

**Sunday 16 September 2022**

# The Fifteenth Sunday after Trinity



**Sermon** © Rosie Kingham.

**Prayers of intercession** © Paul Monk.

**Liturgy** © 2000 The Archbishops' Council.

**Bible readings** © the publishers of the NRSV translation.

The liturgy assumes the service is Eucharistic. The prayers of consecration appear at the end.

All the hymns are hosted on YouTube. Please click on the links to hear them.

To see service transcripts from previous weeks, please visit the page,

<http://www.medlockhead.co.uk/resources/index.htm>

## Introduction and welcome

**HYMN 1** [Christ whose glory fills the skies](#) (click on this link to hear the hymn)  
[Christ whose glory fills the skies](#) (different version)  
[Christ whose glory fills the skies](#) (different again version)

## The Welcome

In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit

**All** **Amen.**

The Lord be with you

**All** **And also with you.**

## The Preparation

**All** **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.**

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.’

And 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.

**All** **Amen. 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.

Therefore, 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.

**All**    **Almighty God, our heavenly Father,  
we have sinned against you  
and against our neighbour  
in thought and word and deed,  
through negligence, through weakness,  
through our own deliberate fault.  
We are truly sorry  
and repent of all our sins.  
For the sake of your Son Jesus Christ,  
who died for us,  
forgive us all that is past  
and grant that we may serve you in newness of life  
to the glory of your name. Amen.**

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

**All**    **Amen.**

## **The Gloria**

This Gloria is sung to the tune of 'Cwm Rhondda'. Click [here](#) for the tune.

**All**    **Glory be to God in Heaven,  
Songs of joy and peace we bring,  
Thankful hearts and voices raising,  
To creation's Lord we sing.  
Lord we thank you, Lord we praise you,  
Glory be to God our King:  
Glory be to God our King.**

**Lamb of God, who on our shoulders,  
Bore the load of this world's sin;  
Only Son of God the Father,  
You have brought us peace within.**

**Lord, have mercy, Christ have mercy,  
Now your glorious reign begin:  
Now your glorious reign begin.**

**You O Son of God are Holy,  
You we praise with one accord.  
None in heav'n or earth is like you,  
Only you are Christ the Lord.  
With the Father and the Spirit,  
Ever worshipped and adored:  
Ever worshipped and adored.**

### **The Collect for the Fifteenth Sunday after Trinity**

God, who in generous mercy sent the Holy Spirit  
upon your Church in the burning fire of your love:  
grant that your people may be fervent  
in the fellowship of the gospel  
that, always abiding in you,  
they may be found steadfast in faith and active in service;  
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.

**All Amen.**

### **First reading**

A reading from the Book of the Prophet Amos

Alas for those who are at ease in Zion, and for those who feel secure on Mount Samaria. Alas for those who lie on beds of ivory, and lounge on their couches, and eat lambs from the flock, and calves from the stall; who sing idle songs to the sound of the harp, and like David improvise on instruments of music; who drink wine from bowls, and anoint themselves with the finest oils, but are not grieved over the ruin of Joseph! Therefore they shall now be the first to go into exile, and the revelry of the loungers shall pass away. *Amos 6:1a-4-7*

This is the Word of the Lord

**All Thanks be to God.**

## Second reading

A reading from St Paul's First Letter to Timothy

Of course, there is great gain in godliness combined with contentment; for we brought nothing into the world, so that we can take nothing out of it; but if we have food and clothing, we will be content with these. But those who want to be rich fall into temptation and are trapped by many senseless and harmful desires that plunge people into ruin and destruction. For the love of money is a root of all kinds of evil, and in their eagerness to be rich some have wandered away from the faith and pierced themselves with many pains. But as for you, man of God, shun all this; pursue righteousness, godliness, faith, love, endurance, gentleness. Fight the good fight of the faith; take hold of the eternal life, to which you were called and for which you made the good confession in the presence of many witnesses.

In the presence of God, who gives life to all things, and of Christ Jesus, who in his testimony before Pontius Pilate made the good confession, I charge you to keep the commandment without spot or blame until the manifestation of our Lord Jesus Christ, which he will bring about at the right time—he who is the blessed and only Sovereign, the King of kings and Lord of lords. It is he alone who has immortality and dwells in unapproachable light, whom no one has ever seen or can see; to him be honor and eternal dominion. Amen. As for those who in the present age are rich, command them not to be haughty, or to set their hopes on the uncertainty of riches, but rather on God who richly provides us with everything for our enjoyment. They are to do good, to be rich in good works, generous, and ready to share, thus storing up for themselves the treasure of a good foundation for the future, so that they may take hold of the life that really is life. *1 Timothy 6:6-19*

This is the Word of the Lord

**All Thanks be to God.**

**HYMN 2 A new commandment**

[\(click on this link to hear the hymn\)](#)

## Gospel reading

Hear the Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ according to Luke

**All Glory to you O Lord.**

[Jesus said], 'There was a rich man who was dressed in purple and fine linen and who feasted sumptuously every day. And at his gate lay a poor man named Lazarus, covered with sores, who longed to satisfy his hunger with what fell from the rich man's table; even the dogs would come and lick his sores. The poor man

died and was carried away by the angels to be with Abraham. The rich man also died and was buried. In Hades, where he was being tormented, he looked up and saw Abraham far away with Lazarus by his side. He called out, "Father Abraham, have mercy on me, and send Lazarus to dip the tip of his finger in water and cool my tongue; for I am in agony in these flames." But Abraham said, "Child, remember that during your lifetime you received your good things, and Lazarus in like manner evil things; but now he is comforted here, and you are in agony. Besides all this, between you and us a great chasm has been fixed, so that those who might want to pass from here to you cannot do so, and no one can cross from there to us." He said, "Then, father, I beg you to send him to my father's house—for I have five brothers—that he may warn them, so that they will not also come into this place of torment." Abraham replied, "They have Moses and the prophets; they should listen to them." He said, "No, father Abraham; but if someone goes to them from the dead, they will repent." He said to him, "If they do not listen to Moses and the prophets, neither will they be convinced even if someone rises from the dead".' *Luke 16:19-31*

This is the Gospel of the Lord

**All Praise to you O Christ.**

## Sermon

There's so much going on in today's readings, that we could do a whole year's sermons from them. But what strikes me the most in the here and now is the continuation of last week's Gospel, which came just before this passage in Luke's Gospel—'You cannot serve God and wealth'.

We have a vivid picture here: Dives, the Rich man dresses in the finest clothes. He is richly housed in a palatial home, and richly fed with the best of foods. Then we see Lazarus, the beggar at his gates, who lies outside Dives' house, and is not only very poor, but is very ill, covered with sores, and is so weak that he cannot even push the unclean dogs away when they come and lick his sores. His circumstances are so tragic that he counts it good fortune to be fed with crumbs from the rich man's table.

We then move to the next scene in the drama, where they have both died. Lazarus is now in heaven, with Abraham, and Dives is in the torments of hell. Dives wants Lazarus to come and ease his torment, by bringing one drop of water. But the answer is no—and it's not just that Dives had good things on earth and Lazarus had only evil things, it's because 'between you and us a great chasm has been fixed'. It's Dives who ends up being condemned in this parable. We naturally want to ask, why?

We are not told how Dives gained his wealth. And there is no implication in that parable that being rich was Dives' crime. Dives in hell was talking to Abraham in heaven, and Abraham was considered rich in his day. So Jesus is not condemning wealth in this parable. As in last week's Gospel, it is the worship of wealth that he condemns. Jesus always warned men that wealth is highly dangerous if it takes over our thoughts and wishes, but if we regard ourselves as a steward, then wealth can be an opportunity for good. There is nothing inherently wrong with wealth, and there is nothing inherently virtuous about poverty. Poor and rich alike can be heaven-bound or not.

No, Dives was condemned because of over absorption with himself and his own concerns, his house, property, money, herds, businesses ... He passed Lazarus every day, but he never really *saw* him. Dives became locked up in Dives. Dives' crime was not his wealth but excessive self-love. The consequence of this was that Dives' selfishness meant that he lost the capacity to empathise. He could look at the sufferings of a fellow human being and not be moved. Dives' wealth had made him cold and calculating and had blotted compassion. And so he was not fit for the Kingdom of God.

But perhaps the greatest sin of all was that he accepted the inequalities of circumstance as being the proper conditions of life. As if God had ordained that it should be this way. This parable gave rise to a verse in the hymn *All things bright and beautiful* which we don't sing any more (thank goodness!)

The rich man in his castle,  
The poor man at his gate,  
He made them high, or lowly,  
He ordered their estate.

No, no, no! Circumstances and possibly characters affect where people are, not God. Circumstances make some people rich, give them social prestige, while others are left gnawing on the crumbs of obscurity. So in the parable Lazarus was poor, not because he wanted to be, but because his circumstances had made him so. On the other hand, Dives was rich because his circumstances had made him so. So there was a gulf between Lazarus and Dives, a gulf because of the accidents of circumstance. The sin of Dives was that he felt that the gulf which existed between him and Lazarus was a proper condition of life.

And we can see this gulf today. It feels to us as if we live in a society that applauds Dives, and even condones his attitude to Lazarus. This presents us with difficulties, because as Christians we are expected to be *in* the world, but not *of* it ([John 17:15-21](#) 'I do not ask You to take them out of the world, but to keep them

from the evil one. They are not of the world, even as I am not of the world'). We are brainwashed by all kinds of media into respecting, and aspiring to, wealth and status, and laughed at or worse if we don't. We are constantly presented with things and made to want them (Christmas adverts, anyone?). We hear phrases like 'strivers or skivers', 'benefit scroungers', and are told (probably apocryphal) stories of hordes of people who have exploited the welfare system. We even have a government that is knowingly unfair. Tax cuts that benefit richer earners, getting rid of the caps on bankers' bonuses, and borrowing billions that ordinary tax-payers will be paying back for years, whilst ignoring the obscene profits made by energy companies—none of this seems fair to me. And if the benefits to the economy do trickle down to the lowest-paid and unpaid, it won't happen soon, so there will be an awful lot of people struggling now who won't survive to see them. None of the examples above see the struggler as relevant—it's almost as if they are not there. Their plight is glossed over at a national level, just as Dives shows no guilt for his lack of regard for Lazarus.

At the end of the story, the rich man begs Abraham to send Lazarus to his family and warn them, but Abraham replies that even if someone goes from the dead, they will not be able to see. For us, this is not the case: we have Someone who rose from the dead, Jesus, who has come to show us a better way, if we will listen. Jesus, who bridged the chasm between us and heaven on the cross, and who shows us the way to live in love.

We are shown what this looks like in Timothy's letter 'As for those who in the present age are rich, command them not to be haughty, or to set their hopes on the uncertainty of riches, but rather on God who richly provides us with everything for our enjoyment', then goes on to tell us to love and be generous. We can't do much for all the Lazaruses in the world, or change circumstances or government policy, but we can be mindful of the circumstances of individuals and love them.

There is a choice to be made—are we *in* the world or are we *of* it? Where do we place our reliance, on God or on our worldly wealth? How compassionate are we to others? Do our actions show Jesus to others? As we go out into the world today, may we all reflect on these, so we serve God better every day. Amen.

## The Creed

Do you believe and trust in God the Father,  
the source of all being and life,  
the one for whom we exist?

**All We believe and trust in him.**



Do you believe and trust in God the Son,  
who took our human nature,  
died for us and rose again?

**All We believe and trust in him.**

Do you believe and trust in God the Holy Spirit,  
who gives life to the people of God  
and makes Christ known in the world?

**All We believe and trust in him.**

This is the faith of the Church.

**All This is our faith.**

**We believe and trust in one God,  
Father, Son and Holy Spirit.  
Amen.**

## **Prayers of intercession**

*These prayers are inspired by today's Gospel reading*

Dear Lord, help us to worship You rather than wealth, than ourselves, than our jobs, careers, homes, or any other thing.

Lord, hear us.

**All Lord, graciously hear us.**

Dear Lord, your creation includes a great chasm between this world and the next. Teach your church to live in ways that makes election sure.

Lord, hear us.

**All Lord, graciously hear us.**

Dear Lord, we all live in an unequal world. Inspire us to notice those around us who live in need, and to work in ways that alleviate that appalling inequality.

Lord, hear us.

**All Lord, graciously hear us.**

Dear Lord, Lazarus was too ill to work: help those who help those who are ill. We pray for healthcare professionals and carers. And we pay for those who are ill ...

Lord, hear us.

**All Lord, graciously hear us.**

Dear Lord, today's Gospel describes the death of Lazarus and Dives. We pray for those who have died recently or died alone. We entrust the souls of ... into Your care.

Lord, hear us.

**All Lord, graciously hear us.**

Merciful Father,

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

## **The peace**

Peace to you from God our heavenly Father.

Peace from his Son Jesus Christ who is our peace.

Peace from the Holy Spirit, the Life-giver

The peace of the Lord be always with you,

**All And also with you.**

**HYMN 3 All I once held dear  
All I once held dear**

[\(please click on this link to hear the hymn\)](#)  
[\(different version\)](#)

The liturgy of the Communion Service appears below

## **The Dismissal**

The peace of God which passes all understanding,  
keep your hearts and minds in the knowledge and love of God,  
and of his Son Jesus Christ our Lord;  
and the blessing  
and the blessing of God the Almighty,  
Father, Son, and Holy Spirit,  
be with you now and remain with you always.

**All Amen.**

**HYMN 4 Beauty for brokenness**

[\(please click on this link to hear the hymn\)](#)

Go in peace to love and serve the Lord.

**All In the name of Christ. Amen.**

## The Liturgy of the Sacrament

### Eucharistic Prayer (prayer E)

The Lord be with you

**All and also with you.**

Lift up your hearts.

**All We lift them to the Lord.**

Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.

**All It is right to give thanks and praise.**

Father, you made the world and love your creation.  
You gave your Son Jesus Christ to be our Saviour.  
His dying and rising have set us free from sin and death.  
And so we gladly thank you,  
with saints and angels praising you, and saying,

**All 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.**

We praise and bless you, loving Father,  
through Jesus Christ, our Lord;  
and as we obey his command,  
send your Holy Spirit,  
that broken bread and wine outpoured  
may be for us the body and blood of your dear Son.

On the night before he died he had supper with his friends  
and, taking bread, he praised you.  
He broke the bread, gave it to them and said:  
Take, eat; this is my body which is given for you;  
do this in remembrance of me.

When supper was ended he took the cup of wine.  
Again he praised you, gave it to them and said:  
Drink this, all of you;  
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.

So, Father, we remember all that Jesus did,  
in him we plead with confidence his sacrifice made once for all upon the cross.

Bringing before you the bread of life and cup of salvation,  
we proclaim his death and resurrection  
until he comes in glory.

Great is the mystery of faith:

**All Christ has died.**  
**Christ is risen.**  
**Christ will come again.**

Lord of all life,  
help us to work together for that day  
when your kingdom comes  
and justice and mercy will be seen in all the earth.

Look with favour on your people,  
gather us in your loving arms  
and bring us with all the saints  
to feast at your table in heaven.

Through Christ, and with Christ, and in Christ,  
in the unity of the Holy Spirit,  
all honour and glory are yours, O loving Father,  
for ever and ever.

**All Amen.**

## The Lord's Prayer

As our Saviour taught us, so we pray

**All 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.**

## Breaking of the Bread

We break this bread to share in the body of Christ.

**All Though we are many, we are one body,  
because we all share in one bread.**

**All Lamb of God,  
you take away the sin of the world,  
have mercy on us.**

**Lamb of God,  
you take away the sin of the world,  
have mercy on us.**

**Lamb of God,  
you take away the sin of the world,  
grant us peace.**

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.

Eat and drink in remembrance that he died for you,  
and feed on him in your hearts  
by faith with thanksgiving.

**All** We do not presume  
to come to this your table, merciful Lord,  
trusting in our own righteousness,  
but in your manifold and great mercies.  
We are not worthy  
so much as to gather up the crumbs under your table.  
But you are the same Lord  
whose nature is always to have mercy.  
Grant us therefore, gracious Lord,  
so to eat the flesh of your dear Son Jesus Christ  
and to drink his blood,  
that our sinful bodies may be made clean by his body  
and our souls washed through his most precious blood,  
and that we may evermore dwell in him,  
and he in us.  
Amen.

Communion is distributed.

### **Prayer after Communion**

Keep, O Lord, your Church, with your perpetual mercy;  
and, because without you our human frailty cannot but fall,  
keep us ever by your help from all things hurtful,  
and lead us to all things profitable to our salvation;  
through Jesus Christ our Lord.

**All** Amen

**All** Almighty God,  
we thank you for feeding us  
with 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.