

Christ Church

High Harrogate



Matthew 22 : 1 - 14

A Parish service for when we're
UNITED but **APART**

for the

**Nineteenth Sunday
after Trinity**

11th October 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 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.

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.

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



**All Most merciful God,
Father of our Lord Jesus Christ,
we confess that we have sinned
in thought, word and deed.
We have not loved you with our whole heart.
We have not loved our neighbours as ourselves.
In your mercy
forgive what we have been,
help us to amend what we are,
and direct what we shall be ;
that we may do justly, love mercy,
and walk humbly with you our God. Amen.**

In sharing and receiving the Absolution of God :

May the God of love and power
forgive us and free us from our sins,
heal and strengthen us by his Spirit
and raise us to new life in Christ our Lord. **Amen.**



O God, forasmuch as without you
we are not able to please you ;
mercifully grant that your Holy Spirit
may in all things direct and rule our hearts ;
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 32 : 1 - 14*

When the people saw that Moses delayed to come down from the mountain, the people gathered around Aaron and said to him, 'Come, make gods for us, who shall go before us ; as for this Moses, the man who brought us up out of the land of Egypt, we do not know what has become of him.' ²Aaron said to them, 'Take off the gold rings that are on the ears of your wives, your sons, and your daughters, and bring them to me.' ³So all the people took off the gold rings from their ears, and brought them to Aaron. ⁴He took the gold from them, formed it in a mould, and cast an image of a calf ; and they said, 'These are your gods, O Israel, who brought you up out of the land of Egypt !' ⁵When Aaron saw this, he built an altar before it ; and Aaron made proclamation and said, 'Tomorrow shall be a festival to the Lord.' ⁶They rose early the next day, and offered burnt-offerings and brought sacrifices of well-being ; and the people sat down to eat and drink, and rose up to revel. ⁷The Lord said to Moses, 'Go down at once ! Your people, whom you brought up out of the land of Egypt, have acted perversely ; ⁸they have been quick to turn aside from the way that I commanded them ; they have cast for themselves an image of a calf, and have worshipped it and sacrificed to it, and said, "These are your gods, O Israel, who brought you up out of the land of Egypt !" ' ⁹The Lord said to Moses, 'I have seen this people, how stiff-necked they are. ¹⁰Now let me alone, so that my wrath may burn hot against them and I may consume them ; and of you I will make a great nation.' ¹¹But Moses implored the Lord his God, and said, 'O Lord, why does your wrath burn hot against your people, whom you

brought out of the land of Egypt with great power and with a mighty hand ? ¹²Why should the Egyptians say, “It was with evil intent that he brought them out to kill them in the mountains, and to consume them from the face of the earth”? Turn from your fierce wrath ; change your mind and do not bring disaster on your people. ¹³Remember Abraham, Isaac, and Israel, your servants, how you swore to them by your own self, saying to them, “I will multiply your descendants like the stars of heaven, and all this land that I have promised I will give to your descendants, and they shall inherit it for ever.” ¹⁴And the Lord changed his mind about the disaster that he planned to bring on his people.

New Revised Standard Version

This is the word of the Lord.

All Thanks be to God.

The Second Reading - *Philippians 4 : 1 - 9*

My brothers and sisters, whom I love and long for, my joy and crown, stand firm in the Lord in this way, my beloved. I urge Euodia and I urge Syntyche to be of the same mind in the Lord. Yes, and I ask you also, my loyal companion, help these women, for they have struggled beside me in the work of the gospel, together with Clement and the rest of my co-workers, whose names are in the book of life. Rejoice in the Lord always ; again I will say, Rejoice. Let your gentleness be known to everyone. The Lord is near. Do not worry about anything, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God. And the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus. Finally, beloved, whatever is true, whatever is honourable, whatever is just, whatever is pure, whatever is pleasing, whatever is commendable, if there is any excellence and if there is anything worthy of praise, think about these things. Keep on doing the things that you have learned and received and heard and seen in me, and the God of peace will be with you.

New Revised Standard Version

This is the word of the Lord.

All Thanks be to God.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Wz1iaF4NJFE>

Dear Lord and Father of mankind,
forgive our foolish ways !
re-clothe us in our rightful mind,
in purer lives thy service find,
in deeper reverence praise,
in deeper reverence praise.

In simple trust like theirs who heard,
beside the Syrian sea,
the gracious calling of the Lord,
let us, like them, without a word
rise up and follow thee,
rise up and follow thee.

O Sabbath rest by Galilee !
O calm of hills above,
where Jesus knelt to share with thee
the silence of eternity,
interpreted by love,
interpreted by love !

Drop thy still dews of quietness,
till all our strivings cease ;
take from our souls the strain and stress,
and let our ordered lives confess
the beauty of thy peace,
the beauty of thy peace.

Breathe through the heats of our desire
thy coolness and thy balm ;
let sense be dumb, let flesh retire ;
speak through the earthquake, wind, and fire,
O still small voice of calm,
O still small voice of calm.

Words : John Whittier (1807-1892)

Tune : Repton

The Gospel Reading

Matthew 22 : 1 - 14



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

Once more Jesus spoke to them in parables, saying : ‘The kingdom of heaven may be compared to a king who gave a wedding banquet for his son. He sent his slaves to call those who had been invited to the wedding banquet, but they would not come. Again he sent other slaves, saying, “Tell those who have been invited : Look, I have prepared my dinner, my oxen and my fat calves have been slaughtered, and everything is ready ; come to the wedding banquet.” But they made light of it and went away, one to his farm, another to his business, while the rest seized his slaves, maltreated them, and killed them. The king was enraged. He sent his troops, destroyed those murderers, and burned their city. Then he said to his slaves, “The wedding is ready, but those invited were not worthy. Go therefore into the main streets, and invite everyone you find to the wedding banquet.” Those slaves went out into the streets and gathered all whom they found, both good and bad ; so the wedding hall was filled with guests. But when the king came in to see the guests, he noticed a man there who was not wearing a wedding robe, and he said to him, “Friend, how did you get in here without a wedding robe ?” And he was speechless. Then the king said to the attendants, “Bind him hand and foot, and throw him into the outer darkness, where there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth.” For many are called, but few are chosen.’

New Revised Standard Version

This is the Gospel of the Lord.

All Praise to you, O Christ.



Interesting that they are anxious that they are 'without gods', in the Exodus narrative. Aaron perhaps feels much the same _ does he just take a pragmatic approach ? - or is he weak ? To be fair he tries to turn it back to the LORD their God - but too little, too late, and wrong. I appreciate we are a very very long time after Moses, and it was a very long time after Moses that this was written down _ so whether we take the conversation with God as verbatim... . But, it illustrates that we may argue with God, that we are no mere automaton in this relationship ; and it puts Moses in a strong position to lead the people _ *'Look what I did for you...'* .

Paul, and this was written in prison, though he would have had no more idea of what would become of him in the years ahead, than we do of ourselves. But there is a sense of 'rejoicing' _ delight in just being able to 'Encourage'. Not Correct, or cajole or chastise _ but bless, thank, encourage : and Why ? - Because God proves faithful ; even when we're imprisoned - literal, or other, in all ways.

The Gospel parable is not Too distant from the situation in Exodus : the people have been quick to forget, and drift from, in this case 'the king'. Disinterest, a little apathy, a *'can't be bothered'*, an *"I'm alright as I am"* _ forgetting Who helped us get where we are. This time however, there is no intermediary to defend them ; judgement is served ; the invitation made elsewhere _ and so interestingly an invitation overtly offered to the *'good and bad'* _ and only One is singled-out - not for being 'bad', and not, I think, for not having "Fine" robes _ but for not having bothered. He came in, without caring _ treated the invitation, host, wedding couple, and guests with disdain, high-handed (or *'stiff-necked'*) superiority _ *"I'm*

above what is going on here, I laugh at it and scorn it, even as I take it's hospitality."

He perhaps feels rather less confident, and more the fool, when He is the one cast out. Only him. When he could have joined a Celebration, offered to All - good and bad.

We are often characterised as being *'holier than thou'*, *'hypocritical'* in (supposedly) telling Others what to do when we are demonstrably far from perfect ourselves. God help us from ever being as that. It is an Easy route, and accusation to make ; appeases their anxiety that we might be Right, like the appeasing of malevolent-deities in Paul's world to stifle the fear that they might do us harm ; a rearguard action, an anxious defence, meeting the world with fists raised _ but can you punch a spirit ? - or a guilt, or a regret, or a fear ?

We could choose something better.

The 'chosen' _ chose or choose not to come.

We're All 'Called'. The 'good and the bad'.

The wedding robe may be old, dishevelled, grubby even and creased _ nothing Fine, nothing refined, not new or expensive or a Name _ we do what we can. We're called _ and Do we respond ? Do we remember ? Do we take a chance, do we let down our guard ? _ and, if you like the image, do we 'take a hand' and 'join the dance' _ it's a Wedding party after all. *"Finally, beloved, whatever is true, whatever is honourable, whatever is just, whatever is pure, whatever is pleasing, whatever is commendable, if there is any excellence and if there is anything worthy of praise, think about these things. . . . Keep on doing . . . Rejoice in the Lord . . . Do not worry " ... but in everything... "let your requests be made known to God."*

Do I do that ?

Not enough.

Will I do that ?

Yes, try.

And Why ? _ because it will bring me joy. It will raise a delightful smile, that starts in my gut. It will become my soul.

- *"And the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus."*

I'm not Chosen, We're Called. How will I respond ? Not out of duty _ but because there's a party - and it lasts a lifetime, an eternal lifetime. I'll choose that, again and again every time I need to ; and I'll let my Fears be the thing that fade away.

Amen.

The Revd Matthew Evans

The Nicene Creed

**We believe in one God, the Father, the almighty,
maker of heaven and earth,
of all that is, seen and unseen.
We believe in one Lord, Jesus Christ,
the only Son of God,
eternally begotten of the Father,
God from God, Light from Light,
true God from true God,
begotten, not made,
of one being with the Father ;
through him all things were made.
For us and for our salvation
he came down from heaven, was incarnate from
the Holy Spirit and the Virgin Mary
and was made man.
For our sake he was crucified under Pontius Pilate ;
he suffered death and was buried.
On the third day he rose again
in accordance with the Scriptures ;
he ascended into heaven
and is seated at the right hand of the Father.
He will come again in glory
to judge the living and the dead,
and his kingdom will have no end.
We believe in the Holy Spirit,
the Lord, the giver of life,
who proceeds from the Father and the Son,
who with the Father and the Son
is worshipped and glorified,
who has spoken through the prophets.
We believe in one holy, catholic and apostolic Church.
We acknowledge one baptism
for the forgiveness of sins.
We look for the resurrection of the dead,
and the life of the world to come. 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=IAFC9HAc7E8>

Be thou my vision, O Lord of my heart,
be all else but naught to me, save that thou art,
be thou my best thought in the day and the night,
both waking and sleeping, thy presence my light.

Be thou my wisdom, be thou my true word,
be thou ever with me, and I with thee, Lord,
be thou my great Father, and I thy true son,
be thou in me dwelling, and I with thee one.

Be thou my breastplate, my sword for the fight,
be thou my whole armour, be thou my true might,
be thou my soul's shelter, be thou my strong tower,
O raise thou me heavenward, great Power of my power.

Riches I heed not, nor man's empty praise,
be thou my inheritance now and always,
be thou and thou only the first in my heart,
O Sovereign of heaven, my treasure thou art.

High King of heaven, thou heaven's bright Sun,
O grant me its joys after victory is won,
great Heart of my own heart, whatever befall,
still be thou my vision, O Ruler of all.

*Words : Irish c 8th century
Tr Mary Byrne (1880-1931)
Versified by Eleanor Hull (1860-1935)
Music : Bob Chilcott*

The Dismissal

The Blessing



May God the Father,
who has given to his Son
the name above every name,
strengthen us to proclaim Christ as Lord ;
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.