

Christ Church

High Harrogate



Living Water

Season of Creation 2026

IMMERSION IN LIVING WATER

Ezekiel 47:9, 12

Matthew 20:1-16

A Parish service for when we're
UNITED but APART

for the

**Sixteenth Sunday
after Trinity**

20th September 2026

Welcome to Christ Church, praying and united, with the whole Church of God ; may this bring a blessing upon your home, as also upon the needs of loved ones and the world,

We build upon all that we have shared and shared still, as now we rejoice in our renewal in Christ's grace, gather as the Church, and unite in fellowship, proclamation and prayer from the place of our own homes.

Be it 8am or 10am or other _ still, maybe, the wisdom to quieten our mobile phone  and be very much in prayer .

Please sit very comfortably.

Please feel free to sing ; and maybe to speak some parts of this prayer time out-loud _ you may find it surprisingly helpful.

Please, above all, simply know that we are all together ; and as we pray where we are now, so do many many more, across the town, across these towns, and across the world,

The Lord is here.

His Spirit is with us.

Matthew

The Greeting

In welcome of one-another, near or far -

The Grace of our Lord, Jesus Christ,
the Love of God,
and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit,
be with us all.

[And also with you.]

Prayers of Penitence

God's whole creation groans.
Our sin affects all around us. So let us —
confess our sins in penitence and faith.

- Silence is kept for a short time, in Confession and Prayer.



**All Creator God, we confess that we have
not honoured and obeyed you.
We have
broken our relationships with one another,
abused your fragile creation,
wounded your love
and marred your holy image in us.
We are sorry and ashamed
and repent of all our sins.
Father, forgive us. Lead us from apathy to love.
Strengthen us as stewards of your precious gifts
and of your glorious creation,
for the sake of your Son, Jesus Christ,
who died for us.
Amen.**

In sharing and receiving the Absolution of God :

May Almighty God, who in Jesus Christ
has given us a kingdom that cannot be shaken :
forgive us our sins, open our eyes to his truth,
strengthen us to do his will
and lead us in the full joy of his kingdom.
Amen.

The Collect



O Lord, we beseech you mercifully to hear the prayers
of your people who call upon you ;
and grant that they may both perceive and know
what things they ought to do,
and also may have grace and power
faithfully to fulfil them ;
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.

The Liturgy of the Word



The First Reading - Exodus 16 : 2 - 15

The whole congregation of the Israelites complained against Moses and Aaron in the wilderness. ³The Israelites said to them, 'If only we had died by the hand of the LORD in the land of Egypt, when we sat by the fleshpots and ate our fill of bread ; for you have brought us out into this wilderness to kill this whole assembly with hunger.' ⁴Then the LORD said to Moses, 'I am going to rain bread from heaven for you, and each day the people shall go out and gather enough for that day. In that way I will test them, whether they will follow my instruction or not. ⁵On the sixth day, when they prepare what they bring in, it will be twice as much as they gather on other days.' ⁶So Moses and Aaron said to all the Israelites, 'In the evening you shall know that it was the LORD who brought you out of the land of Egypt, ⁷and in the morning you shall see the glory of the LORD, because he has heard your complaining against the LORD. For what are we, that you complain against us ?' ⁸And Moses said, 'When the LORD gives you meat to eat in the evening and your fill of bread in the morning, because the LORD has heard the complaining that you utter against him - what are we ? Your complaining is not against us but against the LORD.' ⁹Then Moses said to Aaron, 'Say to the whole congregation of the Israelites, "Draw near to the LORD, for he has heard your complaining." ' ¹⁰And as Aaron spoke to the whole congregation of the Israelites, they looked towards the wilderness, and the glory of the

LORD appeared in the cloud. ¹¹The LORD spoke to Moses and said, ¹²'I have heard the complaining of the Israelites ; say to them, "At twilight you shall eat meat, and in the morning you shall have your fill of bread ; then you shall know that I am the LORD your God." ' ¹³In the evening quails came up and covered the camp ; and in the morning there was a layer of dew around the camp. ¹⁴When the layer of dew lifted, there on the surface of the wilderness was a fine flaky substance, as fine as frost on the ground. ¹⁵When the Israelites saw it, they said to one another, 'What is it ?' For they did not know what it was. Moses said to them, 'It is the bread that the LORD has given you to eat.

New Revised Standard Version

This is the word of the Lord.

All Thanks be to God.

The Second Reading - *Philippians 1 : 21 - end*

For to me, living is Christ and dying is gain. ²²If I am to live in the flesh, that means fruitful labour for me ; and I do not know which I prefer. ²³I am hard pressed between the two : my desire is to depart and be with Christ, for that is far better ; ²⁴but to remain in the flesh is more necessary for you. ²⁵Since I am convinced of this, I know that I will remain and continue with all of you for your progress and joy in faith, ²⁶so that I may share abundantly in your boasting in Christ Jesus when I come to you again. ²⁷Only, live your life in a manner worthy of the gospel of Christ, so that, whether I come and see you or am absent and hear about you, I will know that you are standing firm in one spirit, striving side by side with one mind for the faith of the gospel, ²⁸and are in no way intimidated by your opponents. For them this is evidence of their destruction, but of your salvation. And this is God's doing. ²⁹For he has graciously granted you the privilege not only of believing in Christ, but of suffering for him as well - ³⁰since you are having the same struggle that you saw I had and now hear that I still have.

New Revised Standard Version

This is the word of the Lord.

All Thanks be to God.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=w3FYM5yxjJs>

I heard the voice of Jesus say,
“Come unto me and rest ;
lay down, thou weary one, lay down
thy head upon my breast.”
I came to Jesus as I was,
weary, and worn, and sad ;
I found in him a resting-place,
and he has made me glad.

I heard the voice of Jesus say,
“Behold, I freely give --
the living waters, thirsty one ;
stoop down, and drink, and live.”
I came to Jesus, and I drank
of that life-giving stream ;
my thirst was quenched, my soul revived,
and now I live in him.

I heard the voice of Jesus say,
“I am this dark world’s light ;
look unto me, thy morn shall rise,
and all thy day be bright.”
I looked to Jesus, and I found
in him my star, my sun ;
and in that light of life I’ll walk
till travelling days are done.

*Words: Horatius Bonar (1808-1889)
Tune: Kingsfold*

The Gospel Reading

Matthew 20 : 1 - 16



The Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ according to Matthew.
Glory to you, O Lord.

Jesus said - 'For the kingdom of heaven is like a landowner who went out early in the morning to hire labourers for his vineyard. ²After agreeing with the labourers for the usual daily wage, he sent them into his vineyard. ³When he went out about nine o'clock, he saw others standing idle in the market-place ; ⁴and he said to them, "You also go into the vineyard, and I will pay you whatever is right." So they went. ⁵When he went out again about noon and about three o'clock, he did the same. ⁶And about five o'clock he went out and found others standing around ; and he said to them, "Why are you standing here idle all day ?" ⁷They said to him, "Because no one has hired us." He said to them, "You also go into the vineyard." ⁸When evening came, the owner of the vineyard said to his manager, "Call the labourers and give them their pay, beginning with the last and then going to the first." ⁹When those hired about five o'clock came, each of them received the usual daily wage. ¹⁰Now when the first came, they thought they would receive more ; but each of them also received the usual daily wage. ¹¹And when they received it, they grumbled against the landowner, ¹²saying, "These last worked only one hour, and you have made them equal to us who have borne the burden of the day and the scorching heat." ¹³But he replied to one of them, "Friend, I am doing you no wrong ; did you not agree with me for the usual daily wage ? ¹⁴Take what belongs to you and go; I choose to give to this last the same as I give to you. ¹⁵Am I not allowed to do what I choose with what belongs to me ? Or are you envious because I am generous ?" ¹⁶So the last will be first, and the first will be last.'

New Revised Standard Version

This is the Gospel of the Lord.

All Praise to you, O Christ.



I did meet a 'Holier Than Them' once who compared themselves - I thought rather strangely - to *'those who've worked the day, bourn the burden and the heat'* ___ and are now ___ grumbling. I wasn't sure but I didn't feel they'd seen the truths of the parable.

I always try to take note of the Who or What to which the comparison in a parable is focused ___ the kingdom of heaven is here : the Landowner. The Landowner themselves, not the vineyard, not the workers ; and the defining characteristics seem to be : constant, repeated invitation ; and, generosity. All is given to Each. The full reward, the full day's wage ; no matter when in the day - or when in our life - we enter in ___ the full reward. - May beg the question of, *'Well, why work the full day ? Let's run off, play. live the life of Riley (whoever Riley is ?!) ___ then come back later, if we're bound to be invited in ?'* - It's a simple logic. - In turn begs the question : *What is my life for ? Will I know my way back ? Will I know when it's not too late for one more 'spin of the dice' ? ___ or, will I recognise this Landowner again after all others I've seen when I've turned elsewhere ?* - And if all those just seem a bit negative, how about ___ *Why would I turn down Purpose in my life ? Why would I turn away a full day of life's Reward ? ___ and having all my life's days in which to enjoy and 'spend' it ?*

Every time we come to the reading of the Manna in the Wilderness on that first day, I wonder : *Did Moses Know this was the promised bread ? Was he Sure, or just a leap of faith ?* Elsewhere in Scripture, and as came in one of our readings through the week, Jesus said of faith and prayer_ *"Truly I tell you ... if you do not doubt in your heart, but believe that what you say will come to pass, it will be done for you ... whatever you ask for in prayer, believe that you have received it, and it will be yours."* (Mark 11:23,24)

- Sounds almost like a recipe of self-delusion ; but in contrast I think it is a statement of 'What Already Is'. As in the famous words of the writer Marianne Williamson _

"Our deepest fear is not that we are inadequate _ it is that we are powerful beyond measure" _ it is not that We are Not loved or seen, by others, by God _ it is that we Are : we are seen, we are cherished, we are known, we are loved _ what does That then invite or ask or enable us to Be ? - Suddenly we have few limits, we have open Purpose, we have Full reward.

Moses wrestling with the people, as they wrestled with all this, and Moses, I suspect, wrestled within himself over What to do, How to do it, How to lead, how to keep his feet on the ground whilst knowingly talking with God. Then St Paul _ his own turning - opening - exploring thoughts. He raises the notion of 'suffering for Christ' _ which is perhaps part-to-blame for the thought since that *'to suffer is good and no true reward can come without it'* _ which seems to me a false interpretation. But in a world with a great deal of struggle or hurt - then, or since, or now - to know 'this', that you are in the fellow company of Christ, is a deeply reassuring affirmation ; in contrast to the condemnation of the *'Holier-Than Thous'* in saying, *'Well what have You - or you ancestors, such is their eagerness to find blame - done, to be in such struggle as this ?'*

No such thing is true. You are seen, you are beloved, and you are known, in all your labours and your striving, doubts, falls, wrong-turns ; and If it should be that there are times of hurt, better that these be as we strive for Good in Christ, rather than in the doing of harm.

Stay with Christ, says Paul.

Stay with God, says Moses.

Come to me, says God, I see you and invite You to come find your purpose, day by day, no matter when you hear me or see me calling. Receive in full, the rewards of heaven - in all your days' journeys. You're neither too late, too good, or too bad ; you might not think yourself the first, but you won't be the last _ and you'll be surprised by how good you are.

Amen.

The Revd Matthew Evans

The Creed

**Holy, holy, holy is the Lord God Almighty,
who was and is and is to come.**

**We believe in God the Father, who created all things :
for by his will they were created and have their being.**

**We believe in God the Son who was slain,
for with his blood he purchased us for God
from every tribe and language,
from every people and nation.**

**We believe in God the Holy Spirit.
The Spirit and the Bride say 'Come'.
Even so, come Lord Jesus !
Amen.**

In the power of the Spirit, and in union with Christ,
let us pray to our Father _

O God, the creator and preserver of all,
we pray for people in every place and every kind of need ;
we pray for your grace, your wisdom, your inspiration and care;
make your ways known on earth,
your saving health among and for the nations.
Lord in your mercy - **hear our prayer.**

We pray for your Church ; guide and govern us by your Spirit,
teach and lead us that we and all who call upon your Name
may be led into the way of Truth, and hold the faith in –
unity of spirit, the bond of peace, in righteousness of life.
Lord in your mercy - **hear our prayer.**

We pray for, and commend into your goodness,
all those who are in any way afflicted or distressed -
those known to us and those known to you alone -
those in sickness of body, mind, or spirit :
comfort and relieve them in their need,
give them patience in their troubles,
bring good out of all afflictions,
Lord in your mercy - **hear our prayer.**

We remember in love and faithfulness
all who have gone before us in the peace of Christ : . . .
We give you praise for all your faithful ones,
we make our prayer with and for all who mourn.
Lord in your mercy - **hear our prayer.**

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.**

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=iwZvfVJD1vQ>

The King of love my Shepherd is,
whose goodness faileth never ;
I nothing lack if I am his
and he is mine for ever.



Where streams of living water flow
my ransomed soul he leadeth,
and where the verdant pastures grow
with food celestial feedeth.

Perverse and foolish oft I strayed,
but yet in love he sought me,
and on his shoulder gently laid,
and home, rejoicing, brought me.

In death's dark vale I fear no ill
with thee, dear Lord, beside me ;
thy rod and staff my comfort still,
thy cross before to guide me.

Thou spread'st a table in my sight ;
thy unction, grace bestoweth :
and O what transport of delight
from thy pure chalice floweth !

And so through all the length of days
thy goodness faileth never ;
Good Shepherd, may I sing thy praise
within thy house for ever.

*Words : H W Baker (1821-1877)
from Psalm 23
Tune : Dominus Regit Me*

The Dismissal

The Blessing



May God, the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ,
the source of all goodness and growth,
pour his blessing upon all things created,
and upon we his children,
that we may use his gifts to his glory
and the welfare of all peoples ;
And may the blessing of God almighty,
the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit,
be among us and remain with us always.
Amen.

The Peace

We are all one in Christ Jesus.
We belong to him through faith,
heirs of the promise of the Spirit of peace.

*Please look to your ROOM and HOME _
--- please look from your WINDOW ---*

In our place, heart and home, and to all the world :

The peace of the Lord be always with you.
{ - and also with you. Alleluia }

The Dismissal

So let us go into the day in peace ;
and may we love and serve the Lord
in the name of Christ. Alleluia, alleluia ! Amen.