

Our Service Together

Next before Lent

February 19th 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 99 *We say the psalm aloud*

The Lord is king: let the peoples tremble; he is enthroned above the cherubim: let the earth shake.

The Lord is great in Zion and high above all peoples.

Let them praise your name, which is great and awesome; the Lord our God is holy.

Mighty king, who loves justice, you have established equity;

you have executed justice and righteousness in Jacob.

Exalt the Lord our God; bow down before his footstool, for he is holy.

Moses and Aaron among his priests and Samuel among those who call upon his name;

they called upon the Lord and he answered them.

He spoke to them out of the pillar of cloud; they kept his testimonies and the law that he gave them.

You answered them, O Lord our God; you were a God who forgave them and pardoned them for their offences.

Exalt the Lord our God and worship him upon his holy hill, for the Lord our God is holy.

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 2 Peter 1.16-21

For we did not follow cleverly devised myths when we made known to you the power and coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, but we had been eyewitnesses of his majesty. ¹⁷ For he received honour and glory from God the Father when that voice was conveyed to him by the Majestic Glory, saying, 'This is my Son, my Beloved, with whom I am well pleased.' ¹⁸ We ourselves heard this voice come from heaven, while we were with him on the holy mountain.

¹⁹ So we have the prophetic message more fully confirmed. You will do well to be attentive to this as to a lamp shining in a dark place, until the day dawns and the morning star rises in your hearts. ²⁰ First of all you must understand this, that no prophecy of scripture is a matter of one's own interpretation, ²¹ because no prophecy ever came by human will, but men and women moved by the Holy Spirit spoke from God.

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 17.1-9

Six days later, Jesus took with him Peter and James and his brother John and led them up a high mountain, by themselves. ² And he was transfigured before them, and his face shone like the sun, and his clothes became dazzling white. ³ Suddenly there appeared to them Moses and Elijah, talking with him. ⁴ Then Peter said to Jesus, 'Lord, it is good for us to be here; if you wish, I will make three dwellings here, one for you, one for

Moses, and one for Elijah.’⁵ While he was still speaking, suddenly a bright cloud overshadowed them, and from the cloud a voice said, ‘This is my Son, the Beloved; with him I am well pleased; listen to him!’⁶ When the disciples heard this, they fell to the ground and were overcome by fear.⁷ But Jesus came and touched them, saying, ‘Get up and do not be afraid.’⁸ And when they looked up, they saw no one except Jesus himself alone.⁹ As they were coming down the mountain, Jesus ordered them, ‘Tell no one about the vision until after the Son of Man has been raised from the dead.’

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

Sometimes the English language lets us down immensely in matters of faith, or at least the difference between formal language and the words we use each day lets us down.

‘Mystery’ is a word used about God’s love in Christ that comes with an unhelpful meaning – something beyond comprehension and understanding; something we can never know or make sense of. However, whilst this love is in Christ Jesus is incredible it is not beyond our comprehension and understanding, or experience.

I wonder if our age old Saxon word, ‘weird’ might be more helpful to us in these matters. Something ‘weird’ is something unearthly, supernatural, something with a bit of strangeness attached to it, an un-expected occurrence maybe, but always something we can dwell on and seek understanding of.

The Transfiguration is a ‘weird’ event indeed. Peter, James and John were used to going with Jesus to pray, to talk over matters of life and faith but you get the sense they did not expect what occurred that day to happen. Jesus seems to get a holy glow come over himself as he prays – not that uncommon really, ecstatic states in periods of prayer are known the world over even today. But then, Elijah and Moses appear; if the first is not weird this appearance must have been.

As you reflect and think about what happened it is interesting that the disciples do not run off screaming and instead Peter calmly enters into the conversation. This isn’t from the side-lines it is like he goes up to the 3 of them and asks Jesus if he should build some ‘holy place’ shelters to show the world ‘this is where it all happened’.

It is only then that the fearful event takes place, the cloud and the divine voice; ‘this is my Son, the Beloved; with him I am well pleased; listen to him!’

The how of all this I am sure Peter spent time thinking on, and almost certainly never came to an understanding about – it remained something of a mystery. However, over the years reflecting on the weird things of that day he is sure of one thing – Jesus is the Messiah, he is the Son of God, the fulfilment of all prophesied through the ages to God’s people.

And more he writes his testimony in his letter ‘we did not follow cleverly devised myths when we made known to you the power and coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, but we had been eyewitnesses of his majesty. For he received honour and glory from God the Father when that voice was conveyed to him by the Majestic Glory, saying, ‘This is my Son, my Beloved, with whom I am well pleased.’ We ourselves heard this voice come from heaven, while we were with him on the holy mountain.

Weird happenings for sure, but the love Jesus showed, the welcome of all he gave, the wisdom for life he brings, the presence of God through the Holy Spirit he offers for all who will ‘listen to him’ Peter knows is both real and comprehensible!

God’s self-giving love in Christ for the world is a mystery for sure! There may be some ‘weird’ things happen when Jesus is about, but says Peter to us – this is not made up, this love is real and, just as he has spent his years following Jesus so to can we!

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*

In the power of the Spirit and in union with Christ let us pray to the Father.

As we prepare to travel through Lent let us pray for the coming of the Kingdom of God in our troubled world.
Lord in your mercy hear our prayer

Strengthen Bishop Michael and Ruth 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 our King, the Prime Minister, Members of Parliament and all World leaders, that they may always seek to serve the best interests of those they represent.
Lord in your mercy hear our prayer

As we hear of the frightening events through the world we pray for all world leaders that they may have the courage and goodwill to work together to establish peace between nations. *Lord in your mercy hear our prayer.*

We pray for the homeless, hungry and starving in this country and abroad.
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: Almighty God, whose Son was revealed in majesty before he suffered death on the cross: give us grace to perceive his glory, that we may be strengthened to suffer with him, and be changed into his likeness, from glory to glory; who is alive and reigns with you, in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God now and forever. **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.