**Holy Communion Early Communion 11 December 2022**

**Approach**

As we meet at his table today, we will deliberately set aside the modern rush to get today’s duties over with, and, instead, rest in the comfort of Christ’s daily presence with us:

**Greeting**

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

**Collect for Purity**

**Almighty God,  
to whom all hearts are open,  
all desires known,  
and from whom no secrets are hidden;  
Cleanse the thoughts of our hearts  
by the inspiration of your Holy Spirit,  
that we may perfectly love you,  
and worthily magnify your holy name;  
through Christ our Lord. Amen.**

**Penitence.**

Hear what our Lord Jesus Christ says:  
You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind.  
This is the first and great commandment.  
And the second is like it.  
You shall love your neighbour as yourself.  
On these two commandments depend all the law and the prophets.

**Lord, have mercy on us,**  
**and write these your laws in our hearts.**

**Confession**

When the Lord comes,  
he will bring to light the things now hidden in darkness,  
and will disclose the purposes of the heart.  
Therefore in the light of Christ let us confess our sins.  
*Silence*  
Let us confess our sins

**Advent 1**

Turn to us again, O God our Saviour, and let your anger cease from us.  
Lord, have mercy.  
**Lord, have mercy.**  
Show us your mercy, O Lord, and grant us your salvation.  
Christ, have mercy  
**Christ, have mercy.**  
Your salvation is near for those that fear you, that glory may dwell in our land.  
Lord, have mercy.  
**Lord, have mercy.**

**Absolution**

*Almighty God,  
who forgives all who truly repent,  
have mercy on you,  
pardon and deliver you from all your sins,  
confirm and strengthen you in all goodness,  
and keep you in eternal life;  
through Jesus Christ our Lord*. **Amen.**

**Collect of the Day**

Let us pray  
O Lord Jesus Christ,  
who at your first coming sent your messenger  
to prepare your way before you:  
Grant that the ministers and stewards of your mysteries  
may likewise so prepare and make ready your way  
by turning the hearts of the disobedient to the wisdom of the just,  
that at your second coming to judge the world  
we may be found an acceptable people in your sight;  
for you are alive and reign with the Father and the Holy Spirit,  
one God, world without end. **Amen.**

**Epistle James 5:7–10 page 1216**

Be patient, then, brothers, until the Lord’s coming. See how the farmer waits for the land to yield its valuable crop and how patient he is for the autumn and spring rains. You too, be patient and stand firm, because the Lord’s coming is near. Don’t grumble against each other, brothers, or you will be judged. The Judge is standing at the door! Brothers, as an example of patience in the face of suffering, take the prophets who spoke in the name of the Lord.

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

**Gospel Matthew 11:2–11 page 976**

Alleluia, alleluia.  
Prepare the way of the Lord, make his paths straight,  
and all flesh shall see the salvation of God.  
**Alleluia.**

**Hear the Gospel of our Saviour Christ, according to Matthew chapter 11 beginning at verse 2**

**Glory to you, Lord Jesus Christ.**  
When John heard in prison what Christ was doing, he sent his disciples to ask him, “Are you the one who was to come, or should we expect someone else?” Jesus replied, “Go back and report to John what you hear and see: The blind receive sight, the lame walk, those who have leprosy are cured, the deaf hear, the dead are raised, and the good news is preached to the poor. Blessed is the man who does not fall away on account of me.” As John’s disciples were leaving, Jesus began to speak to the crowd about John: “What did you go out into the desert to see? A reed swayed by the wind? If not, what did you go out to see? A man dressed in fine clothes? No, those who wear fine clothes are in kings’ palaces. Then what did you go out to see? A prophet? Yes, I tell you, and more than a prophet. This is the one about whom it is written: “ ‘I will send my messenger ahead of you, who will prepare your way before you.’ I tell you the truth: Among those born of women there has not risen anyone greater than John the Baptist; yet he who is least in the kingdom of heaven is greater than he.

*and concludes with:*  
This is the Gospel of the Lord.  
**Praise to you, Lord Jesus Christ.**

**Sermon**

**Sermon**

There was a display in Woodlawn this week wt the words: How many sleeps to Christmas? They got wrong, except their christmas is on the 27th… But never mind!

This is a season zwhere parents wish they had more time to prepare for Christmas, and children are counting the hours away!

James has a word for all of us:

**Be patient, then, until the Lord’s coming!**

He compares the patience of a farmer as they ait for the right weather, and the right crop to grow. The 1st century farmer could not shorten the season - certianly not in the way we can tody, with heating and irrigation and glasshouss at our disposal: there was no option but to wait.

In the immediacy of the first coming of Jesus th expectation was that he would come again very soon. The delay has been a cause of doubt and uncertainty ever since. Each generation of believers sees *their era* as the one where Jesus is bound to come, whether in the frenzied atmosphere of the Black Death, or the genocide of jews, or the two great pandemics of the last one hundred years.

So James’ words are ever relevant. Christmas Day is on the 25th. No sooner. Your next birthday will come when it comes, no sooner. The Lord will return when he returns, and we cannot know when that is.

In the meantime, James says

**Be patient and Stand firm. Don’t grumble about one another’s faults, because judgment works both ways. The example of Job shows you what true patience looks like.**

**Nicene Creed *page 205***

Let us affirm our Faith in God

**We believe in one God,  
the Father, the Almighty,  
maker of heaven and earth, of all that is,  
seen and unseen.**

**We believe in one Lord, Jesus Christ,  
the only Son of God,  
eternally begotten of the Father, God from God,  
Light from Light, true God from true God,  
begotten, not made,  
of one Being with the Father.**

**Through him all things were made.  
For us and for our salvation  
he came down from heaven,  
was incarnate by the Holy Spirit of the Virgin Mary,  
and was made man**

**For our sake he was crucified under Pontius Pilate;  
he suffered death and was buried.  
On the third day he rose again  
in accordance with the Scriptures**;

**he ascended into heaven  
and is seated at the right hand of the Father.  
He will come again in glory to judge the living and the dead, and his kingdom will have no end.**

**We believe in the Holy Spirit,  
the Lord, the giver of life,  
who proceeds from the Father and the Son,  
who with the Father and the Son is worshipped and glorified,  
who has spoken through the prophets.**

**We believe in one holy catholic and apostolic Church.  
We acknowledge one baptism for the forgiveness of sins.  
We look for the resurrection of the dead,  
and the life of the world to come. Amen.**

**Prayers of the People**

Lord, in your mercy  
**hear our prayer**  
Merciful Father,  
**accept these our prayers  
for the sake of your Son,  
our Saviour Jesus Christ. Amen.**

**The Peace**

In the tender mercy of our God,  
the dayspring from on high shall break upon us,  
to give light to those who dwell in darkness  
and in the shadow of death,  
and to guide our feet into the way of peace.

The Peace of the Lord be always with you  
**and also with you**

**Preparing the Table**

Look upon us in mercy not in judgement;  
draw us from hatred to love;  
make the frailty of our praise  
a dwelling place for your glory.  
**Amen.**

**Taking the Bread & Wine**

Christ our passover has been sacrificed for us  
**therefore let us celebrate the feast.**

**Great Thanksgiving (1) page 209**

The Lord is here  
**His Spirit is with us.**  
Lift up your hearts.  
**We lift them to the Lord.**  
Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.  
**It is right to give our thanks and praise.**

Father, almighty and everliving God, at all times and in all places it is right to give you thanks and praise:

And now we give you thanks  
because you prepared the way of your Son Jesus Christ  
by the preaching of your servant John the Baptist,  
who proclaimed him as the Lamb of God, our Saviour.

And so with all your people, with angels and archangels, and with all the company of heaven, we proclaim your great and glorious name,

for ever praising you and saying:  
**Holy, holy, holy Lord,  
God of power and might,  
heaven and earth are full of your glory.  
Hosanna in the highest!  
Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord.  
Hosanna in the highest!**

Blessed are you, Father, the creator and sustainer of all things; you made us in your own image, male and female you created us; even when we turned away from you, you never ceased to care for us,

but in your love and mercy you freed us from the slavery of sin, giving your only begotten Son to become man and suffer death on the cross to redeem us:

he made there the one complete and all-sufficient sacrifice for the sins of the whole world: he instituted, and in his holy Gospel commanded us to continue, a perpetual memory of his precious death until he comes again.

On the night that he was betrayed he took bread; and when he had given thanks to you, he broke it, and gave it to his disciples, saying, Take, eat, this is my body which is given for you. Do this in remembrance of me.

In the same way, after supper he took the cup;  
and when he had given thanks to you, he gave it to them, saying,

Drink this, all of you, for this is my blood of the new covenant which is shed for you and for many for the forgiveness of sins. Do this, as often as you drink it, in remembrance of me.

Therefore, Father, with this bread and this cup we do as Christ your Son commanded:  
**we remember his passion and death,  
we celebrate his resurrection and ascension,  
and we look for the coming of his kingdom.**

Accept through him, our great high priest, this our sacrifice of praise and thanksgiving; and as we eat and drink these holy gifts, grant by the power of the life-giving Spirit

that we may be made one in your holy Church and partakers of the body and blood of your Son, that he may dwell in us and we in him:

Through the same Jesus Christ our Lord, by whom, and with whom, and in whom, in the unity of the Holy Spirit,  
**all honour and glory are yours, Almighty Father, for ever and ever. Amen.**

**The Lord’s Prayer**

As our Saviour Christ has taught us we are bold to say  
**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.**

**Breaking Bread**

The bread which we break  
is a sharing in the body of Christ.  
**We being many are one body,  
for we all share in the one bread.**

**Invitation**

Draw near with faith.  
Receive the body of our Lord Jesus Christ which he gave for you, and his blood which he shed for you.  
Remember that he died for you,  
and feed on him in your hearts by faith with thanksgiving.

**Receiving Communion**

Please come forward to receive the Bread and Wine.

**Prayer after Communion**

Father, we give you thanks for these heavenly gifts.  
Kindle us with the fire of your Spirit  
that when Christ comes again  
we may shine as lights before his face;  
who is alive and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit,  
one God, now and for ever. **Amen.**

**Send us**

**Almighty God,  
we thank you for feeding us  
with the spiritual food  
of the body and blood of your Son Jesus Christ.  
Through him we offer you our souls and bodies to be a living sacrifice.  
Send us out in the power of your Spirit  
to live and work to your praise and glory. Amen.**

**Blessing**

Christ the Sun of Righteousness shine upon you,  
scatter the darkness from before your path,  
and make you ready to meet him when he comes in glory; …

and the blessing of God almighty,  
the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit,  
be with you and remain with you always. **Amen.**

**Dismissal**

As we await our coming Saviour,  
go in peace to love and serve the Lord.  
**In the name of Christ. Amen.**