

# Our Sunday Service Together

## Sunday November 5<sup>th</sup> 2023



### An Acclamation for the Season

All: Alleluia, alleluia! To you we come, Father of lights, with angels and saints, where heaven and earth unite. May Jesus meet us in the breaking of the bread. 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

*God the Father forgives us in Christ and heals us by the Holy Spirit. Let us therefore put away all anger and bitterness, all slander and malice, and confess our sins to God our redeemer.*

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 43

Give judgement for me, O God, and defend my cause against an ungodly people; deliver me from the deceitful and the wicked.

For you are the God of my refuge; why have you cast me from you, and why go I so heavily, while the enemy oppresses me?

O send out your light and your truth, that they may lead me, and bring me to your holy hill and to your dwelling,

That I may go to the altar of God, to the God of my joy and gladness; and on the lyre I will give thanks to you, O God my God.

Why are you so full of heaviness, O my soul, and why are you so disquieted within me?

O put your trust in God; for I will yet give him thanks, who is the help of my countenance, and my God.

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 1 Thessalonians 2.9-13

<sup>9</sup>You remember our labour and toil, brothers and sisters; we worked night and day, so that we might not burden any of you while we proclaimed to you the gospel of God. <sup>10</sup>You are witnesses, and God also, how pure, upright, and blameless our conduct was towards you believers. <sup>11</sup>As you know, we dealt with each one of you like a father with his children, <sup>12</sup>urging and encouraging you and pleading that you should lead a life worthy of God, who calls you into his own kingdom and glory.

<sup>13</sup>We also constantly give thanks to God for this, that when you received the word of God that you heard from us, you accepted it not as a human word but as what it really is, God's word, which is also at work in you believers.

*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 24.1-14

As Jesus came out of the temple and was going away, his disciples came to point out to him the buildings of the temple. <sup>2</sup>Then he asked them, 'You see all these, do you not? Truly I tell you, not one stone will be left here upon another; all will be thrown down.'

<sup>3</sup>When he was sitting on the Mount of Olives, the disciples came to him privately, saying, 'Tell us, when will this be, and what will be the sign of your coming and of the end of the age?' <sup>4</sup>Jesus answered them, 'Beware that no one leads you astray. <sup>5</sup>For many will come in my name, saying, "I am the Messiah!" and they will lead

many astray. <sup>6</sup> And you will hear of wars and rumours of wars; see that you are not alarmed; for this must take place, but the end is not yet. <sup>7</sup> For nation will rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom, and there will be famines and earthquakes in various places: <sup>8</sup> all this is but the beginning of the birth pangs.

<sup>9</sup> 'Then they will hand you over to be tortured and will put you to death, and you will be hated by all nations because of my name. <sup>10</sup> Then many will fall away, and they will betray one another and hate one another. <sup>11</sup> And many false prophets will arise and lead many astray. <sup>12</sup> And because of the increase of lawlessness, the love of many will grow cold. <sup>13</sup> But anyone who endures to the end will be saved. <sup>14</sup> And this good news of the kingdom will be proclaimed throughout the world, as a testimony to all the nations; and then the end will come.

*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

In writing to the Thessalonians Paul uses a common motif for him, the Word of God, heard, received, real and genuine, and most of all at work in people's lives.

Paul writes this letter before any of what we think of as the New Testament was written down. I suspect also, whilst Paul quotes the scriptures in his writings, he probably never thought of them as scripture. We think of his writings as scripture, as the word of God, because we recognise God's living Word within - Jesus the Messiah, the Christ.

It is the word of God about Jesus Christ the Thessalonians had heard, received and was now at work in them. At work enabling them to live after his pattern, after his Kingdom ways, to be redeemed in the world they lived in. And what a world, the Empire was in much tension and Israel, still occupied by Rome, was becoming ever more rebellious and confrontational. War and rumours of it would have abounded; but they have done in every century since Jesus spoke his words about the demise of the Temple and the longed for end of time.

It is thinking of these end times that drives the Disciples' questioning; when would the end of the age occur and the reign of God's Messiah be ushered in? Jesus' reply gently deflects their gaze from an all too easy journey into apocalyptic fever – you can almost see them all making placards and beginning to paint 'the end is neigh'. Wars, rumours of war, earthquake and famines, the usual fair of apocalypse will continue to be a part of the world about them – 'do not be alarmed!', says Jesus. Also, do not lose sight of me, and be tricked into following some imposter proclaiming 'the end is come, quick follow me I will save you'.

It won't be easy to stay the course, some will suffer persecution, others will lose heart, some will be led astray. But you, you endure and all will be well, whatever the world throws at you! You who received the good news of Jesus Christ, and on hearing it allowed it to dwell in you, work in you, transform you, strengthen you - you will be saved.

Israel, Palestine, Sudan, Myanmar, Ukraine, Afghanistan; daily we hear of war and rumours of new ones to come. Each day we read of famine, drought, pestilence, flood and earthquake. We would naturally be forgiven for thinking the end of the age is come, or is very near. As much as we pray for peace and for the healing of nations, we are not to be alarmed; we, like God's Spirit should lament what we hear of and see.

Jesus calls us all to keep our focus on his good works, not to allow what he read about and hear make our love grow cold, or to give up and be led astray. If we lament, we continue to love. As Paul would write in other letters, this is the time to gird our loins, to attend to prayer, to be open to the word at work in us through the Spirit of God who saves us in Christ Jesus the Lord.

## 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*

Mindful of God's kingdom, set in process through the cross of Christ and yet to be fulfilled, we commend ourselves to God and pray for the needs of the world in the words: *'thy kingdom come, thy will be done'*.

We pray for our Church throughout the world and across all denominations. Pour out your Spirit of truth on all ordained and lay leaders and grant them wisdom and courage to proclaim your kingdom to the margins of society. *Thy kingdom come, thy will be done.*

We pray for our world. Guide and direct all world leaders and those in positions of authority with responsibility for decision making. Grant them great wisdom, deep commitment and right judgment. We pray especially for the people of Myanmar, Afghanistan, Ukraine, Russia, Israel, Palestine, Lebanon and for the peace of Christ. *Thy kingdom come, thy will be done.*

We pray for all God's people. Grant us the grace to put aside all differences of culture, race, gender or ability, to recognise that we are all created in your image. Guide all those involved in serving children and young people in education that they may see gifts in everyone. We pray for all doctors, nurses and carers. Grant them strength, encouragement and the resources for all lives to flourish without exclusion. *Thy kingdom come, thy will be done.*

We hold before God the elderly, the vulnerable and those who are most at risk. We pray for the sick, those experiencing sorrow and those who are isolated. We pray for ourselves, for one another and for those whose needs are known only to you. Grant us the grace to listen to your voice and the courage to follow it wherever it may lead us. *Thy kingdom come, thy will be done. Amen*

## The Collect

All: Almighty and eternal God, you have kindled the flame of love in the hearts of the saints: grant to us the same faith and power of love, that, as we rejoice in their triumphs, we may be sustained by their example and fellowship; 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.