

# Our Service Together

## Lent 3 March 12<sup>th</sup> 2023



### An Acclamation for the Season

All: This is love, not that we loved God, but that he loved us and sent his Son.  
He is the sacrifice for our sins, that we might live through him.

### 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 Psalm Psalm 95 *We say the psalm aloud*

O come, let us sing to the Lord; let us heartily rejoice in the rock of our salvation.  
Let us come into his presence with thanksgiving and be glad in him with psalms.  
For the Lord is a great God and a great king above all gods.  
In his hand are the depths of the earth and the heights of the mountains are his also.  
The sea is his, for he made it, and his hands have moulded the dry land.  
Come, let us worship and bow down and kneel before the Lord our Maker.  
For he is our God; we are the people of his pasture and the sheep of his hand.  
O that today you would listen to his voice: 'Harden not your hearts as at Meribah,  
on that day at Massah in the wilderness,  
'When your forebears tested me, and put me to the proof, though they had seen my works.  
'Forty years long I detested that generation and said, "This people are wayward in their hearts;  
they do not know my ways."  
'So I swore in my wrath, "They shall not enter into my rest."  
Glory be to the Father, and to the Son: and to the Holy Ghost; as it was in the beginning, is now,  
and ever shall be: world without end. Amen.

## Scripture Reading Romans 5.1-11

Therefore, since we are justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ, <sup>2</sup>through whom we have obtained access to this grace in which we stand; and we boast in our hope of sharing the glory of God. <sup>3</sup>And not only that, but we also boast in our sufferings, knowing that suffering produces endurance, <sup>4</sup>and endurance produces character, and character produces hope, <sup>5</sup>and hope does not disappoint us, because God's love has been poured into our hearts through the Holy Spirit that has been given to us.

<sup>6</sup>For while we were still weak, at the right time Christ died for the ungodly. <sup>7</sup>Indeed, rarely will anyone die for a righteous person—though perhaps for a good person someone might actually dare to die. <sup>8</sup>But God proves his love for us in that while we still were sinners Christ died for us. <sup>9</sup>Much more surely then, now that we have been justified by his blood, will we be saved through him from the wrath of God. <sup>10</sup>For if while we were enemies, we were reconciled to God through the death of his Son, much more surely, having been reconciled, will we be saved by his life. <sup>11</sup>But more than that, we even boast in God through our Lord Jesus Christ, through whom we have now received reconciliation.

*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 John 4.5-42

So he came to a Samaritan city called Sychar, near the plot of ground that Jacob had given to his son Joseph. <sup>6</sup> Jacob's well was there, and Jesus, tired out by his journey, was sitting by the well. It was about noon.

<sup>7</sup> A Samaritan woman came to draw water, and Jesus said to her, 'Give me a drink'. <sup>8</sup> (His disciples had gone to the city to buy food.) <sup>9</sup> The Samaritan woman said to him, 'How is it that you, a Jew, ask a drink of me, a woman of Samaria?' (Jews do not share things in common with Samaritans.) <sup>10</sup> Jesus answered her, 'If you knew the gift of God, and who it is that is saying to you, "Give me a drink", you would have asked him, and he would have given you living water.' <sup>11</sup> The woman said to him, 'Sir, you have no bucket, and the well is deep. Where do you get that living water?' <sup>12</sup> Are you greater than our ancestor Jacob, who gave us the well, and with his sons and his flocks drank from it?' <sup>13</sup> Jesus said to her, 'Everyone who drinks of this water will be thirsty again, <sup>14</sup> but those who drink of the water that I will give them will never be thirsty. The water that I will give will become in them a spring of water gushing up to eternal life.' <sup>15</sup> The woman said to him, 'Sir, give me this water, so that I may never be thirsty or have to keep coming here to draw water.'

<sup>16</sup> Jesus said to her, 'Go, call your husband, and come back.' <sup>17</sup> The woman answered him, 'I have no husband.' Jesus said to her, 'You are right in saying, "I have no husband"; <sup>18</sup> for you have had five husbands, and the one you have now is not your husband. What you have said is true!' <sup>19</sup> The woman said to him, 'Sir, I see that you are a prophet. <sup>20</sup> Our ancestors worshipped on this mountain, but you say that the place where people must worship is in Jerusalem.' <sup>21</sup> Jesus said to her, 'Woman, believe me, the hour is coming when you will worship the Father neither on this mountain nor in Jerusalem. <sup>22</sup> You worship what you do not know; we worship what we know, for salvation is from the Jews. <sup>23</sup> But the hour is coming, and is now here, when the true worshippers will worship the Father in spirit and truth, for the Father seeks such as these to worship him. <sup>24</sup> God is spirit, and those who worship him must worship in spirit and truth.' <sup>25</sup> The woman said to him, 'I know that Messiah is coming' (who is called Christ). 'When he comes, he will proclaim all things to us.' <sup>26</sup> Jesus said to her, 'I am he, the one who is speaking to you.'

<sup>27</sup> Just then his disciples came. They were astonished that he was speaking with a woman, but no one said, 'What do you want?' or, 'Why are you speaking with her?' <sup>28</sup> Then the woman left her water-jar and went back to the city. She said to the people, <sup>29</sup> 'Come and see a man who told me everything I have ever done! He cannot be the Messiah, can he?' <sup>30</sup> They left the city and were on their way to him.

<sup>31</sup> Meanwhile the disciples were urging him, 'Rabbi, eat something.' <sup>32</sup> But he said to them, 'I have food to eat that you do not know about.' <sup>33</sup> So the disciples said to one another, 'Surely no one has brought him something to eat?' <sup>34</sup> Jesus said to them, 'My food is to do the will of him who sent me and to complete his work. <sup>35</sup> Do you not say, "Four months more, then comes the harvest"? But I tell you, look around you, and see how the fields are ripe for harvesting. <sup>36</sup> The reaper is already receiving wages and is gathering fruit for eternal life, so that sower and reaper may rejoice together. <sup>37</sup> For here the saying holds true, "One sows and another reaps." <sup>38</sup> I

sent you to reap that for which you did not labour. Others have laboured, and you have entered into their labour.'

<sup>39</sup> Many Samaritans from that city believed in him because of the woman's testimony, 'He told me everything I have ever done.' <sup>40</sup> So when the Samaritans came to him, they asked him to stay with them; and he stayed there for two days. <sup>41</sup> And many more believed because of his word. <sup>42</sup> They said to the woman, 'It is no longer because of what you said that we believe, for we have heard for ourselves, and we know that this is truly the Saviour of the world.'

*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

Last week he heard Jesus saying 'no one can enter the kingdom of God unless they are born of water and the Spirit'. We were encouraged to look up to see the gift of God come down to us in the Son. I wonder if today we are called to look down and journey deeper into the grace God offers in Christ, and in so doing discover the water of life we need with the Spirit.

Imagine with me, if you will, Jesus, hot and bothered having walked a long way and in need of refreshment. He sits whilst the disciples go to get supplies from the town. This is a brave move in itself for this is Samaritan country, they are Jews, and there has been no love lost between the people over many centuries; Jew and Samaritan are like oil and water, they do not mix. To put it plainly they were supposed to hate each other and distrust each other. This was a sectarian hatred; you see, whilst they both looked to worship the God of Abraham, they thought the other's worship substandard, looked on their neighbours in the faith as heretics, and as far as the Jew's were concerned the Samaritans were not part of God's plans at all. Whilst the Jews had the Holy mountain in Jerusalem, the Samaritans had other holy sites, like the well of Jacob before which Jesus stops – and to which a woman approaches; a Samaritan woman.

And so the conversation begins:

'Give me a drink', said Jesus. The Samaritan woman replied to him, 'what's a Jew like you doing here, asking me a woman for water, a woman of Samaria?' Jesus answered her, 'If you had a clue about God's promises, you would recognise I am not just a Jew and you would have asked me straight off for a blessing; not any blessing but the blessing of life giving water.'

In that moment the woman probably thought 'what a twit' and said to Jesus 'How can you give me any water, you haven't even got a bucket. Jacob gave us this well to draw all the water we need for life round here, are you better than him at finding water?'

Jesus said to her, 'fair comment, but everyone who drinks the still waters from this well has to keep coming back, again and again. My water is ever flowing, gushing forth into eternity'. The woman said, 'Sir give me some of that water so I may never feel parched for life again, but always be satisfied.'

Alas the woman was thinking just in terms of her daily grind, fetching and carrying whilst Jesus, as usual, was talking about something altogether more significant. Every day she would come, throw her bucket over the winch post and haul up the still, cool water. I am certain she had never entered the well itself, journeyed into the depths to find where the water came from. For certain the well even today is replenished by a small stream, a fissure in the aquifer allowing water to gently bubble into the cistern where it would still and sit ready to be drunk. Here is Jesus point, it isn't the water in the well that enables the woman to live but the stream that feeds

it, that gushes from the depths below, unseen, unknown in its source - that is the life giver. And more, it is not to Jacob, or Abraham the Samaritan or the Jew should look to for the basis of their faith, but to the one who was his source of faith for them; to Yahweh, to the 'I am'.

Over time religious practice can actually led us gently away from the richness, the full blessing and life giving source of the faith. We become followers then of the fathers and mothers of the faith, we become disciples of the teachers and the scribes rather than the God who inspired their words and teachings. It is all too easy to become people who found our faith on tradition, on the written word, and even on the world view we inhabit. Sadly, Jews and Samaritans hated each other because someone told them they should; I am sure God loved them both equally! These 3, scripture, reason and tradition are not the source of our faith, instead they beckon us to jump in, swim down and find the source.

As we reflect in Lent on our discipleship, on our daily practices in the faith, our prayers, our bible reading, our singing of worship songs and praise, our taking of bread and wine, we are called to take stock and ask about where is the source, give me the source of it all. We are called by Jesus to stop working hard to quench our spiritual thirst with the still waters, and instead come to him and ask for the waters of life he alone can give us; water that will gush up in us to eternity.

Jesus is correct in saying we need to be born of water and the Spirit; his life giving water and His Spirit!

## 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*

Almighty and ever-loving God, you are more ready to hear us and forgive us than we are to come to you; but now we come in your grace and pray.

Lord we look for you, we long for you, our whole being thirsts for you and your love. Lord, open our eyes, awaken us to what is around us and make us aware of your coming to us. *Lord in your mercy hear our prayers.*

We pray for those who nurture the young, those who teach and equip others that they might flourish in their humanity. Give them wisdom to guide, and patience to walk alongside those who learn the way to love and bring peace in the world. *Lord in your mercy hear our prayers.*

Lord, as you have given us this world to live in, help us to use its riches and resources with sensitivity. Bless all who work on the land, who supply our food and daily need. *Lord in your mercy hear our prayers.*

We pray for those who lead communities and nations, may they know the path you call all humanity to in Christ; that of peace, of grace, of love and justice. *Lord in your mercy hear our prayers.*

We give you thanks for our homes and our loved ones; make us sensitive to each other's needs and hopes.  
*Lord in your mercy hear our prayers.*

We pray for those displaced from their homes, from their lands through earthquake, flood or war. Bless all who receive them with common humanity that they may find somewhere they can call home; even if for a short time. *Lord in your mercy hear our prayers.*

We pray for those taken ill this day, those involved in accidents or facing operations. Be with those who minister healing this day. *Lord in your mercy hear our prayers.*

Lord, you are our helper and you protect us from all evil. We pray for all who face death today; for our loved ones departed, that you will bring them into fullness of joy in your kingdom.

Merciful Father accept these prayers for the sake of your Son, our saviour Jesus Christ. Amen

## The Collect

All: Eternal God, give us insight to discern your will for us, to give up what harms us, and to seek the perfection we are promised in Jesus 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.