

Our Service Together

January 22nd 2023



An Acclamation for the Season

All: Alleluia, alleluia, Christ was revealed in flesh, proclaimed among the nations and believed in throughout the world. 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 27.1, 4-9 *We say the psalm aloud*

The Lord is my light and my salvation; whom then shall I fear?
The Lord is the strength of my life; of whom then shall I be afraid?

One thing have I asked of the Lord and that alone I seek: that I may dwell in the house of the Lord all the days of my life, to behold the fair beauty of the Lord and to seek his will in his temple.
For in the day of trouble he shall hide me in his shelter; in the secret place of his dwelling shall he hide me and set me high upon a rock.
And now shall he lift up my head above my enemies round about me;
Therefore, will I offer in his dwelling an oblation with great gladness; I will sing and make music to the Lord.
Hear my voice, O Lord, when I call; have mercy upon me and answer me.
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 1.10-18

Now I appeal to you, brothers and sisters, by the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that all of you should be in agreement and that there should be no divisions among you, but that you should be united in the same mind and the same purpose. ¹¹ For it has been reported to me by Chloe's people that there are quarrels among you, my brothers and sisters. ¹² What I mean is that each of you says, 'I belong to Paul', or 'I belong to Apollos', or 'I belong to Cephas', or 'I belong to Christ.' ¹³ Has Christ been divided? Was Paul crucified for you? Or were you baptized in the name of Paul? ¹⁴ I thank God that I baptized none of you except Crispus and Gaius, ¹⁵ so that no one can say that you were baptized in my name. ¹⁶ (I did baptize also the household of Stephanas; beyond that, I do not know whether I baptized anyone else.) ¹⁷ For Christ did not send me to baptize but to proclaim the gospel, and not with eloquent wisdom, so that the cross of Christ might not be emptied of its power.

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 4.12-23

Now when Jesus heard that John had been arrested, he withdrew to Galilee. ¹³ He left Nazareth and made his home in Capernaum by the lake, in the territory of Zebulun and Naphtali, ¹⁴ so that what had been spoken through the prophet Isaiah might be fulfilled:

¹⁵ 'Land of Zebulun, land of Naphtali, on the road by the sea, across the Jordan, Galilee of the Gentiles — ¹⁶ the people who sat in darkness have seen a great light, and for those who sat in the region and shadow of death light has dawned.'

¹⁷ From that time Jesus began to proclaim, 'Repent, for the kingdom of heaven has come near.'

¹⁸ As he walked by the Sea of Galilee, he saw two brothers, Simon, who is called Peter, and Andrew his brother, casting a net into the lake—for they were fishermen. ¹⁹ And he said to them, 'Follow me, and I will make you fish for people.' ²⁰ Immediately they left their nets and followed him. ²¹ As he went from there, he saw two other brothers, James son of Zebedee and his brother John, in the boat with their father Zebedee, mending their nets, and he called them. ²² Immediately they left the boat and their father, and followed him.

²³ Jesus went throughout Galilee, teaching in their synagogues and proclaiming the good news of the kingdom and curing every disease and every sickness among the people.

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

Repent! Jesus says, very Old Testament prophet style. Why? Because the kingdom of God is at hand.

Most times when we here the call for repentance it is brings with it guilty feelings, maybe even a sense of worthlessness. Repentance and sin have been closely linked in the church's preaching for many years. But, is this the tone Jesus uses? The kingdom of God was, after all, the hope of Israel, it was the blessing of God with his people, it was liberation from oppression; the kingdom of God is a good thing.

Repentance, is one of those action words, it is a call to turn around, to turn about – it isn't about feeling guilty or being judged; after all Jesus did not come to judge the world, but to save it. When Jesus calls for repentance he calls on people to turn about and see that there is a different way to live, there is an alternate kingdom to live in, an alternate society to become.

On the lips of Jesus, repentance is about a new start, about a life reborn, about hope and possibility! Jesus calls his followers to step into this new life, to enter into what God is doing in Jesus, into the new advent of the word made flesh. This is a call to step into that new thing, into the advent, and to be in an adventure of a lifetime.

It is into this new way that Jesus calls two young men. Matthew, in his gospel, suggests they dropped everything in an instant and followed Jesus, but I wonder if they talked a bit on it, looked at things and then made the step. Whilst we know they left the nets of their business behind on that day of calling, the sense is they never gave up the fishing business completely. These two did not abandon everything, but they did direct time and energy into getting to know this Jesus, hearing his words, experiencing his works of love. And the ways of Jesus rubbed off onto their everyday lives, and I am sure changed them for all time.

In repenting, in turning to the way of Jesus, the two young men began an adventure of faith, a whole life affair that incorporated the spirit and the body. It meant challenges and risk taking at times, but this was the kingdom so long hoped for, so long waited for by the people.

Leaving the comfort of all we know, whether our lives are jam packed with amazing things or rather mundane, is challenging. However, the witness the disciples bring to us, in fact the witness countless generations of the saints bring to us, is that this Jesus is the way, the truth and the life.

His call to repentance is today the same as yesterday, a call to step into the ways of the kingdom of God which is close at hand, into the new things of life and faith. As we here Jesus constant encouragement to come and follow, my wondering is will we leave our comforts and take an adventure with Him into the love of God.

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*

We pray to the one who created all things, who changed water to wine, and who transforms life, Father, Son and Holy Spirit.

Lord, you transformed ordinary water into wine, may our ordinary lives be transformed by your Holy presence.
Good Lord, transform us, that we may reveal your glory

We pray with thanksgiving for all who transform the mundane of our days into glories we rejoice in; for artists, craftspeople, writers and musicians.
Good Lord, transform us, that we may reveal your glory

We pray for those preparing for weddings this year. May they find their union made in your sight is the foundation of peace, your Spirit the provider of patience and your grace to fountain of love for years to come.
Good Lord, transform us, that we may reveal your glory

We pray for your presence in our homes, transform them to become centres for love, joy and peace. We think at this time of the increased cases of domestic abuse, for those being hospitalised through violence in the home and for the work of safe hostels, social services and the police who respond to these situations each day. *Good Lord, transform us, that we may reveal your glory*

We pray for friends and loved ones and give thanks for all who have transformed our lives by their goodness. We think especially of those who nurture and teach children in our school and colleges.
Good Lord, transform us, that we may reveal your glory

We pray for those places of deprivation and darkness that scare our nation. We give thanks for the work of Shelter, for the hope offered to those suffering from drug addiction and psychiatric conditions by Street Pastors and charity foodbanks. For the work of our fire and ambulance services who respond to all needs at every hour of each day.

Good Lord, transform us, that we may reveal your glory

We pray for hospital and NHS staff, local and national government officers. We think of those struggling to provide for their families and for businesses in trouble.

Good Lord, transform us, that we may reveal your glory

We rejoice Holy Lord that in you the best is always still to come. We give thanks for those who have stepped before us into that heavenly banquet and pray we too may be fit by you to join the celebrations of your Son or saviour Jesus Christ. Amen.

The Collect

All: God of all mercy, your son proclaimed good news to the poor, release to the captives, and freedom to the oppressed; anoint us with your Holy Spirit and set your people free to praise you in 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.