

Second Sunday before Advent, 15th November 2020



The Lighting of a Candle

We light this candle to remind us that the love of God is like a light in our darkness.

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.

Grace, mercy and peace
from God our Father
and the Lord Jesus Christ
be with you
and also with you.

This is the day that the Lord has made.
We will rejoice and be glad in it.

**Lord, direct our thoughts, and teach us to pray.
Lift up our hearts to worship you in spirit and in truth,
through Jesus Christ our Lord.
Amen.**

God our Father,
we come to you in sorrow for our sins.
For turning away from you,
and ignoring your will for our lives;
Father, forgive us:
save us and help us.

For behaving just as we wish,
without thinking of you;
Father, forgive us:
save us and help us.

For failing you by what we do
and think and say;
Father forgive us:

save us and help us.

For letting ourselves be drawn away from you
by temptations in the world about us;

Father, forgive us:

save us and help us.

For living as if we were ashamed to belong to your Son;

Father, forgive us:

save us and help us.

May the God of Love bring us back to himself, forgive us our sins, and assure us of his eternal love in Jesus Christ our Lord.

Amen

Blessed is the Lord

for he has heard the voice of our prayer;

therefore shall our hearts dance for joy

and in our song we will praise our God.

The Collect for the day

Heavenly Father,

whose blessed Son was revealed to destroy the works of the devil
and to make us the children of God and heirs of eternal life:

grant that we, having this hope,

may purify ourselves even as he is pure;

that when he shall appear in power and great glory

we may be made like him in his eternal and glorious kingdom;

where he is alive and reigns with you,

in the unity of the Holy Spirit,

one God, now and for ever.

Hearing and responding to the Word of God

(We encourage you to look at the readings in your own time and will continue with the Gospel)

First Reading: Zephaniah 1.7,12-18

⁷Be silent before the Lord GOD! For the day of the LORD is at hand; the LORD has prepared a sacrifice, he has consecrated his guests.

¹²At that time I will search Jerusalem with lamps, and I will punish the people who rest complacently on their dregs, those who say in their hearts, 'The LORD will not do good, nor will he do harm.'

¹³Their wealth shall be plundered, and their houses laid waste.

Though they build houses, they shall not inhabit them;
though they plant vineyards, they shall not drink wine from them.

¹⁴The great day of the LORD is near, near and hastening fast;
the sound of the day of the LORD is bitter, the warrior cries aloud there.¹⁵That day will be a day of wrath, a day of distress and anguish,
a day of ruin and devastation, a day of darkness and gloom,
a day of clouds and thick darkness, ¹⁶a day of trumpet blast and battle cry against the fortified cities and against the lofty battlements.

¹⁷I will bring such distress upon people that they shall walk like the blind; because they have sinned against the LORD, their blood shall be poured out like dust, and their flesh like dung.

¹⁸Neither their silver nor their gold will be able to save them on the day of the LORD's wrath; in the fire of his passion the whole earth shall be consumed; for a full, a terrible end he will make of all the inhabitants of the earth.

Psalm 90.1-8(9-11)12

1 Lord, you have been our refuge
from one generation to another.

2 Before the mountains were brought forth,
or the earth and the world were formed,
from everlasting to everlasting you are God.

3 You turn us back to dust and say:
'Turn back, O children of earth.'

4 For a thousand years in your sight are but as yesterday,
which passes like a watch in the night.

5 You sweep them away like a dream;
they fade away suddenly like the grass.

6 In the morning it is green and flourishes;
in the evening it is dried up and withered.

7 For we consume away in your displeasure;
we are afraid at your wrathful indignation.

8 You have set our misdeeds before you
and our secret sins in the light of your countenance.

9 When you are angry, all our days are gone;
our years come to an end like a sigh.

10 The days of our life are three score years and ten,
or if our strength endures, even four score;

yet the sum of them is but labour and sorrow,
for they soon pass away and we are gone.

11 Who regards the power of your wrath
and your indignation like those who fear you?

12 So teach us to number our days
that we may apply our hearts to wisdom.

Second Reading: 1 Thessalonians 5.1-11

¹Concerning the times and the seasons, brothers and sisters, you do not need to have anything written to you. ²For you yourselves know very well that the day of the Lord will come like a thief in the night. ³When they say, 'There is peace and security,' then sudden destruction will come upon them, as labour pains come upon a pregnant woman, and there will be no escape! ⁴But you, beloved, are not in darkness, for that day to surprise you like a thief; ⁵for you are all children of light and children of the day; we are not of the night or of darkness. ⁶So then let us not fall asleep as others do, but let us keep awake and be sober; ⁷for those who sleep sleep at night, and those who are drunk get drunk at night. ⁸But since we belong to the day, let us be sober, and put on the breastplate of faith and love, and for a helmet the hope of salvation. ⁹For God has destined us not for wrath but for obtaining salvation through our Lord Jesus Christ, ¹⁰who died for us, so that whether we are awake or asleep we may live with him. ¹¹Therefore encourage one another and build up each other, as indeed you are doing.

Gospel: Matthew 25.14-30

Jesus said to his disciples, ¹⁴The kingdom of heaven is as if a man, going on a journey, summoned his slaves and entrusted his property to them; ¹⁵to one he gave five talents, to another two, to another one, to each according to his ability. Then he went away. ¹⁶The one who had received the five talents went off at once and traded with them, and made five more talents. ¹⁷In the same way, the one who had the two talents made two more talents. ¹⁸But the one who had received the one talent went off and dug a hole in the ground and hid his master's money. ¹⁹After a long time the master of those slaves came and settled accounts with them. ²⁰Then the one who had received the five talents came forward, bringing five more talents, saying, "Master, you handed over to me five talents; see, I have made five more talents." ²¹His master said to him, "Well done, good and trustworthy slave; you have been trustworthy in a few things, I will put you in charge of many things; enter into the joy of your master." ²²And the one with the two talents also came forward, saying, "Master, you handed over to me two talents; see, I have made two more talents." ²³His master said to him, "Well done, good and trustworthy slave; you have been trustworthy in a few things, I will put you in charge of many things; enter into the joy of your master." ²⁴Then the one who had received the one talent also came forward, saying, "Master, I knew that you were a harsh man, reaping where you did not sow, and gathering where you did not scatter seed; ²⁵so I was afraid, and I went and hid your talent in the ground. Here you have what is yours." ²⁶But his master replied, "You wicked and lazy slave! You knew, did you, that I reap where I did not sow, and gather where I did not scatter? ²⁷Then you ought to have invested my money with the bankers, and on my return I would have received what was my own with interest. ²⁸So take the talent from him, and

give it to the one with the ten talents. ²⁹For to all those who have, more will be given, and they will have an abundance; but from those who have nothing, even what they have will be taken away. ³⁰As for this worthless slave, throw him into the outer darkness, where there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth.”

Reflection

Prayers of Intercession

Gracious God, fountain of all wisdom,
we pray for all Christian people;
for Stephen our Archbishop and John our bishop,
and for all who teach and guard the faith ...
May the word of Christ dwell richly in our hearts,
and knit us together in the bond of your love.
Hear us.

Hear us, good Lord.

We pray for the leaders of nations,
and for those in authority under them.
Give them the gift of your wisdom,
and a right discernment in all things.
Hear us.

Hear us, good Lord.

Living God,
deliver us from a world without justice
and a future without mercy;
in your mercy, establish justice,
and in your justice, remember the mercy
revealed to us in Jesus Christ our Lord.
Hear us.

Hear us, good Lord.

We pray for our villages and parishes,
for those who live, work and visit here,
and for all who seek the common good.
Speak your word of peace in our midst,
and help us to serve one another as Christ has served us.
Hear us.

Hear us, good Lord.

We pray for those who do not believe,
and for those of hesitant belief.
Open their ears to hear your voice,
and open their hearts to receive you, the very Word of life.
Hear us.

Hear us, good Lord.

We pray for those bowed down with grief, fear or sickness ...
May Christ your living Word bring them comfort and healing.
Hear us.

Hear us, good Lord.

We give thanks for all who have died in the faith of Christ,
and we rejoice with all your saints,
trusting in the promise of your word fulfilled.
Hear us.

Hear us, good Lord.

Prayer for the nation

Loving God,
at this time of crisis
when so many are suffering,
we pray for our nation and our world.
Give our leaders wisdom,
our Health Service strength,
our people hope.
Lead us through these parched and difficult days
to the fresh springs of joy and comfort
that we find in Jesus Christ our Lord.

Amen.

Benefice Prayer

God who made everyone and who may be found in every place, bless our parishes and Benefice, prosper our attempts to be faithful to you and to draw others to you.
Inspire us by the power of your Holy Spirit that we may be a caring people, the true community of the body of Jesus Christ our Lord.

Amen

We commend ourselves, and all for whom we pray,
to the mercy and protection of God.

Merciful Father,
**accept these prayers
for the sake of your Son,
our Saviour Jesus Christ.
Amen.**

**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.**

Let us bless the Lord:
thanks be to God.

**The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God and the fellowship of
the Holy Spirit, be with us all now and evermore. Amen.**