

Sunday 7 November 2021

Third Sunday before Advent



Sermon © Pete Haslam.

Liturgy © 2000 The Archbishops' Council.

Prayers of intercession © Inspired by [Jim Cotter's meditation on Psalm 62](#).

Bible readings © the publishers of the NRSV translation.

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 hover the mouse over each link, press Ctrl and then return.

To see service transcripts from previous weeks, please visit the page,
<http://www.medlockhead.co.uk/resources/index.htm>

Introduction and welcome

HYMN 1 Brightest and best

(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.

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 Third Sunday before Advent

Heavenly Father,
whose blessed Son was revealed
to destroy the works of the devil
and to make us the children of God and heirs of eternal life:
grant that we, having this hope,
may purify ourselves even as he is pure;
that when he shall appear in power and great glory
we may be made like him in his eternal and glorious kingdom;
where he 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 Jonah

The word of the Lord came to Jonah a second time, saying, 'Get up, go to Nineveh, that great city, and proclaim to it the message that I tell you.' So Jonah set out and went to Nineveh, according to the word of the Lord. Now Nineveh was an exceedingly large city, a three days' walk across. Jonah began to go into the city, going a day's walk. And he cried out, 'Forty days more, and Nineveh shall be overthrown!' And the people of Nineveh believed God; they proclaimed a fast, and everyone, great and small, put on sackcloth.it.

When God saw what they did, how they turned from their evil ways, God changed his mind about the calamity that he had said he would bring upon them; and he did not do it. *Jonah 3:1-5, 10*

This is the Word of the Lord

All Thanks be to God.

Second reading

A reading from the Letter to the Hebrews

Christ did not enter a sanctuary made by human hands, a mere copy of the true one, but he entered into heaven itself, now to appear in the presence of God on our behalf. Nor was it to offer himself again and again, as the high priest enters the Holy Place year after year with blood that is not his own; for then he would have had to suffer again and again since the foundation of the world. But as it is, he has appeared once for all at the end of the age to remove sin by the sacrifice of himself. And just as it is appointed for mortals to die once, and after that the judgement, so Christ, having been offered once to bear the sins of many, will appear a second time, not to deal with sin, but to save those who are eagerly waiting for him.

Hebrews 9:24–end

This is the Word of the Lord

All Thanks be to God.

HYMN 2 I love you Lord

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

Gospel reading

Hear the Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ according to Mark

All Glory to you O Lord.

After John [the baptist] was arrested, Jesus came to Galilee, proclaiming the good news of God, and saying, 'The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God has come near; repent, and believe in the good news.'

As Jesus passed along the Sea of Galilee, he saw Simon and his brother Andrew casting a net into the lake—for they were fishermen. And Jesus said to them, 'Follow me and I will make you fish for people.' And immediately they left their nets and followed him. As he went a little farther, he saw James son of Zebedee and his brother John, who were in their boat mending the nets. Immediately he called them; and they left their father Zebedee in the boat with the hired men, and followed him. *Mark 20:14–20*

This is the Gospel of the Lord

All Praise to you O Christ.

Sermon

It seems that in growing up we often lose the ability to sense that we are living in an ultimately mysterious and magnificent world—a world that, because it was

created by God, should be inspiring us with awe and reverence every day of our lives. We must develop and grow from childhood to adulthood, learning from our peers and passing our own learning on to the next generation. One of the things that we all learn is how to pass our spare time. Now something that remains strange and mysterious to those of us who don't understand is the practice of angling and fishing with the purpose of *not* taking home the fish. It's called 'catch and release.' To catch a fish and throw it back in the water—well, it just seems cruel. If you aren't going to take it home and eat it, why in the world would you want to catch it, torture it by poking holes in its lips, and then—throw it back in the water? Wouldn't that just create a lake full of fish with low self-esteem and bad attitudes? I mean, you get a bunch of holes in your lip and then you're sent back to your friends and family—thinking, 'How am I going to explain this to them? How am I going to tell them I didn't get hired? What's wrong with me? Aren't I good enough to eat?' Maybe that's why fish don't have necks, so they can't keep looking themselves over in shame and wonder? All your life you grow up thinking, 'Some-day I'm going to grow up and help feed a hungry family,' and then you get caught and nobody wants you. They just throw you back into the lake.

Let's imagine fishermen out into the Sea of Galilee, hauling the nets in, filled with fish, looking over the fish lovingly and with great admiration, and then, throwing them back in the water—going back home, and trying to explain why they did it to their wives? Even harder to imagine would be a couple of fishermen just walking away from their nets and their father and their hired hands to follow a rabbi who said they were going to learn how to fish for people, or, more accurately, to become fishers of men. Jesus caught Himself a bunch of fish in today's gospel and he meant business. He wasn't into a 'catch and release' sort of world. He spread His net and caught Himself some fishermen. He caught them off guard. The Master Fisherman Himself swept them up into the Kingdom of God, and there was no looking back. This fisherman, this Jesus, meant business, for He was starting on a mission—a mission to save the world. So, when God calls, when Jesus catches us in His net, He's not offering an invitation for a leisurely break. He's not catching us in His net for the purpose of throwing us back out into the world. When Our Lord *Jesus catches us in His net it means that He wants to keep us*. It means that He wants to rescue us from a way of life that means certain death, and He's calling us to bring us all into a Kingdom that will last forever.

The devil, on the other hand, will play catch and release with you. The devil will hook us and watch us squirm for air and laughingly toss us back into the darkness of your old world—full of holes—filled with shame and feeling like a loser. But Jesus will sweep us up into His net and give us all a new life. He has willingly taken

our old lives, and given us a new one. He has taken us from darkness into light. He has taken us from the prison of our own sinfulness, and lead us, bit by bit, into freedom – into the freedom that belongs to the children of God.

Now if the only part of the book of Jonah that we ever read was the part that we heard today, in our first lesson, we'd think of Jonah as a great man of God. And, in a sense, He was. Through Him, the Lord accomplished a great mission. Through His unwilling prophet, the Lord converted a large and ancient city, a city full of the enemies of Jonah and the Israelites. But we know from the book of Jonah that Jonah did not want God to save the Ninevites. He hated them and he hated the fact that God wanted him, Jonah, to deliver a message of repentance, to them. On the one hand, repentance would have been fine because it would mean that the Ninevites would no longer be a threat to the Israelites. But when the Word of God comes to warn a people of their need to repent, it also means that God is giving them the opportunity to be saved—to experience His forgiveness, His grace and His mercy. That's the part, I believe, that Jonah couldn't stand to think about.

We know that Jonah tried to escape God's net, but it didn't do him any good. God was and is the Master Fisherman. God used a whale for His bait and He caught the angry little prophet and used him to accomplish His purpose.

So when Jesus goes fishing, He's not interested in catch and release. If He catches us, He wants us all to be a child of God. He wants us to be a disciple, one of His followers. Jesus intends to expand the Kingdom of God on earth, and He wants us to be one of His fishermen. He doesn't want to create people who fish for people only on weekends. He doesn't want a Kingdom full of fishermen who play catch and release, and pick and choose, among all those who are dying to hear the Word of God. Our calling is to cast out the net and bring it in and let God do the sorting, the picking and the choosing. We don't have the freedom to decide who deserves to hear the Word of God and who doesn't. We don't have the right to say, 'He's no good. She's no good. Throw them back in.' As children of God we are called, no, commanded, to invite everyone to the banquet God will provide, we are to throw our nets and haul them all in. It's a matter of life and death—eternal life and eternal death.

When God goes fishing He uses bait that might be a whole lot larger than you. He might use a situation that looks like a whale of a problem, a problem that looks like something huge, dark and dangerous—and yet, with God in our lives we have nothing to fear except ourselves, and our own lack of trust. And when the world might ask, 'What's in your wallet?' The Lord appears to be asking, 'What's in your whale?' Wherever you are in your own life, wherever you go in life, whatever situations you find yourselves in the Lord is there just as He was there for Jonah, right there in the depths of that big old whale. Finally, if you call upon the name of

the Lord, and put your trust in him, even a whale of a problem can be used, by God, *to deliver you* from sin, death, and the power of the devil. And when that has happened, the Lord calls us, just like He called His early disciples to follow Him and to go fishing, with him, for others—to help others ‘get caught’ just as someone helped us ‘get caught.’ 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

The Church of Christ Lord, we are gathered today to worship you, to sing our praise and tell out our love. But you remind us that this is only part of our relationship: we also need to wait on you alone, in our stillness. And then you in your turn will speak to us. Help us to fulfill our calling, both as part of the Body of Christ as a whole, rejoicing in moving together as one to serve you, and also as individual atoms of that Body.

Lord, in you alone is our hope.

All In your mercy, hear our prayer.

Creation, human society and those in authority Lord, we ask you to inspire the powerful to acknowledge, even if only to you, their own failings and fears, and recognise their need for forgiveness, so that they may empower the oppressed, temper the law with mercy and work for the common good, mindful always that with great power over the lives of others comes great responsibility.

Lord, in you alone is our hope.

All In your mercy, hear our prayer.

The local community Lord, inspire us every day with your love so that it may overflow into love for those we live amongst. Teach us to share in each other's joys and bear one another's burdens, for your sake. And together may we build something of use, foundations for the next generation to inherit and build on in their turn.

Lord, in you alone is our hope.

All In your mercy, hear our prayer.

Those who suffer Lord, show your mercy to those who feel themselves unwanted and unloved, who can see no place for themselves in our common life together. Turn and soften those whose hearts are hardened against their neighbours. May they all be comforted by the reality of your presence, and know the blessing of your grace.

Lord, in you alone is our hope.

All In your mercy, hear our prayer.

The communion of saints Lord, we pray for those whom we have loved here on earth and who have now entered into rest. May they know peace, and may they rise in glory to be with you and all your saints.

Lord, in you alone is our hope.

All In your mercy, hear our prayer.

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.

The peace of the Lord be always with you,

All And also with you.

HYMN 3 For the beauty of the earth (please click on this link to hear the hymn)

The liturgy of the Communion Service appears below

The Dismissal

May Christ our exalted King pour upon you his abundant gifts,
and bring you to reign with him in glory
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 Come and see the King of Love (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

Gracious Lord,
in this holy sacrament
you give substance to our hope:
bring us at the last
to that fullness of life for which we long;
through Jesus Christ our Saviour.

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.