

Our Service Together



The 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 118.1-2 and 19-29 *We say the psalm aloud*

O give thanks to the Lord, for he is good; his mercy endures for ever.
Let Israel now proclaim, 'His mercy endures for ever.'

Open to me the gates of righteousness, that I may enter and give thanks to the Lord.
This is the gate of the Lord; the righteous shall enter through it.
I will give thanks to you, for you have answered me and have become my salvation.
The stone which the builders rejected has become the chief cornerstone.
This is the Lord's doing, and it is marvellous in our eyes.
This is the day that the Lord has made; we will rejoice and be glad in it.
Come, O Lord, and save us we pray. Come, Lord, send us now prosperity.
Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord; we bless you from the house of the Lord.
The Lord is God; he has given us light; link the pilgrims with cords right to the horns of the altar.
You are my God and I will thank you; you are my God and I will exalt you.
O give thanks to the Lord, for he is good; his mercy endures for ever.
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

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 21.1-11

When they had come near Jerusalem and had reached Bethphage, at the Mount of Olives, Jesus sent two disciples, ² saying to them, 'Go into the village ahead of you, and immediately you will find a donkey tied, and a colt with her; untie them and bring them to me. ³ If anyone says anything to you, just say this, "The Lord needs them." And he will send them immediately.' ⁴ This took place to fulfil what had been spoken through the prophet, saying, ⁵ 'Tell the daughter of Zion, Look, your king is coming to you, humble, and mounted on a donkey, and on a colt, the foal of a donkey.'

⁶ The disciples went and did as Jesus had directed them; ⁷ they brought the donkey and the colt, and put their cloaks on them, and he sat on them. ⁸ A very large crowd spread their cloaks on the road, and others cut branches from the trees and spread them on the road. ⁹ The crowds that went ahead of him and that followed were shouting,

'Hosanna to the Son of David!

Blessed is the one who comes in the name of the Lord!

Hosanna in the highest heaven!

¹⁰ When he entered Jerusalem, the whole city was in turmoil, asking, 'Who is this?' ¹¹ The crowds were saying, 'This is the prophet Jesus from Nazareth in Galilee.'

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

Psalm 118 was the song sung by pilgrims making their way to Jerusalem for Passover, it is not surprise then it featured in the singing as Jesus comes up into Jerusalem. The full pilgrimage would have been from Jericho, by the Jordon crossing, the lowest point on the earth's surface and climbed and climbed towards Jerusalem past Bethany and Bethphage before one final dip across the valley surrounding Jerusalem and the hill of

Temple Mount. Jesus has taken this journey, with detours, he has climbed from the day of His baptism to this point of celebration.

'Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord', the people recite the psalm as they gather about Jesus, on his final ascent. Of course, some there did not think that of him at all, the last thing Jesus was to them was 'blessed'. To them Jesus was a pain in the neck, someone to be rid of and these actions, this risk of riot play into their hands and plans.

In a matter of days, the celebrations are muted, the crowds have vanished the hoped for project of messiah Jesus, of King Jesus has unravelled as Jesus is lifted up on the cross for all to see; with Pilate's sign of ridicule – 'this is the king of the Jews' – a ridicule of both Jesus, all his supporters and ultimately the nation itself. This was surely a moment of abject failure for him and the people, and a celebration for Rome.

I wonder what the press headlines said the day after the crucifixion, possibly something along the lines of 'former celebrity Rabbi and faith healer dies alone and in disgrace on a cross in Jerusalem – friends and family disappear'. Jesus has failed in everyone's eyes, he tried to bring the kingdom of God into the world but the project had ended in failure. It was not surprise the followers went into hiding 'for fear of the Jewish authorities'.

Of course fear of failure and disgrace stalk our society today; maybe even plagues our society to the point that today failure is the unforgivable sin.

Jesus may have appeared to have failed, but the reality is quite the opposite. In reality it isn't God's kingdom project that has failed but project sin and death that has failed. For now, as the psalmist and the pilgrims would sing, the gates of righteousness have been opened, and all may enter and give thanks to the Lord.; all are able to worship God through Christ for Jesus is the way, he is the gate of the Lord; the righteous shall enter through it.

In the economy of the Kingdom of God, what the world thinks of as failure is in fact the precursor to new life. All who come to Christ, all who believe in his name pass through the gate of righteousness with thanksgiving in their hearts, and on into the courts of worship and praise. For this is the day that the Lord has made; and we can rejoice and be glad in it.

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 truth, we pray for all whom you call to the task of being prophets.

To those crying for justice in a world controlled by material profit.
Holy God bring strength and perseverance.

To those imprisoned for having dared to challenge the powers,
Holy God bring courage and hope.

To those vilified or misunderstood for threatening closely held assumptions,
Holy God, bring wisdom and determination.

To those ridiculed or ignored for speaking peace in the midst of violence,
Holy God, bring a sense of your Kingdom.

And to your Church, unsure how to speak and be heard, but struggling to find a prophetic voice;
Holy God, bring faith and confidence that comes from confessing Christ as Lord, Amen.

The Collect

All: Almighty and everlasting God,
who in your tender love towards the human race sent your Son our Saviour Jesus Christ to take upon
him our flesh and to suffer death upon the cross:
grant that we may follow the example of his patience and humility,
and also be made partakers of his resurrection;
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.

A prayer as we enter Holy Week

Lord, take our hearts as yours. Fill them with your joy, fill them with your passion for this world, fill them with your purpose.

Jesus may we be ready to walk your way, follow with our cross, be your friends, be your servants. 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.