

SERVICE OF THE WORD
The Last Sunday after Trinity

BIBLE SUNDAY
25th October 2026



In the name of the + Father,
and of the Son,
and of the Holy Spirit.
Amen.

Prayer of Preparation

Faithful Lord,
You have spoken to us through the scriptures
revealing your redeeming love for creation.
Your mercy has no end.
Grant us the grace to trust you
and to receive the gifts of your love,
new every morning,
in Jesus Christ our Lord.
Amen.

HYMN

1 Thou whose almighty word
Chaos and darkness heard,
And took their flight;
Hear us, we humbly pray,
And where the gospel-day
Sheds not its glorious ray,
Let there be light!

2 Thou who didst come to bring
On thy redeeming wing
Healing and sight,
Health to the sick in mind,
Sight to the inly blind:
O now to all humankind
Let there be light!

3 Spirit of truth and love,
Life-giving, holy dove,
Speed forth thy flight!
Move o'er the water's face
Bearing the lamp of grace,
And, in earth's darkest place
Let there be light!

4 Blessed and holy Three,
Glorious Trinity,
Wisdom, Love, Might;
Boundless as ocean's tide,
Rolling in fullest pride,
Through the world, far and wide,
Let there be light!

Invitation to Confession

The word of God is living and active.
It judges the thoughts and intentions of the heart.
All is open and laid bare before the eyes of him
to whom we give account.
We confess our sins in penitence and faith.

Let your faithful love come unto me, O Lord,
even your salvation, according to your promise:
Lord, have mercy.
Lord, have mercy.

Your word is a lantern to my feet
and a light upon my path:
Christ, have mercy.
Christ, have mercy.
I have gone astray like a sheep that is lost;
O seek your servant, for I do not forget your commandments.
Lord, have mercy.
Lord, have mercy.

Absolution

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.

The Collect

Blessed Lord,
who caused all holy Scriptures to be written for our learning:
help us so to hear them,
to read, mark, learn and inwardly digest them
that, through patience, and the comfort of your holy word,
we may embrace and for ever hold fast
the hope of everlasting life,
which you have given us in our Saviour Jesus Christ,
who is alive and reigns with you,
in the unity of the Holy Spirit,
one God, now and for ever. Amen

A Reading from The Old Testament Nehemiah 8 1-4a, 5-6, 8-12

¹ All the people gathered together into the square before the Water Gate. They told the scribe Ezra to bring the book of the law of Moses, which the LORD had given to Israel. ² Accordingly, the priest Ezra brought the law before the assembly, both men and women and all who could hear with understanding. This was on the first day of the seventh month. ³ He read from it facing the square before the Water Gate from early morning until midday, in the presence of the men and the women and those who could understand; and the ears of all the people were attentive to the book of the law. ⁴ The scribe Ezra stood on a wooden platform that had been made for the purpose; ⁵ And Ezra opened the book in the sight of all the people, for he was standing above all the people; and when he opened it, all the people stood up. ⁶ Then Ezra blessed the LORD, the great God, and all the people answered, "Amen, Amen," lifting up their hands. Then they bowed their heads and worshiped the LORD with their faces to the ground. So they read from the book, from the law of God, with interpretation. They gave the sense, so that the people understood the reading. ⁹ And Nehemiah, who was the governor, and Ezra the priest and scribe, and the Levites who taught the people said to all the people, "This day is holy to the LORD your God; do not mourn or weep." For all the people wept when they heard the words of the law. ¹⁰ Then he said to them, "Go your way, eat the fat and drink sweet wine and send portions of them to those for whom nothing is prepared, for this day is holy to our LORD; and do not be grieved, for the joy of the LORD is your strength." ¹¹ So the Levites stilled all the people, saying, "Be quiet, for this day is holy; do not be grieved." ¹² And all the people went their way to eat and drink and to send portions and to make great rejoicing, because they had understood the words that were declared to them.

This is the word of the Lord
Thanks be to God

- ⁹ How can young people keep their way pure?
By guarding it according to your word.
¹⁰ With my whole heart I seek you;



- do not let me stray from your commandments.
¹¹ I treasure your word in my heart,
so that I may not sin against you.
¹² Blessed are you, O LORD;
teach me your statutes.
¹³ With my lips I declare
all the ordinances of your mouth.
¹⁴ I delight in the way of your decrees
as much as in all riches.
¹⁵ I will meditate on your precepts,

- and fix my eyes on your ways.
¹⁶ I will delight in your statutes;
I will not forget your word.

A Reading from The New Testament
Colossians 3 12-17

¹² As God's chosen ones, holy and beloved, clothe yourselves with compassion, kindness, humility, meekness, and patience. ¹³ Bear with one another and, if anyone has a complaint against another, forgive each other; just as the Lord has forgiven you, so you also must forgive. ¹⁴ Above all, clothe yourselves with love, which binds everything together in perfect harmony. ¹⁵ And let the peace of Christ rule in your hearts, to which indeed you were called in the one body. And be thankful. ¹⁶ Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly; teach and admonish one another in all wisdom; and with gratitude in your hearts sing psalms, hymns, and spiritual songs to God. ¹⁷ And whatever you do, in word or deed, do everything in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through him.

This is the word of the Lord
Thanks be to God

HYMN

1 Lord, thy word abideth,
and our footsteps guideth;
who its truth believeth
light and joy receiveth

3 When the storms are o'er us,
and dark clouds before us,
then its light directeth,
and our way protecteth.

5 Word of mercy, giving
succour to the living;
word of life, supplying
comfort to the dying.

2 When our foes are near us,
then thy word doth cheer us,
word of consolation,
message of salvation.

4 Who can tell the pleasure,
who recount the treasure
by thy word imparted
to the simple-hearted?

6 O that we discerning
its most holy learning,
Lord, may love and fear thee,
evermore be near thee!

Gospel Acclamation

Alleluia, alleluia.
Your words are spirit, Lord, and they are life.
Alleluia.

The holy Gospel is written in the 24th Chapter of the Gospel according to Matthew beginning at the 30th verse.

Glory be to thee, O Lord

³⁰ Then the sign of the Son of Man will appear in heaven, and then all the tribes of the earth will mourn, and they will see 'the Son of Man coming on the clouds of heaven' with power and great glory. ³¹ And he will send out his angels with a loud trumpet call, and they will gather his elect from the four winds, from one end of heaven to the other.

³² "From the fig tree learn its lesson: as soon as its branch becomes tender and puts forth its leaves, you know that summer is near. ³³ So also, when you see all these things, you know that he ^[E] is near, at the very gates. ³⁴ Truly I tell you, this generation will not pass away until all these things have taken place. ³⁵ Heaven and earth will pass away, but my words will not pass away.

This is the Gospel of the Lord

Praise be to thee, O Christ

Reflection

Most of the Jews, the best of society, had been taken into captivity in Babylon. Among them was Nehemiah, who had risen through the ranks and was now cupbearer to the King. He had heard how bad the conditions were for the remnant who had remained in Jerusalem; the conditions were appalling and the protecting wall around the city, a pile of rubble.

With the king's blessing he returned to Jerusalem with others, and to cut the story short, the walls were repaired in an amazing 52 days. All the people began to live a better and settled life. But they needed more than just a physical wall, they needed to find and re-establish themselves as a nation. They ask Ezra the scribe to read to them the book of the Law and this becomes a renewal ceremony. It is probable that most of those who returned had never heard these words, and the fact that Ezra and others had to help them understand suggests also the need to translate from the Hebrew into the language now spoken by the people.

The reading lasted six hours, and everyone stood to listen. It takes a bit of imagining. It tells us that this was important, the people had asked to hear and to understand – it mattered.

Initially they were distressed, they wept as they listened. But Nehemiah is quick to avert their sorrow and depression. No! Today is a day to rejoice, go home, have a party include everyone, tomorrow we begin anew!

It was a moment of reconnection, a coming home, a new understanding of who they were which was even more important than the rebuilding of the wall. It formed them again as a people. The sabbath was re-established and the Festivals; it was a re-discovery of identity. The people put behind them the years of captivity and remembered that they were a people in a Covenant relationship to God.

In the same way we are to do the same. We are in a Covenant relationship with God; the New Covenant instituted by Jesus. When we read the scriptures, we also remind ourselves of this relationship. We put the past behind us, remember who we are and press on. This does not mean we can forget – that is not always possible. But memories can transform us if we allow.

As it is Bible Sunday, the Bible is our focus. I wonder have you ever wept when reading? Not only with sorrow that you fall short in how we should live, but perhaps when the words speak directly to comfort, strengthen or encourage. It can feel like a text from God – it so hits the spot.

The reading of Scripture is one of four key sources in theological understanding, the others are Reason, Experience and Tradition; in order to remember them I use the acronym REST. Reason, Experience, We can 'rest' our exploration of theology on these – they keep us balanced.

Paul writes to the young church in Colossae a city in Turkey. *'Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly...'* The church had the oral history and teaching of Jesus. There was no 'New Testament' as we know it; Paul is, in effect, composing much of it in his letters to the churches.

I am struck by Paul's words to the church at Colossae, they are peaceful words of encouragement. 'Let' the word *dwell* in you. It has the idea of our meditating on them so that they influence our thinking and thereby our practice.

The Bible calls Jesus the Word. The Word that brought all heaven and earth into being and Jesus tells us that not one of His words will pass away. For His words to dwell in us as Paul suggests, we should come to know them. Paul doesn't lecture the church but encourages them by suggesting the richness that will repay their attention.

The Creed

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 from the Holy Spirit and 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.

Let us give thanks for the gift of the Bible
and pray for all who enable it to be studied, understood, and loved.

Almighty God,
in your goodness you have given us the Scriptures
to equip us for every kind of good deed.
We give thanks for all who translate the Bible,
and pray that, through their work and skill,
your word may go forth to the ends of the earth.

We give thanks for all who distribute the Scriptures,
and pray that, through the written text,
your people may be built up in faith and love.

We give thanks for all whose learning interprets the Scriptures,
and pray for biblical scholars and theologians,
that more light and truth may break forth from your word.

We give thanks for all preachers and teachers,
and pray that, through the word proclaimed and shared,
your Church may grow in holiness and discipleship.

We give thanks for all who read the Bible in public worship,
for all study groups and training courses,
and pray that, through the study of the Scriptures,
your word may find a home in the hearts of your people.

Gracious Lord,
grant to us that loving your holy word,
we may adorn it with obedient and Christlike lives;
to the glory of your name.

These and all the silent prayers of our hearts we offer to you.

Merciful father, accept these prayers for the sake of your son, Jesus Christ
our lord. Amen

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.
Lead us not into temptation but deliver us from evil.
For the kingdom, the power,
and the glory are yours now and for ever.
Amen.

God, our judge and saviour,
teach us to be open to your truth
and to trust in your love,
that we may live each day
with confidence in the salvation which is given
through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen

We pray for God's blessing

Live this day in peace,
knowing that you have been born again,
not of perishable seed, but of imperishable,
through the living and enduring word of God;
And the blessing of
God who created you
Jesus the Christ who saves you
And the Spirit who is within you
Be with you and with all for whom you pray
Now and always
Amen

HYMN

1. We have a gospel to proclaim,
Good news for men in all the
earth;
The gospel of a Saviour's name,
We sing His glory, tell His worth

3. Tell of His death at Calvary,
Hated by those He came to
save,
In lonely suffering on the
cross,
For all He loved His life He
gave.

5. Tell of His reign at God's right
hand,
By all creation glorified,
He sends His Spirit on His Church,
To live for Him, the Lamb who
died.

2. Tell of His birth at Bethlehem,
Not in a royal house or hall
But in a stable dark and dim,
The Word made flesh, a light for
all.

4. Tell of that glorious Easter
moon,
Empty the tomb, for He was
free.
He broke the power of death
and hell
That we might share His
victory

6. Now we rejoice to name Him
King,
Jesus is Lord of all the earth,
This gospel message we proclaim,
We sing His glory, tell His worth.



This official Daily Prayer app, its free. Complete services for Morning, Evening and Night Prayer from the Church of England. <https://www.chpublishing.co.uk/apps/daily-prayer>



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