

Our Service Together

Lent 2 March 1st 2026



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 Psalm - Psalm 121

We say the psalm aloud

I lift up my eyes to the hills; from where is my help to come?
My help comes from the Lord, the maker of heaven and earth.
He will not suffer your foot to stumble; he who watches over you will not sleep.
Behold, he who keeps watch over Israel shall neither slumber nor sleep.
The Lord himself watches over you; the Lord is your shade at your right hand,
So that the sun shall not strike you by day, neither the moon by night.
The Lord shall keep you from all evil; it is he who shall keep your soul.
The Lord shall keep watch over your going out and your coming in, from this time forth for evermore.
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 Genesis 12.1-4a

Now the Lord said to Abram, 'Go from your country and your kindred and your father's house to the land that I will show you. I will make of you a great nation, and I will bless you, and make your name great, so that you will be a blessing. I will bless those who bless you, and the one who curses you I will curse; and in you all the families of the earth shall be blessed.'

So Abram went, as the Lord had told him; and Lot went with him. Abram was seventy-five years old when he departed from Haran.

At the end of the reading we say:

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

The Gospel John 3.1-17

Now there was a Pharisee named Nicodemus, a leader of the Jews. ²He came to Jesus by night and said to him, 'Rabbi, we know that you are a teacher who has come from God; for no one can do these signs that you do apart from the presence of God.' ³Jesus answered him, 'Very truly, I tell you, no one can see the kingdom of God without being born from above.' ⁴Nicodemus said to him, 'How can anyone be born after having grown old? Can one enter a second time into the mother's womb and be born?' ⁵Jesus answered, 'Very truly, I tell you, no one can enter the kingdom of God without being born of water and Spirit. ⁶What is born of the flesh is flesh, and what is born of the Spirit is spirit. ⁷Do not be astonished that I said to you, "You must be born from above." ⁸The wind blows where it chooses, and you hear the sound of it, but you do not know where it comes from or where it goes. So it is with everyone who is born of the Spirit.' ⁹Nicodemus said to him, 'How can these things be?' ¹⁰Jesus answered him, 'Are you a teacher of Israel, and yet you do not understand these things? ¹¹'Very truly, I tell you, we speak of what we know and testify to what we have seen; yet you do not receive our testimony. ¹²If I have told you about earthly things and you do not believe, how can you believe if I tell you about heavenly things? ¹³No one has ascended into heaven except the one who descended from heaven, the Son of Man. ¹⁴And just as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, so must the Son of Man be lifted up, ¹⁵that whoever believes in him may have eternal life.

¹⁶'For God so loved the world that he gave his only Son, so that everyone who believes in him may not perish but may have eternal life.

¹⁷'Indeed, God did not send the Son into the world to condemn the world, but in order that the world might be saved through him.

At the end of the reading we say:

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

A Reflection for the day

Abram, the father of the Judeo-Christian faith, has been searching for God over many a year. With his wife Sari, his sheep, and household, he has wandered. Each and every time he has stopped and resided somewhere he has built an 'alter' (more a cairn than a stone or wooden slab on which to make sacrifices); yet it seems God has been silent for a long time.

What was he searching God out for? Was it for God's blessing of a family; he and Sari were old and childless? Was it for a permanent home, a land he could be identified with – you get the sense to have a 'land' you need to be a nation, and Israel had not been born to them yet. Whichever it was, Abram has not given up on God (even if God had been silent for a very long time) and it is this 'not giving up', this faith, that we are told is counted to Abram as 'righteousness' – something St Paul picks up on in Romans; it is by faith alone we are declared righteous, not by works.

But Abram and Sari do try and resolve some matters themselves. For Abram to have a descendent Sari suggests he has a child by her servant. Abram does and Ishmael, who would become the 'father' of the Arab peoples, is born. It is only when, through some hilarity, Sari gives birth, despite her ripe years, to Israel that all falls into place and the 'covenant' between God and Abram is cemented, all noted by a change in identity; Abram is then known as Abraham, and Sari as Sarah. The work of God's creative Spirit is often like that, beyond our normal expectations, sometimes to the point of hilarity at what is suggested, yet brining change of situation and identity.

Nicodemus is a man searching for God in all that Jesus is reported to be saying and doing. Late at night he comes, one Rabbinic teacher to another, seeking some understanding of why Jesus is acting as he is and saying the things he does about God's kingdom. It may also be that Nicodemus, as with the other Pharisees in John's gospel, is in fact there to try and get Jesus to 'dial things back', to stop being so open, so radical, so threatening to Rome, to the order of everything. It had been bad enough having public baptisms at the Jordon river, but now Jesus is teaching the faith in the open air rather than the confines of the synagogue, and accompanying his words with 'signs and wonders'.

Jesus' response is simple; the wind of the Spirit of God will blow wherever she chooses too! God will work out His purposes, bring about the possibility of new life, of changed nature - redemption (to be born again speaks of this to Nicodemus). Nicodemus finds this difficult to accept, he is searching as any disciple would do for God's purposes and will, but this all seems a little too 'lively'.

Reading these two passages during Lent reminds us of the nature of discipleship, to seek out, to search for God's purposes and possibilities, and to do so even if God is silent for what may seem an age. Discipleship is to exercise faith, each day, being open to the Spirit's leading us and transforming us, individually and as a church, for then we will see the Kingdom come and will God's done; although it may take time; maybe a life time.

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 Fiona, 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 fourth anniversary of Russia's invasion of Ukraine, 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 by the prayer and discipline of Lent may we enter into the mystery of Christ's sufferings, and by following in his way may we come to share in his glory; through Jesus Christ our Lord. 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