

Our Service Together

January 26th 2025



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 19 *We say the psalm aloud*

The heavens are telling the glory of God and the firmament proclaims his handiwork.
One day pours out its song to another and one night unfolds knowledge to another.
They have neither speech nor language and their voices are not heard,
Yet their sound has gone out into all lands and their words to the ends of the world.
In them has he set a tabernacle for the sun, that comes forth as a bridegroom out of his chamber
and rejoices as a champion to run his course.

It goes forth from the end of the heavens and runs to the very end again,
and there is nothing hidden from its heat.

The law of the Lord is perfect, reviving the soul;
the testimony of the Lord is sure and gives wisdom to the simple.

The statutes of the Lord are right and rejoice the heart;
the commandment of the Lord is pure and gives light to the eyes.

The fear of the Lord is clean and endures for ever;
the judgements of the Lord are true and righteous altogether.

More to be desired are they than gold, more than much fine gold,
sweeter also than honey, dripping from the honeycomb.

By them also is your servant taught and in keeping them there is great reward.

Who can tell how often they offend?

O cleanse me from my secret faults!

Keep your servant also from presumptuous sins

lest they get dominion over me; so shall I be undefiled, and innocent of great offence.

Let the words of my mouth and the meditation of my heart
be acceptable in your sight, O Lord, my strength and my redeemer.

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 Nehemiah 8.1-3, 5-6 and 8-10

All the people gathered together into the square before the Water Gate. They told the scribe Ezra to bring the book of the law of Moses, which the Lord had given to Israel. ² Accordingly, the priest Ezra brought the law before the assembly, both men and women and all who could hear with understanding. This was on the first day of the seventh month. ³ He read from it facing the square before the Water Gate from early morning until midday, in the presence of the men and the women and those who could understand; and the ears of all the people were attentive to the book of the law.

⁵ And Ezra opened the book in the sight of all the people, for he was standing above all the people; and when he opened it, all the people stood up. ⁶ Then Ezra blessed the Lord, the great God, and all the people answered, 'Amen, Amen', lifting up their hands. Then they bowed their heads and worshipped the Lord with their faces to the ground.

⁸ So they read from the book, from the law of God, with interpretation. They gave the sense, so that the people

understood the reading.

⁹ And Nehemiah, who was the governor, and Ezra the priest and scribe, and the Levites who taught the people said to all the people, 'This day is holy to the Lord your God; do not mourn or weep.' For all the people wept when they heard the words of the law. ¹⁰ Then he said to them, 'Go your way, eat the fat and drink sweet wine and send portions of them to those for whom nothing is prepared, for this day is holy to our Lord; and do not be grieved, for the joy of the Lord is your strength.'

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 4.14-21

Then Jesus, filled with the power of the Spirit, returned to Galilee, and a report about him spread through all the surrounding country. ¹⁵ He began to teach in their synagogues and was praised by everyone.

¹⁶ When he came to Nazareth, where he had been brought up, he went to the synagogue on the Sabbath day, as was his custom. He stood up to read, ¹⁷ and the scroll of the prophet Isaiah was given to him. He unrolled the scroll and found the place where it was written:

¹⁸ 'The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he has anointed me to bring good news to the poor.

He has sent me to proclaim release to the captives and recovery of sight to the blind, to let the oppressed go free, ¹⁹ to proclaim the year of the Lord's favour.'

²⁰ And he rolled up the scroll, gave it back to the attendant, and sat down. The eyes of all in the synagogue were fixed on him. ²¹ Then he began to say to them, 'Today this scripture has been fulfilled in your hearing.'

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

"So they read from the book, from the law of God, with interpretation. They gave the sense, so that the people understood the reading."

Read the text, and give the sense so that people understand the words. Both matter, the word of God needs to be heard, but in every age folk need to know the sense of it for their age, their situation and time! History does show us times when the interpretation was frankly way off the mark. Times when interpretation may have been more 'society' filtering the word, than the word filtering 'society'.

For the people returned to the ruins of Jerusalem after the Exile such historic revelation was evident. Whilst the word, the Mosaic law was always present, its interpretation had clearly been flawed – God had no choice but to send them into exile. If only there could be a way of providing a sound, reliable interpretation of the word of God that could give wisdom to follow in all ages and times!

Jesus makes a bold statement before the assembled worshippers and learned theologians of his day "The

Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he has anointed me to bring good news to the poor. He has sent me to proclaim release to the captives and recovery of sight to the blind, to let the oppressed go free, to proclaim the year of the Lord's favour". Israel had not heard the word, the voice of God, via a prophet for hundreds of years; instead they had relied on Rabbinic interpretations of the Law. Jesus declares he is anointed by the Spirit to speak with God's voice to the people, to proclaim the word of God – directly, not interpretively. This is a bold assertion indeed!

But there is more, if it was not enough to say 'I am God's envoy', Jesus then declares that the word spoken is now being put into action; it is becoming 'fulfilled'. I suspect you could have heard a pin drop when he sat down; we read of the arguments that then erupted.

Not only is Jesus claiming here to proclaim God's word, he is declaring he is enacting the fulfilment of God's words. As John says in his gospel, in Jesus Christ the word of God, the creative, authoritative word of God that sustain all life is fully 'enfleshed', completely enacted, brought to life and fulfilled!

In Jesus then, we have both the text 'read' aloud and interpretation brought to full life; making sense of the word, removing all doubt and argument on the matter; don't we?!

Let's face it, we are happier folks when we have directions to follow – do this, don't do that. But Jesus does not give us a long list of laws, which can be argued over time and again - as if having an ass or not is the issue in the law; it is covetousness, it is murderous intent! (there I go offering interpretation!). Jesus instead offers every generation tools to apply to the time and season, benchmarks if you like.

Jesus enables questions to be asked, 'what is impoverishment in your 'place' and time?' 'What is 'God's good news today?' 'What holds people captive and how would God see them set them free?' 'What oppresses, who is oppressing people and how would God seek to free them?'

Jesus provides for the people of God in every generation and location, not a process, but a framework for accessing if the 'year of the Lord's favour', the jubilee, the freedom of humanity from enslavement in all forms, is evident in their time and in their location. He also provides the example of what it means to be people bringing to fulfilment the word of God; as he did, so we too are called to 'offer our souls and bodies, to be a living sacrifice, sent in the power of the Spirit to live and work for His praise and glory'.

So, in our time, in our place, where do we see good news proclaimed to the poor or not? Where is the proclamation of release to those held captive, recovery of sight to the blind, the oppressed going free, and the proclamation made of the year of the Lord's favour? How are we, his disciples, following Jesus, enabling in our lives God's words to be 'fleshed out', to see His kingdom come and will be done, on earth as in heaven?

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*

In the power of the Spirit and in union with Christ let us pray to the Father.

Strengthen Michael and Ruth our Bishops 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 lead us into justice and peace. *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.

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: God of all mercy, your son proclaimed good news to the poor, release to the captives, and freedom to the oppressed; anoint us with your Holy Spirit and set your people free to praise you in Christ our Lord.
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.