

Our Service Together

January 28th 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 Psalmody Psalm 128 *We say the psalm aloud*

Blessed are all those who fear the Lord, and walk in his ways.

You shall eat the fruit of the toil of your hands; it shall go well with you, and happy shall you be.

Your wife within your house shall be like a fruitful vine; your children round your table, like fresh olive branches.

Thus shall the one be blest who fears the Lord.

The Lord from out of Zion bless you, that you may see Jerusalem in prosperity all the days of your life.

May you see your children's children, and may there be peace upon Israel.

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 Revelation 19.6-10

Then I heard what seemed to be the voice of a great multitude, like the sound of many waters and like the sound of mighty thunder-peals, crying out,
'Hallelujah!

For the Lord our God the Almighty reigns.

⁷ Let us rejoice and exult and give him the glory, for the marriage of the Lamb has come, and his bride has made herself ready; ⁸ to her it has been granted to be clothed with fine linen, bright and pure'— for the fine linen is the righteous deeds of the saints.

⁹ And the angel said to me, 'Write this: Blessed are those who are invited to the marriage supper of the Lamb.' And he said to me, 'These are true words of God.' ¹⁰ Then I fell down at his feet to worship him, but he said to me, 'You must not do that! I am a fellow-servant with you and your comrades who hold the testimony of Jesus. Worship God! For the testimony of Jesus^[e] is the spirit of prophecy.'

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.

On the third day there was a wedding in Cana of Galilee, and the mother of Jesus was there. ² Jesus and his disciples had also been invited to the wedding. ³ When the wine gave out, the mother of Jesus said to him, 'They have no wine.' ⁴ And Jesus said to her, 'Woman, what concern is that to you and to me? My hour has not yet come.' ⁵ His mother said to the servants, 'Do whatever he tells you.' ⁶ Now standing there were six stone water-jars for the Jewish rites of purification, each holding twenty or thirty gallons. ⁷ Jesus said to them, 'Fill the jars with water.' And they filled them up to the brim. ⁸ He said to them, 'Now draw some out, and take it to the chief steward.' So they took it. ⁹ When the steward tasted the water that had become wine, and did not know where it came from (though the servants who had drawn the water knew), the steward called the bridegroom ¹⁰ and said to him, 'Everyone serves the good wine first, and then the inferior wine after the guests have become drunk. But you have kept the good wine until now.' ¹¹ Jesus did this, the first of his signs, in Cana of Galilee, and revealed his glory; and his disciples believed in 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 Revd. John Webb writes:

It's easy to overlook the skill with which St John tells us the good news of the gospel. Over Christmas we have become familiar with his beautiful opening chapter in which he sets the birth of Christ into its wider setting of God's eternal plan for the world – In the beginning was the word etc. Especially powerful in the magical poetical prose of the authorised version. Yet this message might seem to be for theologians and philosophers and not for the average person. But, by contrast, in the second chapter he tells us the lovely domestic story of the Wedding Feast at Cana. A story we can all relate to and understand. In it we see how Jesus reacted to a minor catering upset and by extension how God would react in a similar situation. We are told about a community event when friends and neighbours come together to celebrate and enjoy fellowship. Somebody has got their sums wrong and they run out of wine to the great embarrassment of the hosts to which Jesus responds with extravagant generosity.

This simple story tells an enormous amount on several levels. It tells us that Jesus was concerned with our everyday lives and not only the great events. It tells us that Jesus was happy to quietly solve the problem without making a great fuss. It tells us that his response was immediate and generous. It tells us that Jesus was prepared to intervene and not just to simply point out that they could go to the local vineyard and get more wine. In short he shows us the meaning of love in action. This is the first miracle that Jesus did so it is particularly significant and sets the scene for the whole of his ministry. If we really believe that the gospel is good news and that we now live surrounded by the abundant love of God, we have every reason to celebrate.

St John also uses this story to introduce two themes repeated throughout the bible. This story is about wine which inevitably brings the Last Supper and the Eucharist to mind. St John doesn't record the institution of the Eucharist at the Last Supper so it has been suggested that this story together with the loaves at the feeding of the multitude is his way of looking forward to the communion at which our faith is nourished. The second great recurring theme is that of the kingdom of God seen as the heavenly banquet referred to in our first reading from Revelations as 'the marriage feast of the lamb' when the faithful will be gathered together round the throne of God.

It is a mark of St John's genius that he was able to take a domestic crisis at a village girl's wedding in an obscure little Galilean village to tell us so much about Jesus and his purpose for the world. Thank God for St John and his gospel which continues to nourish the faith of all those who hear it.

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.

Strengthen Michael our Bishop and those who seek to serve you in this diocese May they be filled with the spirit of wisdom and serve you as the first disciples. *Lord in your mercy hear our prayer.*

We Pray for the King, Prime Minister, and all World leaders, that they may have wisdom and optimism to lead us through this difficult time. *Lord in your mercy hear our prayer.*

We pray for nations at war, that they may reconcile their differences and live in peace.
Lord in your mercy hear our prayer.

As we remember the Wedding Feast at Cana let us pray for all those recently married or getting married soon that they may be greatly blessed and that they may be a blessing on the communities where they live. *Lord in your mercy hear our prayer.*

We pray for the homeless, hungry and starving, that their needs may be satisfied.
Lord in your mercy hear our prayer.

Let us pray for our families, friends, and neighbours that we may bring light and hope in the darkest places.
Lord in your mercy hear our prayer.

We pray for the sick, suffering and dying and we give thanks and pray for those who use their skill and risk their lives to care for them. *Lord in your mercy hear our prayer.*

Hear us as we remember those who have died..... According to your promises grant them joy in your eternal kingdom. *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. Amen.

The Collect

All: Almighty God, whose Son revealed in signs and miracles the wonder of your saving presence: renew your people with your heavenly grace, and in all our weakness sustain us by your mighty power; 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.