

# Our Sunday Service Together

July 16<sup>th</sup> 2023

6<sup>th</sup> Sunday after Trinity



## An Acclamation

Alleluia, alleluia.

Glory to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit,  
one God, who was, and who is, and who is to come, the Almighty.

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

*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 65.9-13

The river of God is full of water; you prepare grain for your people, for so you provide for the earth. You drench the furrows and smooth out the ridges; you soften the ground with showers and bless its increase. You crown the year with your goodness, and your paths overflow with plenty. May the pastures of the wilderness flow with goodness and the hills be girded with joy. May the meadows be clothed with flocks of sheep and the valleys stand so thick with corn that they shall laugh and sing. 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 Romans 8.1-11

There is therefore now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus. <sup>2</sup> For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus has set you free from the law of sin and of death. <sup>3</sup> For God has done what the law, weakened by the flesh, could not do: by sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, and to deal with sin, he condemned sin in the flesh, <sup>4</sup> so that the just requirement of the law might be fulfilled in us, who walk not according to the flesh but according to the Spirit. <sup>5</sup> For those who live according to the flesh set their minds on the things of the flesh, but those who live according to the Spirit set their minds on the things of the Spirit. <sup>6</sup> To set the mind on the flesh is death, but to set the mind on the Spirit is life and peace. <sup>7</sup> For this reason the mind that is set on the flesh is hostile to God; it does not submit to God's law—indeed it cannot, <sup>8</sup> and those who are in the flesh cannot please God.

<sup>9</sup> But you are not in the flesh; you are in the Spirit, since the Spirit of God dwells in you. Anyone who does not have the Spirit of Christ does not belong to him. <sup>10</sup> But if Christ is in you, though the body is dead because of sin, the Spirit is life because of righteousness. <sup>11</sup> If the Spirit of him who raised Jesus from the dead dwells in you, he who raised Christ from the dead will give life to your mortal bodies also through his Spirit that dwells in you.

*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 13.1-9 and 18-23

That same day Jesus went out of the house and sat beside the lake. <sup>2</sup> Such great crowds gathered around him that he got into a boat and sat there, while the whole crowd stood on the beach. <sup>3</sup> And he told them many things in parables, saying: 'Listen! A sower went out to sow. <sup>4</sup> And as he sowed, some seeds fell on the path, and the birds came and ate them up. <sup>5</sup> Other seeds fell on rocky ground, where they did not have much soil, and they sprang up quickly, since they had no depth of soil. <sup>6</sup> But when the sun rose, they were scorched; and since they had no root, they withered away. <sup>7</sup> Other seeds fell among thorns, and the thorns grew up and choked them. <sup>8</sup> Other seeds fell on good soil and brought forth grain, some a hundredfold, some sixty, some thirty. <sup>9</sup> Let anyone with ears listen!'

<sup>18</sup> 'Hear then the parable of the sower. <sup>19</sup> When anyone hears the word of the kingdom and does not understand it, the evil one comes and snatches away what is sown in the heart; this is what was sown on the path. <sup>20</sup> As for what was sown on rocky ground, this is the one who hears the word and immediately receives it with joy; <sup>21</sup> yet such a person has no root, but endures only for a while, and when trouble or persecution arises on account of the word, that person immediately falls away. <sup>22</sup> As for what was sown among thorns, this is the one who hears the word, but the cares of the world and the lure of wealth choke the word, and it yields nothing. <sup>23</sup> But as for what was sown on good soil, this is the one who hears the word and understands it, who indeed bears fruit and yields, in one case a hundredfold, in another sixty, and in another thirty.'

*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 *Revd John Webb writes*

This is an appropriate time of year for our thoughts to be directed to the 'Parable of the Sower' because many of us will be watching and fussing over seeds we planted earlier in the year and hoping for a good harvest. But it's worth stopping for a moment and noting the contrast between the farmer in the parable and what is regarded as good practice according to Gardeners Question Time, Countryfile and numerous books and magazines. We are told to prepare the soil carefully, clear weeds, add compost, fertiliser, grit etc, etc.. But Jesus' farmer ignores all that and sows the seed liberally so that it falls everywhere going on the path, stony ground, among weeds as well as the good soil. His method could be described as wasteful but optimistic, but the acid test must be that it seems to work and there is a plentiful harvest.

We should remember that seeds grow at very different speeds – cress grows in a few days, but an acorn will take many years to come to maturity. It is the same with faith – for some there may be a dramatic Damascus Road conversion but for others faith will develop over many years. Looking back over my life I can see times when seeds of faith were planted by people, by their words or actions. Those people may never know that the seeds they planted have come to maturity – they planted in hope never knowing the result.

Jesus 'scattered' the love of God over all those he met and those who came to him for help. He was confident that many people would be changed in spite of failure and rejection and inevitable wastage. Perhaps this is a lesson we as his disciples and the church as a whole need to learn. We are getting anxious because the seeds we plant don't seem to be growing as we would hope and there seems to be a general feeling that things are going wrong – falling congregations, shortage of clergy, corruption, lack of money, lack of direction and lots more. But that has always been the case and was certainly the situation that Jesus was facing when he spoke this parable. So let's

follow that farmer and like Jesus be generous in sharing the love of God with all those we meet. Let's copy him in his confident optimism for a good harvest.

We are called upon to throw the love of God around like there is no to-morrow, precisely because there is a to-morrow and it is safely in the hands 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*

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.

We pray for Bishops Michael and Ruth and all those who seek to serve you in this diocese May they be filled with the Spirit and speak with authority. May they have confident optimism as they preach the love of God. *Lord in your mercy hear our prayer.*

We pray for world leaders as they seek justice and peace for all people. Especially we pray for the leaders of Ukraine and Russia that a just solution may be found for their dispute, and for the peoples of Ukraine and Russia that they may become good neighbours to each other. *Lord in your mercy hear our prayer.*

We pray for our King, Prime Minister, members of parliament and local councillors that they may have the Spirit of wisdom to lead us through this difficult time. *Lord in your mercy hear our prayer.*

We pray for all journalists and broadcasters that they may seek the truth and resist the temptation to misuse their influence. *Lord in your mercy hear our prayer.*

We pray for our families, friends, and neighbours that we may serve Christ in one another and seek the common good. *Lord in your mercy hear our prayer.*

We pray for those who suffer as a result of war and for those who work to relieve their suffering. *Lord in your mercy hear our prayer.*

We pray for the sick, suffering, dying and those who mourn ..... and we give thanks and pray for those who care for them. *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.

And may the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with us all, now and for evermore. Amen.

## The Collect

All: Merciful God, you have prepared for those who love you such good things as pass our understanding: pour into our hearts such love toward you that we, loving you in all things and above all things, may obtain your promises, which exceed all that we can desire; through Jesus Christ your Son our Lord, who is alive and reigns with you, in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God, 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