

[OPENING PRAYERS AND HOLY COMMUNION ARE AVAILABLE AS A VIDEO HERE](#)

PART 1 – OPENING PRAYERS

WELCOME

The Lord be with you.
And also with you.

SENTENCE

The wages of sin is death, but the free gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord.
Romans 6.23

PRAYER OF PREPARATION

Let us pray.
Almighty God,
to whom all hearts are open,
all desires known,
and from whom no secrets are hidden:
cleansing 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.

TWO GREAT COMMANDMENTS

Our Lord Jesus Christ said:
You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your mind, and with all your strength. This is the great and first commandment. And a second is like it:
You shall love your neighbour as yourself. Matthew 22.37–40, Mark 12.30–31

CONFESSION AND ABSOLUTION

In penitence and faith,
let us confess our sins to Almighty God:

Merciful God,
our maker and our judge,
we have sinned against you
in thought, word, and deed,
and in what we have failed to do:
we have not loved you with our whole heart;
we have not loved our neighbours as ourselves;
we repent, and are sorry for all our sins.
Father, forgive us.
Strengthen us to love and obey you
in newness of life;
through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

Almighty God,
who has promised forgiveness to all who turn to him in faith:
pardon you and set you free from all your sins,
strengthen you in all goodness
and keep you in eternal life,
through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

PRAYER OF THE DAY

O God,
who for our redemption
gave your only-begotten Son
to suffer death upon a cross,
and by his glorious resurrection
delivered us from the power of the enemy:
grant us so to die daily to sin
that we may evermore live with him in the joy of his resurrection;
through the same Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

PLEASE PAUSE THE VIDEO

PART 2 — AN ALL AGE VIDEO ON THE ONE ANOTHERS, PART 3: SERVE ONE ANOTHER, AND
DOWNLOADABLE MATERIAL FOR YOUNGER CHILDREN [HERE](#)

PART 3 — LOOK UP AND READ THROUGH THE READINGS, LISTEN TO THE [SERMON PODCAST](#) (READ
ALONG IF YOU WISH) BY REV JENNIE SAVAGE, AND PRAY THE INTERCESSIONS, TODAY BY ALISON
BURGESS.

READINGS

Romans 6:15-23
Psalm 89:1-4, 15-18
Matthew 11:2-6, 28-30

SERMON BY REV JENNIE SAVAGE

[Available to listen online and/or download – access via Pentecost 2020 link and notice also a reasonable library of past sermons for you to listen to as you exercise or meditate...](#)

Matthew 11:2-6, 28-30

Let us pray:

Lord, we thank you for the gift of your Word;

open our hearts and our minds to your Spirit as reflect and pray. Amen.

When I was a child and deciding what I wanted to be when I grew up, I first thought I would be a librarian, and then a writer. I spent a lot of time in libraries, particularly in secondary school. Eventually I became a ballet dancer which was sort of a surprise. Ballet careers tend to be short, so I had to think again about what I wanted to be – next.

Perhaps a photographer?

I became a travel agent.

Later, I became a minister of religion, how about that?

When I grow up – I remember that song on a Shirley Temple record! (Now I feel really old).

Shirley sang:

I'll soon be grown up tall

So I've got to think what I will be

When I'm no longer small.

We plan to grow up bigger and stronger.

Businesses plan to grow bigger and stronger.

So do churches.

Who would plan to be little?

Who would plan to be weak?

What we need, is to be in control!

Jesus prayed in Matthew 11 verse 25-26:

'I thank you, Father, Lord of heaven and earth, because you have hidden these things from the wise and the intelligent and have revealed them to infants; yes, Father, for such was your gracious will.'

Infants?

Little ones.

The phrase 'little ones' pops up in Matthew's gospel.

It is thought that 'the little ones' is the cherished name of Matthew's community, the Messianic Jewish sect of Judaism who were becoming more and more ostracised from the main body.

Jesus used the term in the reading we heard last week, the end of chapter 10. In chapter 18 he talks about not putting stumbling blocks in front of the little ones, and the special regard God has for them.

'Little ones' does not indicate an age group, rather humble, or disadvantaged, or marginalised.

Another phrase Jesus uses for his disciples is 'you of little faith'.

Now some read this as a rebuke, but it is not necessarily the case.

These situations are usually ones where the disciples are experiencing fear, let alone understanding what is going on.

It has become almost something of a sport to make jokes about the disciples, like how thick they are, they just don't get it, and how they fail.

I feel that is rather unfair.

It is not only anachronistic for us to project our expectations of discipleship back into that original time, but it also exhibits a blindness to our own so-called knowledge and behaviour.

You of little faith can be put next to the term 'little ones'.

Listen to these words from Jesus, first Matthew 6:

But if God so clothes the grass of the field, which is alive today and tomorrow is thrown into the oven, will he not much more clothe you—you of little faith?

And Matthew 17 in response to their inability to cast out a demon:

'Because of your little faith. For truly I tell you, if you have faith the size of a mustard seed, you will say to this mountain, "Move from here to there", and it will move; and nothing will be impossible for you.'

These can be read as an encouragement rather than a scolding. The disciples will need to overcome fear, and will need to grow in trust and faith in God.

But that does take time and guidance, which Jesus provides.

'Little ones' and those with 'little faith' are not limited to the twelve disciples.

At the start of chapter 11, Jesus yet again gets interrogated.

In the last couple of chapters he has been approached by the Pharisees, the Sadducees and the disciples of John the Baptist, all questioning his ministry and methods.

It is the disciples of John again, but this time with a question from their leader who is in prison. John once pointed to Jesus as the coming Messiah, but now he has his doubts.

Jesus tells John's disciples to report back what they are seeing: the blind seeing, the lame walking, the lepers cleansed, the deaf hearing, the dead alive, and the poor receiving good news.

And blessed is anyone who takes no offense at me.

Last week, I talked about how many people were offended by Jesus' ministry. They did not like the sort of people who flocked to him. They did not appreciate his compassion for the poor, the sick, and the marginalised, aka 'the little ones'.

Between these first few verses and the last of this chapter read today, Jesus gets angry with the crowd, and then gets angrier with the cities and towns he has been travelling through who have beheld his ministry, wonderful acts of healing and restoration.

Woe to you Chorazin, Bethsaida, even Capernaum!

If the deeds of power done in you had been done in wicked cities of old, they would have repented, turned to God.

After his rants, Jesus then prays that prayer:

'I thank you, Father, Lord of heaven and earth, because you have hidden these things from the wise and the intelligent and have revealed them to infants; yes, Father, for such was your gracious will. All things have been handed over to me by my Father; and no one knows the Son except the Father, and no one knows the Father except the Son and anyone to whom the Son chooses to reveal him.'

The infants are the little ones, not regarded as wise or important.

They are the poor in spirit, the meek, the merciful, the persecuted, all whom Jesus calls blessed (5:3-12). They are the sick and the lame, the lepers and demon-possessed, the tax collectors and sinners, who come to Jesus for healing of body and spirit.

And so this is the context for these last most famous verses:

'Come to me, all you that are weary and are carrying heavy burdens, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you, and learn from me; for I am gentle and humble in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light.'

It is those who are not blind to their neediness, their poverty or their weakness who are able to come to Jesus. He invites those very people.

These words used to be called 'words of comfort' in the old Book of Common Prayer. It got changed to Words of Assurance, for it was felt that people understand the word comfort differently today, that it is all about ease.

While Jesus invites us to lay down our burdens, he asks us to take up another.

What?

Take my yoke upon you.

To be yoked is not really that attractive.

The picture is of lowly beasts yoked to a plough doing the long slow work of furrowing the field. (And that is an interesting image for when we get to all the parables of the seed and soil in chapter 13!)

There is a practice of yoking a young and inexperienced animal alongside one who is well-trained. The more experienced creature trains the other almost by example - gradually, it learns how to work until the day when it can manage alone.

Alternatively, an older one approaching the end of its working life may be yoked to the one in its prime - so that it can still work but the strain is taken by the partner.

So when Jesus invites us to take his yoke, he is alongside bearing what we need to bear with us.

His promise has always been to be with us to the end of the age.

In the hymn, ***Just a closer walk with Thee***, a couple of the verses pick up this theme of the little ones walking with Jesus alongside.

Let these verses be our prayer to finish:

I am weak, but Thou art strong;

Jesus, keep me from all wrong;

I'll be satisfied as long

As I walk, let me walk close to Thee.

Through this world of toil and snares,

If I falter, Lord, who cares?

Who with me my burden shares?

None but Thee, dear Lord, none but Thee.

Amen.

INTERCESSIONS BY ALISON BURGESS

Lord we thank you for the gift of this day and for your mercy and grace shown to us new every morning. In the quietness we bring before you the concerns of our hearts in the knowledge that you care deeply for us and each part of your creation.

Father, these troubled times remind us just how much the world needs to hear the declaration that Jesus is the one who brings hope and a future. Bless all who serve you taking the gospel message to those who do not know Jesus Christ as Lord and Saviour. We ask you to guard, protect and guide all missionaries, encourage and refresh them when times are hard. May we too be witnesses for you in our daily lives.

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

Lord Jesus Christ, healer and friend, continue to care for your world through the danger and uncertainty of the coronavirus epidemic. To people who are sick, bring healing. To people who are displaced, isolated, or cut off from family, friends or work, bring comfort and companionship. Work with medical staff as they care for the sick, and protect them from harm. Give skill and fruitful research to scientists as they search for treatments, prevention and a cure. As we begin school holidays in this difficult situation, we ask you to watch over all families and strengthen relationships with each other and with you. May everyone return healthy and ready for a new term and activities in your service.

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

We ask your blessing for the leaders of our church – for Archbishop Philip, Bishop Paul, for Jennie, Sam and their families, for the wardens and parish council members. We pray for our parish as we journey through this difficult time. Guide us and keep us close to You and supportive of each other.

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

Father we bring to you now those in need of whatever kind. God of mercy remember the homeless, the destitute, the sick, the aged and all who have no-one to care for them. Heal those who are broken in body or spirit. We pray for carers around the world, that they, too, may know your presence, and experience new stamina and purpose in their attention to the needs of others. Within our own community, comfort and heal all who are in sorrow, need, sickness, or any other trouble. We bring before you those we have on our hearts, as we silently name them.

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

Lord, we praise you for all your servants whose lives have honoured Christ. Encourage us by their example.

Accept our prayers through Jesus Christ our Lord who taught us to pray:

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.
Save us from the time of trial,
and deliver us from evil.
For the kingdom, the power, and the glory are yours
now and for ever. Amen.

PLEASE RESUME THE VIDEO FOR HOLY COMMUNION

GREETING OF PEACE

We are the body of Christ.
His Spirit is with us.
The peace of the Lord be always with you.
And also with you.

OFFERTORY PRAYER

Blessed are you, Lord, God of all creation.
Through your goodness we have these gifts to share.
Accept and use our offerings for your glory
and for the service of your kingdom.
Blessed be God for ever.

HOLY COMMUNION

The Lord be with you,
And also with you.
Lift up your hearts;
We lift them to the Lord.
Let us give thanks to the Lord our God
It is right to give our thanks and praise.

You are worthy, our Lord and God,
to receive glory and honour and power,
for you created all things,
making us in your own image.

We praise you for your Son, our Saviour Jesus Christ,
who by his death on the cross and rising to new life
offered the one true sacrifice for sin
and obtained an eternal deliverance for his people.
Therefore, we lift our voices to praise you, saying,

Holy, holy, holy Lord,
God of power and might,
heaven and earth are full of your glory.
Hosanna in the highest.

And now we thank you for these gifts of bread and wine; may we who receive them, as Jesus said,
share his body and his blood.

On the night he was betrayed, he took bread and gave you thanks. He broke the bread and gave it
to his friends, and said, 'Take and eat. This is my body given for you. Do this in remembrance of
me.'

After supper he took the cup and gave you thanks.
He shared the cup with them and said,
'This is my blood poured out so that sins may be forgiven.
Do this in remembrance of me.'

**Christ has died,
Christ is risen,
Christ will come again.**

**You have gathered us together to feed on Christ and to remember all he has done for us:
Fill us with your Spirit that we may follow Jesus in all we do and say, working for justice and
bringing your peace to this world that you have made.
Accept our prayers through Jesus Christ our Lord.**

**Blessing and honour and glory and power,
are yours forever and ever. Amen**

THE BREAKING AND SHARING OF THE BREAD AND WINE

**We break this bread to share in the body of Christ.
We who are many are one body,
for we all share in the one bread.**

DISTRIBUTION OF COMMUNION

POST COMMUNION PRAYER

**Gracious God,
we thank you that in this sacrament
you assure us of your goodness and love.
Accept our sacrifice of praise and thanksgiving
and help us to grow in love and obedience
that we may serve you in the world
and finally be brought to that table
where all your saints feast with you for ever.**

**Father,
we offer ourselves to you as a living sacrifice
through Jesus Christ our Lord.
Send us out in the power of your Spirit
to live and work to your praise and glory.**

AFFIRMATION OF FAITH

**We believe in one God,
who made and loves all that is.
We believe in Jesus Christ,
God's only Son, our Lord,
who was born, lived, died and rose again,
and is coming to call all to account.
We believe in the Holy Spirit,
who calls, equips and sends out God's people,
and brings all things to their true end.**

**This is our faith, the faith of the Church:
We believe in one God,
Father, Son and Holy Spirit. Amen.**

BLESSING

**The peace of God which passes all understanding keep your hearts and minds in the knowledge and love of God, and of his Son, Jesus Christ our Lord;
and the blessing of God almighty, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit, be among you and remain with you always. Amen.**

DISMISSAL

**Go in peace to love and serve the Lord:
In the name of Christ. Amen.**