

Order of Service

for Home Worship

THE SIXTH SUNDAY

After TRINITY



Hymn 1 Father of Heaven

1. Father of heaven, whose love profound
a ransom for our souls hath found,
before thy throne we sinners bend,
to us thy pardoning love extend.
2. Almighty son, incarnate Word,
our Prophet, Priest, Redeemer, Lord,
before thy throne we sinners bend,
to us thy saving grace extend.
3. Eternal Spirit, by whose breath
the soul is raised from sin and death,
before thy throne we sinners bend,
to us thy quickening power extend.
4. Thrice Holy! Father, Spirit, Son;
mysterious Godhead. Three in One,
before thy throne we sinners bend,
grace, pardon, life to us extend.

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:

Merciful God, you have prepared for those who love you such good things as pass our understanding: pour into our hearts such love toward you that we, loving you in and above all things, may obtain your promises, which exceed all that we can desire; 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

55. 10-13

For as the rain and the snow come down from heaven, and do not return there until they have watered the earth, making it bring forth and sprout, giving seed to the Sower and bread to the eater, so shall my word be that goes out from my mouth; it shall not return to me empty, but it shall accomplish that which I purpose, and succeed in the thing for which I sent it. For you shall go out in joy, and be led back in peace; the mountains and the hills before you shall burst into song, and all the trees of the field

shall clap their hands. Instead of the thorn shall come up the cypress; instead of the brier shall come up the myrtle; and it shall be to the Lord for a memorial, for an everlasting sign that shall not be cut off.

This is the Word of the Lord.

Thanks be to God.

Psalm 65. 9-13

Response: Happy are those whom you choose to live in your courts

You visit the earth and water it, you greatly enrich it;
the river of God is full of water;
you provide the people with grain,
for so you have prepared it. (R)

You water its furrows abundantly,
settling its ridges,
softening it with showers, and blessing its growth.
You crown the year with your bounty;
your wagon tracks overflow with richness, (R)

The pastures of the wilderness overflow,
the hills gird themselves with joy.
the meadows clothe themselves with flocks,
the valleys deck themselves with grain,
they shout and sing together for joy. (R)

A reading from Paul's letter to the Romans

8. 1-11

There is therefore now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus. For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus has set you free from the law of sin and of death. For God has done what the law, weakened by the flesh, could not do: by sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, and to deal with sin, he condemned sin in the flesh, so that the just requirement of the law might be fulfilled in us, who walk not according to the flesh but according to the Spirit. For those who live according to the flesh set their minds on the things of the flesh, but those who live according to the Spirit set their minds on the things of the Spirit. To set the mind on the flesh is death, but to set the mind on the Spirit is life and peace. For this reason the mind that is set on the flesh is hostile to God; it does not submit to God's law—indeed it cannot, and

those who are in the flesh cannot please God. But you are not in the flesh; you are in the Spirit, since the Spirit of God dwells in you. Anyone who does not have the Spirit of Christ does not belong to him. But if Christ is in you, though the body is dead because of sin, the Spirit is life because of righteousness. If the Spirit of him who raised Jesus from the dead dwells in you, he who raised Christ from the dead will give life to your mortal bodies also through his Spirit that dwells in you.

This is the Word of the Lord.

Thanks be to God.

The Gospel Acclamation:

Alleluia! Alleluia! Alleluia! But as for what was sown on good soil, this is the one who hears the word and understands it, who indeed bears fruit and yields
Alleluia! Alleluia! Alleluia!

Listen to the Gospel of Christ according to St. Matthew Glory to you, O Lord.

13. 1-9, 18-23

That same day Jesus went out of the house and sat beside the lake. Such great crowds gathered around him that he got into a boat and sat there, while the whole crowd stood on the beach. And he told them many things in parables, saying: 'Listen! A Sower went out to sow. And as he sowed, some seeds fell on the path, and the birds came and ate them up. Other seeds fell on rocky ground, where they did not have much soil, and they sprang up quickly, since they had no depth of soil. But when the sun rose, they were scorched; and since they had no root, they withered away. Other seeds fell among thorns, and the thorns grew up and choked them. Other seeds fell on good soil and brought forth grain, some a hundredfold, some sixty, some thirty. Let anyone with ears listen!' 'Hear then the parable of the sower. When anyone hears the word of the kingdom and does not understand it, the evil one comes and snatches away what is sown in the heart; this is what was sown on the path. As for what was sown on rocky ground, this is the one who hears the word and immediately receives it with joy; yet such a person has no root, but endures only for a while, and when trouble or persecution arises on account of the word, that person immediately falls away. As for what was sown among thorns, this is the one who hears the word, but the cares of the world and the lure of wealth choke the word, and it yields nothing. But as for what was sown on good soil, this is the one who hears the word and understands it, who indeed bears fruit and yields, in one case a hundredfold, in another sixty, and in another thirty.'

This is the Gospel of the Lord.

Praise to you, O Christ.

Meditation:

A class of teenagers were given the opportunity to work on a project. They were put into teams and at the end of the day they had to give a presentation. Unfortunately, not everyone was able to work as a team member and various characteristics came to the fore. One team had an individual who, putting it politely was rather vocal and would not let any other member have any input. Another member had plenty of good ideas but after hearing the way one person was spoken to, knew it was pointless trying to speak so just noted the ideas and kept quiet. The final team member just lost interest because of poor team spirit which created an unhealthy attitude. As the day progressed, the team did the best they could and before long they were giving their presentation. Unfortunately, the team described did not score very well. They were disappointed, but without exchanging words, each member knew the problem except for the vocal member who asked, "Where did we go wrong?"

All eyes turned in a certain direction and members explained their views. One said, "You ignored what I said" Another commented "What was the point in being there, I just felt useless. And finally "Why didn't you let everyone say something so that we could all give and listen to each other's ideas" Instead of arguing, they discussed the day, when suddenly the vocal member saw the error of their ways, apologised and promised to improve their listening skills in readiness for the next time.

Matthew speaks of a farmer sowing seeds, some fall on a path and are eaten by birds, others fall where there are rocks but little soil so even though the plants could grow quickly, the sun dries them and they die from lack of soil. Then we hear of the seeds that fall among the weeds and thorns which stop the seeds from growing and finally Matthew speaks of the seeds that fall on good soil and grow, allowing the farmer a harvest. Everything Matthew speaks of is understandable so what is the parable trying to teach us.

Firstly, it shows the different ways that people respond to their faith and also questions ourselves as to which best describes each one of us. The first way of responding to God is represented by the path. The path is ground that has become so hard that the seed doesn't have a chance to grow. The next style of response spoken about in the parable is a shallow person.—not shallow in their personality but shallow in their faith as they accept God's message and accept it well at first but when they are taken out of the safe environment of for example their church or workplace then things become very different. It is possible that the last thing they would want to do is stand up and be counted as a Christian. But what happens if people in work don't share the same Christian values, do we stick to our faith? or do

we become weak in our faith? Strangely enough it is when we are most weak that God helps us the most as being a Christian is not something that we do on our own or in our own strength. The third type of person could be called the distracted as they listened to God's word and started to put it into practice but then they let all the distractions of this life build up around them and choke their faith just as the weeds and thorns stopped the seeds from growing. The final group of people are fruitful people. These are people who let God's word fully into their lives and allow it to do its work; changing them into the kind of people God wants them to be. God wants to make us more like Jesus, being people who not only hear God's word but retain God's Word.

On hearing the parable and the explanation, we now need to think about how we not only as individuals and Christians can be the seeds that fell in the good soil and ask how do we improve our relationship with God. The answer may be, if we are the seeds of the good soil, we should be attempting to help the people represented by the other seeds through living out our Christian faith in our thoughts, words and actions. In other words, we are communicating with people. It is said that communication is a two way process and therefore people will react to what we say and what we do. Communication is so important as just showing an act of kindness or enquiring about someone who has been ill could be all it takes to help someone who has fallen by the wayside return to their faith. Faith is one of those parts of our lives that we don't just need to work at now and again. Faith is something we need to work at constantly. One important aspect of developing our faith is through prayer which is an opportunity for two way communication between us and God, a conversation with God where we can talk to Him about our happiness, our sadness, our loneliness, our worries and where we can also ask Him for help, direction and guidance in our lives. God is someone we can talk to about anything and someone we can turn to for help. The wonderful thing about God is that no matter what we say to Him, he never fails to listen. Good, loyal and true friends can be hard to find but we don't have to search for God because he is always there for us—willing to listen and willing to help.

It could be said that the parable teaches us about ourselves in the same way that the young people learnt about themselves. The parable also teaches us about trust because when we trust Jesus he will teach us and through us following his teachings we will change because Jesus will change us.

Similarly, the young people all learnt from their group work how hard it is to work as a team and rather than exclude people they make sure that all are included. As they

had the insight to discuss where they went wrong, they saw the error of their ways and were prepared to change their ways the following time. An anagram of the word team is mate, a friend and that is what Jesus is to, us our friend as long as we keep reminding ourselves that we too need to improve our listening skills so that we continue to be taught by Jesus. If we want to be taught by Jesus we need to remind ourselves that the seeds in the parable were equal in their make up, it was the soil where they fell that allowed them to grow differently. Now we need to ask ourselves one question. **Which kind of soil are we like?**

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. We have a gospel to proclaim.

- 1. We have a gospel to proclaim,
good news for men in all the earth;
the gospel of a Saviour's name:
we sing his glory, tell his worth.**
- 2. Tell of his birth at Bethlehem,
not in a royal house or hall,
but in a stable dark and dim,
the Word made flesh, a light for all.**
- 3. Tell of his death at Calvary,
hated by those he came to save;
in lonely suff'ring on the cross:
for all he loved, his life he gave.**
- 4. Tell of that glorious Easter morn,
empty the tomb, for he was free;
He broke the pow'r of death and hell
that we might share his victory.**
- 5. Tell of his reign at God's right hand,
by all creation glorified.
He sends his Spirit on his Church
to live for him, the Lamb who died.**
- 6. Now we rejoice to name him King:
Jesus is Lord of all the earth.
This gospel-message we proclaim:
we sing his glory, tell his worth**