

Our Service Together

2nd Sunday before Lent

February 4th 2024

An Acclamation for the Season

All: There is one body and one spirit. There is one hope to which we were called; one Lord, one faith, one baptism, one God and Father of all.

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 104.26-37 *We say the psalm aloud*

O Lord, how manifold are your works!

In wisdom you have made them all; the earth is full of your creatures.

There is the sea, spread far and wide, and there move creatures beyond number, both small and great.

There go the ships, and there is that Leviathan which you have made to play in the deep.

All of these look to you to give them their food in due season.

When you give it them, they gather it; you open your hand and they are filled with good.

When you hide your face they are troubled; when you take away their breath,
they die and return again to the dust.

When you send forth your spirit, they are created, and you renew the face of the earth.

May the glory of the Lord endure for ever; may the Lord rejoice in his works;

He looks on the earth and it trembles; he touches the mountains and they smoke.

I will sing to the Lord as long as I live; I will make music to my God while I have my being.

So shall my song please him while I rejoice in the Lord.

Let sinners be consumed out of the earth and the wicked be no more.

Bless the Lord, O my soul. Alleluia.

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 Colossians 1.15-20

He is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn of all creation; ¹⁶for in him all things in heaven and on earth were created, things visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or rulers or powers—all things have been created through him and for him. ¹⁷He himself is before all things, and in him all things hold together. ¹⁸He is the head of the body, the church; he is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead, so that he might come to have first place in everything. ¹⁹For in him all the fullness of God was pleased to dwell, ²⁰and through him God was pleased to reconcile to himself all things, whether on earth or in heaven, by making peace through the blood of his cross.

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 1.1-14

In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. ²He was in the beginning
with God. ³All things came into being through him, and without him not one thing came into being. What has
come into being ⁴in him was life, and the life was the light of all people. ⁵The light shines in the darkness, and
the darkness did not overcome it.

⁶There was a man sent from God, whose name was John. ⁷He came as a witness to testify to the light, so that

all might believe through him. ⁸ He himself was not the light, but he came to testify to the light. ⁹ The true light, which enlightens everyone, was coming into the world.

¹⁰ He was in the world, and the world came into being through him; yet the world did not know him. ¹¹ He came to what was his own, and his own people did not accept him. ¹² But to all who received him, who believed in his name, he gave power to become children of God, ¹³ who were born, not of blood or of the will of the flesh or of the will of man, but of God.

¹⁴ And the Word became flesh and lived among us, and we have seen his glory, the glory as of a father's only son, full of grace and truth.

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 the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was in the beginning with God. All things came into being through him, and without him not one thing came into being", says John casting our minds to the very start of Genesis.

St Paul brings the hopes of Israel, of all humanity together in his words from Colossians, "He (Jesus Christ) is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn of all creation; for in him all things in heaven and on earth were created... He himself is before all things, and in him all things hold together."

It is interesting that the word 'beginning' in Hebrew also means 'sum total', 'head', and 'first fruits'. The word 'in' can also mean 'through' and 'for'. Here we have so much of the New Testament language about Jesus the Messiah, the one who brings to fullness, to completion, the hopes of Israel and the redemption of God.

If we do go back to the beginning, as John would wish us to, to the time when God made humanity in his image we are left with the sense that Jesus is the 'truly human' one, the second Adam, because he is the 'Image', the one who was with God and was God. However, there is more to note in the story of the creation. It is through the 'handmaid' of God, through Wisdom herself – the Spirit that God brings life and this wisdom God 'before all things'.

We find that to reflect God's image, to be completely human we need God's Wisdom, a down to earth kind of wisdom; an incarnate wisdom, a word of God become flesh wisdom. And here is the good news for in ascending to the Father, Jesus ask that the Spirit, the power and wisdom of God is sent forth to the earth and to the Church.

This is good news worthy of the songs of praise that fill Colossians. But there is challenge too as we rejoice. With Christ ascended how is humanity to know its redemption has come? How is the 'first fruit' of the 'sum total' of God's action to be manifest in a broken and ravaged creation? How is the word of God to become down to earth Wisdom amongst us today?

It can only be within the life and worship of the body, the church, of which Christ is the 'head'. It can only be when we are open to the presence, power and Wisdom that comes from God's Spirit come to us, with us in down to earth ways until the end of the age.

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 embody your love and speak your word of redemption.
Lord of faith and trust, help us to trust in you.

We pray for those who are persecuted for their faith, 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 our government, our King and 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 created the heavens and the earth and made us in your own image: teach us to discern your hand in all your works and your likeness in all your children; through Jesus Christ your Son our Lord, who with you and the Holy Spirit reigns supreme over all things, 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.