

Our Service Together

January 21st 2024

An Acclamation for the Season

All: Alleluia, alleluia, Christ was revealed in flesh, proclaimed among the nations and believed in throughout the world. 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

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 139. 1-5 and 12-18

O Lord, you have searched me out and known me; you know my sitting down and my rising up; you discern my thoughts from afar.
You mark out my journeys and my resting place and are acquainted with all my ways.
For there is not a word on my tongue, but you, O Lord, know it altogether.
You encompass me behind and before and lay your hand upon me.
Such knowledge is too wonderful for me, so high that I cannot attain it.

For you yourself created my inmost parts; you knit me together in my mother's womb.
I thank you, for I am fearfully and wonderfully made; marvellous are your works, my soul knows well.
My frame was not hidden from you, when I was made in secret and woven in the depths of the earth.
Your eyes beheld my form, as yet unfinished; already in your book were all my members written,
As day by day they were fashioned when as yet there was none of them.
How deep are your counsels to me, O God!
How great is the sum of them!
If I count them, they are more in number than the sand, and at the end, I am still in your presence.
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 1 Samuel 3.1-10

Now the boy Samuel was ministering to the Lord under Eli. The word of the Lord was rare in those days; visions were not widespread.
² At that time Eli, whose eyesight had begun to grow dim so that he could not see, was lying down in his room; ³ the lamp of God had not yet gone out, and Samuel was lying down in the temple of the Lord, where the ark of God was. ⁴ Then the Lord called, 'Samuel! Samuel!' and he said, 'Here I am!' ⁵ and ran to Eli, and said, 'Here I am, for you called me.' But he said, 'I did not call; lie down again.' So he went and lay down. ⁶ The Lord called again, 'Samuel!' Samuel got up and went to Eli, and said, 'Here I am, for you called me.' But he said, 'I did not call, my son; lie down again.' ⁷ Now Samuel did not yet know the Lord, and the word of the Lord had not yet been revealed to him. ⁸ The Lord called Samuel again, a third time. And he got up and went to Eli, and said, 'Here I am, for you called me.' Then Eli perceived that the Lord was calling the boy. ⁹ Therefore Eli said to Samuel, 'Go, lie down; and if he calls you, you shall say, "Speak, Lord, for your servant is listening."' So Samuel went and lay down in his place.
¹⁰ Now the Lord came and stood there, calling as before, 'Samuel! Samuel!' And Samuel said, 'Speak, for your servant is listening.'

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 1.43 to end

⁴³ The next day Jesus decided to go to Galilee. He found Philip and said to him, 'Follow me.' ⁴⁴ Now Philip was from Bethsaida, the city of Andrew and Peter. ⁴⁵ Philip found Nathanael and said to him, 'We have found him about whom Moses in the law and also the prophets wrote, Jesus son of Joseph from Nazareth.' ⁴⁶ Nathanael said to him, 'Can anything good come out of Nazareth?' Philip said to him, 'Come and see.' ⁴⁷ When Jesus saw Nathanael coming towards him, he said of him, 'Here is truly an Israelite in whom there is no deceit!' ⁴⁸ Nathanael asked him, 'Where did you come to know me?' Jesus answered, 'I saw you under the fig tree before Philip called you.' ⁴⁹ Nathanael replied, 'Rabbi, you are the Son of God! You are the King of Israel!' ⁵⁰ Jesus answered, 'Do you believe because I told you that I saw you under the fig tree? You will see greater things than these.' ⁵¹ And he said to him, 'Very truly, I tell you, you will see heaven opened and the angels of God ascending and descending upon the Son of Man.'

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 Trainee Ordinand Farhad Chermahini writes:

The beckoning of love

Today's readings bring us to the themes of intimacy, knowledge, and purpose. In Psalm 139, David is astonished by the truth that God intimately understands every aspect of his being: from the complexities of his thoughts to his formation in his mother's womb. He is wrapped, perhaps unexpectedly, in the awareness that God sees the invisible in him.

The reading from the book of Samuel affirms David's recognition and goes further to show us that God's call is personal: even when it seems God is distant, he knows and calls individuals by name. Samuel's call came at a time when the word of the Lord was rare, another sign that God never gives up on people. And although Samuel was at first unfamiliar with God's voice, he learned, from Eli, to recognise God's voice and respond. We see the same thing afresh in the Gospel of John by the way Jesus interacted with Nathanael. Jesus' knowledge of Nathanael under the fig tree caused Nathanael to declare Jesus was the Son of God and the King of Israel. God's knowledge of who Nathanael was took him beyond simple awareness and caused his faith and discipleship to spring into existence, even flourishing, as he responded to Jesus and received the promise of '*seeing greater things.*'

As we reflect on these passages, we learn that God's knowledge of us is not abstract, or distant. Quite the reverse, it is knitted into the very fabric of our existence. It is a knowledge that prepares the way for our awareness of him. The call of God in these stories is not general knowledge but a personal invitation that acknowledges and affirms our individual identities.

I believe these passages are God's invitation to us to embrace the truth that we are fearfully and wonderfully made, known intimately by a God who looks at us and says, '*this is good (Gen. 1:4).*' And as we embrace these truths, we find purpose, significance, and the beckoning call to respond with open hearts, the way Samuel did, '*Speak, for your servant is listening.*' I am reminded of the encouragement of Paul the apostle, '*Therefore, brothers and sisters, since we have confidence to enter the Most Holy Place by the blood of Jesus... let us draw near to God... (Hebrews 10: 20-22).*' Let us do just that daily, and be surprised by the One whose faithfulness faileth not!

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*

We pray for the church and all God's people. We pray especially for all whose faith is being tested and all who may be approaching Jesus for the first time.

Lord in your mercy hear our prayer.

We pray for the queen, for our politicians and all in public office that, through God's grace they may lead us with compassion, remain sensitive to the needs of others and be free from false judgement and condemnation.

Lord in your mercy hear our prayer.

We pray that God will remind us about what is important and what is not, and will help us to overcome our own temptation. *Lord in your mercy hear our prayer.*

We pray for all who suffer through the sin of others: all victims of abuse, oppression or neglect; we pray for all who need God's help. *Lord in your mercy hear our prayer.*

Almighty God, who hast given us grace at this time with one accord to our common supplications unto thee; and dost promise that when two or three are gathered together in thy name thou will grant their requests: fulfil now, O Lord, the desires and petitions of thy servants, as may be most expedient for them; granting us in this world knowledge of thy truth, and in the world to come life everlasting. Amen

The Collect

All: Almighty God, in Christ you make all things new: transform the poverty of our nature by the riches of your grace, and in the renewal of our lives make known your heavenly glory; 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.