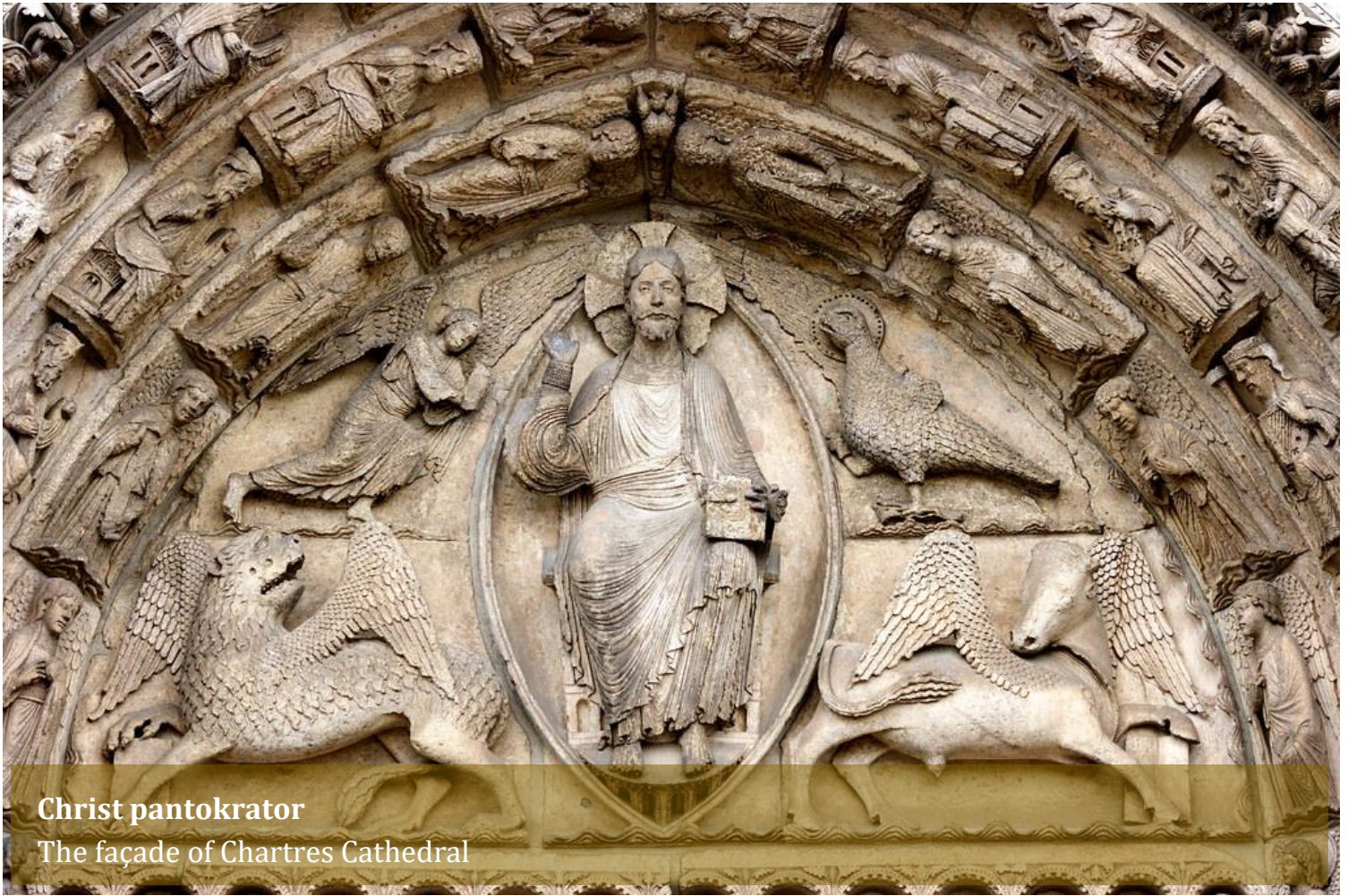


**Sunday 26 November 2023**

# Christ the King



**Christ pantokrator**  
The façade of Chartres Cathedral

**Sermon** © Pete Haslam.

**Liturgy and prayers of intercession** © 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 [The Servant King](#)

(please 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.**

Jesus says, ‘Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is close at hand’.

So let us turn away from sin and turn to Christ,  
confessing our sins in penitence and faith.

**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 Christ the King**

Eternal Father,  
whose Son Jesus Christ ascended to the throne of heaven  
that he might rule over all things as Lord and King:  
keep the Church in the unity of the Spirit  
and in the bond of peace,  
and bring the whole created order to worship at his feet;  
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 Ezekiel

For thus says the Lord God: I myself will search for my sheep, and will seek them out. As shepherds seek out their flocks when they are among their scattered sheep, so I will seek out my sheep. I will rescue them from all the places to which they have been scattered on a day of clouds and thick darkness. I will bring them out from the peoples and gather them from the countries, and will bring them into their own land; and I will feed them on the mountains of Israel, by the watercourses, and in all the inhabited parts of the land. I will feed them with good pasture, and the mountain heights of Israel shall be their pasture; there they shall lie down in good grazing land, and they shall feed on rich pasture on the mountains of Israel. I myself will be the shepherd of my sheep, and I will make them lie down, says the Lord God. I will seek the lost, and I will bring back the strayed, and I will bind up the injured, and I will strengthen the weak, but the fat and the strong I will destroy. I will feed them with justice.

Therefore, thus says the Lord God to them: I myself will judge between the fat sheep and the lean sheep. Because you pushed with flank and shoulder, and butted at all the weak animals with your horns until you scattered them far and wide, I will save my flock, and they shall no longer be ravaged; and I will judge between sheep and sheep. I will set up over them one shepherd, my servant David, and he shall feed them: he shall feed them and be their shepherd. And I, the Lord, will be their God, and my servant David shall be prince among them; I, the Lord, have spoken.'

*Ezekiel 34:11-16, 20-24*

This is the Word of the Lord

**All Thanks be to God.**

## Second reading

A reading from St Paul's Letter to the Ephesians

In Christ we have also obtained an inheritance, having been destined according to the purpose of him who accomplishes all things according to his counsel and will, so that we, who were the first to set our hope on Christ, might live for the praise of his glory. In him you also, when you had heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation, and had believed in him, were marked with the seal of the promised Holy Spirit; this is the pledge of our inheritance toward redemption as God's own people, to the praise of his glory.

I have heard of your faith in the Lord Jesus and your love toward all the saints, and for this reason I do not cease to give thanks for you as I remember you in my prayers. I pray that the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, may give you a spirit of wisdom and revelation as you come to know him, so that, with the eyes of your heart enlightened, you may know what is the hope to which he has called you, what are the riches of his glorious inheritance among the saints, and what is the immeasurable greatness of his power for us who believe, according to the working of his great power. God put this power to work in Christ when he raised him from the dead and seated him at his right hand in the heavenly places, far above all rule and authority and power and dominion, and above every name that is named, not only in this age but also in the age to come. And he has put all things under his feet and has made him the head over all things for the church, which is his body, the fullness of him who fills all in all.

*Ephesians 1:15-end*

This is the Word of the Lord

**All Thanks be to God.**

**HYMN 2 The King of love my shepherd is**

[\(please click here\)](#)

## Gospel reading

Hear the Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ according to Matthew

**All    Glory to you O Lord.**

[Jesus said], 'When the Son of Man comes in his glory, and all the angels with him, then he will sit on the throne of his glory. All the nations will be gathered before him, and he will separate people one from another as a shepherd separates the sheep from the goats, and he will put the sheep at his right hand and the goats at the left. Then the king will say to those at his right hand, 'Come, you that are blessed by my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world; for I was hungry and you gave me food, I was thirsty and you gave me something to drink, I was a stranger and you welcomed me, I was naked and you gave me clothing, I was sick and you took care of me, I was in prison and you visited me.'

'Then the righteous will answer him, "Lord, when was it that we saw you hungry and gave you food, or thirsty and gave you something to drink? And when was it that we saw you a stranger and welcomed you, or naked and gave you clothing? And when was it that we saw you sick or in prison and visited you?" And the king will answer them, "Truly I tell you, just as you did it to one of the least of these who are members of my family, you did it to me."

'Then he will say to those at his left hand, 'You that are accursed, depart from me into the eternal fire prepared for the devil and his angels; for I was hungry and you gave me no food, I was thirsty and you gave me nothing to drink, I was a stranger and you did not welcome me, naked and you did not give me clothing, sick and in prison and you did not visit me.'" Then they also will answer, "Lord, when was it that we saw you hungry or thirsty or a stranger or naked or sick or in prison, and did not take care of you?" Then he will answer them, "Truly I tell you, just as you did not do it to one of the least of these, you did not do it to me.'" And these will go away into eternal punishment, but the righteous into eternal life.' *Matthew 25:31-end*

This is the Gospel of the Lord

**All    Praise to you O Christ.**

## Sermon

Today's Gospel tells us about the great final judgment that every human on planet Earth will participate in, including you, and me. We find this parable in Matthew chapter 25, which shares three different parables all in connection to the return of Christ. The parable of the ten virgins, the parable of the talents, and the parable of the sheep and the goats, which we'll be looking at today. Additionally, in Matthew

24, we see Jesus talking about the end times, so nestled immediately after his talk about the last days and the destruction of the temple, are these 3 parables.

The parable is very simple, yet it's also quite complex. It's also exceedingly practical. It's a parable about sheep and goats. It's interesting how Jesus taught the crowds who followed him. He taught spiritual truths by referring to normal parts of everyday life. Typically, ancient nations like Israel were designed in a particular way. There were various walled cities, to defend against invading armies. And these walled cities would be surrounded by farmlands and grazing pastures. There was no complicated supply chain to keep everyone supplied. If a city wanted food, it would have to be surrounded by farmlands and flocks and herds. It's common. If you think about cities and large towns today it's pretty similar, you have the inner-city area, and surrounding the city you see various farmlands. So what would everyone see and be aware of? Flocks of sheep, goats, farming, planting, and so on. So Jesus taught by referencing such things. If Jesus was walking the Earth today, I imagine he would reference things like the internet, cars, colleges, industries, restaurants, and sports teams.

But, in any case, Jesus teaches here in Matthew 25, about when he returns to Earth. We know that this will happen at some point in the future, though we don't know exactly when. So let's just dive in. It says, 'When the Son of Man comes in his glory, and all the angels with him, he will sit on his glorious throne. All the nations will be gathered before him, and he will separate the people one from another as a shepherd separates the sheep from the goats. He will put the sheep on his right and the goats on his left.' Sheep will typically follow their master, and tend to gather in flocks. Goats are different. They are more independent and more likely to be resistant and go their own way. Jesus uses a simple contrast to help us understand the judgment. And it continues saying,

'Then the King will say to those on his right, 'Come, you who are blessed by my Father; take your inheritance, the kingdom prepared for you since the creation of the world. For I was hungry and you gave me something to eat, I was thirsty and you gave me something to drink, I was a stranger and you invited me in, I needed clothes and you clothed me, I was sick and you looked after me, I was in prison and you came to visit me.'

If Jesus taught this parable today he would be accused of teaching a works-based gospel. This kind of talk makes us wonder, what about grace through faith alone! Do we just have to believe! Well, here it is. Jesus puts a firm emphasis on what people do for others. But surely we couldn't do any of these things properly without believing in Him first. So the fact that our deeds must bear fruit, it's very

important. It's vital. It's evidence of real faith. And if it's not happening, something is very wrong. Surely we are all providing for others? We provide food to the hungry. Providing water to the thirsty. Offering advice and a cheery word for the homeless. We provide clothing to charities especially for children which fulfil that mandate to provide clothing. And we're also called to visit and care for the sick, and to visit those in jail. Now you may be tempted to say well there are many charities doing this so I'm good I want to challenge us today, be out there meeting needs. Make it part of our life, make a plan, and get to work providing for the needs of others.

The Gospel continues,

'Then the righteous will answer him, 'Lord, when did we see you hungry and feed you, or thirsty and give you something to drink? When did we see you a stranger and invite you in or needing clothes and clothe you? When did we see you sick or in prison and go to visit you?'

'The King will reply, 'truly I tell you, whatever you did for one of the least of these brothers and sisters of mine, you did for me.'

The amazing thing is, whenever we do one of these things for someone in need, it's just like we did it for Jesus himself. Did you give someone some food? You did it for Jesus. Did you visit someone in hospital? You did it for Jesus. Did you minister to a child? You did it for Jesus. And apparently part of our judgment as Christians will be, did we fulfil these mandates to help those in need? And in particular, did we help other Christians in need? That's the most difficult part of this parable to understand though, is Jesus talking about "the least of these my brothers" is he talking about Christians only? Or is he talking about helping anyone? Honestly, I think the best way to resolve this, is to simply help whoever is in need. We could say, and particularly, be helping other Christian brothers and sisters, is that fair? Help anyone, but in particular, if a Christian brother or sister is in need in our faith community, prioritize that need.

Then we see Jesus addressing those on the left, the goats,

'Depart from me, you who are cursed, into the eternal fire prepared for the devil and his angels. For I was hungry and you gave me nothing to eat, I was thirsty and you gave me nothing to drink, I was a stranger and you did not invite me in, I needed clothes and you did not clothe me, I was sick and in prison and you did not look after me.'

'They also will answer, "Lord, when did we see you hungry or thirsty or a stranger or needing clothes or sick or in prison, and did not help you?"'



and he will reply, 'truly I tell you, whatever you did not do for one of the least of these; you did not do for me.'

Have you ever noticed someone in need, and the Lord was moving in our heart to go talk to them or help them or pray for them, and we've felt the Holy Spirit say go do it, and we didn't? There have been times most of us that I've felt that. So if the Spirit is speaking to you, be sure to go quickly and do it. And honestly, if you did feel the Lord moving you to help someone or meet a need, and you didn't do it, let us repent and ask God's forgiveness. The Bible says that to know the good we're supposed to do, and to not do it, that is sin, from James 4:17. In any case, we see Jesus saying depart from me, to the goats, who did not care for him. These are the lazy Christians who did not help those in need. They didn't serve others. They served themselves. And if we live that way, we'll be held accountable.

Jesus actually says to them, you are cursed, into the eternal fire, prepared for the devil and his angels." Scary stuff. And sometimes we don't like to talk about this part, about divine accountability. God is love. God is mercy. God is gracious. But God is also a just judge. So It matters how you live and the choices to make. We are all accountable to God. And there will be a day of judgment, when we give an account for how we lived. Make doing acts of kindness and love part of your daily life. God will give you opportunities to help people and meet needs. All you have to do is take those opportunities. What is our motivation for this lifestyle of service: God is really real. The Bible is really God's word. Jesus Christ is really our Saviour. Which means every good deed we do in this life for someone, is just like we did it for Jesus our Lord himself. And we know we will be rewarded in heaven for each good deed we do. Finally I want us to picture in our mind a vision from God, in which they see Jesus in heaven, and Jesus will show these people their house in heaven, and how every time they do a good deed, or preach the gospel, or meet someone's need, it adds on something new to the house. And Jesus is the carpenter, building the house in heaven, preparing it for them when they arrive in heaven. How beautiful is that? I think it's amazing. And indeed God's word says that we will be rewarded for what we do in this life for Christ. Great is our reward in heaven, when we serve Jesus here. Every loaf of bread, every gallon of water, every piece of clothing given to those in need are jewels in your crown in heaven.

I know these things are true. So Christians, be like the sheep that follow our great shepherd Jesus Christ. Don't be like the goats, who pretend to care about the needy, but don't really do anything to help people. They just serve themselves. Don't just pretend. Really live it out.

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

Let us with confidence present our prayers and supplications to the throne of grace.  
We pray for all those in positions of power,  
that they may govern with wisdom and integrity,  
serving the needs of their people.

May your reign come;

**All Lord, hear our prayer.**

We pray for the Church, the sign of your reign,  
that it may extend your welcome to people of every  
race and background.

May your reign come;

**All Lord, hear our prayer.**

We pray for Christians of every denomination,  
that together we may come to understand  
the royal priesthood you bestowed on us in baptism.

May your reign come;

**All Lord, hear our prayer.**

We pray for those whose commitment to truth  
brings them into conflict with earthly powers,  
that they may have the courage to endure.

May your reign come;

**All Lord, hear our prayer.**

We pray for this community of faith,  
that attentive to your word  
we may always worship in spirit and in truth.

May your reign come;

**All Lord, hear our prayer.**

Loving God,  
you have taught us that the power of the heart  
is greater than the power of wealth and might.  
Hear us as we pray for the fulfilment of your reign.  
We ask this through Jesus Christ our King;  
to him be glory and power for ever.

**All Amen.**

Merciful Father,

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

## **The peace**

To crown all things there must be love,  
to bind all together and complete the whole.  
Let the peace of Christ rule in our hearts.  
And the peace of the Lord be always with you.

The peace of the Lord be always with you,

**All And also with you.**

**HYMN 3** [Jesus shall take the highest honour](#) (please click to hear the hymn)

The liturgy of the Communion Service appears below

## The Dismissal

God the Father,  
who has given to his Son the name above every name,  
strengthen you to proclaim Christ Jesus as Lord.

**All Amen.**

God the Son,  
who is our great high priest passed into the heavens,  
plead for you at the right hand of the Father.

**All Amen.**

God the Holy Spirit,  
who pours out his abundant gifts upon the Church,  
make you faithful servants of Christ our King.

**All Amen.**

And the blessing of God the Almighty, the Father, Son and Holy Spirit,  
be with you now and remain with you always.

**All Amen.**

**HYMN 4** [What a beautiful name](#) (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.**

It is indeed right, our duty and our joy,  
always and everywhere to give you thanks,  
holy Father, almighty and eternal God.

For with the oil of gladness  
you have anointed Christ the Lord, your only Son,  
to be our great high priest and king of all creation.  
As priest, he offered himself once for all upon the altar of the cross  
and redeemed the human race by this perfect sacrifice of peace.  
As king he claims dominion over all your creatures,  
that he may bring before your infinite majesty  
a kingdom of truth and life,  
a kingdom of holiness and grace,  
a kingdom of justice, love and peace.  
And so with angels and archangels  
and all the heavenly host,  
we proclaim your glory and join their unending hymn of praise:

**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 the Holy Innocents and 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**

Stir up, O Lord,  
the wills of your faithful people;  
that they, plenteously bringing forth the fruit of good works, may by you be  
plenteously rewarded;  
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.