

**Sunday 18 August 2024**

# Twelfth Sunday after Trinity



**Sermon and prayers of intercession** © Revd Dr Paul Monk.

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

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

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

The hymns can be accessed via a YouTube link. 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** [May the mind of Christ the saviour](#)

[\(click to hear the hymn\)](#)

## 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**

**All** Glory to God in the highest,  
and peace to his people on earth.  
Lord God, heavenly King,  
almighty God and Father,  
we worship you, we give you thanks,  
we praise you for your glory.  
Lord Jesus Christ, only Son of the Father,  
Lord God, Lamb of God,  
you take away the sin of the world:  
have mercy on us;  
you are seated at the right hand of the Father:  
receive our prayer.

**For you alone are the Holy One,  
you alone are the Lord,  
you alone are the Most High, Jesus Christ,  
with the Holy Spirit,  
in the glory of God the Father.  
Amen.**

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

Almighty and everlasting God,  
you are always more ready to hear than we to pray  
and to give more than either we desire or deserve:  
pour down upon us the abundance of your mercy,  
forgiving us those things of which our conscience is afraid  
and giving us those good things  
which we are not worthy to ask  
but through the merits and mediation  
of 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 Proverbs

Wisdom has built her house,  
she has hewn her seven pillars.  
She has slaughtered her animals, she has mixed her wine,  
she has also set her table.  
She has sent out her servant-girls, she calls from the highest places in the town,  
'You that are simple, turn in here!'  
To those without sense she says,  
'Come, eat of my bread and drink of the wine I have mixed.  
Lay aside immaturity, and live,  
and walk in the way of insight.'

*Proverbs 9:1-6*

This is the Word of the Lord

**All Thanks be to God.**

## Second reading

A reading from St Paul's Letter to the Ephesians

Be careful then how you live, not as unwise people but as wise, making the most of the time, because the days are evil. So do not be foolish, but understand what the will of the Lord is. Do not get drunk with wine, for that is debauchery; but be filled with the Spirit, as you sing psalms and hymns and spiritual songs among yourselves, singing and making melody to the Lord in your hearts, giving thanks to God the Father at all times and for everything in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ.

*Ephesians 5:15–20*

This is the Word of the Lord

**All Thanks be to God.**

**HYMN 2 Perfect wisdom of our God**      ([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.**

Jesus said, 'I am the living bread that came down from heaven. Whoever eats of this bread will live forever; and the bread that I will give for the life of the world is my flesh.' The Jews then disputed among themselves, saying, 'How can this man give us his flesh to eat?' So Jesus said to them, 'Very truly, I tell you, unless you eat the flesh of the Son of Man and drink his blood, you have no life in you. Those who eat my flesh and drink my blood have eternal life, and I will raise them up on the last day; for my flesh is true food and my blood is true drink. Those who eat my flesh and drink my blood abide in me, and I in them. Just as the living Father sent me, and I live because of the Father, so whoever eats me will live because of me. This is the bread that came down from heaven, not like that which your ancestors ate, and they died. But the one who eats this bread will live forever.' *John 6:51–58*

This is the Gospel of the Lord

**All Praise to you O Christ.**

## Sermon

Today's first reading talks about wisdom and begs a lot of questions. It says, 'You that are simple, turn in here!' To those without sense she says, "Come, eat of my bread and drink of the wine I have mixed. Lay aside immaturity, and live, and walk in the way of insight". It suggests the idea that God wants us to grow in wisdom.

But, straightaway, we need to remind ourselves that wisdom is not the same as intelligence ... which is a great relief! Genuine intelligence, IQ, is largely inherited so telling people to become more clever is quite simply unfair: it's like telling someone to change their height, adapt their eye-colour, alter their metabolism.

The word 'wisdom' in the Bible never means 'intelligence'—good! Rather, in the Bible wisdom is the quality of doing the right thing, being the faith-filled, devout, moral person that God the Almighty wants us to be. That nature of that obedience is the subject of today's Bible readings. So, straightaway, we see a problem.

Reading today's second reading on its own suggests a rule-based approach. Doing the right thing means 'Do this, do that ... don't, do' and if in doubt look up a response in the big book of rules! In fact, reading the Bible as a rule will never work and never has. It has never been able to accommodate every personality in every context. Worse, it often needs to rely on a human to interpret and explore so it transfer the same problem down the line.

Interpreting Law is the heart of most religions, so it is a relief to remember how Christianity is not a religion but a faith. Wisdom is not simply a matter of holy obedience. Rather, wisdom is to faith what rules are to a religion. Let me explain.

Taken together, today's readings suggest we move away from lists and rules precisely because they're second best. They work for simple matters like 'Do not kill' and so forth, but what does 'Love my neighbour' *really* look like in my, and their, situation? If only I was wise.

The idea that everyone wisdom is available to everyone was predicted by the prophet Jeremiah writing in about 600 BC. He said,

This is the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel after those days, says the Lord: I will put my law within them, and I will write it on their hearts; and I will be their God, and they shall be my people.

No longer shall they teach one another, or say to each other, 'Know the Lord', for they shall all know me, from the least of them to the greatest, says the Lord; for I will forgive their iniquity, and remember their sin no more. *Jeremiah 31:33-34*

Where the promise to 'know the Lord' is the subject of wisdom: God (through Jeremiah) is promising that everyone can know the Lord, which means we can know His will and know what He wants as the holy means to His holy ends. It promises that wisdom is offered freely to all.

God promises that we *can* be wise. The whole point is this: if God lives in a human life and soul, He will make His will always make His presence felt. That 'making His presence felt' is most obviously stated in Scripture in terms of the so-called fruit of the Spirit and gifts of the Spirit. But the indwelling Holy Spirit also gives a believer the gift of knowing God. As it says in 1 Corinthians 2:15–16,

Those who are spiritual discern all things,  
and they are themselves subject to no one else's scrutiny.  
'For who has known the mind of the Lord so as to instruct him?'  
But we have the mind of Christ.

(where the part in quote marks come from Isaiah 40:13).

These ideas beg a great many questions. How does a soul become available for God to inhabit it; how does a soul discern what is God's will rather than, say, the promptings from other spiritual sources? We need help.

Which is why we need today's Gospel reading. In it, Jesus expresses the fruit of wisdom, 'Whoever eats of this bread will live forever; and the bread that I will give for the life of the world is my flesh.' To paraphrase, we will be rewarded with eternal life if we truly follow the Lord Jesus, if we truly do what he is genuinely telling us to do and how to live, if we genuinely seek to live our lives in ways that are Christ-like, if we learn to distinguish between the voices of good and evil. To paraphrase differently, God will reward us with eternal life if we so model our lives on Jesus that we have effectively become like Jesus: we have taken his flesh upon ourselves and his blood into our spiritual veins.

The fruits are obvious: those who genuinely eat the flesh of Jesus in this sense will secure eternal life. They will attract other folk to God because God will become apparent through the way they live. They will know the comfort of the indwelling Spirit of God, who will help direct and govern everything they do: they will acquire the spiritual wisdom that God desires for all His children and, as promised by Jeremiah, to that end, can be forgiven.

Finally, then, to reiterate: Jesus says, 'I am the living bread that came down from heaven.'

## 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 to the God of loving wisdom.

We pray with the psalmist, 'The Lord confides in those who love Him, and reveals His covenant to those who seek Him with a humble heart' **Psalm 25:14**. Help us to seek Him; help us to be humble of heart.

Lord in your mercy, give us this wisdom

**All Hear our prayer.**

We pray with the psalmist when he says, 'The love of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom; all who follow his precepts have good understanding' **Psalm 111:10**. Fill each of us with your Spirit, and thereby help us as we begin the long journey into wisdom.

Lord in your mercy give us this wisdom

**All Hear our prayer.**



We pray with St James, 'Let us show wisdom and understanding by our good lives, by deeds done in the humility that comes from wisdom' **James 3:13**.

We pray for the leaders of the world to grow into the humility that comes from true wisdom.

Lord in your mercy give us this wisdom

**All Hear our prayer.**

We pray with St Paul, 'Let the same mind be in us that was in Christ Jesus, who, though he was in the form of God, did not regard equality with God as something to be exploited, but emptied himself, taking the form of a slave, being born in human likeness' **Philippians 2:5-11** We pray for those whose human likeness involves illness, weakness, and other forms of need.

Lord in your mercy, give us this wisdom

**All Hear our prayer.**

Jesus says, 'Those who eat my flesh and drink my blood have eternal life, and I will raise them up on the last day' **John 6:54**. We pray for those who have died recently ... and their families and friends.

Lord in your mercy give us this wisdom

**All Hear our prayer.**

Merciful Father,

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

## **The Peace**

The peace to this house from God our heavenly Father.

The peace to this house from his Son who is our peace.

The peace to this house from the Holy Spirit, the life-giver.

The peace of the Lord be always with you.

**All And also with you**

**HYMN 3 Bread of heaven, on thee we feed** (click on this link to hear the hymn)

The liturgy of the Communion Service appears below

**HYMN 4 O bread of Heaven**

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

## The Dismissal

The Lord bless you and keep you.

The Lord make his face to shine upon you and be gracious to you.

The Lord lift up the light of his countenance upon you

and give you his peace;

and the blessing of God the Almighty:

Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.

**All Amen.**

**HYMN 4 Holy, holy, holy**

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

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**

God of all mercy,  
in this eucharist you have set aside our sins  
and given us your healing:  
grant that we who are made whole in Christ  
may bring that healing to this broken world,  
in the name of 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.