

Our Sunday Service Together

Advent Sunday, November 30th 2025



An Acclamation for the Season

All: Alleluia, alleluia. Prepare the way of the Lord, make his paths straight, and all flesh shall see the salvation of God. 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

God the Father forgives us in Christ and heals us by the Holy Spirit. Let us therefore put away all anger and bitterness, all slander and malice, and confess our sins to God our redeemer.

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 122 *We say the psalm aloud*

I was glad when they said to me, 'Let us go to the house of the Lord.'

And now our feet are standing within your gates, O Jerusalem;

Jerusalem, built as a city that is at unity in itself.

Thither the tribes go up, the tribes of the Lord, as is decreed for Israel, to give thanks to the name of the Lord.

For there are set the thrones of judgement, the thrones of the house of David.

O pray for the peace of Jerusalem: 'May they prosper who love you.

'Peace be within your walls and tranquillity within your palaces.'

For my kindred and companions' sake, I will pray that peace be with you.

For the sake of the house of the Lord our God, I will seek to do you good.

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 Isaiah 2.1-5

The word that Isaiah son of Amoz saw concerning Judah and Jerusalem.

²In days to come the mountain of the Lord's house shall be established as the highest of the mountains, and shall be raised above the hills; all the nations shall stream to it.

³ Many peoples shall come and say, 'Come, let us go up to the mountain of the Lord, to the house of the God of Jacob; that he may teach us his ways and that we may walk in his paths.'

For out of Zion shall go forth instruction, and the word of the Lord from Jerusalem.

⁴He shall judge between the nations, and shall arbitrate for many peoples; they shall beat their swords into ploughshares, and their spears into pruning-hooks; nation shall not lift up sword against nation, neither shall they learn war any more.

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 Matthew 24.36-44

'But about that day and hour no one knows, neither the angels of heaven, nor the Son, but only the Father. ³⁷For as the days of Noah were, so will be the coming of the Son of Man. ³⁸For as in those days before the flood they were eating and drinking, marrying and giving in marriage, until the day Noah entered the

ark, ³⁹ and they knew nothing until the flood came and swept them all away, so too will be the coming of the Son of Man. ⁴⁰ Then two will be in the field; one will be taken and one will be left. ⁴¹ Two women will be grinding meal together; one will be taken and one will be left. ⁴² Keep awake therefore, for you do not know on what day your Lord is coming. ⁴³ But understand this: if the owner of the house had known in what part of the night the thief was coming, he would have stayed awake and would not have let his house be broken into. ⁴⁴ Therefore you also must be ready, for the Son of Man is coming at an unexpected hour.

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

The Old testament prophets often talk of terrible world ending events and judgment on the earth. If we jump the book of revelations we find the same things, plague, war, pestilence; but we also are pointed in hope to a new world, a new dawning age with peace on the earth and between heaven and earth.

In the gospels we see that the motif of judgment and grace, of end times and cataclysmic world events must have been a feature of questions put to Jesus. In all his answers he keeps to common themes. Yes, he says, cataclysmic things will occur for that is the way of this broken world and planet, but don't ask me when, for no one knows the date or time of all of this, save the Father – the creator of all things. Jesus has clearly been asked about the end of time, when God will judge and all things will be 'made right' in the world. Again, Jesus gives no specific date or time, and as such speculation has reigned over the centuries whether he was only every talking of the fall of Jerusalem at the hand of Rome, or of a future event. In today's gospel Jesus answers the questions with an affirmation that there will be day when some will be taken (judged and killed) and others left (in mercy). This could easily refer to the attack on Jerusalem, however thinking of the date, the time, to how and the where is to miss the real point of Jesus' answers to their questions.

Jesus' answers with a quick reference to 'the days of Noah', which would, I suspect, make folks think once again of catastrophe and flood, and especially of worldwide judgment by God. And there is the rabbit hole we run headlong into. The days of Noah are not a reference to catastrophic judgment of the world, but to the ordinariness of life at the time. People were simply getting on with the usual, going to school, working, having families, falling out and fighting each other. To those who look for the signs, Jesus says in this stop wasting your time and energy, stop being distracted and instead focus on your calling as my disciples. To those who say we have not seen any signs, this is never happening Jesus says, beware of your complacency and instead keep following me, don't give up!

'For as the days of Noah were, so will be the coming of the Son of Man.' Through his teaching and actions amongst the people he meets, both Jew and Gentile, Jesus often talks of the coming of the Son of Man, of seeing the signs of that, of the kingdom being 'at hand' – having come and still to come fully into the world. Within the ordinariness of the world, just as it was in Noah's time, so now, if the people would only look and see, God's presence has appeared in the world. And there is Judgment made, on the corrupt systems of the nation elites and palaces, on the expectations of how God will reveal his purposes and who is worthy of his grace. It is not to the places of power the Son of Man comes, but to the lowly, to the marginalised in society, to foreigners come to the land. God subverts and inverts the expectations of power, privilege, of nationalism (no nation or people own this faith, our calling is to a new nationhood as citizens of heaven, not of any nation of the earth) and pride in His coming to us.

In the coming of the Son of Man, the longed for judgement and grace are begun; 'the night has past and the new day is dawning'. Live as people of this new day, St Paul would say. Stop living as those of the night, take a hold of your new dignity, of your identity in Christ, walk in the light and revelation of God's grace

revealed in Jesus, the Son of Man. Stop looking for the sign of the end of the age to come, for it is at hand – get on with following Jesus. Stop thinking, it has been 2,000 years and nothing will ever happen – it already has, wake up and live the new life you have already received.

The day of Jesus' second coming is something we do look for, but not to live in the light of His first advent, is to waste everything, to bury the talent, to cast the pearl to swine, to blaspheme against the Spirit who reveals 'The Lord is here' now already.

In these ordinary days Jesus comes to us. In these ordinary days His light has dawned for us to live in. In these ordinary days He is with us, 'to the very end of the age'. Complacency brings slumber, looking for signs brings distraction from the presence of God already come to us. 'Awake O sleeper, rise from the dead and the light of Christ will shine upon you'.

This Advent may we know, in these very ordinary days, the Son of Man is come to us already, and live in the light of that revelation.

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*

On this Advent Sunday 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 of faith and ask that it may be refreshed and renewed as we prepare for Christmas. *Lord in your mercy hear our prayer.*

Strengthen our Bishop, clergy, Readers, lay ministers 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 King, Prime Minister, and all World leaders, that they may have the Spirit of wisdom to lead us into your peace and justice. May they always use their power for the good of the people and avoid the temptation to personal gain. *Lord in your mercy hear our prayer.*

We pray for the peoples of Israel, Palestine, Lebanon, Ukraine and Russia suffering as the result of war, that solutions may be found for their historic differences and they may live at peace.
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 the sick, suffering and dying and we give thanks and pray for those who use their skill 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.*

The Collect

All: Almighty God, give us grace to cast away the works of darkness and to put on the armour of light, now in the time of this mortal life, in which your Son Jesus Christ came to us in great humility; that on the last day, when he shall come again in his glorious majesty to judge the living and the dead, we may rise to the life immortal; through him 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.