

## ST MARK AND ALL SAINTS, READING

*Whoever you are,  
wherever you are on life's journey, you are welcome here.*

## SECOND SUNDAY OF ADVENT 7TH DECEMBER 2025

### THE GATHERING

*All the words are in this service sheet. Please join in with the words printed in **bold type**.*

*At the start of the service a bell is rung and the procession enters as we stand to sing the opening hymn.*

### ENTRANCE HYMN

Hills of the North, rejoice,  
river and mountain-spring,  
hark to the advent voice;  
valley and lowland, sing.  
Christ comes in righteousness and love,  
he brings salvation from above.

Isles of the Southern seas,  
sing to the listening earth,  
carry on every breeze  
hope of a world's new birth:  
In Christ shall all be made anew,  
his word is sure, his promise true.

Lands of the East, arise,  
he is your brightest morn,  
greet him with joyous eyes,  
praise shall his path adorn:  
your seers have longed to know their Lord;  
to you he comes, the final word.

Shores of the utmost West,  
lands of the setting sun,  
welcome the heavenly guest  
in whom the dawn has come:  
he brings a never-ending light  
who triumphed o'er our darkest night.

**Shout, as you journey home,  
songs be in every mouth,  
lo, from the North they come,  
from East and West and South:  
in Jesus all shall find their rest,  
in him the universe be blest.**

## **THE GREETING**

**✠ In the name of the Father,  
and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.  
The Lord be with you  
and also with you.**

*The priest welcomes us and introduces the service and we pray together.*

**Almighty God,  
to whom all hearts are open,  
all desires known,  
and from whom no secrets are hidden:  
cleanse 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.**

## **PRAYER OF PENITENCE**

When the Lord comes,  
he will bring to light the things now hidden in darkness,  
and will disclose the purposes of the heart.  
Therefore in the light of Christ let us confess our sins.

*We say together*

**Father eternal, giver of light and grace,  
we have sinned against you and against our neighbour,  
in what we have thought,  
in what we have said and done,  
through ignorance, through weakness,  
through our own deliberate fault.  
We have wounded your love  
and marred your image in us.  
We are sorry and ashamed,  
and repent of all our sins.  
For the sake of your Son Jesus Christ,  
who died for us,  
forgive us all that is past;  
and lead us out from darkness**

**to walk as children of light. Amen.**

Almighty God, who forgives all who truly repent,  
have mercy upon you,  
pardon and deliver you from all your sins,  
confirm and strengthen you in all goodness,  
and keep you in life eternal;  
through Jesus Christ our Lord.  
**Amen.**

## **THE ADVENT WREATH**

*The second candle is lit on the Advent wreath and we sing*

**A candle is burning, a candle of Peace;  
A candle to signal that conflict must cease.  
For Jesus is coming to show us the way;  
A message of Peace humbly laid in the hay.**

## **THE COLLECT**

*The priest says the prayer set for the day.*

O Lord, raise up, we pray, your power  
and come among us,  
and with great might succour us;  
that whereas, through our sins and wickedness  
we are grievously hindered  
in running the race that is set before us,  
your bountiful grace and mercy  
may speedily help and deliver us;  
through Jesus Christ your Son our Lord,  
to whom with you and the Holy Spirit,  
be honour and glory, now and for ever.  
**Amen**

*Please sit*

## **THE LITURGY OF THE WORD**

### **FIRST READING**

Isaiah 11.1-10

A shoot will come up from the stump of Jesse;  
from his roots a Branch will bear fruit.  
The Spirit of the LORD will rest on him –  
the Spirit of wisdom and of understanding,  
the Spirit of counsel and of power,  
the Spirit of knowledge and of the fear of the LORD –  
and he will delight in the fear of the LORD.

He will not judge by what he sees with his eyes,  
or decide by what he hears with his ears;  
but with righteousness he will judge the needy,  
with justice he will give decisions for the poor of the earth.  
He will strike the earth with the rod of his mouth;  
with the breath of his lips he will slay the wicked.  
Righteousness will be his belt  
and faithfulness the sash round his waist.  
The wolf will live with the lamb,  
the leopard will lie down with the goat,  
the calf and the lion and the yearling together;  
and a little child will lead them.  
The cow will feed with the bear,  
their young will lie down together,  
and the lion will eat straw like the ox.  
The infant will play near the hole of the cobra,  
and the young child put his hand into the viper's nest. They will neither harm nor destroy  
on all my holy mountain, for the earth will be full of the knowledge of the LORD as the waters cover  
the sea.  
In that day the Root of Jesse will stand as a banner for the peoples; the nations will rally to him, and  
his place of rest will be glorious  
This is the word of the Lord  
**Thanks be to God.**

## **GRADUAL HYMN PSALM 72**

Michael

*Our gradual Hymn is a congregational setting of today's psalm.*

*As we stand and sing the Gospel Book is carried into the midst of the congregation, reflecting God's coming among us in Christ. Please turn to face it.*

**Give the king, my God, your judgement,  
virtue to your royal son.  
He will judge the people fairly,  
and the poor who are undone.  
Mountains raise  
peace and praise,  
for your people, in his days.**

**He will judge the poor and needy,  
crush the ones who bring them low.  
He will save the cold and starving,  
from oppression and the foe.  
He will run,  
like the sun,  
rising still for years to come.**

**Bless the Lord, the God of Israel,**

bless the wonders he has done;  
bless his name and mighty splendour,  
ever glorious, ever one.  
Earth shall then,  
once again,  
brim with glory. Amen, amen.

**THE GOSPEL**  
Matthew 3.1-12

**Alleluia, alleluia, alleluia**

Prepare the way of the Lord, make his paths straight,  
and all flesh shall see the salvation of God

**Alleluia, alleluia, alleluia**

The Lord be with you

**And also with you**

Hear the Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ  
according to Matthew.

**Glory to you, O Lord.**

In those days John the Baptist appeared in the wilderness of Judea, proclaiming, 'Repent, for the kingdom of heaven has come near.' This is the one of whom the prophet Isaiah spoke when he said, 'The voice of one crying out in the wilderness:

"Prepare the way of the Lord, make his paths straight."

Now John wore clothing of camel's hair with a leather belt around his waist, and his food was locusts and wild honey. Then the people of Jerusalem and all Judea were going out to him, and all the region along the Jordan, and they were baptized by him in the river Jordan, confessing their sins. But when he saw many Pharisees and Sadducees coming for baptism, he said to them, 'You brood of vipers! Who warned you to flee from the wrath to come? Bear fruit worthy of repentance. Do not presume to say to yourselves, "We have Abraham as our ancestor"; for I tell you, God is able from these stones to raise up children to Abraham. Even now the axe is lying at the root of the trees; every tree therefore that does not bear good fruit is cut down and thrown into the fire. I baptize you with water for repentance, but one who is more powerful than I is coming after me; I am not worthy to carry his sandals. He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit and fire. His winnowing-fork is in his hand, and he will clear his threshing-floor and will gather his wheat into the granary; but the chaff he will burn with unquenchable fire.'

This is the Gospel of the Lord

**Praise to you, O Christ.**

*Sit*

**THE SERMON**

*A brief period of silence may follow for us to reflect on the address and the readings today, then the priest invites us to stand to declare our faith.*

## THE 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.

*Sit or kneel to pray*

*During the prayers these or other responses may be used*

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

*And at the end of the prayers we say*

## THE INTERCESSIONS

Merciful Father,  
**accept these prayers**  
**for the sake of your Son,**  
**our Saviour Jesus Christ. Amen.**

## THE LITURGY OF THE SACRAMENT

*Stand*

### THE PEACE

In the tender mercy of our God,  
the dayspring from on high shall break upon us,  
to give light to those who dwell in darkness  
and in the shadow of death  
and to guide our feet into the way of peace.

The peace of the Lord be always with you.  
**and also with you.**

*We greet those around us in the peace of Christ, shaking hands and saying "Peace be with you"*

### OFFERTORY HYMN

*As we sing a collection will be taken for  
the work of the church, Our church is a  
charity which relies on your generous gift.  
Please support our Mission and Ministry  
and keep our beautiful buildings open  
by placing your gift in the plate or scan  
to donate.*

**Longing for light, we wait in darkness.**  
**Longing for truth, we turn to you.**  
**Make us your own, your holy people,**  
**Light for the world to see.**

***Christ, be our light! Shine in our hearts.***  
***Shine through the darkness.***  
***Christ, be our light!***  
***Shine in your church gathered today.***

**Longing for peace, our world is troubled.**  
**Longing for hope, many despair.**  
**Your word alone has power to save us.**  
**Make us your living voice.**

**Longing for food, many are hungry.**  
**Longing for water, many still thirst.**  
**Make us your bread, broken for others,**

**Shared until all are fed.**

**Longing for shelter, many are homeless.  
Longing for warmth, many are cold.  
Make us your building, sheltering others,  
Walls made of living stone.**

**Many the gifts, many the people,  
Many the hearts that yearn to belong.  
Let us be servants to one another,  
Making your kingdom come.**

*When the altar is prepared and the offerings received the president leads the offertory prayers.*

Blessed are you, Lord God of all creation:  
through your goodness we have this bread  
to set before you,  
which earth has given and human hands have made.  
It will become for us the bread of life.  
**Blessed be God for ever.**

Blessed are you, Lord God of all creation:  
through your goodness we have this wine to set before you,  
fruit of the vine and work of human hands.  
It will become for us the cup of salvation.  
**Blessed be God for ever.**

Generous God, as we gather around your table called and welcomed by Christ we present this  
money, symbol of all the gifts you give to us.  
**use it, use us, in the service of your world  
to the glory of your name. Amen.**

## **THE EUCHARISTIC PRAYER**

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 thanks and praise.**

It is indeed right and good to give you thanks and praise,  
almighty God and everlasting Father,  
through Jesus Christ your Son.  
For when he humbled himself to come among us in human flesh,  
he fulfilled the plan you formed before the foundation of the world  
to open for us the way of salvation.  
Confident that your promise will be fulfilled,  
we now watch for the day



when Christ our Lord will come again in glory.  
And so we join our voices with angels and archangels  
and with all the company of heaven  
to proclaim your glory,  
for ever praising you and *singing*:

**Holy, holy, holy Lord,  
God of power and might,  
heaven and earth are full of your glory.  
Hosanna in the highest.  
Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord.  
Hosanna in the highest.**

Lord, you are holy indeed, the source of all holiness;  
grant that by the power of your Holy Spirit,  
and according to your holy will,  
these gifts of bread and wine  
may be to us the body and blood of our Lord Jesus Christ; who, in the same night that he was  
betrayed,  
took bread and gave you thanks;  
he broke it and gave it to his disciples, saying:  
Take, eat; this is my body which is given for you;  
do this in remembrance of me.

In the same way, after supper  
he took the cup and gave you thanks;  
he gave it to them, saying:

Drink this, all of you;  
this is my blood of the new covenant,  
which is shed for you and for many for the forgiveness of sins.  
Do this, as often as you drink it,  
in remembrance of me.

Great is the mystery of faith  
**Christ has died:  
Christ is risen:  
Christ will come again.**

And so, Father,  
calling to mind his death on the cross,  
his perfect sacrifice made once for the sins of the whole world;  
rejoicing in his mighty resurrection and glorious ascension,  
and looking for his coming in glory,  
we celebrate this memorial of our redemption.  
As we offer you this our sacrifice of praise and thanksgiving,  
we bring before you this bread and this cup  
and we thank you for counting us worthy  
to stand in your presence and serve you.

Send the Holy Spirit on your people

and gather into one in your kingdom  
all who share this one bread and one cup,  
so that we, in the company of [N and] all the saints,  
may praise and glorify you for ever,  
through Jesus Christ our Lord;  
by whom, and with whom, and in whom,  
in the unity of the Holy Spirit,  
all honour and glory be yours, almighty Father,  
for ever and ever. **Amen**

*We kneel or sit as silence is kept before the Lord's 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.**

*The priest breaks the consecrated bread, saying*

We break this bread to share in the body of Christ.

**Though we are many, we are one body,  
because we all share in one bread.**

*The priest invites the people to receive Communion, and says*

God's Holy gifts for God's Holy people

**Jesus Christ is Holy,  
Jesus Christ in Lord,  
To the glory of God the Father**

**Lamb of God,  
you take away the sin of the world  
have mercy on us.**

**Lamb of God,  
you take away the sin of the world  
have mercy on us.**

**Lamb of God,  
you take away the sin of the world  
grant us your peace.**

## COMMUNION HYMN

How lovely on the mountains  
Are the feet of him  
Who brings good news, good news,  
Announcing peace,  
Proclaiming news of happiness:  
Our God reigns, our God reigns.

*Our God reigns*  
*Our God reigns*  
*Our God reigns*  
*Our God reigns*

You watchmen, lift your voices  
Joyfully as one,  
Shout for your King, your King!  
See eye to eye,  
The Lord restoring Zion:  
Our God reigns, our God reigns.

Wasteplaces of Jerusalem,  
Break forth with joy!  
We are redeemed, redeemed.  
The Lord has saved  
And comforted his people:  
Our God reigns, our God reigns.

Ends of the earth, see  
The salvation of our God!  
Jesus is Lord, is Lord!  
Before the nations,  
He has bared his holy arm:  
Our God reigns, our God reigns!

## POST COMMUNION PRAYER

*Once communion has been shared we stand when the priest invites us to pray.*

Father in heaven,  
who sent your Son to redeem the world  
and will send him again to be our judge:  
give us grace so to imitate him  
in the humility and purity of his first coming  
that, when he comes again,  
we may be ready to greet him  
with joyful love and firm faith;  
through Jesus Christ our Lord.

**Amen**

**Father of all,  
we give you thanks and praise,  
that when we were still far off  
you met us in your Son and brought us home.  
Dying and living, he declared your love,  
gave us grace, and opened the gate of glory.  
May we who share Christ's body live his risen life;  
we who drink his cup bring life to others;  
we whom the Spirit lights give light to the world.  
Keep us firm in the hope you have set before us,  
so we and all your children shall be free,  
and the whole earth live to praise your name;  
through Christ our Lord.  
Amen.**

## **NOTICES**

*We sit to listen to any notices about parish events.  
Banns of Marriage may be announced.  
If your Birthday falls this week please tell us we would love to celebrate with you.*

## **THE DISMISSAL**

*Stand*

The Lord be with you  
**And also with you**

Christ the Sun of Righteousness shine upon you,  
scatter the darkness from before your path,  
and make you ready to meet him  
when he comes in glory;  
and the blessing of God almighty,  
the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit,  
be among you and remain with you always.  
**Amen**

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

## **THE BLESSING**

## **CLOSING HYMN**

**God has spoken—by the prophets,  
Spoken the unchanging Word,  
Each from age to age proclaiming**

God, the one, the righteous Lord.  
'Mid the world's despair and turmoil  
One firm anchor holding fast:  
God eternal reigns forever,  
God the first, and God the last.

God has spoken—by Christ Jesus,  
Christ, the everlasting Son,  
Brightness of the Father's glory,  
With the Father ever one;  
Spoken by the Word incarnate,  
God of God, ere time was born,  
Light of light, to earth descending,  
Christ, as God in human form.

God is speaking—by the Spirit,  
Speaking to our hearts again,  
In the age-long word declaring  
God's own message, now as then.  
Through the rise and fall of nations  
One sure faith yet standing fast;  
God abides, the Word unchanging,  
God the first, and God the last.