

**Sunday 12 March 2023**

# The Third Sunday of Lent

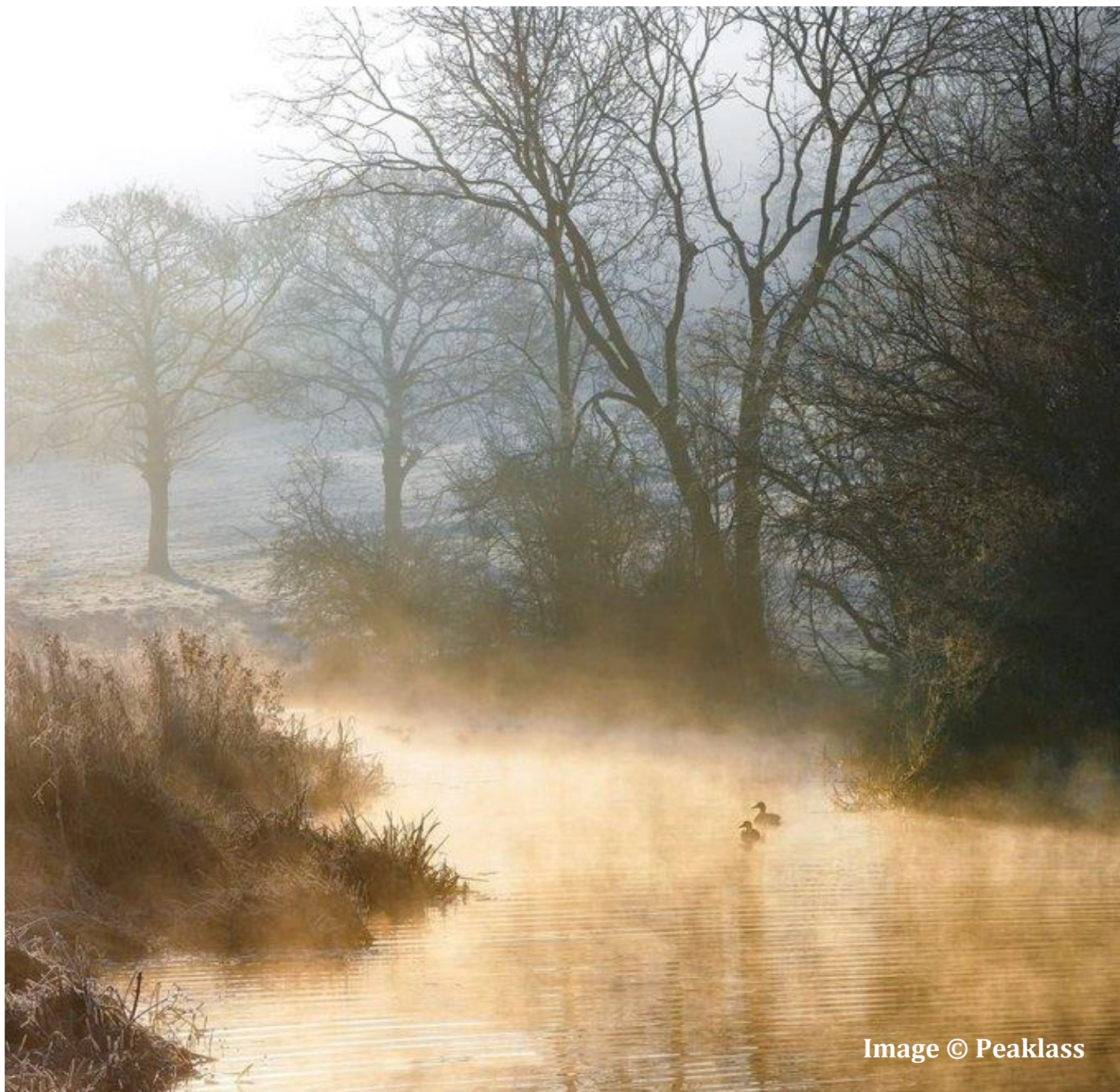


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The liturgy assumes the service is Eucharistic. The prayers of consecration appear at the end.

The hymns are YouTube links. To hear the hymns please click on the links.

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

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

## Introduction and welcome

**HYMN 1 All my hope on God is founded** ([click on this link to hear the hymn](#))

### 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.**

The sacrifice of God is a broken spirit;

a broken and contrite heart God will not despise.

Let us come to the Lord, who is full of compassion,

and 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.**

*It is usual to omit the Gloria during Lent.*

### **The Collect for the Third Sunday of Lent**

Almighty God,  
whose most dear Son went not up to joy but first he suffered pain,  
and entered not into glory before he was crucified:  
mercifully grant that we, walking in the way of the cross,  
may find it none other than the way of life 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.

**All**    **Amen.**

## First reading

A reading from the Second Book of Moses called Exodus

From the wilderness of Sin the whole congregation of the Israelites journeyed by stages, as the Lord commanded. They camped at Rephidim, but there was no water for the people to drink. The people quarreled with Moses, and said, 'Give us water to drink.' Moses said to them, 'Why do you quarrel with me? Why do you test the Lord?' But the people thirsted there for water; and the people complained against Moses and said, 'Why did you bring us out of Egypt, to kill us and our children and livestock with thirst?' So Moses cried out to the Lord, 'What shall I do with this people? They are almost ready to stone me.' The Lord said to Moses, 'Go on ahead of the people, and take some of the elders of Israel with you; take in your hand the staff with which you struck the Nile, and go. I will be standing there in front of you on the rock at Horeb. Strike the rock, and water will come out of it, so that the people may drink.' Moses did so, in the sight of the elders of Israel. He called the place Massah and Meribah, because the Israelites quarreled and tested the Lord, saying, 'Is the Lord among us or not?' *Exodus 17:1-7*

This is the Word of the Lord

**All Thanks be to God.**

## Second reading

A reading from St Paul's Letter to the Romans

Therefore, since we are justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ, through whom we have obtained access to this grace in which we stand; and we boast in our hope of sharing the glory of God. And not only that, but we also boast in our sufferings, knowing that suffering produces endurance, and endurance produces character, and character produces hope, and hope does not disappoint us, because God's love has been poured into our hearts through the Holy Spirit that has been given to us.

For while we were still weak, at the right time Christ died for the ungodly. Indeed, rarely will anyone die for a righteous person—though perhaps for a good person someone might actually dare to die. But God proves his love for us in that while we still were sinners Christ died for us. Much more surely then, now that we have been justified by his blood, will we be saved through him from the wrath of God. For if while we were enemies, we were reconciled to God through the death of his Son, much more surely, having been reconciled, will we be saved by his life. But more than that, we even boast in God through our Lord Jesus Christ, through whom we have now received reconciliation. *Romans 5:1-11*



This is the Word of the Lord

**All Thanks be to God.**

**HYMN 2 Create in me a clean heart O Lord** ([click on this link to hear the hymn](#))

## **Gospel reading**

Hear the Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ according to John

**All Glory to you O Lord.**

For a sermon on this important Gospel passage, please [click here](#)

[Jesus] came to a Samaritan city called Sychar, near the plot of ground that Jacob had given to his son Joseph. Jacob's well was there, and Jesus, tired out by his journey, was sitting by the well. It was about noon. A Samaritan woman came to draw water, and Jesus said to her, 'Give me a drink.' (His disciples had gone to the city to buy food.) The Samaritan woman said to him, 'How is it that you, a Jew, ask a drink of me, a woman of Samaria?' (Jews do not share things in common with Samaritans.) Jesus answered her, 'If you knew the gift of God, and who it is that is saying to you, "Give me a drink," you would have asked him, and he would have given you living water.' The woman said to him, 'Sir, you have no bucket, and the well is deep. Where do you get that living water? Are you greater than our ancestor Jacob, who gave us the well, and with his sons and his flocks drank from it?' Jesus said to her, 'Everyone who drinks of this water will be thirsty again, but those who drink of the water that I will give them will never be thirsty. The water that I will give will become in them a spring of water gushing up to eternal life.' The woman said to him, 'Sir, give me this water, so that I may never be thirsty or have to keep coming here to draw water.' Jesus said to her, 'Go, call your husband, and come back.' The woman answered him, "I have no husband." Jesus said to her, 'You are right in saying, "I have no husband"; for you have had five husbands, and the one you have now is not your husband. What you have said is true!' The woman said to him, 'Sir, I see that you are a prophet. Our ancestors worshiped on this mountain, but you say that the place where people must worship is in Jerusalem.' Jesus said to her, 'Woman, believe me, the hour is coming when you will worship the Father neither on this mountain nor in Jerusalem. You worship what you do not know; we worship what we know, for salvation is from the Jews. But the hour is coming, and is now here, when the true worshipers will worship the Father in spirit and truth, for the Father seeks such as these to worship him. God is spirit, and those who worship him must worship in spirit and truth.' The woman said to him,

‘I know that Messiah is coming’ (who is called Christ). ‘When he comes, he will proclaim all things to us.’ Jesus said to her, “I am he, the one who is speaking to you.’

Just then his disciples came. They were astonished that he was speaking with a woman, but no one said, ‘What do you want?’ or, ‘Why are you speaking with her?’ Then the woman left her water jar and went back to the city. She said to the people, ‘Come and see a man who told me everything I have ever done! He cannot be the Messiah, can he?’ They left the city and were on their way to him. Meanwhile the disciples were urging him, ‘Rabbi, eat something.’ But he said to them, ‘I have food to eat that you do not know about.’ So the disciples said to one another, ‘Surely no one has brought him something to eat?’ Jesus said to them, ‘My food is to do the will of him who sent me and to complete his work. Do you not say, “Four months more, then comes the harvest”? But I tell you, look around you, and see how the fields are ripe for harvesting. The reaper is already receiving wages and is gathering fruit for eternal life, so that sower and reaper may rejoice together. For here the saying holds true, “One sows and another reaps.” I sent you to reap that for which you did not labour. Others have laboured, and you have entered into their labour.’ Many Samaritans from that city believed in him because of the woman’s testimony, ‘He told me everything I have ever done.’ So when the Samaritans came to him, they asked him to stay with them; and he stayed there two days. And many more believed because of his word. They said to the woman, ‘It is no longer because of what you said that we believe, for we have heard for ourselves, and we know that this is truly the Saviour of the world.’

*John 4:5–42*

This is the Gospel of the Lord

**All Praise to you O Christ.**

## **Sermon**

We have been looking at the impact of Lent on different aspects of our lives. Last week we looked at the impact of Lent on ourselves, on our own personal lives using the focus of ‘personal holiness.’ Next week we will look at the impact of Lent on our families, which seems a good focus for Mothering Sunday. And the week after that we look at Lent and identify with Jesus himself and thence the way we interact with society in general—the social Gospel. But today we will look at the impact of Lent on our relationship(s) within the church.

At once we need to define terms, so I’m going to talk about ‘the church’ as the group of fellow Christians in a local context rather than the church ‘universal’, by which is meant the group of all Christians ever and located throughout the world. We’re talking here, this week, now, local.

The way that I am trying to live Lent will affect this church in many ways, or it can do if I let it do so. I will give up food and wine, for example, and could give the money saved to enhance the work of the church. I can give up my time and give the spare time thus saved to the church or its members, or for cleaning, serving, advertising, and so on. I can also give more time to scripture and thence serve the church with greater spiritual wisdom and a devotion that's more intelligent, more thought through, greater than it would otherwise have been. In effect, I'm saying that the holiness we discussed last week will also enhance the church because people will see God in those of us who seek to live in Him. In a sense, that's what our personal holiness is for. True holiness is never personal but given for a purpose, and that purpose always involves the church.

These are all physical ways, because they rely on my being known to the local church. I'm here in the context of a local church and am in a relationship with other members of the church. Churches when genuine to their calling are always relational places, which explains why the first fruit and gift of the Holy Spirit to a human soul are both love.

But there is a second and major way in which our personal Lenten disciplines affect the local church, in ways that I'm going to call 'mystical'. It's not a popular or even a common word these days. It lies at the heart of the collect for All Saints' Day:

Almighty God,  
you have knit together your elect  
in one communion and fellowship  
in the mystical body of your Son Christ our Lord:  
grant us grace so to follow your blessed saints  
in all virtuous and godly living  
that we may come to those inexpressible joys  
that you have prepared for those who truly love you;  
through Jesus Christ our Lord,  
who is alive and reigns with you  
in the unity of the Holy Spirit,  
one God, now and for ever.

This sense implies all of us connected at a deep, spiritually subterranean level, your souls depending on mine and my soul depending on yours.

In Scripture, the implications of this mystical, supernatural overlap are most thoroughly worked out in the letters of St Paul, particularly in 1 Corinthians 12:

For just as the body is one and has many members, and all the members of the body, though many, are one body, so it is with Christ. For in the one

Spirit we were all baptised into one body—Jews or Greeks, slaves or free—and we were all made to drink of one Spirit.

The body does not consist of one member but of many. If the foot were to say, 'Because I am not a hand, I do not belong to the body', that would not make it any less a part of the body. And if the ear were to say, 'Because I am not an eye, I do not belong to the body', that would not make it any less a part of the body. If the whole body were an eye, where would the hearing be? If the whole body were hearing, where would the sense of smell be? But as it is, God arranged the members in the body, each one of them, as he chose. If all were a single member, where would the body be? As it is, there are many members, yet one body. The eye cannot say to the hand, 'I have no need of you', nor again the head to the feet, 'I have no need of you.' On the contrary, the members of the body that seem to be weaker are indispensable, and those members of the body that we think less honourable we clothe with greater honour, and our less respectable members are treated with greater respect; whereas our more respectable members do not need this.

God has so arranged the body, giving the greater honour to the inferior member, that there may be no dissension within the body, but the members may have the same care for one another. If one member suffers, all suffer together with it; if one member is honoured, all rejoice together with it. [vv. 12-26](#)

This passage (and many others like it) mean that whatever I do, whenever I do it, you will know about in a spiritual way rather than through the news, or through the grapevine. In St Paul's thinking, we are a spiritual organism and operate as a collective of Christians. We cannot be considered in isolation because, spiritually, we are always parts one of another. Like a body, there are consequences such as health: there are physical consequences, my mind cannot concentrate because my foot hurts. And for the Body of Christ there are spiritual consequences: if you struggle but overcome a temptation then I will find it easier when you are tempted. If I struggle and succumb, then you will find it harder not to succumb, and so on. *Therefore, what any of us does with their Lent has a spiritual impact on all of us.*

As we attempt a conclusion, we can say that whatever we do, it affects the church. We therefore need to work out what we want to do to enhance the church. This Lent, do I feed the church with food and spiritual insight. Do I pray for the church and build it up. And am I consciously trying to strengthen the church spiritually by seeking God's help in my own personal spiritual battles. We can do so, and easily, and Lent is a good place to start.



## 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 the theme of 'living water' in today's Gospel reading.

Holy Father, we pray that you will pour out the living water of your Spirit upon your Church in the world. Give us the humility and courage to seek unity where we are divided. Give us the grace to exclude no-one from fellowship because we disapprove of their way of life or the expression of their faith. Remind us always that it is only through your gracious love that we can find peace with you.

Lord in your mercy

**All hear our prayer.**

Holy Father we pray that you will pour out the living water of your Spirit upon the nations of the world. Help us to find new non-violent ways of seeking peace and reconciliation. Give grace, wisdom and insight to the powerful that they may surrender some of their power; to the rich that they may surrender some of their wealth; and to those who express hatred and prejudice through violence to learn that there are better ways to be.

Lord in your mercy

**All hear our prayer.**

Holy Father we pray that you will pour out the living water of your Spirit upon our communities and our families. Help us to allow that living water to flow through us enabling us to reach out to those around us. Help us not to be afraid to show kindness to strangers or to stand alongside those on the edges of our society. Give to us the Spirit that was in Jesus, drawing people to him and uniting them in their common experience of his compassion and love.

Lord in your mercy

**All** hear our prayer.

Holy Father we pray that you will pour out the living water of your Spirit on all who are in need. We pray for those who face any pain, fear, loneliness, depression or anxiety. Let them find in you refreshment, hope and comfort for their spirit and the peace of mind that comes with the assurance of your presence alongside them.

Lord in your mercy

**All** hear our prayer.

Merciful Father,

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

## The peace

Since we are justified by faith,  
we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ,  
who has given us access to his grace.

The peace of the Lord be always with you,

**All** And also with you.

**HYMN 3** [Amazing love](#)

(please click on this link to hear the hymn)

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 almighty,  
the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit,  
be among you and remain with you always.  
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 Seek ye first**

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

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**

Lord God,  
whose blessed Son our Saviour  
gave his back to the smiters  
and did not hide his face from shame:  
give us grace to endure the sufferings of this present time  
with sure confidence in the glory that shall be revealed;  
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.**