

Our Service Together

Lent 2 March 16th 2024



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 Psalms Psalm 27

We say the psalm aloud

The Lord is my light and my salvation; whom then shall I fear?
The Lord is the strength of my life; of whom then shall I be afraid?
When the wicked, even my enemies and my foes,
came upon me to eat up my flesh, they stumbled and fell.
Though a host encamp against me, my heart shall not be afraid,
and though there rise up war against me, yet will I put my trust in him.
One thing have I asked of the Lord and that alone I seek:
that I may dwell in the house of the Lord all the days of my life,
To behold the fair beauty of the Lord and to seek his will in his temple.
For in the day of trouble he shall hide me in his shelter;
in the secret place of his dwelling shall he hide me and set me high upon a rock.
And now shall he lift up my head above my enemies round about me;
Therefore, will I offer in his dwelling an oblation
with great gladness; I will sing and make music to the Lord.
Hear my voice, O Lord, when I call; have mercy upon me and answer me.
My heart tells of your word, 'Seek my face.' Your face, Lord, will I seek.
Hide not your face from me, nor cast your servant away in displeasure.
You have been my helper; leave me not, neither forsake me, O God of my salvation.
Though my father and my mother forsake me, the Lord will take me up.
Teach me your way, O Lord; lead me on a level path, because of those who lie in wait for me.
Deliver me not into the will of my adversaries,
for false witnesses have risen up against me, and those who breathe out violence.
I believe that I shall see the goodness of the Lord in the land of the living.
Wait for the Lord; be strong and he shall comfort your heart; wait patiently for the Lord.
Glory be to the Father, and to the Son: and to the Holy Ghost; as it was in the beginning, is now, and ever shall
be: world without end. Amen.

Scripture Reading Philippians 3.17 to 4.1

Brothers and sisters, join in imitating me, and observe those who live according to the example you have in us. ¹⁸ For many live as enemies of the cross of Christ; I have often told you of them, and now I tell you even with tears. ¹⁹ Their end is destruction; their god is the belly; and their glory is in their shame; their minds are set on earthly things. ²⁰ But our citizenship is in heaven, and it is from there that we are expecting a Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ. ²¹ He will transform the body of our humiliation so that it may be conformed to the body of his glory, by the power that also enables him to make all things subject to himself.

4 ¹ Therefore, my brothers and sisters, whom I love and long for, my joy and crown, stand firm in the Lord in this way, my beloved.

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 13.31-35

³¹ At that very hour some Pharisees came and said to him, 'Get away from here, for Herod wants to kill you.' ³² He said to them, 'Go and tell that fox for me, "Listen, I am casting out demons and performing cures today and tomorrow, and on the third day I finish my work. ³³ Yet today, tomorrow, and the next day I must be on my way, because it is impossible for a prophet to be killed away from Jerusalem." ³⁴ Jerusalem, Jerusalem, the city that kills the prophets and stones those who are sent to it! How often have I desired to gather your children together as a hen gathers her brood under her wings, and you were not willing! ³⁵ See, your house is left to you. And I tell you, you will not see me until the time comes when you say, "Blessed is the one who comes in the name of the Lord."'

At the end of the reading we say:

This is the word of the Lord. Thanks be to God.

A Reflection for the day

In the book of Ecclesiastes we read in chapter 3 – "For everything there is a season, and a time for every matter under heaven: a time to be born, and a time to die; a time to plant, and a time to pluck up what is planted; ..." I do chuckle when a wedding couple asks for this passage; I know they have not read it fully and seen all the talk of war, decay and destruction – everything you want talked about as you get married.

Jesus and Paul hold to the overarching principle contained in the first part of the declaration – there is a time for everything 'under heaven'.

Jesus is 'under heaven', he is at the will and work of his Father – "I am casting out demons and performing cures today and tomorrow, and on the third day I finish my work. Yet today, tomorrow, and the next day I must be on my way, because it is impossible for a prophet to be killed away from Jerusalem." Herod can shout and spout his death threats, or desires for someone else to do his dirty work (a king's request centuries later, 'who will rid me of this troublesome priest' comes to mind) all he likes; Jesus is fixed at his calling and work and trusts God to see it completed.

Jesus is acknowledging he will die at the hands of those who oppose the kingdom of God 'at hand', present and revealed in healing and deliverance; but this will be in God's time, in the place and manner of God's choosing. It may be the authorities think they are succeeding and having their will as the events of Easter unfold, but it becomes all too clear they have no control, God is at work, his purpose is being fulfilled, Jesus is the Christ, the Messiah!

Paul too talks with this concept of being 'under heaven', not 'of the world' as he writes to the church at Philippi. In Christ the believers are now become 'citizens' of 'heaven above', rather than the world below. Citizenship was a critical issue for folks across the Roman empire with huge implications, and we need to hold this in mind as we read Paul's writings.

I am sure for most of us our 'citizenship' matters little on a day to day basis. It may do so when we need a passport and it certainly does when you come to reside in a foreign land. Being a citizen of a country gives, or should do, access to all the rights of that land. Without citizenship you lose or have reduced rights for work, for education and healthcare. In the Roman Empire the rights of a citizen included ownership of property, voting, freedom from slavery, marriage and even the right to a trial and a 'nicer', if there ever can be, method of execution than meted out to non-citizens.

Paul is writing to fellow Roman citizens in Philippi! However, whereas he is a Jew come to Christ these are Gentiles come to Christ, but he asserts they still seem to be living as citizens of the 'world' rather than 'of heaven'. Be like me in following Christ, Paul says – not of the earth and its rulers, but as one 'under heaven'. He reminds them the 'world' is set for destruction, but those who live 'under heaven', though their bodies may suffer death as Jesus himself did, will find they are raised, just as he was. Live in the light of this reality, is Paul's charge; 'stand firm in the Lord'.

Here is our Easter hope, Jesus who lived 'under heaven' offered himself that all might be saved and even though they die, they will be raised as he was raised. Here also is our Lenten challenge, are we living as citizens of the world or are we standing firm, living as citizens 'under heaven', as sojourners in the world but not of the world?

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*

As we journey through Lent may we grow in faith, understanding and service.
Lord in your mercy hear our prayer.

Strengthen Michael and Ruth our Bishops 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 witness of the church to God's faithfulness, the redemption of Christ, and to the grace which welcomes all, again and again.
Lord in your mercy hear our prayer

Let us pray for priests, preachers and theologians as they struggle to interpret the mystery of God to be relevant for each generation. *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 through difficult times. *Lord in your mercy hear our prayer.*

Following the third anniversary of Russia's invasion of Ukraine, the continued fighting in Gaza, and the rumours of war about the world we pray with deep lament for those killed, injured, displaced and all who make profits from war. May the reign of the Prince of Peace come to this broken world.

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 those approaching death. We give thanks for those who use their skills 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. The grace of our Lord, Jesus Christ and the love of God and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with us now and always. Amen

The Collect

Almighty God, you show to those who are in error the light of your truth, that they may return to the way of righteousness:
grant to all those who are admitted into the fellowship of Christ's religion, that they may reject those things that are contrary to their profession, and follow all such things as are agreeable to the same;
through our Lord Jesus Christ, 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

Christ, as a light illumine and guide me this day.
as a shield overshadow me.
me, Christ over me;
Christ beside me on my left and my right.
This day be within and without me. Amen.

Christ,
Christ under