

**The Ninth Sunday after  
Trinity  
17th August 2025**



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

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

**Prayer of Preparation**

Holy God,  
faithful and unchanging:  
enlarge our minds with the knowledge of your truth,  
and draw us more deeply into the mystery of your love,  
that we may truly worship you,  
Father, Son and Holy Spirit,  
one God, now and for ever.  
Amen.

**HYMN**

1 New every morning is the love  
our waking and uprising prove;  
through sleep and darkness safely brought,  
restored to life and power and thought.

3 If on our daily course our mind  
be set to hallow all we find,  
new treasures still, of countless price,  
God will provide for sacrifice.

2 New mercies, each returning day,  
hover around us while we pray;  
new perils past, new sins forgiven,  
new thoughts of God, new hopes of heaven.

4 The trivial round, the common task,  
will furnish all we need to ask,  
room to deny ourselves, a road  
to bring us daily nearer God.

5 Only, O Lord, in thy dear love  
fit us for perfect rest above;  
and help us, this and every day,  
to live more nearly as we pray.

**Confession**

Almighty God,  
long-suffering and of great goodness:  
I confess to you,  
I confess with my whole heart  
my neglect and forgetfulness of your commandments,  
my wrong doing, thinking, and speaking;  
the hurts I have done to others,  
and the good I have left undone.  
O God, forgive me, for I have sinned against you;

and raise me to newness of life;  
through Jesus Christ our Lord.  
Amen.

### **Absolution**

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 Lord.  
Amen

### **The Collect**

Almighty God,  
who sent your Holy Spirit  
to be the life and light of your Church:  
open our hearts to the riches of your grace,  
that we may bring forth the fruit of the Spirit  
in love and joy and peace;  
through Jesus Christ your Son our Lord,  
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 Jeremiah 23. 23-29**

23 Am I a God near by, says the Lord, and not a God far off? 24 Who can hide in secret places so that I cannot see them? says the Lord. Do I not fill heaven and earth? says the Lord. 25 I have heard what the prophets have said who prophesy lies in my name, saying, 'I have dreamed, I have dreamed!' 26 How long? Will the hearts of the prophets ever turn back—those who prophesy lies, and who prophesy the deceit of their own heart? 27 They plan to make my people forget my name by their dreams that they tell one another, just as their ancestors forgot my name for Baal. 28 Let the prophet who has a dream tell the dream, but let the one who has my word speak my word faithfully. What has straw in common with wheat? says the Lord. 29 Is not my word like fire, says the Lord, and like a hammer that breaks a rock in pieces?

This is the word of the Lord  
Thanks be to God

### **Psalm 82**

#### **A Plea for Justice**

1 God has taken his place in the divine council;  
in the midst of the gods he holds judgement:  
2 'How long will you judge unjustly  
and show partiality to the wicked?  
3 Give justice to the weak and the orphan;  
maintain the right of the lowly and the destitute.

4 Rescue the weak and the needy;  
deliver them from the hand of the wicked.'

5 They have neither knowledge nor understanding,  
they walk around in darkness;  
all the foundations of the earth are shaken.

6 I say, 'You are gods,  
children of the Most High, all of you;  
7 nevertheless, you shall die like mortals,  
and fall like any prince.'

8 Rise up, O God, judge the earth;  
for all the nations belong to you!



### **The Epistle Hebrews 11 29-12.2**

29 By faith the people passed through the Red Sea as on dry land; but when the Egyptians tried to do so, they were drowned. 30 By faith the walls of Jericho fell, after the army had marched around them for seven days. 31 By faith the prostitute Rahab, because she welcomed the spies, was not killed with those who were disobedient.

32 And what more shall I say? I do not have time to tell about Gideon, Barak, Samson and Jephthah, about David and Samuel and the prophets, 33 who through faith conquered kingdoms, administered justice, and gained what was promised; who shut the mouths of lions, 34 quenched the fury of the flames, and escaped the edge of the sword; whose weakness was turned to strength; and who became powerful in battle and routed foreign armies. 35 Women received back their dead, raised to life again. There were others who were tortured, refusing to be released so that they might gain an even better resurrection. 36 Some faced jeers and flogging, and even chains and imprisonment. 37 They were put to death by stoning; they were sawed in two; they were killed by the sword. They went about in sheepskins and goatskins, destitute, persecuted and mistreated— 38 the world was not worthy of them. They wandered in deserts and mountains, living in caves and in holes in the ground.

39 These were all commended for their faith, yet none of them received what had been promised, 40 since God had planned something better for us so that only together with us would they be made perfect.

12 Therefore, since we are surrounded by such a great cloud of witnesses, let us throw off everything that hinders and the sin that so easily entangles. And let us run with perseverance the race marked out for us, fixing our eyes on Jesus, the pioneer and perfecter of faith. For the joy set before him he endured the cross, scorning its shame, and sat down at the right hand of the throne of God.

This is the word of the Lord  
Thanks be to God

### **HYMN**

1 Blest are the pure in heart,  
for they shall see their God;  
the secret of the Lord is theirs,  
their soul is Christ's abode.

3 Still to the lowly soul  
Himself He will impart,  
and for His dwelling and His throne  
chooses the pure in heart.

2 The Lord, who left the heavens  
our life and peace to bring,  
to dwell in lowliness with us,  
our pattern and our King;

4 Lord, we Your presence seek —  
we ask this blessing, too;  
give us a pure and lowly heart,  
a temple meet for You.

### **Gospel Acclamation**

Alleluia, alleluia.

Glory to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit,  
one God, who was, and who is, and who is to come,  
the Almighty.

Alleluia.

### **The Gospel**

The holy Gospel is written in the 12<sup>th</sup> Chapter of the Gospel according to Luke beginning at the 49<sup>th</sup> verse.

Glory be to thee, O Lord

Jesus the Cause of Division

49 'I came to bring fire to the earth, and how I wish it were already kindled! 50 I have a baptism with which to be baptized, and what stress I am under until it is completed! 51 Do you think that I have come to bring peace to the earth? No, I tell you, but rather division! 52 From now on, five in one household will be divided, three against two and two against three; 53 they will be divided:

father against son

and son against father,

mother against daughter

and daughter against mother,

mother-in-law against her daughter-in-law

and daughter-in-law against mother-in-law.'

Interpreting the Time

54 He also said to the crowds, 'When you see a cloud rising in the west, you immediately say, "It is going to rain"; and so it happens. 55 And when you see the south wind blowing, you say, "There will be scorching heat"; and it happens. 56 You hypocrites! You know how to interpret the appearance of earth and sky, but why do you not know how to interpret the present time?

This is the Gospel of the Lord

Praise be to thee, O Christ

### **Reflection**

These are strange and uncomfortable – even disturbing readings this week. They force us to face truth and reality. It is tempting always to look for that which brings us comfort. But that is not being realistic – life is not like that. Far better we face what is.

We often need to shake ourselves awake, out of our trance. God does that through his word, through prayer when we feel, or hear, or sense an enlightenment, a flashing truth that sears into our thoughts. Or perhaps an insight into the great otherness of God before which we 'find our place' our littleness, or an insight into the mercy of God. This is not a searing which is to destroy, a fire that will burn us up, rather a fire of judgement which is also cleansing. It cannot be captured but like a comet's tail it leaves its trace to which we can return.

Demanded of us in this is a decision – a reaffirmation, a reconfirmation of our ‘yes’.

In Jeremiah the prophets played with ideas and dreams of their making and origin. No doubt they bedazzled their hearers filling them with sensuous ideas which would fascinate and turn them from God. Baal worship probably seemed so much more ‘exciting’. Are we not equally beguiled by the world and the media? So much easier to be carried along with another’s fantasy than come to ourselves and think for ourselves.

‘What has straw in common with wheat? says the Lord. Is not my word like fire, says the Lord, and like a hammer that breaks a rock in pieces? ‘

Straw cannot nourish us, but wheat can. God’s word is indeed like a fire, or like a hammer. But not to destroy, else why would God rebuke the prophets and encourage them to return to what would heal and nourish?

Nonetheless, these readings do challenge us, especially when the writer of Hebrews sets before us a catalogue of great men and women of faith. He builds the story of their great deeds and their suffering, and you expect he would tell of an equally glorious end. But that is not what we read. These are all commended for their faith ‘yet none of them received what had been promised, since God had planned something better, only together with us would they be made perfect.’

What is the ‘something better’ that God had planned?

We meet this in the Gospel “There is an experience through which I must pass; and now I am under tension until it is accomplished.” says Jesus. The Authorised Version translates this as a ‘baptism to be baptised with’. Baptise was a secular word used in the dying industry, it means to dip or submerge. But we can use it to describe a severe experience, we speak of a ‘baptism of fire’.

This is the way Jesus uses it here “a terrible experience through which I must pass, and life is full of tension until I pass through it and emerge triumphantly from it.” The cross was ever before his eyes.

It seems strange to describe such a thing as something better yet, of course it is. Through the death and resurrection, the long purposes of God are made perfect. Only together with us, the church, will the heroes of the past come into all that they anticipated. The faithful from the past, and us now, are to ‘fix our eyes on Jesus, the pioneer (the one who has gone ahead) and the perfecter of faith.’

The fire that Jesus brings can refer equally to the fire of the Spirit at Pentecost empowering the church and the idea of a fire of judgement. Certainly, we cannot ignore the seriousness of his words. Do we think Jesus only came to bring peace on the earth? Is this a trance from which we must awake? Not peace but division. This quite literally so in the early church where the Romans hated Christianity because it tore families in two. Today, ever and over again we must decide where to place our loyalties. We are called to be prepared to count all things but loss for the excellence of Jesus Christ.

Jesus alludes to the way we can read the weather, as a warning to us to read the signs of the time if for no other reason that ‘time’s winged chariot hurries near’. There are some things we cannot afford to put off. Above all we cannot afford to delay making our peace with God.

Jesus is our peace for he has reconciled us to God in his own body on the cross. All the great heroes of faith, known and unknown, other than to God, looked to the promises of God which would be fulfilled in Jesus Christ.

As we are surrounded by this great crowd of witnesses as our encouragement let us wake up and run with perseverance the race marked out for us, 'fixing our eyes on Jesus, the pioneer and perfecter of faith. Who for the joy set before him, this joy into which we enter by faith, endured the cross, scorning its shame, and sat down at the right hand of the throne of God.'

## **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. Amen.

## **Intercessions**

Let us by prayer and intercession with thanksgiving  
make our requests to God.

Gracious God, fountain of all wisdom,  
we pray for all Christian people;  
for all Christian leaders,  
and for those 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, good Lord.

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

We pray for our community.  
For those who live and work here,  
Speak your word of peace in our midst,  
and help us to serve one another as Christ has served us.  
Hear us, good Lord.

We pray for those who do not believe,  
and yet who long to know you, the very Word of life ...  
Open their ears to hear your voice,  
and open their hearts to the knowledge  
    of your love in Christ.  
Hear us, good Lord.

We pray for those bowed down with grief,  
    fear or sickness,  
    for the lonely, and those brought low...  
May your living Word bring comfort and healing  
    to all those in need.  
Hear us, good Lord.

We give thanks for all those who have died in the  
    faith of Christ  
and we rejoice with all who have gone before us  
trusting in your love.  
We commit to your merciful comfort those who mourn

Trusting in the promise of your word fulfilled.  
Lord of life,  
hear our prayer,  
and make us one in heart and mind  
to serve you with joy for ever.

Almighty God,  
you have surrounded us by a great cloud of witnesses.  
As you strengthened them,  
inspire us to throw off all that weighs us down  
and the sin that clings so closely.  
As you sustained them,  
keep us running in the race that lies ahead,  
fixing our eyes on Jesus, the pioneer and perfecter of our faith.  
Hear us as we offer with them,  
in the power of the eternal Spirit,  
the unending song of praise,  
through Jesus Christ our Lord.  
Amen

## HYMN

1 God moves in a mysterious way  
His wonders to perform.  
He plants his footsteps in the sea  
And rides upon the storm.

3 His purposes will ripen fast,  
Unfolding every hour.  
The bud may have a bitter taste,  
But sweet will be the flower.

2 You fearful saints, fresh courage take;  
The clouds you so much dread  
Are big with mercy and shall break  
In blessings on your head.

4 Blind unbelief is sure to err  
And scan his work in vain.  
God is his own interpreter,  
And he will make it plain.

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