

Our Service Together

Lent 5 (Passiontide)

April 6th 2025



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

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 126 *We say the psalm aloud*

When the Lord restored the fortunes of Zion, then were we like those who dream.
Then was our mouth filled with laughter and our tongue with songs of joy.
Then said they among the nations, 'The Lord has done great things for them.'
The Lord has indeed done great things for us, and therefore we rejoiced.
Restore again our fortunes, O Lord, as the river beds of the desert.
Those who sow in tears shall reap with songs of joy.
Those who go out weeping, bearing the seed, will come back with shouts of joy, bearing their sheaves with them.
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 3.4b-14

If anyone else has reason to be confident in the flesh, I have more: ⁵circumcised on the eighth day, a member of the people of Israel, of the tribe of Benjamin, a Hebrew born of Hebrews; as to the law, a Pharisee; ⁶as to zeal, a persecutor of the church; as to righteousness under the law, blameless.
⁷Yet whatever gains I had, these I have come to regard as loss because of Christ. ⁸More than that, I regard everything as loss because of the surpassing value of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord. For his sake I have suffered the loss of all things, and I regard them as rubbish, in order that I may gain Christ ⁹and be found in him, not having a righteousness of my own that comes from the law, but one that comes through faith in Christ, the righteousness from God based on faith. ¹⁰I want to know Christ and the power of his resurrection and the sharing of his sufferings by becoming like him in his death, ¹¹if somehow I may attain the resurrection from the dead.

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 12.1-8

Six days before the Passover Jesus came to Bethany, the home of Lazarus, whom he had raised from the dead. ²There they gave a dinner for him. Martha served, and Lazarus was one of those at the table with him. ³Mary took a pound of costly perfume made of pure nard, anointed Jesus' feet, and wiped them with her hair. The house was filled with the fragrance of the perfume. ⁴But Judas Iscariot, one of his disciples (the one who was about to betray him), said, ⁵'Why was this perfume not sold for three hundred denarii and the money given to the poor?' ⁶(He said this not because he cared about the poor, but because he was a thief; he kept the common purse and used to steal what was put into it.) ⁷Jesus said, 'Leave her alone. She bought it so that she might keep it for the day of my burial. ⁸You always have the poor with you, but you do not always have me.'

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

Who was that woman, she must have been of dubious character to have all that perfume – possibly a prostitute, certainly a wasteful person, expending all that financial resource in such a manner, and for what in return? Such have been the mutterings and the disgust over centuries ever since Judas sat in the corner watching and looking on in his festering fugue of plotting, theft and impending betrayal.

The other gospel writers do not assist us in knowing exactly who this woman was, and maybe add fuel to the muttering, however John tells it all. There is nothing salacious I am afraid, just plain, beautiful generosity of giving in worship and thanksgiving to Jesus.

This all happens in Bethany, Lazarus' house with his sisters, going about their usual ways; Martha serving (they were not rich and had no servants) and Mary sat at Jesus' feet. The woman is Mary! If this is Mary then her actions make perfect sense, as John tells us, Jesus had raised Lazarus from the dead; Mary acts in response to this! She acts with what she has, with her resources, in thanksgiving and worship; every guest should have their feet bathed and dried (think of the last supper). But Mary adds to the normal actions for a house guest with the application of a sweet anointing perfume, not a little dab, but a whole pint. This is more than a normal welcome, but this is not your normal house guest in Mary's eyes; so her response is extravagant, filled with heartfelt thankfulness. A pint of perfume would have started to run onto the floor, almost instantly – quick, where is the towel? - there isn't one, so Mary grabs her hair and wipes the oil (see, nothing salacious and quite ordinary really). The house is filled with the perfumed smell, and for days, maybe weeks, wherever Mary went the sweet smell of this act of worship went with her too (folks didn't shower every day back then).

Today, we mark the start of 'Passiontide'. Our readings gift us two impassioned people. Judas is filled with a passionate distaste, hatred possibly, for Jesus; he will act on these passions. Mary is filled with passionate thanksgiving and worship, a response to Jesus' love for her and, when given the opportunity she also acts, with abandoned generosity.

We start Lent with a penitential service on Ash Wednesday and many of us leave the church with the mark of that act of worship, bold or faint on our foreheads. Mary is marked by her worship actions, all will have noticed the smell and many will have asked 'why'. Not for a moment would we look to act like Judas, but what about Mary? Are we open to abandoned generosity in our worship and thanksgiving for the love of God come to us is Jesus Christ? Are we ready to be 'marked' by our actions in worship and when people ask why we 'smell of heaven', what will we say?

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

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

Strengthen Michael our Bishop 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 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 into your peace. *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: Most merciful God, who by the death and resurrection of your Son Jesus Christ delivered and saved the world: grant that by faith in him who suffered on the cross we may triumph in the power of his victory; through Jesus Christ your Son our Lord, 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.