the fullness of your love: help us to walk in his light and dwell in his love that we may know the fullness of his joy; 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.