

**Sunday 16 November 2025,
Second Sunday Before Advent**

Collect:

Heavenly Lord,
you long for the world's salvation:
stir us from apathy,
restrain us from excess
and revive in us new hope
that all creation will one day be healed
in Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

Readings for this week:

Malachi 4:1-2a; Psalm 98; 2 Thessalonians 3:6-13; Luke 21:5-19

We open with a very brief, but powerful, text from the prophet Malachi that announces the coming day of the Lord. These words are designed to which bring comfort to those who have been faithful and fierce judgement on all who have over-confidently relied on the work of their – our – own hands. During this pre-Advent season we are focussed on the end-times and judgement, which fits with Malachi's message that God will establish a just worldwide reign. Psalm 98, which is also set for Christmas Day, further unrolls this theme of divine universal judgement, finishing with creation praising the overwhelming majesty and justice of God. In the selection from the Second Letter to the Thessalonians, Paul sternly condemns the problems created by a false response to preaching about the imminence of the end times. This, he argues, is wild and irresponsible thinking that leads to idleness and a lack of purpose.

Luke was writing his Gospel around twenty years after the destruction of the Temple in 70CE. The great building that for centuries had been revered as the locus of God's presence had been brought crashing down by Roman forces. Built to be impregnable, it lay in ruins, and along with it, so many thought, their relationship with the Lord. But Luke reminds them of Jesus' words. Jesus had called them to stay faithful during such times of uncertainty and trial. God is not contained by a building, any building, no matter how beautifully it has been adorned, how expensive it is to run or how much its guardians feel it to be at the heart of the community. Putting trust in buildings, rather than in the God whose worship they were designed to facilitate, leads to the sort of false responses Paul was writing to refute. The vocation of Christians of any age lies not in revering temples but in working to build the vision of the kingdom that God has tasked us with. Luke, like Paul, understands that the end times are still to come but reminds us that now is the moment for us proclaim our trust in God through deeds and words.

Gracious Lord,
in this holy sacrament
you give substance to our hope:
bring us at the last
to that fullness of life for which we long;
through Jesus Christ our Saviour. Amen.

Readings for next week:

Jeremiah 23:1-6; Psalm 46; Colossians 1:11-20; Luke 23:33-43

Christ the King