

# Our Sunday Service Together

1<sup>st</sup> October 2023

17<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 Psalm 25.1-9

To you, O Lord, I lift up my soul; O my God, in you I trust;  
let me not be put to shame; let not my enemies triumph over me.  
Let none who look to you be put to shame, but let the treacherous be shamed and frustrated.  
Make me to know your ways, O Lord, and teach me your paths.  
Lead me in your truth and teach me, for you are the God of my salvation; for you have I hoped all the day long.  
Remember, Lord, your compassion and love, for they are from everlasting.  
Remember not the sins of my youth or my transgressions, but think on me in your goodness, O Lord,  
according to your steadfast love.  
Gracious and upright is the Lord; therefore, shall he teach sinners in the way.  
He will guide the humble in doing right and teach his way to the lowly.  
All the paths of the Lord are mercy and truth to those who keep his covenant and his testimonies.  
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      Philippians 2.1-13

If then there is any encouragement in Christ, any consolation from love, any sharing in the Spirit, any compassion and sympathy, make my joy complete: be of the same mind, having the same love, being in full accord and of one mind. Do nothing from selfish ambition or conceit, but in humility regard others as better than yourselves. Let each of you look not to your own interests, but to the interests of others. Let the same mind be in you that was in Christ Jesus, who, though he was in the form of God, did not regard equality with God as something to be exploited, but emptied himself, taking the form of a slave, being born in human likeness.

And being found in human form, he humbled himself and became obedient to the point of death — even death on a cross.

Therefore God also highly exalted him and gave him the name that is above every name, so that at the name of Jesus every knee should bend, in heaven and on earth and under the earth, and every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord,  
to the glory of God the Father.

Therefore, my beloved, just as you have always obeyed me, not only in my presence, but much more now in my absence, work out your own salvation with fear and trembling; for it is God who is at work in you, enabling you both to will and to work for his good pleasure.

*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 21.23-32

When he entered the temple, the chief priests and the elders of the people came to him as he was teaching, and said, 'By what authority are you doing these things, and who gave you this authority?' Jesus said to them, 'I will also ask you one question; if you tell me the answer, then I will also tell you by what authority I do these things. Did the baptism of John come from heaven, or was it of human origin?' And they argued with one another, 'If we say, "From heaven", he will say to us, "Why then did you not believe him?" But if we say, "Of human origin", we are afraid of the crowd; for all regard John as a prophet.' So they answered Jesus, 'We do not know.' And he said to them, 'Neither will I tell you by what authority I am doing these things.

'What do you think? A man had two sons; he went to the first and said, "Son, go and work in the vineyard today." He answered, "I will not"; but later he changed his mind and went. The father went to the second and said the same; and he answered, "I go, sir"; but he did not go. Which of the two did the will of his father?' They said, 'The first.' Jesus said to them, 'Truly I tell you, the tax-collectors and the prostitutes are going into the kingdom of God ahead of you. For John came to you in the way of righteousness and you did not believe him, but the tax-collectors and the prostitutes believed him; and even after you saw it, you did not change your minds and believe him.

*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

Matthew 21 is filled with three occasions Jesus uses the 'Vineyard' motif as an illustration during times of questioning from authorities about who he is and why he does and says what he does.

The Vineyard is of course meant to be Israel established in the land God had given them; a land of abundant milk and honey'.

In the illustration used earlier in the Gospel Jesus seeks to remind Israel of the nature of God – generous, ensuring 'daily bread', for each and all who would accept the call to be active in the work of the Kingdom, in the vineyard.

Today, we find Jesus asked, well bluntly 'who gave you the right to teach and do the things you do?' The question comes from those 'in charge', from 'the gatekeepers', for those who watch with care for the people to ensure they are not being led into heresy and false worship – or do they.

Jesus challenges their abilities as the 'vineyard keepers'. And his challenge is really quite cutting asking, more than simply if they are up to the task, and instead suggesting that they are failing in the purpose for which they were created. A bit like the fig tree mentioned in the lines before today's gospel – God made the fig to provide for hungry people, and they are useless when they don't.

If we remember the birth stories of both Jesus and John the Baptist they are more than simply God calling someone to a certain role; both men are born to the task, made for the time, the calling, the work of God! John was born to call the people of Israel to repentance! They came - the sinners, the tax collectors, the

unwelcomed and those thrown out like the rubbish; and God welcomed them, loved them, renewed them. Without words Jesus asks the leaders here, 'who should have been doing this?'

Jesus has no time for the theoretical arguments about the source of John's, or his authority; they were born to walk, talk, live and die in the love of God for all rejected by those who should know better!

Jesus makes it all plain as day with his tale of two sons. One says 'no, no, no', but repents and shows his yes by the action he takes. The second says 'yes, of course', but ends up showing his heart is really filled with 'no' as he does not act.

'Truly I tell you, the tax-collectors and the prostitutes are going into the kingdom of God ahead of you. For John came to you in the way of righteousness and you did not believe him, but the tax-collectors and the prostitutes believed him; and even after you saw it, you did not change your minds and believe him.'

How are we to take this to heart today, thousands of years from when the words were spoken and miles from Israel?

God does not just call us to roles, God has made us for a purpose, to be in humanity living, breathing, walking, talking, living and dying images of His love for the entire creation.

And more, in baptism we have died to the life of rebellion with God that comes through sin and have the ability, like the son who said 'no', to step into action that is filled with a yes to God.

And more, His church is created with a purpose, to be the vineyard where people find an abundant harvest grows, where daily bread is available, where all are welcomed.

Are we living the life our baptism offers us? Are we a church fulfilling its purpose, do we place barriers that prevent folks coming to Christ, or are we truly welcoming to all?

## 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*

God our Father, your kingdom embraces the whole of creation. Guide your church throughout the world to assist in your harvest and speak your truth into areas of doubt. We pray for those who are persecuted for their faith, and for Open Doors and all Christian charities, who take risks to bring your word into places of violence and oppression.

*Lord of faith and trust, help us to trust in you.*

Lord, you search the secret motives of our leaders to reveal hypocrisy and virtue. Pour out your spirit of integrity on all world leaders. Grant us all the wisdom to discern your voice and the courage to follow your will.  
*Lord of faith and trust, help us to trust in you.*

Lord, you see fully into our hearts and know what we can become. We pray for those who affirm and encourage others, especially teachers and those who care for young and vulnerable people.  
*Lord of faith and trust, help us to trust in you.*

Lord, you know our needs and concerns before we ask. Hear us as we bring before you all who are sick or in special need...  
Bless them and fill them with your healing strength.  
*Lord of faith and trust, help us to trust in you.*

Lord, there is no darkness that can extinguish your eternal light.  
In this faith we entrust to you all who have died...  
Raise us with them to your eternal kingdom.  
*Lord of faith and trust, help us to trust in you.*

## The Collect

All: Almighty God, you have made us for yourself,  
and our hearts are restless till they find their rest in you:  
pour your love into our hearts and draw us to yourself,  
and so bring us at last to your heavenly city  
where we shall see you face to face;  
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