

Our Service Together

January 5th 2025



An Acclamation for the Season

All: 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

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 147.12-20 *We say the psalm aloud*

But the Lord delights in those who fear him, who put their trust in his steadfast love.

Sing praise to the Lord, O Jerusalem; praise your God, O Zion;

For he has strengthened the bars of your gates and has blest your children within you.

He has established peace in your borders and satisfies you with the finest wheat.

He sends forth his command to the earth and his word runs very swiftly.

He gives snow like wool and scatters the hoarfrost like ashes.

He casts down his hailstones like morsels of bread; who can endure his frost?

He sends forth his word and melts them; he blows with his wind and the waters flow.

He declares his word to Jacob, his statutes and judgements to 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 Jeremiah 31.7-14

For thus says the Lord: Sing aloud with gladness for Jacob, and raise shouts for the chief of the nations; proclaim, give praise, and say, 'Save, O Lord, your people, the remnant of Israel.'

⁸ See, I am going to bring them from the land of the north, and gather them from the farthest parts of the earth, among them the blind and the lame, those with child and those in labour, together; a great company, they shall return here.

⁹ With weeping they shall come, and with consolations I will lead them back, I will let them walk by brooks of water, in a straight path in which they shall not stumble; for I have become a father to Israel, and Ephraim is my firstborn.

¹⁰ Hear the word of the Lord, O nations, and declare it in the coastlands far away; say, 'He who scattered Israel will gather him, and will keep him as a shepherd a flock.'

¹¹ For the Lord has ransomed Jacob, and has redeemed him from hands too strong for him.

¹² They shall come and sing aloud on the height of Zion, and they shall be radiant over the goodness of the Lord, over the grain, the wine, and the oil, and over the young of the flock and the herd; their life shall become like a watered garden, and they shall never languish again.

¹³ Then shall the young women rejoice in the dance, and the young men and the old shall be merry. I will turn their mourning into joy, I will comfort them, and give them gladness for sorrow.

¹⁴ I will give the priests their fill of fatness, and my people shall be satisfied with my bounty, says the Lord.

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 1.10-18

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. ¹⁵ (John testified to him and cried out, 'This was he of whom I said, "He who comes after me ranks ahead of me because he was before me."') ¹⁶ From his fullness we have all received, grace upon grace. ¹⁷ The law indeed was given through Moses; grace and truth came through Jesus Christ. ¹⁸ No one has ever seen God. It is God the only Son, who is close to the Father's heart, who has made him known.

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

We have just had the New Year's honours list published along with folks being interviewed and having their '5 minutes of basking in glory'. Interestingly, 'glory' features in both our readings today.

Jeremiah talks of God's saving the people of Israel, of their return from captivity and their redemption. This is something worth singing about, celebrating and as the people gather in Jerusalem he says "they shall be radiant over the goodness of the Lord"; the word used for radiance is the same as for glory in Hebrew. The people glorify God's actions and their redemption in the worship. But the sense here is glorifying God in more than words, in singing or dancing, it is as if this is something that takes hold of them completely encompassing their whole being.

John too talks of glory being 'given' to God in a whole being, a whole life capacity as he talks of the word made flesh. The 'word' is not concept or theory, it isn't abstract, this 'word' is visceral, it is alive, it is one with us, living amongst humanity and both giving glory to God and revealing that glory; the glory of a son who is his father's child as he embodies the father's characteristics of grace and truth. Might we begin to see that humanity is made to worship God, to proclaim His glory, and also, as one created in the image of God to reveal the glory of God with our entire being? Are we to enter into our worship with our full being and live lives which glorify God, as a children of God – in grace and truth?

Sobriety and piety are two common themes for the British in worship; the thought of losing ourselves in worship like King David, well that's all well and good for Mediterranean folks. And as for glorifying God in the 'flesh', well, have you never heard of sin and looked in the mirror – we are unworthy to gather up the crumbs from under the table.

Talk of the 'flesh', we find difficult thanks in large part to Greek philosophy which divides our being into two

parties – the flesh and the spirit; one is salvageable, the other, well that will be flung off one day. And good riddance to the flesh, after all our protestant piety underscores it is our ‘fleshly’ nature that causes us to sin. It is our bodies that fail us, and we find solace in the Greek idea of souls and bodies, of souls in bodies.

But our Hebrew heritage has none of this dualistic nature, we are created as whole beings, given life by the breath of God. Whilst we might acknowledge we are thinking, feeling, spiritual and physical creatures these are not compartmentalised characteristics they are what makes us whole beings. This is why, when asked to give the commandment that would lead to eternal life Jesus declares ‘remember God is one and only, worship your God with your entire being – heart, mind, soul and strength’ and give glory to God as you embody this worship in ‘loving your neighbour as you love yourself’

Loving yourself is not easy when the world tells us to dislike, despise even our fleshly natures. Loving our neighbours becomes less easy because we look at others with the same eyes we view our own selves; how do you love the unworthy; be that yourself or your neighbour? The answer is through the love of God!

John will talk of that love as his gospel unfolds. In a few chapters after today’s reading John reveals the dimension of God’s love, a love for the entire ‘fleshly’ cosmos. Through the fall we are indeed unworthy of that love, yet we are not worthless. We are not no-bodies we are bodies which have worth, are worth loving and redeeming. We may feel unworthy to gather up the crumbs, but the nature of God is always to have mercy! If God says we are loveable, if God declares humanity is of worth, then maybe we can love our fleshly, earthy selves, and more reveal that love to the world about us.

In Jesus we see the way for all humanity to be changed, transfigured, and able to glorify God in whose image we are created. In Him we find a way to fully worship - with heart, mind, soul and strength! In Him we find the way is opened for each and every one of us to glorify God, be redeemed, to be enlivened by the breath of God. For he is the way, the truth, the life and as we cry out ‘Abba, father’ we know both our calling and the possibility to glorify God, radiating in our being grace and truth in a dark 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*

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.

As we start a new year 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 and continue to live in faith.
Lord in your mercy hear our prayer

Strengthen our Bishops and all laity and clergy 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 Our King, Prime Minister, and all World leaders, that they may have the Spirit of wisdom to lead us through difficult times.

Lord in your mercy hear our prayer.

We pray for our legal system – those who make our laws that they may have wisdom, and those who enforce them that they may have compassion.

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 our schools, the children, teachers, and support staff as they return to the classroom next week.

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 a share 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. And may the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with us all, now and for evermore. Amen.

The Collect

All: Almighty God, in the birth of your Son you have poured on us the new light of your incarnate Word, and shown us the fullness of your love: help us to walk in his light and dwell in his love that we may know the fullness of his joy; 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.