

Order of Service for Home Worship

THE EIGHTEENTH SUNDAY *After TRINITY*



Hymn 1 Fight the good fight with all thy might

1. Fight the good fight with all thy might;
Christ is thy strength, and Christ thy right;
Lay hold on life, and it shall be
Thy joy and crown eternally.
2. Run the straight race through God's good grace,
Lift up thine eyes, and seek His face;
Life with its way before us lies,
Christ is the path, and Christ the prize.
3. Cast care aside, lean on thy guide,
His boundless mercy will provide;
Trust, and thy trusting soul shall prove
Christ is its life, and Christ its love.
4. Faint not nor fear, His arms are near,
He changeth not, and thou art dear.
Only believe, and thou shalt see
That Christ is all in all to thee.

In the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit. **Amen.**
Grace and peace be with you from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.

Father of glory, holy and eternal, look upon us now in power and mercy. May your strength overcome our weakness, your radiance transform our blindness, and your Spirit draw us to that love shown and offered to us by your Son, our Saviour Jesus Christ. Amen.

As we come into the presence of our heavenly Father let us seek his forgiveness of our sins that we may know his peace is our hearts.

Lord Jesus, you have shown us the way to the Father. **Lord, have mercy.**
Lord Jesus, you have given us knowledge of your truth. **Christ, have mercy.**
Lord Jesus, you are the Good Shepherd leading us to life. **Lord, have mercy.**

May almighty God have mercy upon us, forgive us our sins and bring us to everlasting life. **Amen.**

Alleluia, alleluia, glory be to God on high;
Alleluia, to the Saviour who has gained the victory;
Alleluia to the Spirit, fount of love and sanctity;
Alleluia, Alleluia, to the Triune Majesty.

Collect:

Almighty and everlasting God, increase in us your gift of faith that, forsaking what lies behind and reaching out to that which is before, we may run the way of your commandments and win the crown of everlasting joy; 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. **Amen.**

A reading from the book of the prophet Isaiah

5. 1-7

Let me sing for my beloved my love-song concerning his vineyard: My beloved had a vineyard on a very fertile hill. He dug it and cleared it of stones, and planted it with choice vines; he built a watch-tower in the midst of it, and hewed out a wine vat in it; he expected it to yield grapes, but it yielded wild grapes. And now, inhabitants of Jerusalem and people of Judah, judge between me and my vineyard. What more was there to do for my vineyard that I have not done in it? When I expected it to yield

grapes, why did it yield wild grapes? And now I will tell you what I will do to my vineyard. I will remove its hedge, and it shall be devoured; I will break down its wall, and it shall be trampled down. I will make it a waste; it shall not be pruned or hoed, and it shall be overgrown with briars and thorns; I will also command the clouds that they rain no rain upon it.

This is the Word of the Lord.

Thanks be to God.

Psalm 80. 7-15

Response: Let your face shine, O God, that we may be saved.

You make us the scorn of our neighbours;
our enemies laugh among themselves.

Restore us, O God of hosts;
let your face shine, that we may be saved. (R)

You brought a vine out of Egypt;
you drove out the nations and planted it.
You cleared the ground for it;
it took deep root and filled the land. (R)

The mountains were covered with its shade,
the mighty cedars with its branches,
it sent out its branches to the sea;
and its shoots to the River. (R)

Why then have you broken down its walls,
so that all who pass along the way pluck its fruit?
The boar from the forest ravages it,
and all that move in the field they feed on it. (R)

Turn again, O God of hosts;
look down from heaven, and see;
have regard for this vine,
the stock that your right hand planted. (R)

A reading from Paul's letter to the Philippians

3. 4b-14

If anyone else has reason to be confident in the flesh, I have more: circumcised on the eighth day, a member of the people of Israel, of the tribe of Benjamin, a Hebrew born of Hebrews; as to the law, a Pharisee; as to zeal, a persecutor of the church; as to righteousness under the law, blameless. Yet whatever gains I had, these I have come to regard as loss because of Christ. More than that, I regard everything as loss

because of the surpassing value of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord. For his sake I have suffered the loss of all things, and I regard them as rubbish, in order that I may gain Christ and be found in him, not having a righteousness of my own that comes from the law, but one that comes through faith in Christ, the righteousness from God based on faith. I want to know Christ and the power of his resurrection and the sharing of his sufferings by becoming like him in his death, if somehow I may attain the resurrection from the dead. Not that I have already obtained this or have already reached the goal; but I press on to make it my own, because Christ Jesus has made me his own. Beloved, I do not consider that I have made it my own; but this one thing I do: forgetting what lies behind and straining forward to what lies ahead, I press on towards the goal for the prize of the heavenly call of God in Christ Jesus.

This is the Word of the Lord.

Thanks be to God.

The Gospel Acclamation:

Alleluia! Alleluia! Alleluia!

"The stone that the builders rejected has become the cornerstone; this was the Lord's doing, and it is amazing in our eyes"

Alleluia! Alleluia! Alleluia!

Listen to the Gospel of Christ according to St. Matthew

21. 33-46

Glory to you, O Lord.

'Listen to another parable. There was a landowner who planted a vineyard, put a fence around it, dug a wine press in it, and built a watch-tower. Then he leased it to tenants and went to another country. When the harvest time had come, he sent his slaves to the tenants to collect his produce. But the tenants seized his slaves and beat one, killed another, and stoned another. Again he sent other slaves, more than the first; and they treated them in the same way. Finally he sent his son to them, saying, "They will respect my son." But when the tenants saw the son, they said to themselves, "This is the heir; come, let us kill him and get his inheritance." So they seized him, threw him out of the vineyard, and killed him. Now when the owner of the vineyard comes, what will he do to those tenants?' They said to him, 'He will put those wretches to a miserable death, and lease the vineyard to other tenants who will give him the produce at the harvest time.' Jesus said to them, 'Have you never read in the scriptures: "The stone that the builders rejected has become the cornerstone; this was the Lord's doing, and it is amazing in our eyes"? Therefore I tell you, the kingdom of God will be taken away from you and given to a people that produces the fruits of the kingdom. The one who falls on this stone will be broken to pieces; and it will crush anyone on whom it falls.' When the chief priests and the Pharisees heard his

parables, they realized that he was speaking about them. They wanted to arrest him, but they feared the crowds, because they regarded him as a prophet.

This is the Gospel of the Lord.

Praise to you, O Christ.

Meditation:

In today's gospel, we hear the Parable of the Wicked Vinedressers where Jesus spoke of a landowner who planted a vineyard and placed a hedge around it. He also put a wine press in it and built a tower then rented it to the vinedressers and moved to another country. At harvest time his servants went to the vinedressers to gather his share of the crop, but the vinedressers killed one, beat another and stoned another and when other servants were sent, they received the same treatment. The third time the vinedresser sent his son, but he too was killed as they hoped to claim his inheritance. When we listen to or read this parable, we realise that God is the landowner and Israel is the vineyard – which we heard in both the reading from Isaiah and the Psalm, the hedge is the Law of Moses which separated Israel from the Gentiles and preserved them as a distant people for the Lord. We then realise that the wine press signifies the fruit which Israel should have produced for God and the tower represents Jehovah's watchful care for all his people. Finally, the vinedressers are the chief priests and the scribes. Once we have realised the representations, we see that God repeatedly sent his servants, the prophets, to the people of Israel hoping to gather from the vineyard the fruits of fellowship, holiness and love. Jesus is using this image of the vineyard and vinedressers to speak of himself and of his mission – he has come to call the people back to their true selves thus enabling them to produce the fruit of justice which God expects. Jesus tells the religious leaders, those who have been entrusted with ensuring that the people live as God expects, a parable telling them that they have abused their responsibility and reject the Word of God as they are thinking only of their own profits and interests and not those of God. These are religious leaders who have concentrated on religion at the expense of justice and have stressed the importance of piety and religious rules while not giving the clear message of the prophets which is that justice and integrity make the true worship that God really wants. When people ask about faith and what it means to be a Christian, they may expect to hear about prayer and the sacraments such as baptism, marriage and Holy Communion. Whilst as Christians we do believe in prayer and the sacraments, there must be more such as a desire for justice which means living as God expects and doing as God wants. It also means being welcoming and open to any unsettling messages God may speak of and not silencing his messengers. We also need to look at our lives and lifestyles and see if we are living out our faith – it is

no use if we say one thing and do the other. We need to allow the Word of God into our lives and confront our lives, to influence our choices, to challenge our attitudes and prejudices, to expose our selfishness and to question our commitments and relationships. If we truly desire to belong to God's vineyard, his Kingdom, our lives should be shaped by both justice and integrity. **Amen.**

Intercessions:

In the power of the Holy Spirit and in union with Christ let us bring our prayers for the Church and for the world to our heavenly Father.

We pray for the Church throughout the world, for the leaders of the Church among them Andrew our Archbishop and Mary our Bishop. We pray for the clergy and people of our diocese and for our own ministry area; that the Church may faithfully work with Christ to proclaim the saving love of God to the world.

Lord in your mercy, **Hear our prayer.**

We pray for the people of the world, for the victims of violence and oppression among them the people of the Ukraine and the Yemen, for all suffering the effects of natural disaster and for those suffering from famine or drought; May the leaders of the nation's follow the Lord in the ways of justice and peace.

Lord in your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

We pray for our own community, for our families, friends and neighbours. We give thanks for all who serve the needs of the vulnerable; may we persevere in the ways of Christ bringing hope and peace to those in need around us.

Lord in your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

We pray for all who are in need, for those who are sick, for those who are bereaved, for the lonely and isolated and for all in any kind of need. We hold in our hearts before God those known to us who are in need at this time and all whose names are recorded in our intercession books; relieve them according to their need, strengthen them with your Holy Spirit and console them with the love of Christ.

Lord in your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

We pray for all who have died. We remember before God our own departed loved ones and we pray for the recently departed and those whose anniversary of death falls at this time; welcome them and all the departed into the eternal joy and peace of your heavenly kingdom.

Lord in your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

We bring all our prayers to our heavenly Father as we pray together:

**Our Father,
who art in heaven,
hallowed be thy name,
thy Kingdom come, thy will be done,
on earth as it is in heaven.
Give us this day our daily bread.
And forgive us our trespasses
as we forgive those who trespass against us.
And lead us not into temptation,
but deliver us from evil.
For thine is the Kingdom,
The power and the glory, for ever and ever. Amen.**

The Peace:

Jesus said, "Peace, I bequeath to you; my own peace I give you; a peace the world cannot give, this is my gift to you. The peace of the Lord be with you and with all those whom you love. **And also with you.**

Let us pray:

Lord Jesus Christ, you have taught us that what we do for the least of our brothers and sisters we do also for you: give us the will to be the servant of others as you were the servant of all, and gave up your life and died for us, but are alive and reign, now and for ever. **Amen.**

The Blessing:

The Lord be with you. **And also with you.**

The peace of God which is beyond all understanding guard your hearts in the knowledge and love of God and of his Son Jesus Christ. **Amen.**

Let us go in peace to love and serve the Lord.

In the name of Christ. **Amen**

Hymn 2. Christ is made the sure foundation,

**1 Christ is made the sure foundation,
Christ the head and cornerstone,
chosen of the Lord, and precious,
binding all the Church in one,
holy Zion's help forever,
and her confidence alone.**

**2 To this temple, where we call You,
come, O Lord of Hosts, today;
you have promised loving kindness,
hear Your servants as we pray;
bless your people now before you
turn our darkness into day,**

**3 Hear the cry of all your people
what they ask and hope to gain,
what they gain from you, forever
with your chosen to retain,
and hereafter in your glory
evermore with you to reign.**

**4 Praise and honour to the Father,
praise and honour to the Son,
praise and honour to the Spirit,
ever Three, and ever One,
One in might, and One in glory,
while unending ages run.**

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