

Our Sunday Service Together

Advent Sunday, December 1st 2024



An Acclamation for the Season

All: Alleluia, alleluia. Prepare the way of the Lord, make his paths straight, and all flesh shall see the salvation of God. Alleluia, 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 25.1-9 *We say the psalm aloud*

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 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 Jeremiah 33.14-16

The days are surely coming, says the Lord, when I will fulfil the promise I made to the house of Israel and the house of Judah. ¹⁵ In those days and at that time I will cause a righteous Branch to spring up for David; and he shall execute justice and righteousness in the land. ¹⁶ In those days Judah will be saved and Jerusalem will live in safety. And this is the name by which it will be called: 'The Lord is our righteousness.'

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 Luke 21.25-36

'There will be signs in the sun, the moon, and the stars, and on the earth distress among nations confused by the roaring of the sea and the waves. ²⁶ People will faint from fear and foreboding of what is coming upon the world, for the powers of the heavens will be shaken. ²⁷ Then they will see "the Son of Man coming in a cloud" with power and great glory. ²⁸ Now when these things begin to take place, stand up and raise your heads,

because your redemption is drawing near.'

²⁹ Then he told them a parable: 'Look at the fig tree and all the trees; ³⁰ as soon as they sprout leaves you can see for yourselves and know that summer is already near. ³¹ So also, when you see these things taking place, you know that the kingdom of God is near. ³² Truly I tell you, this generation will not pass away until all things have taken place. ³³ Heaven and earth will pass away, but my words will not pass away.

³⁴ 'Be on guard so that your hearts are not weighed down with dissipation and drunkenness and the worries of this life, and that day does not catch you unexpectedly, ³⁵ like a trap. For it will come upon all who live on the face of the whole earth. ³⁶ Be alert at all times, praying that you may have the strength to escape all these things that will take place, and to stand before 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

To many of his readers Luke would have seemed very unreal and apocalyptic. With some of the weather patterns we face today to some folks he would sound amazingly prophetic. No matter who the biblical writer is, there are times when you wish they would get to the point, just be direct and open and stop with all the weird happenings and words.

It is lovely that Jeremiah does just that for us today. He does use imagery, but it is simple and without flourish. God will restore his people, he will raise up a descendant of David and establish his kingdom, and Yahweh will be the people's righteousness. This is of course a verse for the beginning of Advent, for our looking to the gift born to us, God's love as one with us.

Prophetic imagery of heavenly things can be opaque indeed, distracting maybe from the message it is looking to bring. Jesus' words at the beginning of our passage from Luke may have been distracting to the hearers, maybe this is why Jesus turns to trusted parables. Yet even here the parable seems to not convey the point as simply as Jesus is hoping to. So he says things simply, 'do not let everything in life weigh you down and distract you from what is your through me'.

Do not worry, be assured, you are the Son of Man's, you will be OK not matter what is happening about you!

How? How will we be saved, how will we be secure? Simply, because the Lord is our righteousness! He who was slain and raised again on the third day accredits to his people His righteousness.

No-one likes a self-righteous person; God especially shuns the self-righteous and for good reason! There is no earning righteousness before God, we can only humbly receive his, the Lord's righteousness. But that seems very straight forward, surely there has to be something other, something more complicated to this vision of God's redemption?

Well no! God has raised up for us a branch, God has brought restoration to His people and the Lord is our righteousness! Our task is to put that righteousness on and allow it to define our lives before all the world.

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*

On this Advent Sunday let us open our hearts and minds to receive anew the gift of Jesus into our lives. Let us give thanks that in baptism we started our journey of faith and ask that it may be refreshed and renewed as we prepare for Christmas. *Lord in your mercy hear our prayer.*

Strengthen Bishops Michael and Ruth and those who seek to serve you in this diocese. May they be filled with the Spirit 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 the Spirit of wisdom to lead us into peace. May they always use their power for the good of the people and avoid the temptation to personal gain. *Lord in your mercy hear our prayer.*

We pray for the peoples of Israel, Palestine, Lebanon, Ukraine and Russia suffering as the result of war, that solutions may be found for their historic differences and they may live at peace. *Lord in your mercy hear our prayer.*

We pray for the hungry and starving, that the available food may be used for the benefit of all. *Lord in your mercy hear our prayer.*

We pray for our families, friends, and neighbours that we may serve Christ in one another and seek the common good. *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 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 a share in your eternal kingdom. *Lord in your mercy hear our prayer.*

The Collect

All: Almighty God, give us grace to cast away the works of darkness and to put on the armour of light, now in the time of this mortal life, in which your Son Jesus Christ came to us in great humility; that on the last day, when he shall come again in his glorious majesty to judge the living and the dead, we may rise to the life immortal; through him 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.