

# Our Service Together

## January 29<sup>th</sup> 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 15 *We say the psalm aloud*

Lord, who may dwell in your tabernacle?

Who may rest upon your holy hill?

Whoever leads an uncorrupted life and does the thing that is right;

Who speaks the truth from the heart and bears no deceit on the tongue;

Who does no evil to a friend and pours no scorn on a neighbour;

In whose sight the wicked are not esteemed, but who honours those who fear the Lord.

Whoever has sworn to a neighbour and never goes back on that word;

Who does not lend money in hope of gain, nor takes a bribe against the innocent;

Whoever does these things shall never fall.

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 1.18-31

For the message about the cross is foolishness to those who are perishing, but to us who are being saved it is the power of God. <sup>19</sup>For it is written, 'I will destroy the wisdom of the wise, and the discernment of the discerning I will thwart.'

<sup>20</sup>Where is the one who is wise? Where is the scribe? Where is the debater of this age? Has not God made foolish the wisdom of the world? <sup>21</sup>For since, in the wisdom of God, the world did not know God through wisdom, God decided, through the foolishness of our proclamation, to save those who believe. <sup>22</sup>For Jews demand signs and Greeks desire wisdom, <sup>23</sup>but we proclaim Christ crucified, a stumbling-block to Jews and foolishness to Gentiles, <sup>24</sup>but to those who are called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ the power of God and the wisdom of God. <sup>25</sup>For God's foolishness is wiser than human wisdom, and God's weakness is stronger than human strength.

<sup>26</sup>Consider your own call, brothers and sisters: not many of you were wise by human standards, not many were powerful, not many were of noble birth. <sup>27</sup>But God chose what is foolish in the world to shame the wise; God chose what is weak in the world to shame the strong; <sup>28</sup>God chose what is low and despised in the world, things that are not, to reduce to nothing things that are, <sup>29</sup>so that no one might boast in the presence of God. <sup>30</sup>He is the source of your life in Christ Jesus, who became for us wisdom from God, and righteousness and sanctification and redemption, <sup>31</sup>in order that, as it is written, 'Let the one who boasts, boast in the Lord.'

*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 5.1-12

When Jesus saw the crowds, he went up the mountain; and after he sat down, his disciples came to him. Then he began to speak, and taught them, saying:

'Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.

'Blessed are those who mourn, for they will be comforted.

'Blessed are the meek, for they will inherit the earth.

'Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they will be filled.

'Blessed are the merciful, for they will receive mercy.

'Blessed are the pure in heart, for they will see God. 'Blessed are the peacemakers, for they will be called children of God.

'Blessed are those who are persecuted for righteousness' sake, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.

'Blessed are you when people revile you and persecute you and utter all kinds of evil against you falsely on my account. Rejoice and be glad, for your reward is great in heaven, for in the same way they persecuted the prophets who were before you.

*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          from John Webb

In today's Epistle St Paul explains to his friends in Corinth what the life of Jesus tells us about the nature of God and explores the apparent irony that although the cross appears to be a total failure, to those of faith it shows the love of God in action.

We are still in the season of Epiphany when we celebrate the revelation of God through the birth of Jesus. The Old Testament is the story of the search for the meaning of life and the nature of God, but it had clearly failed and towards the end the later prophets had realised that nothing less than God coming among us would work. The expectation developed that he would come as a messiah. This they understood as a national leader like the great King David, which may have been why the Wise Men initially went to find Jesus in a palace. But that would never have worked because it would have been like a wealthy person visiting a slum, expressing horror at the conditions, and then returning to their comfortable homes. They could observe and even sympathise, but that is not the same as the experience of living it. So Jesus was born into a simple poor family. But even that was not enough if he was to identify with the reality of life, to identify with suffering in its many forms he would have to experience them – and that was on the cross. There he experienced what it means to be fully human and not just a neutral observer. By doing this he experienced life at its worst.

Those brave people now suffering in Ukraine can know that God in Jesus knows how they feel and shares their suffering. They can't say to God "It's all right for you – you don't know how it feels" because he does, he has been through suffering like theirs. The cold, the hungry, the sick and suffering, the refugees can all know that he has suffered the same on the cross and that he is with them.

In his life and his teaching Jesus shows us the love of God in action, but by dying on the cross he shows that he's not just a neutral observer but that he shares in our suffering. As St Paul says, 'God's foolishness is wiser than human wisdom, and God's weakness is stronger than human strength'. God will always be a mystery but in Jesus we get a glimpse of the love of God active in the world. Through the life and death of Jesus we can be sure that he understands and supports us throughout our lives whatever we have to face. Not only that, but we know that Good Friday was followed by Easter; that death was followed by resurrection.

## 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 travel through Epiphany with the wise men let us open our hearts and minds to celebrate the coming of Jesus. *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.*

Let us pray for priests, preachers and theologians as they struggle to interpret the mystery of God to be relevant for each generation. *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 and optimism to lead us through this difficult time. *Lord in your mercy hear our prayer.*

We pray for all who suffer - the homeless, hungry and starving, that their needs may be satisfied. *Lord in your mercy hear our prayer.*

Let us pray for our families, friends, and neighbours that we may bring light and hope in the darkest places. *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 joy 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: God of heaven, you send the gospel to the ends of the earth and your messengers to every nation:  
send your Holy Spirit to transform us by the goodness of everlasting life 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.