

# Our Sunday Service Together

## Sunday November 16<sup>th</sup> 2025

*2<sup>nd</sup> Sunday before Advent*



### 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 98 *We say the psalm aloud*

Sing to the Lord a new song, for he has done marvellous things.

His own right hand and his holy arm have won for him the victory.

The Lord has made known his salvation; his deliverance has he openly shown in the sight of the nations.

He has remembered his mercy and faithfulness towards the house of Israel, and all the ends of the earth have seen the salvation of our God.

Sound praises to the Lord, all the earth; break into singing and make music.

Make music to the Lord with the lyre, with the lyre and the voice of melody.

With trumpets and the sound of the horn sound praises before the Lord, the King.

Let the sea thunder and all that fills it, the world and all that dwell upon it.

Let the rivers clap their hands and let the hills ring out together before the Lord, for he comes to judge the earth.

In righteousness shall he judge the world and the peoples with equity.

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 2 Thessalonians 3.6-13

Now we command you, beloved, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, to keep away from believers who are living in idleness and not according to the tradition that they received from us. <sup>7</sup> For you yourselves know how you ought to imitate us; we were not idle when we were with you, <sup>8</sup> and we did not eat anyone's bread without paying for it; but with toil and labour we worked night and day, so that we might not burden any of you. <sup>9</sup> This was not because we do not have that right, but in order to give you an example to imitate. <sup>10</sup> For even when we were with you, we gave you this command: Anyone unwilling to work should not eat. <sup>11</sup> For we hear that some of you are living in idleness, mere busybodies, not doing any work. <sup>12</sup> Now such persons we command and exhort in the Lord Jesus Christ to do their work quietly and to earn their own living. <sup>13</sup> Brothers and sisters, do not be weary in doing what is right.

*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 21.5-19

When some were speaking about the temple, how it was adorned with beautiful stones and gifts dedicated to God, he said, <sup>6</sup> 'As for these things that you see, the days will come when not one stone will be left upon another; all will be thrown down.'

<sup>7</sup> They asked him, 'Teacher, when will this be, and what will be the sign that this is about to take place?' <sup>8</sup> And he said, 'Beware that you are not led astray; for many will come in my name and say, "I am he!" and, "The time is near!" Do not go after them.

<sup>9</sup> 'When you hear of wars and insurrections, do not be terrified; for these things must take place first, but the end will not follow immediately.' <sup>10</sup> Then he said to them, 'Nation will rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom; <sup>11</sup> there will be great earthquakes, and in various places famines and plagues; and there will be dreadful portents and great signs from heaven.

<sup>12</sup> 'But before all this occurs, they will arrest you and persecute you; they will hand you over to synagogues and prisons, and you will be brought before kings and governors because of my name. <sup>13</sup> This will give you an opportunity to testify. <sup>14</sup> So make up your minds not to prepare your defence in advance; <sup>15</sup> for I will give you words and a wisdom that none of your opponents will be able to withstand or contradict. <sup>16</sup> You will be betrayed even by parents and brothers, by relatives and friends; and they will put some of you to death. <sup>17</sup> You will be hated by all because of my name. <sup>18</sup> But not a hair of your head will perish. <sup>19</sup> By your endurance you will gain your souls.

*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

Luke and Paul are writing their works at roughly the same time. We know Luke has travelled far and wide with Paul and been privy to the establishment of new worshipping communities, churches, about the Greek speaking Roman empire, including the church at Thessaloniki.

All seems have gone well initially at this new church, but there seems to be complacency, laziness even, on the part of some people who now seem to have stopped 'pulling their weight' in the faith community. Was it on the back of rumours that Jesus was returning, so why bother to develop your faith? Why bother to be active, to contribute your part to what God calls each church community to be active in as kingdom comes and will is done in their local area? Why even bother with church, with your brothers and sisters in Christ if Jesus is coming back, after all you are baptised and that is your ticket, isn't it!

Well no, says Paul; all are called into the family of God, after all we do pray 'our father', and every part of the family has a role to play in the work of God. Paul has demonstrated this to the Thessalonians and calls on them to imitate him in the 'traditions' of the Christian faith. Part of that imitation is not to be a burden on the Christian community, not to sit back and let others do the works God has for them.

We wouldn't admit it but we all imitate something or someone in life. That imitation may be following a decision we make; it may be unconscious, and it may change over the years. Children imitate their parents to start with but then begin to imitate friends, or personalities and heroes put to them as good role models.

Who do we imitate? As Christians, of course we are always called to imitate Jesus. Such imitation, such following as disciples of Jesus as lord, begins with being people motivated in our actions and lives by the

Father's love for the world, being open to the Spirit's leading and equipping us to love the world as God loves it completely; dedicated to the grace and justice of God, and to His peace, His redeeming shalom for the world. Jesus gives us the benchmark by which to appraise our own lives and those who may be influencing us. Are they for peace or division, do they welcome as the father and Son or despise and reject. Do they look for the marginalised, the widow, the orphan or is it all about receiving our praise and glory?

The need to look, to watch and discern the motives and hearts of those who ask us to follow them is nothing new. Jesus reminds his disciples in Luke's passage to day, there will be many phoney and fake versions of me, all saying "I am he", all saying follow me. But are they, like Paul following Jesus and therefore worthy of imitating?

Jesus says this as people ask about the demise and destruction of the temple in Jerusalem, with all its adornment and jewels. Luke initial hearers, some 50 years after Jesus' death and resurrection, find themselves in a very unsure, unsafe world. The Jewish rebellion against Rome is gaining traction and war is coming and they know it will not end well – but then, no war ends well! In the years that followed Rome did come and destroy the temple, ransacking Jerusalem with the usual terrible massacre they unleashed with no care or concern. But there would be more for Christ's people, they would be brought before rulers and kings to give account for their lives (Luke had seen first-hand Paul dragged through the courts for the gospel).

In hearing Jesus' words in Luke there is the sense that these things would happen, did happen, and more will always happen for His disciples in every age. This is what always happens for those who imitate Him, but his disciples are not to worry for not a hair on their head would be touched. Imitating Jesus, being people motivated by the love, peace and justice of God will always result in being hated; it was what happened for Jesus, why would we expect anything else when we imitate him? But have heart!

Have heart, for "neither death nor life, neither angels nor demons, neither the present nor the future, nor any powers, neither height nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God that is in Christ Jesus our Lord." Continue in your journey, he will not let you down. Imitate Jesus, do not be idle in the ways of the faith, be active in the body of Christ, the church, and fear not for "By your endurance you will gain your souls."

## 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*

Mindful of God's kingdom, set in process through the cross of Christ and yet to be fulfilled, we commend ourselves to God and pray for the needs of the world in the words: 'thy kingdom come, thy will be done'.

We pray for our Church throughout the world and across all denominations. Pour out your Spirit of truth on all ordained and lay leaders and grant them wisdom and courage to proclaim your kingdom to the margins of society. *Thy kingdom come, thy will be done.*

We pray for our world. Guide and direct all world leaders and those in positions of authority with responsibility for decision making. Grant them great wisdom, deep commitment and right judgment. We pray especially for the people of America that divisions may be healed and unity restored in the aftermath of their elections. *Thy kingdom come, thy will be done.*

We pray for all God's people. Grant us the grace to put aside all differences of culture, race, gender or ability, to recognise that we are all created in your image. Guide all those involved in serving children and young people in education that they may see the gifts in everyone. We pray for all doctors, nurses and carers. Grant them strength, encouragement and the resources for all lives to flourish without exclusion. *Thy kingdom come, thy will be done.*

We hold before God the elderly, the vulnerable and those who are most at risk from coronavirus. We pray for the sick, those experiencing sorrow and those who are isolated. In the silence of our hearts we make our own intentions...

We pray for ourselves, for one another and for those whose needs are known only to you. Grant us the grace to listen to your voice and the courage to follow it wherever it may lead us. *Thy kingdom come, thy will be done. Amen*

## The Collect

All: Heavenly Lord, you long for the world's salvation: stir us from apathy, restrain us from excess and revive in us new hope that all creation will one day be healed in Jesus 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.