

# Our Service Together

## 2<sup>nd</sup> Sunday before Lent

### February 12<sup>th</sup> 2023

#### 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 119.1-8 *We say the psalm aloud*

Blessed are those whose way is pure, who walk in the law of the Lord.  
Blessed are those who keep his testimonies and seek him with their whole heart,  
Those who do no wickedness, but walk in his ways.  
You, O Lord, have charged that we should diligently keep your commandments.  
O that my ways were made so direct that I might keep your statutes.  
Then should I not be put to shame, because I have regard for all your commandments.  
I will thank you with an unfeigned heart, when I have learned your righteous judgements.  
I will keep your statutes; O forsake me not utterly.  
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 3.1-9

And so, brothers and sisters, I could not speak to you as spiritual people, but rather as people of the flesh, as infants in Christ. <sup>2</sup>I fed you with milk, not solid food, for you were not ready for solid food. Even now you are still not ready, <sup>3</sup>for you are still of the flesh. For as long as there is jealousy and quarrelling among you, are you not of the flesh, and behaving according to human inclinations? <sup>4</sup>For when one says, 'I belong to Paul', and another, 'I belong to Apollos', are you not merely human?  
<sup>5</sup>What then is Apollos? What is Paul? Servants through whom you came to believe, as the Lord assigned to each. <sup>6</sup>I planted, Apollos watered, but God gave the growth. <sup>7</sup>So neither the one who plants nor the one who waters is anything, but only God who gives the growth. <sup>8</sup>The one who plants and the one who waters have a common purpose, and each will receive wages according to the labour of each. <sup>9</sup>For we are God's servants, working together; you are God's field, God's building.

*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 5.21-37

'You have heard that it was said to those of ancient times, "You shall not murder"; and "whoever murders shall be liable to judgement."' <sup>22</sup>But I say to you that if you are angry with a brother or sister, you will be liable to judgement; and if you insult a brother or sister, you will be liable to the council; and if you say, "You fool", you will be liable to the hell of fire. <sup>23</sup>So when you are offering your gift at the altar, if you remember that your brother or sister has something against you, <sup>24</sup>leave your gift there before the altar and go; first be reconciled to your brother or sister, <sup>25</sup>and then come and offer your gift. <sup>25</sup>Come to terms quickly with your accuser while you are on the way to court with him, or your accuser may hand you over to the judge, and the judge to the

guard, and you will be thrown into prison. <sup>26</sup> Truly I tell you, you will never get out until you have paid the last penny.

<sup>27</sup> 'You have heard that it was said, "You shall not commit adultery." <sup>28</sup> But I say to you that everyone who looks at a woman with lust has already committed adultery with her in his heart. <sup>29</sup> If your right eye causes you to sin, tear it out and throw it away; it is better for you to lose one of your members than for your whole body to be thrown into hell. <sup>30</sup> And if your right hand causes you to sin, cut it off and throw it away; it is better for you to lose one of your members than for your whole body to go into hell.

<sup>31</sup> 'It was also said, "Whoever divorces his wife, let him give her a certificate of divorce." <sup>32</sup> But I say to you that anyone who divorces his wife, except on the ground of unchastity, causes her to commit adultery; and whoever marries a divorced woman commits adultery.

<sup>33</sup> 'Again, you have heard that it was said to those of ancient times, "You shall not swear falsely, but carry out the vows you have made to the Lord." <sup>34</sup> But I say to you, Do not swear at all, either by heaven, for it is the throne of God, <sup>35</sup> or by the earth, for it is his footstool, or by Jerusalem, for it is the city of the great King. <sup>36</sup> And do not swear by your head, for you cannot make one hair white or black. <sup>37</sup> Let your word be "Yes, Yes" or "No, No"; anything more than this comes from the evil one.

*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

*Rev John Webb writes:*

Both our readings to-day present a sad picture of society and the Church. In the first St Paul seems to be concerned that the Church in Corinth is divided into unhappy factions competing with each other. While in the Gospel Jesus presents us with a picture of society riddled with murder, adultery and corruption. But before we get too judgmental it is worth reflecting that to read the news headlines in the press or television would give the same impression to-day. There are certainly some rather unpleasant people about causing a lot of unhappiness and crying out for the love of God. This is compounded by disease and natural disasters. But I don't want to dwell on that but to look forward to Tuesday.

You don't have to be deeply religious to know that next Tuesday 14th February is St Valentine's Day. For days now it has been publicised in shops restaurants and countless retail outlets and we have been encouraged to celebrate Valentine, which is rather odd because very little is known about him. It seems that there was an early Christian called Valentine who was martyred in Rome in the 3<sup>rd</sup> or 4<sup>th</sup> Century but little else is known for certain. The present popularity of Valentine's Day has little to do with the historical saint, but is more to do with the time of year, because it was a commonly held belief that birds began to choose their mates at the beginning of spring which happened to coincide with Valentine's Day. It was not until the 14th century that Geoffrey Chaucer suggested it was the time that young people should select someone to be their 'Valentine' and the object of their affection.

So it seems that Valentine's Day reflects something very important to society which people want to mark and celebrate which the church would do well to acknowledge and encourage. It marks what for many of us is the most important decision of our lives – the choice of a life partner. This choice is important not only for the couple concerned, but for the whole of society. It is well known that children nurtured in loving homes create a stable society. So as we move towards the blossoming of spring and of new life I suggest that we should pray very specially for all marriages that God will bless and protect them. Let us pray for all those who are

choosing their Valentine to be their lifelong partner and our young people as they grow up amid the challenges of society that they may find real happiness and fulfilment in their lives.

## 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.

Strengthen Michael and Ruth 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.*

Let us pray for all those who are married that they may know the love of God in their lives.  
*Lord in your mercy hear our prayer.*

We pray for all who suffer. We pray particularly for those suffering as a result of the earthquakes in Turkey and Syria that there may be a generous response to their needs. *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 grace of our Lord, Jesus Christ and the love of God and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with us now and always. Amen

## The Collect

All: Almighty God, you have created the heavens and the earth and made us in your own image: teach us to discern your hand in all your works and your likeness in all your children; through Jesus Christ your Son our Lord, who with you and the Holy Spirit reigns supreme over all things, 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.