

Our Sunday Service Together
June 2nd 2025
1st Sunday after Trinity



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 22.19-28

Be not far from me, O Lord; you are my strength; hasten to help me.
Deliver my soul from the sword, my poor life from the power of the dog.
Save me from the lion's mouth, from the horns of wild oxen.
You have answered me!
I will tell of your name to my people; in the midst of the congregation will I praise you.
Praise the Lord, you that fear him; O seed of Jacob, glorify him; stand in awe of him, O seed of Israel.
For he has not despised nor abhorred the suffering of the poor;
neither has he hidden his face from them; but when they cried to him he heard them.
From you comes my praise in the great congregation; I will perform my vows in the presence of those that fear you.
The poor shall eat and be satisfied; those who seek the Lord shall praise him; their hearts shall live for ever.
All the ends of the earth shall remember and turn to the Lord, and all the families of the nations shall bow before him. For the kingdom is the Lord's and he rules over the nations.
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 Galatians 3.23-29

Now before faith came, we were imprisoned and guarded under the law until faith would be revealed. ²⁴ Therefore the law was our disciplinarian until Christ came, so that we might be justified by faith. ²⁵ But now that faith has come, we are no longer subject to a disciplinarian, ²⁶ for in Christ Jesus you are all children of God through faith. ²⁷ As many of you as were baptized into Christ have clothed yourselves with Christ. ²⁸ There is no longer Jew or Greek, there is no longer slave or free, there is no longer male and female; for all of you are one in Christ Jesus. ²⁹ And if you belong to Christ, then you are Abraham's offspring, heirs according to the promise.

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 8.26-39

Then they arrived at the country of the Gerasenes, which is opposite Galilee. ²⁷ As he stepped out on land, a man of the city who had demons met him. For a long time he had worn no clothes, and he did not live in a house but in the tombs. ²⁸ When he saw Jesus, he fell down before him and shouted at the top of his voice, 'What have you to do with me, Jesus, Son of the Most High God? I beg you, do not torment me'— ²⁹ for Jesus had commanded the unclean spirit to come out of the man. (For many times it had seized him; he was kept under guard and bound with chains and shackles, but he would break the bonds and be driven by the demon into the wilds.) ³⁰ Jesus then asked him, 'What is your name?' He said, 'Legion'; for many demons had entered him. ³¹ They begged him not to order them to go back into the abyss.

³² Now there on the hillside a large herd of swine was feeding; and the demons begged Jesus to let them enter these. So he gave them permission. ³³ Then the demons came out of the man and entered the swine, and the

herd rushed down the steep bank into the lake and was drowned.

³⁴ When the swineherds saw what had happened, they ran off and told it in the city and in the country. ³⁵ Then people came out to see what had happened, and when they came to Jesus, they found the man from whom the demons had gone sitting at the feet of Jesus, clothed and in his right mind. And they were afraid. ³⁶ Those who had seen it told them how the one who had been possessed by demons had been healed. ³⁷ Then all the people of the surrounding country of the Gerasenes asked Jesus to leave them; for they were seized with great fear. So he got into the boat and returned. ³⁸ The man from whom the demons had gone begged that he might be with him; but Jesus sent him away, saying, ³⁹ 'Return to your home, and declare how much God has done for you.' So he went away, proclaiming throughout the city how much Jesus had done for him.

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

'Our Father in heaven, your name is holiness, your kingdom come and will be done on earth as in heaven.'

The gods of the ancient world dwelt away from the world but their will, their 'pleasure' was meted out on human life and in the natural world. There may have been kings and emperors, but the gods actually reigned. For the common person life revolved around placating the will of both your earthly masters and the whims of the gods. This took a lot of effort, you could say to do things properly you needed to invest all your time, intellect, energy and worldly resources. In reality it was only the most powerful, the wealthiest in society, who had any chance of succeeding.

The god's names resembled their nature – Jupiter/Zeus the god of thunder, Mars the god of war, Eros the god of love, Athena the god of wisdom, Hermes/Mercury the god of mischief. There was also a hierarchy of the gods with Zeus as the head of all, whilst Kronos (the god of time) was the originator/father of Zeus. This hierarchy was reflected within society, with the wealthiest and most powerful often worshippers of Zeus, with many men followers of Mars and women Athena. Not only could society at large know who you worshipped because they would see you attend the temple, often with an amount of pageant, but you would also have a token, a badge, or even an item of clothing which revealed your god to all. The poorest in society may have wished for the ability to worship and to bear an outward sign of their devotion but they were too poor to have that hope.

As Paul writes to the new Christian community in Galatia with these societal and religious expectations still in the background to life for the majority of the 'converts' to Christ.

Paul knew what it was to be defined by faith. He was a Jew, but more a semi-professional adherent to the faith. Whilst not of the priestly clan of Israel he was a Pharisee, a fully committed lay adherent to the faith. All Hebrews were brought up with the law of Moses, but as a Pharisee, Paul was someone fully in love with the law and seeking to help the people 'keep the law' and acting to defend the nation from all who would divert them from the law.

Paul loved the law, yet to the Galatians he writes, before Christ, we were imprisoned and guarded under the law, it was our disciplinarian. Now, Christ had changed everything – fulfilled the law and led the people to freedom and peace with God. But it transpires this freedom and peace with God is not just for the Jew it is for the entirety of humanity, for Christ has set the Gentile free from a life of pagan idolatry and the Jew free from a life burdened by the law of Moses; which for some was almost idolatrous.

Rather than the law, which imprisoned people, or the worship of pagan gods, which imprisoned people, Christ, who sets free, is now the focal point for the life and worship. And more, all who believe in God's work in Christ are now part of one family, brought to birth through the self-sacrificial death and resurrection of Jesus. The children promised to Abraham, are indeed more numerous than the sand on the shore, and each is given a dignity, and equity of identity, as siblings loved and accepted for who they are because of what Christ has done. There is no earning the pleasure of God, Christ tore down all the barriers and welcomes each and all –

for free!

All are equally welcome, equally loved and can pray 'our father', for all are equally the children of God. But it would seem the Galatians have missed this and there are some of the old ways of society's hierarchy evident within the faith they practise. There is the sense that Jewish converts to Christ still considered themselves set apart. The wealthy and powerful of Galatia certainly had their table at the Eucharist and the elite would worship apart with their servants and slaves who were often left outside of the full gathering. So Paul announces to them that in the family of God's messiah there is neither Jew nor Greek, slave or free, male or female; all God sees is his children adopted into the one family through Christ.

None are preferred, or held as first before the another. God sees none of the labels humanity looks to - the labels that ultimately divide rather than make us one. For, as each and all are equitably baptized in Christ, dying to the old self and rising to a new dignity defined by Christ, so there is only one label now, the label of the children of the one God – Christian.

In baptism all are clothed with Christ as a sign to the world of their family nature, of their faith and worship. This is not a Sunday best thing, this clothing is for every day, for all occasions, occupations and hobbies. It is Christ who defines you, says Paul, not your old labels or idols, nor any new ones you may come up with, and it is this Christ you are called on to present each day to the world about you.

I wonder, are we much different from the folks at Galatia? Is it our baptism that defines us? Have we left our old lives and outward attire in the waters of his death and been raised into a new dignity, clothed with Christ? Do we hold dear the labels of the world and let them define us – labels of career, colour, gender, education, rank or title? Are there labels of faith, denomination, spiritual or liturgical preference which we wish to be defined by? The reality in Paul's day and in today, is that the God we call 'our father' sees none of these labels, He only sees sons and daughters in Christ. The reality in Paul's day and in today, is that these labels perpetuate hierarchy and create division which are alien to the oneness God call us into in Christ – they are not the Father's kingdom we pray for, but the worlds.

As the Galatians are called to be defined by Christ alone, so too are we. Only in Christ all are one, revealed to us through our common baptism and to the world as a new dignity, a new clothing for each and every day, a way of life – Christian!

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

God of light and power, we rejoice in your light, we live in your power, we look for your glory.

Open our eyes to perceive your presence, that we may give ourselves to you...

Lord, in your mercy hear our prayers.

We give thanks for the light that is revealed to us in the face of our Lord Jesus Christ. Lord, enlighten your church where vision is dim and the light of the gospel nearly gone out.

Lord, in your mercy hear our prayers.

We pray for spiritual renewal, for an increase in vision and hope. Lord, in your mercy hear our prayers.

Lord, direct all who are seeking to improve the world. We pray for peace-makers, for relief agencies, for all involved in scientific research, for all who hunger for righteousness and justice.

Lord, in your mercy hear our prayers.

We give thanks for all who have led us to you, all who shared insight and knowledge, all who kept the lamp of faith burning. Lord, in your mercy hear our prayers.

We pray for all who have entered into weakness, into sadness or into trouble this week, all who have been injured in accidents, the afflicted and perplexed, the persecuted and the forsaken.

Lord, in your mercy hear our prayers.

We rejoice that the afflicted will know affection, the perplexed will know purpose, the persecuted will come to your peace, the forsaken will be enfolded in love, in the fullness of your kingdom. We pray for our loved ones departed. *Merciful Father, accept these prayers for the sake of Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen*

The Collect

All: O God, the strength of all those who put their trust in you, mercifully accept our prayers and, because through the weakness of our mortal nature we can do no good thing without you, grant us the help of your grace, that in the keeping of your commandments we may please you both in will and deed; 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