

# Our Sunday Service Together

## April 26<sup>th</sup> 2026

### Easter 4

#### 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 23 *We say the psalm aloud*

The Lord is my shepherd; therefore, can I lack nothing. He makes me lie down in green pastures and leads me beside still waters. He shall refresh my soul and guide me in the paths of righteousness for his name's sake. Though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil; for you are with me; your rod and your staff, they comfort me. You spread a table before me in the presence of those who trouble me; you have anointed my head with oil and my cup shall be full. Surely goodness and loving mercy shall follow me all the days of my life, and I will dwell in the house of the Lord 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

## Scripture Reading Acts 2.42-47

They devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching and fellowship, to the breaking of bread and the prayers. <sup>43</sup> Awe came upon everyone, because many wonders and signs were being done by the apostles. <sup>44</sup> All who believed were together and had all things in common; <sup>45</sup> they would sell their possessions and goods and distribute the proceeds to all, as any had need. <sup>46</sup> Day by day, as they spent much time together in the temple, they broke bread at home and ate their food with glad and generous hearts, <sup>47</sup> praising God and having the goodwill of all the people. And day by day the Lord added to their number those who were being saved.

*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 John 10.1-10

'Very truly, I tell you, anyone who does not enter the sheepfold by the gate but climbs in by another way is a thief and a bandit. <sup>2</sup> The one who enters by the gate is the shepherd of the sheep. <sup>3</sup> The gatekeeper opens the gate for him, and the sheep hear his voice. He calls his own sheep by name and leads them out. <sup>4</sup> When he has brought out all his own, he goes ahead of them, and the sheep follow him because they know his voice. <sup>5</sup> They will not follow a stranger, but they will run from him because they do not know the voice of strangers.'<sup>6</sup> Jesus used this figure of speech with them, but they did not understand what he was saying to them.

<sup>7</sup> So again Jesus said to them, 'Very truly, I tell you, I am the gate for the sheep. <sup>8</sup> All who came before me are thieves and bandits; but the sheep did not listen to them. <sup>9</sup> I am the gate. Whoever enters by me will be saved, and will come in and go out and find pasture. <sup>10</sup> The thief comes only to steal and kill and destroy. I came that they may have life, and have it abundantly.

*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

In first century Israel people hoped for a renewal of the nation. For some this could only come with a toppling of the government, with the rooting out of all the corrupt and especially the removal, by whatever means, of all non-Jews from the land. This would usher in a new age, the age of the rule of God. For others, the hope was for a renewal of Israel, the family of those who were descended from 12 brothers living in covenant with each other and with God.

For many, Jesus' arrest and execution had spelt the end for their hopes; Peter for one. But now, after the resurrection there is a hope again, a hope that began to bear fruit and reveal what 'kingdom' Jesus was bringing into being.

At this time, it was the usual practice for a family to have a common purse, to pool the resources they had for the good of each member. It had been the expectation in Israel for centuries that God required each and all to assist a neighbour in need. This was a matter of honour in the community; as a sign that they were the people of God, a family of God, living in peace and justice with God and each other. This was the 'right' way to live; and those who did were credited 'righteous' before God.

Things had clearly changed by the first century, so much so that Jesus had to teach on both the call to minister to a person in need as well as define God's parameters for what was a need and who could be ministered to – and so we have the parable of the Samaritan to guide today.

It is no surprise that after we pray 'our Father' we ask for God's kingdom to come on earth as in heaven. But what is the kingdom of God? Here Jesus taught a lot saying 'thin kingdom of God is like...'. Is it a hierarchical, organised way of being God's people, with kings and servants? Or might it be a 'way', Jesus' way, through which the divided 12 tribes, the sons of Israel, might come together again as the people of God, renewed as the family of God?

On the day of Pentecost, recorded in the verses of the book of Acts a little before today's reading, we see the later. We see the people renewed in their faith and come to live together again. They are 'devoted' (that is a strong word) to prayer, to fellowship, to eating together, to learning the faith and in their common concern for each other's needs.

But there is more, for we do not simply see people from the 12 tribes come together in a renewal of their Hebrew faith, we see people from all the nations of the known world coming together. This is the kingdom of God; this is the work of Christ, redemption for the entire world!

We do get worried about this passage and the talk of 'having everything in common' it sounds like communism. It isn't, for a start communism is devoid of God! This is something very different, it is the kingdom of God. The sharing of resources in common in Hebrew is known as 'Ruach tzedakah'; the justice of God, enabled by the Spirit and manifest in social action. In the writings of St Paul, he translates this Hebrew into Greek within his teaching on the 'fruit' of the Spirit within the life of the believer. In his writings he teaches us that the presence of the Spirit of God in a believer is seen in the love for brother and sister, in justice – in social action; in Charity.

May it be we are filled by the Spirit, the breath of God and be so animated in our lives that righteousness and justice flow like rivers That the glory of God is seen as sisters and brothers in Christ come together in devotion to pray, to eat together, to share fellowship, to learn more of the faith and to be the family of God.

## Prayers

*We make our intercessions*

As we think of Jesus as the Good Shepherd let us pray for our Bishops and clergy that they may be faithful shepherds to the church and community. Also for the appointment of a new Archbishop of Canterbury, a person after Jesus' own heart. *Lord in your mercy hear our prayer.*

We Pray for Our King, Prime Minister, and all World leaders, that they may have the Spirit of wisdom to lead us through this difficult time. Especially, we pray for peace and justice in Ukraine, Gaza, Sudan and Iran.  
*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 our schools, the children, teachers, and support staff. We pray for all those responsible for religious education that they may inspire those they teach. *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 and risk their lives 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.*

Rejoicing in the fellowship of all your saints, we commend ourselves and the whole creation to your unfailing love. Amen.

## The Collect

All: Almighty God, whose Son Jesus Christ is the resurrection and the life:  
raise us, who trust in him, from the death of sin to the life of righteousness,  
that we may seek those things which are above, where he 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.