Sunday 8 November 2026
Third Sunday Before Advent (Remembrance Sunday)

Collect:

God, our refuge and strength,
bring near the day when wars shall cease
and poverty and pain shall end,
that earth may know the peace of heaven
through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

Readings for this week:

Amos 5:18-24; Psalm 70; 1 Thessalonians 4:13-18; Matthew 25:1-13

Today's readings draw us closer to the end of the liturgical year, and while this is our focus, Remembrance Sunday is also in the mix, with its own themes of sacrifice and of standing up for justice. Our opening passage from Amos consists of two distinct parts. In verses 18-20 we hear a traditional cry of woe against a sinful people who desire the apocalyptic day of the Lord believing that they will be vindicated against their enemies. The irony in this section is that by their wayward behaviour they have become the very enemies God will defeat. In the second part the Lord is directly quoted, angry that the people have prioritised ritual over godly living. It ends with a description of what God is looking for – justice and righteousness being constantly refreshed. By contrast, the writer of Psalm 70 is well aware of their own weakness, as in desperation and humility they call upon God to save them.

Many of the Thessalonian Christians to whom Paul was writing were Gentiles with no understanding of the Jewish apocalyptic tradition, so they have asked their founder some concrete questions about the end times, resurrection and what will happen to those who have died before Christ comes again. Paul responds fulsomely and carefully, with words that are designed to encourage rather than terrify. Ultimately, he tells them, we have placed our faith in the same God that Jesus also trusted, and Jesus died, but rose again.

In the Gospel reading we again hear whispers of the end times, of Christ, the bridegroom, coming to reclaim his kingdom and draw into his presence all those who have stayed faithful. But this is also a parable about being active, about preparation and readiness. Faith is not something that you passively drink in and expect that it will endure, or mature, without any further input from you. Rather it needs active attention, watchfulness as you continue to practise your faith, committing yourself to worship, learning and testing how you can make it tangible, not just in your life, but in the lives of others. In a world full of competing versions of the truth, of anxiety and unease, watchfulness is vital, and trust must be placed wisely. Christ trusts us to be ready.

God of peace,
whose Son Jesus Christ proclaimed the kingdom
and restored the broken to wholeness of life:
look with compassion on the anguish of the world,
and by your healing power
make whole both people and nations;
through our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. Amen.

Readings for next week:

Zephaniah 1:7, 12-18; Psalm 90:1-12; 1 Thessalonians 5:1-11; Matthew 25:14-30
Second Sunday before Advent