

Our Service Together

December 29th 2024



An Acclamation for the Season

Alleluia, alleluia. The people who walked in darkness have seen a great light. For to us a child is born to us a Son is given. His name will be called Wonderful counsellor, mighty God, the everlasting Father, the Prince of Peace. Glory to God in the highest and peace to his people on earth. Alleluia, alleluia!

Preparation

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.

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

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

The night has passed, and the day lies open before us; let us pray with one heart and mind.

Silence is kept.

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 Psalm Psalm 148 *We say the psalm aloud*

Alleluia. Praise the Lord from the heavens; praise him in the heights.

Praise him, all you his angels; praise him, all his host.

Praise him, sun and moon; praise him, all you stars of light.

Praise him, heaven of heavens, and you waters above the heavens.

Let them praise the name of the Lord, for he commanded and they were created.

He made them fast for ever and ever; he gave them a law which shall not pass away.

Praise the Lord from the earth, you sea monsters and all deeps;

Fire and hail, snow and mist, tempestuous wind, fulfilling his word;

Mountains and all hills, fruit trees and all cedars;

Wild beasts and all cattle, creeping things and birds on the wing;

Kings of the earth and all peoples, princes and all rulers of the world;

Young men and women, old and young together; let them praise the name of the Lord.

For his name only is exalted, his splendour above earth and heaven.

He has raised up the horn of his people and praise for all his faithful servants,

the children of Israel, a people who are near him. 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 3.12-17

As God's chosen ones, holy and beloved, clothe yourselves with compassion, kindness, humility, meekness, and patience. ¹³ Bear with one another and, if anyone has a complaint against another, forgive each other; just as the Lord has forgiven you, so you also must forgive. ¹⁴ Above all, clothe yourselves with love, which binds everything together in perfect harmony. ¹⁵ And let the peace of Christ rule in your hearts, to which indeed you were called in the one body. And be thankful. ¹⁶ Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly; teach and admonish one another in all wisdom; and with gratitude in your hearts sing psalms, hymns, and spiritual songs to God. ¹⁷ And whatever you do, in word or deed, do everything in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through him.

At the end of the reading we say: This is the word of the Lord. Thanks be to God.

Gloria

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 2. 41 to end

Now every year his parents went to Jerusalem for the festival of the Passover. ⁴² And when he was twelve years old, they went up as usual for the festival. ⁴³ When the festival was ended and they started to return, the boy Jesus stayed behind in Jerusalem, but his parents did not know it. ⁴⁴ Assuming that he was in the group of travellers, they went a day's journey. Then they started to look for him among their relatives and

friends. ⁴⁵ When they did not find him, they returned to Jerusalem to search for him. ⁴⁶ After three days they found him in the temple, sitting among the teachers, listening to them and asking them questions. ⁴⁷ And all who heard him were amazed at his understanding and his answers. ⁴⁸ When his parents saw him they were astonished; and his mother said to him, 'Child, why have you treated us like this? Look, your father and I have been searching for you in great anxiety.' ⁴⁹ He said to them, 'Why were you searching for me? Did you not know that I must be in my Father's house?' ⁵⁰ But they did not understand what he said to them. ⁵¹ Then he went down with them and came to Nazareth, and was obedient to them. His mother treasured all these things in her heart. ⁵² And Jesus increased in wisdom and in years, and in divine and human favour.

At the end of the reading we say: This is the word of the Lord. Thanks be to God.

Our Reflection

Many a parent has had the heart sinking moment Mary and Joseph must have had on noticing your child isn't where you thought they were. In a split second a child so easily disappears in a crowded area. Panic sets in and the search begins. When they are found there is relief and, if your experience was anything like mine when one son disappeared amongst the clothes racks in one large store, complete disbelief that they wonder what all the fuss is about; after all they know they are where they should be – by the toys in my son's case, in the temple complex in Jesus' case.

'Why were you searching for me? Did you not know that I must be in my Father's house? – there is much to unpack in this one sentence!

For Mary, here begins the road to the day when it will not be a small flutter of the heart, but instead a piercing pain, like a dagger to her heart. Jesus is beginning His calling, he knows where he should be with his time and focus – with his Father. We are never told how his dad felt in all of this, his hope may well have been that Jesus follow him into the building trade. But no, his calling is to the will of his Father and this begins in the Temple.

The Old Testament reading for today is from Samuel, another young man who began his ministry in the temple, hearing the call of God. It is Samuel who would anoint God's chosen king over Israel, David who would establish a throne and become the basis for a hope that, even though defeat and oppression would come again and again, in the end God would send a Messiah king to sit on the throne forever. Luke is the only gospel writer that tells us of Jesus early years, and with good reason, have hope people, rejoice Jerusalem for the promised king, the Messiah king is come to you!

Ok, so it is easy to miss your child in a moment, but to misplace them for hours and leave them miles behind; that takes some doing indeed by Mary and Joseph. You walk off confidently on your journey home, chatting with others, a hustle within the caravan of travellers almost certainly with the assumption Jesus is with you; why would he not be?

After a busy time of Christmas services and as the journey into a new year begins I find myself challenged not to assume Jesus is amongst the new busyness of the year, that he is rushing along on my journey. The celebrations have been great, the time of worship a blessing with so many others, but before jumping into everything of the new year I wonder if it is best to stop, take stock, and importantly to ask yourself 'where's Jesus'. It may be he is ahead on the road calling us on, it may be he is right there in the midst of the conversation, however he could be going nowhere at all and is simply at prayer in the Father's presence.

Whichever it may be, I wonder if each and every day our first port of call should be to stop, look for Jesus, connect with Him and to ensure we are with Him, rather than expect Him to come search for us!

If there is one resolution worth making at the start of any New Year it would be to start each day seeking Jesus, finding where he is, and praying His prayer – 'your kingdom come and your will be done, here in earth, as it is in heaven'.

The Creed

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*

Let us pray to our incarnate Lord, who has brought us out of darkness and into his own marvellous light.

Christ born for us, Son of God given for us:
help us to know you, to worship and to serve you ...

Lord, in your mercy hear our prayer.

Wonderful counsellor, you order all things with your wisdom:

help the Church to reveal the mystery of your love
and fill her with the Spirit of truth ...

Lord, in your mercy hear our prayer.

Mighty God, the government is on your shoulders:

guide the leaders of the nations and bring in your kingdom of justice and righteousness ...

Lord, in your mercy hear our prayer.

Everlasting father, you call us to live together in unity:

protect by your mercy all your children, bless our families and renew our communities ...

Lord, in your mercy hear our prayer.

Prince of peace, you bring reconciliation through the cross:

by your healing power give to all who suffer your gift of wholeness and peace.

Lord, in your mercy hear our prayer.

Lord Jesus Christ, Son of the Father, full of the Spirit, hear our prayer, receive our praises, fill our lives. Amen.

The Collect

Almighty God, who wonderfully created us in your own image and yet more wonderfully restored us through your Son Jesus Christ: grant that, as he came to share in our humanity, so we may share the life of his divinity; 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

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.