

**Sunday 23 January 2022**

# The Third Sunday after the Epiphany



**Sermon** © Rosie Kingham.

**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.
- 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** [Take my life and let it be](#) (please click on this link to hear the hymn)

[Take my life and let it be](#) (please click for a different interpretation)

## 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.

By the mercies of God,

let us confess our sins and present our bodies as a living sacrifice,  
holy and acceptable to him,  
which is our spiritual worship:

**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 after the Epiphany**

Almighty God,

whose Son revealed in signs and miracles

the wonder of your saving presence:

renew your people with your heavenly grace,

and in all our weakness

sustain us by your mighty power;

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 Nehemiah

All the people gathered together into the square before the Water Gate. They told the scribe Ezra to bring the book of the law of Moses, which the Lord had given to Israel. Accordingly, the priest Ezra brought the law before the assembly, both men and women and all who could hear with understanding. This was on the first day of the seventh month. He read from it facing the square before the Water Gate from early morning until midday, in the presence of the men and the women and those who could understand; and the ears of all the people were attentive to the book of the law. And Ezra opened the book in the sight of all the people, for he was standing above all the people; and when he opened it, all the people stood up. Then Ezra blessed the Lord, the great God, and all the people answered, 'Amen, Amen,' lifting up their hands. Then they bowed their heads and worshiped the Lord with their faces to the ground.

So they read from the book, from the law of God, with interpretation. They gave the sense, so that the people understood the reading.

And Nehemiah, who was the governor, and Ezra the priest and scribe, and the Levites who taught the people said to all the people, 'This day is holy to the Lord your God; do not mourn or weep.' For all the people wept when they heard the words of the law. Then he said to them, 'Go your way, eat the fat and drink sweet wine and send portions of them to those for whom nothing is prepared, for this day is holy to our Lord; and do not be grieved, for the joy of the Lord is your strength.'

*Nehemiah 8:1-3, 5-6, 8-10*

This is the Word of the Lord

**All Thanks be to God.**

## **Second reading**

A reading from St Paul's First Letter to the Corinthians

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 baptized into one body—Jews or Greeks, slaves or free—and we were all made to drink of one Spirit. Indeed, the body does not consist of one member but of many. If the foot would 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 would 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 honorable we clothe with greater honor, and our less respectable members are treated with greater respect; whereas our more respectable members do not need this. But God has so arranged the body, giving the greater honor 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 honored, all rejoice together with it.

Now you are the body of Christ and individually members of it. And God has appointed in the church first apostles, second prophets, third teachers; then deeds of power, then gifts of healing, forms of assistance, forms of leadership, various

kinds of tongues. Are all apostles? Are all prophets? Are all teachers? Do all work miracles? Do all possess gifts of healing? Do all speak in tongues? Do all interpret? But strive for the greater gifts. And I will show you a still more excellent way.

*1 Corinthians 12:12-31*

This is the Word of the Lord

**All Thanks be to God.**

**HYMN 2 Your word is a lamp unto my feet** ([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.**

Then Jesus, filled with the power of the Spirit, returned to Galilee, and a report about him spread through all the surrounding country. He began to teach in their synagogues and was praised by everyone. When he came to Nazareth, where he had been brought up, he went to the synagogue on the sabbath day, as was his custom. He stood up to read, and the scroll of the prophet Isaiah was given to him. He unrolled the scroll and found the place where it was written: 'The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he has anointed me to bring good news to the poor. He has sent me to proclaim release to the captives and recovery of sight to the blind, to let the oppressed go free, to proclaim the year of the Lord's favour.' And he rolled up the scroll, gave it back to the attendant, and sat down. The eyes of all in the synagogue were fixed on him. Then he began to say to them, 'Today this scripture has been fulfilled in your hearing.' *Luke 4:14-21*

This is the Gospel of the Lord

**All Praise to you O Christ.**

## Sermon

Today's readings set out the central part of Jesus' practical ministry, and outline our part in it. What we have in the Gospel is Luke's account of what we might call Jesus' first known sermon. It does what sermons should do—it makes its hearers think, and makes them uncomfortable. Jesus is giving notice that change is coming, that things will be different, that things will be turned round. He is staring in Nazareth, where He was brought up, where His faith has been nurtured and developed, the setting that's most comfortable and familiar. But He didn't exactly get a sympathetic and supportive hearing, as we shall see.

Jesus went to the synagogue on the Sabbath ‘as was his custom.’ On this particular Sabbath, he stood up to read. We don’t know why. It’s not clear whether various men took turns reading the scripture or whether He asked to read the scripture on this particular day? Did someone else ask him to read? We’re simply told that He stood up to read.’ We’re not told how He was given the passage He read—but however it happened, it was an example of the Holy Spirit at work!

Luke simply says once he was handed the scroll he unfurled it to a particular passage—from Isaiah 6—and he began to read.

The Spirit of the Lord is upon me,  
He has anointed me to bring good news to the poor,  
He has sent me to proclaim release to the captives and  
recovery of sight to the blind, to let the oppressed go free,  
to proclaim the year of the Lord’ favour.

So far, so good. This is familiar piece of scripture that would have reinforced the comfortable views of a future Messiah, coming to God’s chosen people, the Jews. But then comes ‘Today, this Scripture has been fulfilled in your hearing.’ A two second sermon, or so it would seem. That in itself would be difficult for the congregation to hear—this is a man they know well, suddenly saying that he is the promised Messiah. What blasphemy.

But Jesus didn’t stop here, and that’s where the change began. In the next part of the Gospel, which isn’t part of today’s passage, He goes on to remind the congregation of times when the favour of God fell on unlikely people, people who weren’t ‘one of us’. Of Naaman the Syrian leper who was healed when Hebrew lepers weren’t, of a poor widow who was held up as a model of faith rather than the leaders. He was telling them things they did not want to hear. They wanted to hear about how God had saved them, God’s chosen people, and how salvation belonged only to them.

Jesus was determined to proclaim the prophecy of Isaiah, that a New Creation has begun. The Good News is no longer a gift for the people of God to hoard for themselves, but a responsibility to share graciously with others. What this means for us today is that God invites all who would call upon him to a life of faithfulness and service, his mercies are extended to saint and sinner alike, and it’s up to us to get the word out.

So what does this say about the priorities of our lives today as we seek to follow in his footsteps? Who are the ones we ought to be most concerned about today—the rich and powerful or the poor and powerless? Can we do more to help people who need it: refugees, homeless people, hungry children? We see where God's love is needed. So we all need to think how we can best feed the hungry, clothe the naked, care for the sick and those in prison, and welcome strangers, and bring Jesus's Kingdom to this world.

Because make no mistake, it is the responsibility of us all to carry on this work. It is clear from the reading from Corinthians that we are Christ's body on Earth now he is no longer a physical presence. We all have our different role and function, God has a different plan for each of us; but we are all charged with continuing Jesus' work and we will all be accountable to God for the way in which we live our lives and use our gifts in His service. When we pray, we need to pray for guidance to see where we are needed, grace to give us the will to help, and strength to carry on and forgiveness for when we get things wrong. We'll need it all!

## 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

We pray that Christ may be seen in the life of the Church.

You have called us into the family  
of those who are the children of God.

May our love for our brothers and sisters in Christ  
be strengthened by your grace.

Jesus, Lord of the Church,

**All in your mercy hear us.**

You have called us to be a temple  
where the Holy Spirit can dwell.  
Give us clean hands and pure hearts  
so that our lives will reflect your holiness.

Jesus, Lord of the Church,

**All in your mercy hear us.**

You have called us to be a light to the world,  
so that those in darkness come to you.

May our lives shine as a witness  
to the saving grace you have given for all.

Jesus, Lord of the Church,

**All in your mercy hear us.**

You have called us to be members of your body,  
so that when one suffers, all suffer together.

We ask for your comfort and healing power  
to bring hope to those in distress.

Jesus, Lord of the Church,

**All in your mercy hear us.**

You have called us to be the Bride,  
where you, Lord, are the Bridegroom.

Prepare us for the wedding feast,  
where we will be united with you for ever.

Jesus, Lord of the Church,

**All in your mercy hear us.**

Jesus, Lord of the Church,  
you have called us into fellowship with all your saints.

We unite our prayers with theirs  
and ask for grace to serve you with joy

where you live and reign with the Father and the Holy Spirit,  
one God, now and for all eternity.

**All Amen.**

Merciful Father,

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

## **The peace**

Christ is our peace.

If anyone is in Christ, there is a new creation.

The old has passed away: behold, everything has become new.

The peace of the Lord be always with you,

**All And also with you.**

**HYMN 3 Faithfulness**

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

[The liturgy of the Communion Service appears below](#)

## **The Dismissal**

Christ the Son of God perfect in you the image of his glory  
and gladden your hearts with the good news of his kingdom;  
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 When the saints go marching in** [\(click on this link to hear the hymn\)](#)

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**

Almighty Father,  
whose Son our Saviour Jesus Christ is the light of the world:  
may your people,  
illuminated by your word and sacraments,  
shine with the radiance of his glory,  
that he may be known, worshipped, and obeyed  
to the ends of the earth;  
for he is alive and reigns, now and for ever.

**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.**