



Anglican Diocese of Wangaratta
Parochial District of
Wangaratta West & The Warbys

The Twenty-Third Sunday after Pentecost

Ante-Communion, 5th November 2023, 11.00am

GATHERING IN GOD'S NAME

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.
Let us rejoice and be glad in it.

Sentence

The greatest among you will be your servant. All who exalt
themselves will be humbled, and all who humble themselves will be
exalted.

Matthew 23. 11-12

Prayer of Preparation

Come and worship the holy and glorious Trinity,
as we pray together:

**God of the feast,
your Wisdom calls us,
your Word teaches us
and your love feeds us here.
Give us grace to welcome one another
as you have welcomed us in Christ Jesus,
in whose name we pray. Amen.**

Our Lord Jesus Christ said: The first commandment is this:
'Hear, O Israel, the Lord our God is the only Lord. You shall love the Lord
your God with all your heart, with all your soul, with all your mind, and
with all your strength.'

The second is this: 'Love your neighbour as yourself.'

There is no other commandment greater than these.

On these two commandments hang all the law and the prophets.

**Lord, have mercy.
Christ, have mercy.
Lord, have mercy.**

God so loved the world that he gave his only Son Jesus Christ to save us from our sins, to be our advocate in heaven, and to bring us to eternal life.

Let us confess our sins in penitence and faith, firmly resolved to keep God's commandments and to live in love and peace with all.

**Lord God,
we have sinned against you;
we have done evil in your sight.
We are sorry and repent.
Have mercy on us according to your love.
Wash away our wrongdoing and cleanse us from our sin.
Renew a right spirit within us
and restore us to the joy of your salvation;
through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.**

May the Father of all mercies cleanse us from our sins, and restore us in his image to the praise and glory of his name, through Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

Hymn of Praise (Gloria in excelsis). tune, The Ashgrove

- 1. To God be the glory, all glory in the highest
and peace to his people who dwell here below,
Our heav'nly Father, our Lord, and our sov'reign,
to you, the Almighty, our praises bestow.
We worship and adore you, we bow here before you
with grateful thanksgiving, our song let us raise.
All glory and honour and glad adoration
to God in the highest, hosanna and praise.**
- 2. Lord Jesus, the only begotten of the Father
we praise and we bless you, the Son and the Lamb.
The sin of the world you have taken upon you,
have mercy upon us, the Great I AM.
For holy, you meet us, yet lowly you greet us,
the Lord in the highest, the Holy One.
All glory to the Father, the Son and the Spirit,
From ages everlasting, the Three in One.**

The English Folk Song Mass—Malcolm Archer

The Collect

Let us pray (*silence for reflection on the theme of the day*)

Creator God,
you have filled the world with beauty:
open our eyes to behold your gracious hand in all your works,
that, rejoicing in your whole creation,
we may learn to serve you with gladness,
for the sake of him through whom all things were made,
your Son Jesus Christ our Lord;
who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit,
one God, now and for ever. **Amen.**

Please be seated

THE MINISTRY OF THE WORD

A Reading from the Prophecy of Micah [3. 5-12]

Thus says the Lord concerning the prophets
who lead my people astray,
who cry 'Peace' when they have something to eat,
but declare war against those who put nothing into their mouths.
Therefore it shall be night to you, without vision,
and darkness to you, without revelation.
The sun shall go down upon the prophets,
and the day shall be black over them;
the seers shall be disgraced, and the diviners put to shame;
they shall all cover their lips, for there is no answer from God.
But as for me, I am filled with power, with the spirit of the Lord,
and with justice and might, to declare to Jacob his transgression
and to Israel his sin.

Hear this, you rulers of the house of Jacob
and chiefs of the house of Israel,
who abhor justice and pervert all equity,
who build Zion with blood and Jerusalem with wrong!
Its rulers give judgement for a bribe,
its priests teach for a price, its prophets give oracles for money;
yet they lean upon the Lord and say, 'Surely the Lord is with us!
No harm shall come upon us.'
Therefore because of you Zion shall be ploughed as a field;
Jerusalem shall become a heap of ruins,
and the mountain of the house a wooded height.

Hear the word of the Lord,
thanks be to God.

Psalm is said: Lectern side (left), Pulpit side (right) or All together

Psalm 43

Give judgement for me, O God,
take up my cause against an ungodly people:
deliver me from the deceitful and unjust.

For you are God my refuge—why have you turned me away:
**why must I go like a mourner because
the enemy oppresses me?**

O send out your light and your truth, and let them lead me:
let them guide me to your holy hill and to your dwelling.

Then I shall go to the altar of God, to God my joy and my delight:
and to the harp I shall sing your praises, O God, my God.

*Why are you so full of heaviness, my soul:
and why so unquiet within me?*

*O put your trust in God:
for I will praise him yet, who is my deliverer and my God.*

A Reading from The First Letter of Paul to the Thessalonians [3. 5-13]

For this reason, when I could bear it no longer, I sent to find out about your faith; I was afraid that somehow the tempter had tempted you and that our labour had been in vain.

But Timothy has just now come to us from you, and has brought us the good news of your faith and love. He has told us also that you always remember us kindly and long to see us—just as we long to see you. For this reason, brothers and sisters, during all our distress and persecution we have been encouraged about you through your faith. For we now live, if you continue to stand firm in the Lord. How can we thank God enough for you in return for all the joy that we feel before our God because of you? Night and day we pray most earnestly that we may see you face to face and restore whatever is lacking in your faith.

Now may our God and Father himself and our Lord Jesus direct our way to you. And may the Lord make you increase and abound in love for one another and for all, just as we abound in love for you. And may he so strengthen your hearts in holiness that you may be blameless before our God and Father at the coming of our Lord Jesus with all his saints.

Hear the word of the Lord,
thanks be to God.

Gradual Hymn AHB 339/TiS 431. tune Regent Square

1. **Thanks to God whose Word was spoken
in the deed that made the earth.
His the voice that called a nation,
his the fires that tried its worth.
*God has spoken, God has spoken:
praise him for his open Word.***
2. **Thanks to God whose Word incarnate
human flesh has glorified,
who by life and death and rising
grace abundant has supplied.
*God has spoken, :***
3. **Thanks to God whose Word was written
in the Bible's sacred page,
record of the revelation showing God to every age.
*God has spoken,***

The Gospel of Our Lord Jesus Christ According to Matthew [24. 1-14]
Glory to you Lord Jesus Christ.

As Jesus came out of the temple and was going away, his disciples came to point out to him the buildings of the temple. Then he asked them, 'You see all these, do you not? Truly I tell you, not one stone will be left here upon another; all will be thrown down.'

When he was sitting on the Mount of Olives, the disciples came to him privately, saying, 'Tell us, when will this be, and what will be the sign of your coming and of the end of the age?' Jesus answered them, 'Beware that no one leads you astray. For many will come in my name, saying, "I am the Messiah!" and they will lead many astray. And you will hear of wars and rumours of wars; see that you are not alarmed; for this must take place, but the end is not yet. For nation will rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom, and there will be famines and earthquakes in various places: all this is but the beginning of the birth pangs.

'Then they will hand you over to be tortured and will put you to death, and you will be hated by all nations because of my name. Then many will fall away, and they will betray one another and hate one another. And many false prophets will arise and lead many astray. And because of the increase of lawlessness, the love of many will grow cold. But anyone who endures to the end will be saved. And this good news of the kingdom will be proclaimed throughout the world, as a testimony to all the nations; and then the end will come.

For the Gospel of the Lord,
praise to you Lord Jesus Christ

5. **Thanks to God whose Word is answered
by the Spirit's voice within.
Here we drink of joy unmeasured,
life redeemed from death and sin.
*God has spoken, God has spoken:
praise him for his open Word.***

R. T. Brooks 1918–85 alt.

A time of reflection

The Creed

Let us affirm our faith and the faith of the Church.

**I believe in God, the Father almighty,
creator of heaven and earth.**

**I believe in Jesus Christ, God's 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 from the dead;
he ascended into heaven,
and is seated at the right hand of the Father;
from there 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.**

THE PRAYERS OF THE PEOPLE

Almighty God, your Son Jesus Christ has promised that you will hear us when we ask in faith: receive the prayers we offer.

We give you thanks for all who have encouraged and strengthened us in faith, for our early teachers, for preachers, for faithful witnesses.

We pray to you for the world-wide church, that it may lead people to your love, your peace, your joy; above all that it may draw many to know your presence and your grace.

We pray for those who suffer for their faith, and get little support.

Lord, inspire us

and fill us with Your grace.

We pray for all who are burdened by heavy loads,
for countries and individuals who are deeply in debt,
for all who live among chaos and confusion,
for all who suffer from earthquakes or famine,
for all who are subjected to wars and rumours of wars,
for displaced persons and refugees.

Lord, inspire us

and fill us with Your grace.

We give thanks for our homes and for all who have been a good support.

We remember before you our loved ones and our close friends.

We pray for a sense of joy and liberty in the communities to which we belong, that we may be forgiving and understanding in our dealings.

Lord, inspire us

and fill us with Your grace.

We pray for all who find life severe, all who are hard on themselves and on others.

We pray for all with deep burdens of guilt.

Lord, be a strength to the weak, bring hope to the fearful, and peace to the troubled.

Ease the heavy-burdened, be a guide to all who have erred and strayed.

We pray for the sick, and especially for

Lord, inspire us

and fill us with Your grace.

We rejoice in your love and forgiveness.

We pray that the departed may know your mercy and grace.

May we all come to know your loving acceptance in your glorious kingdom.

We remember this week:

Rest eternal grant unto them O Lord.

And may light perpetual shine upon them.

Accept our prayers through Jesus Christ our Lord, who taught us to pray,

**Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your name,
your kingdom come, your will be done,
on earth as in heaven.**

Give us today our daily bread.

**Forgive us our sins as we forgive those who sin against us.
Save us from the time of trial and deliver us from evil.**

**For the kingdom, the power, and the glory are yours
now and for ever. Amen.**

Please stand

THE GREETING OF PEACE

We are the body of Christ.

His Spirit is with us.

The peace of the Lord be always with you.

And also with you.

All may exchange a sign of peace.

THE SENDING OUT OF GOD'S PEOPLE

Offertory Cantic—A Song of God's Love

**Beloved, let us love one another, for love is of God;
everyone who loves is born of God and knows God.**

**Whoever does not love does not know God,
for God is love.**

**In this the love of God was revealed among us,
that God sent his only Son into the world,
so that we might live through him.**

**In this is love,
not that we loved God but that he loved us,
and sent his Son to be the expiation for our sins.**

**Beloved, since God loved us so much,
we ought also to love one another.**

**For if we love one another, God abides in us,
and God's love will be perfected in us.**

1 John 4.7-11, 12b

Offertory prayer:

Yours, Lord, is the greatness, the power,
the glory, the splendour, and the majesty;
for everything in heaven and on earth is yours.

**All things come from you,
and of your own do we give you.**

Notices

Eternal God and Father,
**by whose power we are created,
and by whose love we are redeemed:
Guide and strengthen us by your Spirit,
that we may give ourselves to your service,
and live this day in love to one another
and to you;
through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.**

Hymn—TiS 165. tune, Marching or Shipston (or any 87 87)

- 1. Praise our God, the great creator,
world evolving through his might,
darkness shattered by explosion,
filled his world with life and light.**
- 2. Great inventors splitting atoms
energy and power extend,
firing rockets, space exploring,
search his light which has no end.**
- 3. King of kings beyond our vision,
none could tell what he might be;
in the image of his Father
Jesus came, and we can see.**
- 4. Still he calls, for us to follow,
dare to travel by his side,
facing danger, find adventure,
take his light to be our guide.**

**5. Poet, artist and composer
capture colour all ablaze,
words of splendour tell the story,
Light of all the world we praise.**

Shirley Erena Murray 1931-

The Conclusion

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

Dismissal

Let us go in peace to love and serve the Lord:
In the name of Christ. Amen.

Text from *A Prayer Book for Australia* (Sydney: Broughton Books, 1995) © 1995, The Anglican Church of Australia Trusts Corporation. Holy Communion Second Order.

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Hymns from Together in Song. CCLI 637628. Prayers of The People from David Adam *Clouds and Glory Year B*.

‘That was a really depressing morning,’ said one disciple to another, leaning back in the sparse shade of the olive tree to keep out of the midday sun.

‘Yes,’ agreed another. ‘I’m thinking of packing it in. I can’t see that he’s ever going to show his hand and lead us all to power.’

‘But that’s just what he said would happen,’ chipped in a third. ‘He said that some of our hearts will grow cold, and that we’ll stop being his followers.’

‘He didn’t mean us,’ retorted the first disciple. ‘As far as I could tell, he seems to think all of this could go on for generations, getting worse and worse.’

‘And why does he have to keep annoying the Pharisees if he isn’t going to take them on properly?’ murmured the second disciple, discontentedly. ‘He’ll just get us all into trouble for no good reason.’

The little group sat back, hot and angry, contemplating the morning they had just had. First of all, Jesus had got into yet another slanging match with the Pharisees, one of the worst of the increasingly hostile encounters between them. Then, after they’d left the temple, followed by the buzz of furious and thrilled conversation, Jesus turned back and looked at the sacred beloved building, and said, ‘It won’t last much longer.’

Well, of course, that raised a lot of hopes. After all, the only way they could manage without the temple was if God was going to come and rule directly. So that meant that Jesus was at last ready to overthrow the Romans and the Jewish leaders who opposed him, and reign directly for God.

‘When, when?’ the disciples asked eagerly, hoping for an exact date, like ‘next week’, or ‘at the Passover’, or something definite.

But instead, what they got was a long list of things that had to happen first, all of them horrible, many of them painful to the very disciples who were ready to sacrifice everything for Jesus’s cause.

Except, of course, they weren’t ready. They might have been prepared to take up arms, if it came to it, though they were secretly hoping that enough of the people would come over to their side to make it unnecessary. But what Jesus seemed to be suggesting was that many of them would use up their lives, and die horrible deaths, and still see nothing. They also couldn’t help noticing that Jesus kept saying things like ‘They will hand you over’, or ‘You will hear of wars’, almost as though he wasn’t going to be with them in it.

The only clue Jesus gave them about actual timing was that the end was linked to the spreading of the good news of the kingdom throughout the world. ‘What good news?’ they asked each other. ‘I didn’t hear any good news in what he just said.’

‘Yes,’ laughed one of them, going off into a parody of a popular preacher.

‘Join my wonderful movement, and you might end up hating each other and getting killed. That message is going to catch on.’

And yet, amazingly, the good news of the kingdom of the crucified Messiah did catch on. Despite all temptations and occasional failures, most of those first disciples did endure to the end, and did persuade thousands of others that the kingdom of the risen Lord is the country that they have always longed for, a country where God directly rules his subjects, with justice and love held together.

When it is Paul’s turn to preach this gospel, he gives us a little vignette of his methods in Thessalonica. He settles down with the people, earning his own living, trying to live out and embody that vision of a righteousness that is loving and converting. Above all, he doesn’t want the Thessalonians to think of the gospel as something only he can give them. He is delighted that through his preaching they recognize God’s greatness, not Paul’s.

But if this is a brief pastoral idyll for Paul, there are many more scenes of violence and pain. Intrinsic to Jesus’s message, as Paul and the disciples know so well, is the cost. The cost is borne first of all and supremely by Jesus himself, but this good news, of the direct reign of God, sweeping away all the false gods and false rulers we so busily build in God’s place, can never be preached without warnings. If this costs you, will you still hear it as good news? Do you want the closeness of God more than anything? Only God can make this good news, because only God is supremely worth it. Our job is to get out of the way, so that we can become channels, like Paul, for God’s word.

Williams, Jane. (2004). Lectionary Reflections: Year A (pp. 124–125). SPCK.

MICAH 3:5–12

Micah of Moresheth was a contemporary of Isaiah in Judah who is known to Christians almost exclusively for his prophecy of a future Bethlehemite (5:1) and his peaceful counsel to “do right, love goodness, and walk humbly with your God” (6:8). He was, however, as strident as any of the forth-tellers for God, whose only foretelling was of the destruction the people could expect (5:9–14) for the exploitation of the poor by the rich (chap. 2) and the venality of leaders, priests, and prophets (3:11). The last-named are well fed as they declare that all is well in the land while they make war on the poor (v. 5). The darkness of night must fall on them for they have no message (v. 6). Micah, contrariwise, is supremely confident that he is God-inspired to charge Jacob Israel with its crimes. The rulers have built Zion with perverse deeds not the least of which are bribery, simony, and graft (vv. 9–11). They claim exemption from divine sanction, little knowing that when God’s agent, crouching Assyria, pounces it will reduce Jerusalem to rubble (see 5:4f for the foolish boast that the tyrant can be turned back by a land force of shepherds under arms).