

Our Service Together

2nd Sunday before Lent

February 20th 2022

An Acclamation for the Season

All: There is one body and one spirit. There is one hope to which we were called; one Lord, one faith, one baptism, one God and Father of all.

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 Psalms Psalm 37.1-11 and 39-40 *We say the psalm aloud*

Fret not because of evildoers; be not jealous of those who do wrong.
For they shall soon wither like grass and like the green herb fade away.
Trust in the Lord and be doing good; dwell in the land and be nourished with truth.
Let your delight be in the Lord and he will give you your heart's desire.
Commit your way to the Lord and put your trust in him, and he will bring it to pass.
He will make your righteousness as clear as the light and your just dealing as the noonday.
Be still before the Lord and wait for him; do not fret over those that prosper as they follow their evil schemes.
Refrain from anger and abandon wrath; do not fret, lest you be moved to do evil.
For evildoers shall be cut off, but those who wait upon the Lord shall possess the land.
Yet a little while and the wicked shall be no more; you will search for their place and find them gone.
But the lowly shall possess the land and shall delight in abundance of peace.
But the sinners shall perish together, and the posterity of the wicked shall be rooted out.
The salvation of the righteous comes from the Lord; he is their stronghold in the time of trouble.
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 1 Corinthians 15.35-38 and 42-50

But someone will ask, 'How are the dead raised? With what kind of body do they come?' ³⁶ Fool! What you sow does not come to life unless it dies. ³⁷ And as for what you sow, you do not sow the body that is to be, but a bare seed, perhaps of wheat or of some other grain. ³⁸ But God gives it a body as he has chosen, and to each kind of seed its own body.

So it is with the resurrection of the dead. What is sown is perishable, what is raised is imperishable. ⁴³ It is sown in dishonour; it is raised in glory. It is sown in weakness; it is raised in power. ⁴⁴ It is sown a physical body; it is raised a spiritual body. If there is a physical body, there is also a spiritual body. ⁴⁵ Thus it is written, 'The first man, Adam, became a living being'; the last Adam became a life-giving spirit. ⁴⁶ But it is not the spiritual that is first, but the physical, and then the spiritual. ⁴⁷ The first man was from the earth, a man of dust; the second man is from heaven. ⁴⁸ As was the man of dust, so are those who are of the dust; and as is the man of heaven, so are those who are of heaven. ⁴⁹ Just as we have borne the image of the man of dust, we will also bear the image of the man of heaven.

⁵⁰ What I am saying, brothers and sisters, is this: flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God, nor does the perishable inherit the imperishable.

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

Luke 6.27-38

²⁷ 'But I say to you that listen, Love your enemies, do good to those who hate you, ²⁸ bless those who curse you, pray for those who abuse you. ²⁹ If anyone strikes you on the cheek, offer the other also; and from anyone who takes away your coat do not withhold even your shirt. ³⁰ Give to everyone who begs from you; and if anyone takes away your goods, do not ask for them again. ³¹ Do to others as you would have them do to you. ³² 'If you love those who love you, what credit is that to you? For even sinners love those who love them. ³³ If you do good to those who do good to you, what credit is that to you? For even sinners do the same. ³⁴ If you lend to those from whom you hope to receive, what credit is that to you? Even sinners lend to sinners, to receive as much again. ³⁵ But love your enemies, do good, and lend, expecting nothing in return. Your reward will be great, and you will be children of the Most High; for he is kind to the ungrateful and the wicked. ³⁶ Be merciful, just as your Father is merciful.

³⁷ 'Do not judge, and you will not be judged; do not condemn, and you will not be condemned. Forgive, and you will be forgiven; ³⁸ give, and it will be given to you. A good measure, pressed down, shaken together, running over, will be put into your lap; for the measure you give will be the measure you get back.'

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

Paul continues his discussion about the resurrection in our reading today. It seems to be difficult to put into words for the Corinthians just what resurrection is about; I wonder if we find it any easier today. Whilst they seem to struggle with resurrection it is interesting they have little concern about the incarnation. Maybe this is not a surprise in reality because the religious thoughts of the ancients had promoted the gods come to earth for a long time.

I wonder if we differ here. Maybe we don't, and have no concern for how God could come and be human, fully human; the divine, the holy, living and breathing amongst the created, the unholy. The Corinthians it seems could accept God come down to be amongst us, but have questions about how humanity could enter the realm of God.

To try and give a scientific answer Paul knows would only lead Christ's followers into more difficulty. What is presently perishable will in some way be made imperishable is his statement. This is not to say that the physical body will become spirit (a ghost), but it will become of the Spirit. In the resurrection a body is given by God fit for the future God has in mind for all of creation redeemed through Christ.

You can't help but wonder, as you read the whole letter of 1 Corinthians, maybe more so 2 Corinthians, if there is an unhealthy concern for what might happen one day and in this a large part of the gospel is lost. The temptation to look to Jesus and jump from birth to crucifixion and resurrection leaves a big hole in the gospel. Likewise, if we jump from our baptism to resurrection at the end of time, we miss what being followers of Jesus is all about.

In his work, his words, his actions, in his life before his death, Jesus is all about bringing the kingdom of God – on earth as in heaven. Jesus is about making, in his age and time, the future promised, hoped for, purpose of God a reality. In his crucifixion he cements the possibility (it is finished or completed), in His resurrection we see revealed that the perishable can be made imperishable by God. The Spirit comes to seal the deal; in essence Christ's followers become a people of God's promised and preferred future for all creation – citizens of a new kingdom. Maybe it should not surprise to hear Jesus declare 'the kingdom of God has come close today'.

It should also not be a surprise that in his teaching Jesus calls us to a different living today. Not to be people who judge but to live as those who have stepped beyond the time of judgment and who beckon others to follow too. He calls us to begin to live as those who are of the kingdom, to be driven by its values and by its essence – the love of God. To be different in how you look at wealth and its use. To be different in how we relate to those in need. To be hold lightly to what is perishable and look instead for those things that will not perish.

To be a people who pray 'your kingdom come and will be done, on earth as in heaven'; a people who welcome and live today for what is coming from His future. To be people open to being made fit for the future ourselves as well as living now to see something of that heaven, that resurrection life, come today in this time and age.

I wonder if we can be open each day to being transformed, made fit for our promised and sealed future in Christ. And more, if we might be open to seeing, working to see, the kingdom come near, on earth as in heaven.

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 grace and glory, give us the gift of generosity, that we may reveal your love and forgiveness, and live in fellowship and peace with each other as we work for the coming of your kingdom; through Jesus Christ our Lord and in the presence and power of the Spirit. Amen.

Lord, you are our delight and our joy, we seek to reflect your grace and goodness: make us slow to anger and not too ready to condemn.

Lord in your mercy, hear our prayers.

We pray that your church may be open and welcoming to all in need. We pray for divisions and factions in your church, may there be healing and unity of purpose to see your kingdom come.

Lord in your mercy, hear our prayers

God of peace, we pray for peace-givers and peace-makers. We seek peace today in Ukraine, Afghanistan, Iraq, Syria, The Yemen, Sudan, Myanmar. Empower with wisdom and patience thos seeking to bring reconciliation and understanding between peoples.

Lord in your mercy, hear our prayers

We remember today that word of Amnesty International, the UN and all seeking through diplomacy to avoid further war in Ukraine.

Lord in your mercy, hear our prayers

We give thanks for our homes and communities, our loved ones, and pray for your peace in our communities and in our lives.

Lord in your mercy, hear our prayers

We remember all who are struggling at this time, all who realise they are perishable beings through illness or disability. Bring peace to the disturbed and distressed and your presence to the isolated and those fearful of entering the world about them as Covid becomes endemic rather than pandemic. Give wisdom and skill, patience and abundance of care for all health a social care professionals and bring healing through them to all we name in need this day

Lord in your mercy, hear our prayers

We rejoice that in our God we are more than conquerors. In your power, O Lord, we will overcome all evil, we will triumph over death and rejoice in your gift to us of life eternal. We pray and give thanks for loved ones departed, that they rest in your peace. Be close to those bereaved at this time.

Merciful Father, accept these prayers for the sake of your Son, our Saviour Jesus Christ. Amen.

The Collect

All: O God, you know us to be set in the midst of so many and great dangers, that by reason of the frailty of our nature we cannot always stand upright: grant to us such strength and protection as may support us in all dangers and carry us through all temptations; 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 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.