

# Our Sunday Service Together

## Advent 2, December 4<sup>th</sup> 2022



### An Acclamation for the Season

All: Alleluia, alleluia. Prepare the way of the Lord, make his paths straight, and all flesh shall see the salvation of God. 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

*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 72.1-7 and 18-19 *We say the psalm aloud*

Give the king your judgements, O God, and your righteousness to the son of a king.

Then shall he judge your people righteously and your poor with justice.

May the mountains bring forth peace, and the little hills righteousness for the people.

May he defend the poor among the people, deliver the children of the needy and crush the oppressor.

May he live as long as the sun and moon endure, from one generation to another.

May he come down like rain upon the mown grass, like the showers that water the earth.

In his time shall righteousness flourish, and abundance of peace till the moon shall be no more.

Blessed be the Lord, the God of Israel, who alone does wonderful things. And blessed be his glorious name for ever. May all the earth be filled with his glory. Amen. Amen.

## Scripture Reading Isaiah 11.1-10

A shoot shall come out from the stock of Jesse, and a branch shall grow out of his roots. <sup>2</sup>The spirit of the Lord shall rest on him, the spirit of wisdom and understanding, the spirit of counsel and might, the spirit of knowledge and the fear of the Lord. <sup>3</sup>His delight shall be in the fear of the Lord.

He shall not judge by what his eyes see, or decide by what his ears hear; <sup>4</sup>but with righteousness he shall judge the poor, and decide with equity for the meek of the earth; he shall strike the earth with the rod of his mouth, and with the breath of his lips he shall kill the wicked. <sup>5</sup>Righteousness shall be the belt around his waist, and faithfulness the belt around his loins.

<sup>6</sup>The wolf shall live with the lamb, the leopard shall lie down with the kid, the calf and the lion and the fatling together, and a little child shall lead them. <sup>7</sup>The cow and the bear shall graze, their young shall lie down together; and the lion shall eat straw like the ox. <sup>8</sup>The nursing child shall play over the hole of the asp, and the weaned child shall put its hand on the adder's den. <sup>9</sup>They will not hurt or destroy on all my holy mountain; for the earth will be full of the knowledge of the Lord as the waters cover the sea.

<sup>10</sup>On that day the root of Jesse shall stand as a signal to the peoples; the nations shall inquire of him, and his dwelling shall be glorious.

*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 3.1-12

In those days John the Baptist appeared in the wilderness of Judea, proclaiming, <sup>2</sup> 'Repent, for the kingdom of heaven has come near.' <sup>3</sup> This is the one of whom the prophet Isaiah spoke when he said, 'The voice of one crying out in the wilderness: "Prepare the way of the Lord, make his paths straight."' "

<sup>4</sup> Now John wore clothing of camel's hair with a leather belt around his waist, and his food was locusts and wild honey. <sup>5</sup> Then the people of Jerusalem and all Judea were going out to him, and all the region along the Jordan, <sup>6</sup> and they were baptized by him in the river Jordan, confessing their sins.

<sup>7</sup> But when he saw many Pharisees and Sadducees coming for baptism, he said to them, 'You brood of vipers! Who warned you to flee from the wrath to come? <sup>8</sup> Bear fruit worthy of repentance. <sup>9</sup> Do not presume to say to yourselves, "We have Abraham as our ancestor"; for I tell you, God is able from these stones to raise up children to Abraham. <sup>10</sup> Even now the axe is lying at the root of the trees; every tree therefore that does not bear good fruit is cut down and thrown into the fire.

<sup>11</sup> 'I baptize you with water for repentance, but one who is more powerful than I is coming after me; I am not worthy to carry his sandals. He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit and fire. <sup>12</sup> His winnowing-fork is in his hand, and he will clear his threshing-floor and will gather his wheat into the granary; but the chaff he will burn with unquenchable fire.'

*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 *Revd John Webb writes:*

Young children are exhausting and stimulating because they are constantly asking questions and seeking explanations and information. It can be very satisfying researching with them and deepening their understanding and I am often amazed about the amount of information they can absorb and process. We hope that with encouragement this will enable them to develop into fully rounded adults. But sadly it seems that when it comes to faith we are asked to accept all sorts of ideas without question and to do otherwise is somehow seen as a lack of faith. The consequence is that many very intelligent people feel unable to engage meaningfully when it comes to faith – they feel unable to ask the questions so they don't find the answers.

Our Gospel to-day is about asking questions and getting answers. John the Baptist had a very special relationship with Jesus; he had baptised him and realised there was something very special about him and that he might even be the Messiah promised by the Old Testament Prophets. But John was being held in prison by a despotic and irrational king. Some of his followers had been reporting the amazing things that

Jesus had been doing and he asked them to go to Jesus and ask him the direct question, 'are you the Messiah or are we to look for another?'. It is a question to which any person of faith needs an answer.

The answer that Jesus gives is very simple 'tell him what you hear and see'. What you see depends entirely on where you look. The classic example of looking in the wrong place was when the Wise Men came looking for Jesus they looked to a palace rather than a simple stable. But Jesus goes on to point out where to look and what they can see – 'the blind receive their sight, the lame walk, the lepers are cleansed, the deaf hear, the dead are raised, and the poor have good news brought to them.' That was not what John would have wanted or expected – he would have expected to see Herod and the Roman powers defeated and Jesus becoming a powerful ruler in their place. But John needed to learn that Jesus was turning society upside down; that his model was not based on the use of power but expressing the love of God in service. His model was not the classic OT Messiah, but the Suffering Servant foretold by Isaiah. That is truly revolutionary and we still find it difficult.

Perhaps we need to take note of the same message. It may be that as we listen to the news all may seem to be doom and gloom but looking deeper there are very real signs of the love of God in action. I can see examples like those pointed out by Jesus. I see the love of God quietly active in so many ways; loving parents sacrificing for the benefit of their children; the old and disabled being cared for by spouses and children; neighbours caring for neighbours; hospital staff working tirelessly in spite of massive problems; devoted teachers nurturing our children; amazing acts of courage facing up to violence and injustice; politicians working to improve countries throughout the world. If we look in the right place, we can see the love of God in action and be inspired to make our own contribution.

## 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 continue to journey through Advent 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 of faith and ask that it may be refreshed and renewed as we prepare for Christmas.

*Lord in your mercy hear our prayer.*

Strengthen our bishops and those 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 the King, 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.

*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 the sick, suffering and dying .....      and we give thanks and pray for those who use their skill 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.

## The Collect

All:      O Lord, raise up, we pray, your power and come among us, and with great might succour us; that whereas, through our sins and wickedness we are grievously hindered in running the race that is set before us, your bountiful grace and mercy may speedily help and deliver us; through Jesus Christ your Son our Lord, to whom with you and the Holy Spirit, be honour and glory, 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.