



The Second Sunday before Lent 8th February 2026

In the name of the + Father,
and of the Son,
and of the Holy Spirit. Amen

HYMN

Awake, my soul, and with the sun
Thy daily stage of duty run;
Shake off dull sloth, and joyful rise,
To pay thy morning sacrifice

Redeem thy mis-spent time that's past,
Live this day as if 'twere thy last:
Improve thy talent with due care'
For the great day thyself prepare.

Let all thy converse be sincere
Thy conscience as the noon-day clear;
Think how all-seeing God thy ways
And all they secret thoughts surveys

Awake, Awake, ye heaven choir,
May your devotion me inspire,
That I like you my age may spend,
Like you may on my God attend.

Praise God, from whom all blessings flow,
Praise him, all creatures here below,
Praise him above, ye heavenly host,
Praise Father, Son, and Holy Ghost

Introduction to confession

The Spirit of the Lord fills the whole world
and knows our every word and deed.
Let us then open ourselves to the Lord
and confess our sins in penitence and faith.

Kyrie confession

We have not always been open to the
transformation of your Spirit.
Lord, have mercy.
We have not always been persistent in prayer
and love for others.
Christ, have mercy.
We have not always placed our trust in you,
our Saviour and guide.
Lord, have mercy.
Lord, have mercy

May God who loved the world so much
that he sent his Son to be our Saviour
forgive us our sins +
and make us holy to serve him in the world,
through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

The Collect

Almighty God,
you have created the heavens and the earth
and made us in your own image:
teach us to discern your hand in all your works
and your likeness in all your children;
through Jesus Christ your Son our Lord,
who with you and the Holy Spirit reigns supreme over all things,
now and for ever.

Amen

A Reading from The Old Testament

Genesis 1,1 – 2,3

1 In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth. 2 Now the earth was formless and empty, darkness was over the surface of the deep, and the Spirit of God was hovering over the waters.

3 And God said, “Let there be light,” and there was light. 4 God saw that the light was good, and he separated the light from the darkness. 5 God called the light “day,” and the darkness he called “night.” And there was evening, and there was morning—the first day.

6 And God said, “Let there be a vault between the waters to separate water from water.” 7 So God made the vault and separated the water under the vault from the water above it. And it was so. 8 God called the vault “sky.” And there was evening, and there was morning—the second day.

9 And God said, “Let the water under the sky be gathered to one place, and let dry ground appear.” And it was so. 10 God called the dry ground “land,” and the gathered waters he called “seas.” And God saw that it was good.

11 Then God said, “Let the land produce vegetation: seed-bearing plants and trees on the land that bear fruit with seed in it, according to their various kinds.” And it was so. 12 The land produced vegetation: plants bearing seed according to their kinds and trees bearing fruit with seed in it according to their kinds. And God saw that it was good. 13 And there was evening, and there was morning—the third day.

14 And God said, “Let there be lights in the vault of the sky to separate the day from the night, and let them serve as signs to mark sacred times, and days and years, 15 and let them be lights in the vault of the sky to give light on the earth.” And it was so. 16 God made two great lights—the greater light to govern the day and the lesser light to govern the night. He also made the stars. 17 God set them in the vault of the sky to give light on the earth, 18 to govern the day and the night, and to separate light from darkness. And God saw that it was good. 19 And there was evening, and there was morning—the fourth day.

20 And God said, “Let the water teem with living creatures, and let birds fly above the earth across the vault of the sky.” 21 So God created the great creatures of the sea and every living thing with which the water teems and that moves about in it, according to their kinds, and every winged bird according to its kind. And God saw that it was good. 22 God blessed them and said, “Be fruitful and increase in number and fill the water in the seas and let the birds increase on the earth.” 23 And there was evening, and there was morning—the fifth day.

24 And God said, “Let the land produce living creatures according to their kinds: the livestock, the creatures that move along the ground, and the wild animals, each according to its kind.” And it was so. 25 God made the wild animals according to their kinds, the livestock according to their kinds, and all the creatures that move along the ground according to their kinds. And God saw that it was good.

26 Then God said, “Let us make mankind in our image, in our likeness, so that they may rule over the fish in the sea and the birds in the sky, over the livestock and all the wild animals, and over all the creatures that move along the ground.”

27 So God created mankind in his own image,
in the image of God he created them;
male and female he created them.

28 God blessed them and said to them, “Be fruitful and increase in number; fill the earth and subdue it. Rule over the fish in the sea and the birds in the sky and over every living creature that moves on the ground.”

29 Then God said, “I give you every seed-bearing plant on the face of the whole earth and every tree that has fruit with seed in it. They will be yours for food. 30 And to all the beasts of the earth and all the birds in the sky and all the creatures that move along the ground—everything that has the breath of life in it—I give every green plant for food.” And it was so.

31 God saw all that he had made, and it was very good. And there was evening, and there was morning—the sixth day.

2 Thus the heavens and the earth were completed in all their vast array.

2 By the seventh day God had finished the work he had been doing; so, on the seventh day he rested from all his work. 3 Then God blessed the seventh day and made it holy, because on it he rested from all the work of creating that he had done.

This is the word of the Lord
Thanks be to God

Psalm 136

1 Give thanks to the Lord, for he is good.
His love endures forever.

2 Give thanks to the God of gods.
His love endures forever.

3 Give thanks to the Lord of lords:
His love endures forever.

4 to him who alone does great wonders,
His love endures forever.

5 who by his understanding made the heavens,
His love endures forever.

6 who spread out the earth upon the waters,
His love endures forever.

7 who made the great lights—
His love endures forever.

8 the sun to govern the day,
His love endures forever.

9 the moon and stars to govern the night;
His love endures forever.

10 to him who struck down the firstborn of Egypt
His love endures forever.

11 and brought Israel out from among them
His love endures forever.



12 with a mighty hand and outstretched arm;
His love endures forever.

A reading from the New Testament
Romans 8. 18-25

Present Suffering and Future Glory

18 I consider that our present sufferings are not worth comparing with the glory that will be revealed in us. 19 For the creation waits in eager expectation for the children of God to be revealed. 20 For the creation was subjected to frustration, not by its own choice, but by the will of the one who subjected it, in hope 21 that the creation itself will be liberated from its bondage to decay and brought into the freedom and glory of the children of God.

22 We know that the whole creation has been groaning as in the pains of childbirth right up to the present time. 23 Not only so, but we ourselves, who have the firstfruits of the Spirit, groan inwardly as we wait eagerly for our adoption to sonship, the redemption of our bodies. 24 For in this hope we were saved. But hope that is seen is no hope at all. Who hopes for what they already have? 25 But if we hope for what we do not yet have, we wait for it patiently.

This is the word of the Lord

Thanks be to God

HYMN

To the Name of our salvation,
Laud and honour let us pay,
Which for many a generation
Hid in God's foreknowledge lay;
But with holy exultation
We may sing aloud today.

Jesus is the Name we treasure;
Name beyond what words can tell;
Name of gladness, Name of pleasure,
Ear and heart delighting well;
Name of power beyond all measure,
Saving us from sin and hell.

'Tis the Name that whoso preaches
Speaks like music to the ear;
Who in prayer this Name beseeches
Finds sweet comfort ever near;
Who its perfect wisdom reaches,
Heavenly joy possesses here.

Jesus is the Name prevailing
Over every name by right;
At this Name, in terror quailing,
Powers of hell are put to flight;
God, in mercy never failing,
Saves us by this Name of might.

Therefore we in love adoring,
This most blessed Name revere;
Holy Jesus, Thee imploring
So to write it in us here,
That hereafter, heavenward soaring,
We may sing with angels there.

The Gospel

Alleluia, alleluia.
The word of the Lord endures for ever
The word of the Lord is the good news announced to you
Alleluia

Hear the Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ according to Matthew 6. 25 - end
All Glory be to thee O Lord

25 “Therefore I tell you, do not worry about your life, what you will eat or drink; or about your body, what you will wear. Is not life more than food, and the body more than clothes? 26 Look at the birds of the air; they do not sow or reap or store away in barns, and yet your heavenly Father feeds them. Are you not much more valuable than they? 27 Can any one of you by worrying add a single hour to your life?

28 “And why do you worry about clothes? See how the flowers of the field grow. They do not labour or spin. 29 Yet I tell you that not even Solomon in all his splendour was dressed like one of these. 30 If that is how God clothes the grass of the field, which is here today and tomorrow is thrown into the fire, will he not much more clothe you—you of little faith? 31 So do not worry, saying, ‘What shall we eat?’ or ‘What shall we drink?’ or ‘What shall we wear?’ 32 For the pagans run after all these things, and your heavenly Father knows that you need them. 33 But seek first his kingdom and his righteousness, and all these things will be given to you as well. 34 Therefore do not worry about tomorrow, for tomorrow will worry about itself. Each day has enough trouble of its own.

This is the gospel of the Lord
Praise to you O Christ

Reflection

Each of our readings touch on creation and our part and place within it. Genesis reveals to us a Creator who speaks, who communicates into nothingness and darkness and brings light into being. This is not just poetry or prose. Scientists know that there was light in the cosmos before stars and planets.

Such a creator is surely far beyond our imagining; so far, that we perhaps struggle to believe that this creator God could be aware, let alone interested and concerned, about our individual fleeting lives.

When I have such thoughts, I reason back. Yes, I am here for a brief time, but I am here. I have a place for better or worse in the great mystery of creation, I need not have been. So, in some way I must have significance and if me then everyone and everything else. And this God who communicates has told us that we are loved.

This changes me. Now when I look at the natural world I can I recognise God in the beauty of a short-lived flower, the smallest fish in the deepest sea that no human eye will ever see. the mystery of neutrinos those minute particles that spin around and through all matter and occasionally pass unknown through me. *

My vision is heightened, and I am made more aware of my place in creation. I also recognise that as Paul puts it in our second reading: ‘all creation groans in travail’ is ..‘subject to futility’ (KJV). Is this not what we see? There is something fundamentally amiss.

This planet is not the garden of Eden of our imaginings. Alongside the beauty is the terrible hurt and damage, not only in natural events, but increasing caused by us. And this is fuelled by our greed and our inability to live in harmony with others and ourselves. We are pretty messed up.

And into this we hear the words of Jesus telling us not to worry! It all sounds rather Pollyanna. How could we not worry?

Jesus’ words are timeless. Our way of life may have changed but the effect of ‘life’ on people has not. Living in 1st century Palestine was hard. It was an occupied country and life was probably well described in Hobbs’ words, ‘... as... continual fear, and danger of violent death; ...the life of man, solitary, poor, nasty, brutish, and short’ (Leviathan, i. xiii. 9). Thus, Jesus’ words are as relevant today as then.

The word 'worry' in our reading is not a good translation (NIV). The KJV is even worse where it says, 'Take no thought for the morrow....'. This sounds as if Jesus is advocating a shiftless, thriftless, reckless, thoughtless, improvident attitude to life which he is not.

It is better translated as being 'over care full', 'over busy', 'over occupied' rather than worry with its implication of anxiety and stress.

Jesus commands us to be wise. To care about our affairs is common sense. To think and plan ahead to exhibit foresight is sensible, good and uses wisdom.

What he is forbidding a care worn worried fear which takes all the joy out of life. It is the anxious, draining, life-diminishing type of worry that he is warning us against.

It sounds rather twee to compare us with birds and flowers – but perhaps it is not and to think so just shows how full we are of misplaced self-importance and pride that we should imagine ourselves so separate and disconnected from the rest of the natural world.

Jesus points us to the birds and the flowers because they are everywhere – he always teaches from the natural world. Do you see a bird sitting on a branch chewing its claws wondering where the next worm is? Or a flower frightened to bloom in case the wind blows, he asks? No, they just get on and live.

We are not birds and flowers. We have a particular sense of ourselves:

We have highly developed imagination which is a great blessing but also leads us to think and dwell on the good and the bad. We have conscience and memory which can seriously affect our lives. We live in complex relationships; our lives inexorably intertwined with others. We know and are aware frequently of the transient and fragile nature of our lives. We know we will die... and Jesus tells us not to worry!

But along with his admonition, Jesus teaches us two ways to advance and overcome carefulness, worry and anxiety.

Firstly, he counsels us to live in the now. Worry will achieve nothing and change nothing, each day is enough to be concerned with, tomorrow will be what it will be whether you worry or not.

This idea has re-emerged and is popular now and called 'mindfulness'. There is nothing new in this – it is an ancient practice.

When worry and anxiety come, bringing our thoughts into the present and will stop our mind racing. And we have an added bonus that they do not supply with the books on mindfulness. As Christians we are children of God and within the Kingdom of his Christ, we can pray and the God who spoke light into being hears us.

Do not be anxious about anything, but in everything, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God. And the peace of God, which transcends all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus. (Philippians 4. 6-7)

Secondly, Jesus also tells us to do something. We are to seek. To seek the Kingdom of God first before all else. What is the Kingdom of God? It is most clearly defined in the Lord's prayer. 'Thy kingdom come thy will be done.' The Kingdom of God is that sphere where the will of God is perfectly done.

We come into that Kingdom through our faith in Jesus Christ and we will live out this extraordinary and gracious fact by obedience. We will be 'at work' to bring in the Kingdom of God where we are. In our own lives by growing in faith through study, in our role as witnesses to the wider world, and in practical action. Faith is not a warm feeling it is always courage and action.

Don't let the words of the gospel, because they are so familiar, just be read. Rather let us place in the hands of our loving God the anxieties and worries we carry daily and leave them there and go on repeating that until the peace of God indeed quietens our hearts and minds.

We are loved of God. '... your heavenly Father knows that your needs. But seek first his kingdom and his righteousness...and do not worry about tomorrow, for tomorrow will worry about itself. Each day has enough trouble of its own.'

Next time you see a flower or bird – remember – you are greatly loved.

*Neutrinos are subatomic particles that zip through the cosmos. Having nearly no mass, they zip through the cosmos at almost the speed of light.

Intercessions

Let us by prayer and intercession with thanksgiving
make our requests to God.

Gracious god,
we pray for our world,
for the tragedy of natural disaster,
for those suffering misery and loss
for nations experiencing civil and national distress
for those with the responsibilities to lead us at this time,
for the King and his government.
for those who manipulate power in all places that evil may be restrained.
for those who suffer persecution for their faith.
for the honouring of human rights,
for the relief of the oppressed.
Lord in your mercy hear our prayers.

We pray for the renewal of the church in faith, love, and service.
for the life of this church and community.
for all people in their daily life and work:
for the young and the elderly,
for neighbours, for families,
for all who are worried or fearful,
for those who feel cut off and alone.
Lord in your mercy hear our prayers.

We pray for those who are in any need.
for the lonely, the sorrowful, the sick and the troubled ...
for all who bring comfort, care, and healing.
Lord in your mercy hear our prayers.
We pray for those who have died in recent days,
especially for any who died alone.
we commit all whom we remember with love and affection to your loving care.
Lord in your mercy hear our prayers.

Let us commend ourselves, and all for whom we pray,
to the mercy and protection of God.

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

Amen

Our Father in heaven,
hallowed be your name,
your kingdom come, your will be done,
on earth as in heaven.
Give us today our daily bread.
Forgive us our sins
as we forgive those who sin against us.
Lead us not into temptation but deliver us from evil.
For the kingdom, the power,
and the glory are yours now and for ever. Amen.

Almighty God,
give us reverence for all creation
and respect for every person,
that we may mirror your likeness
in Jesus Christ our Lord.
And the blessing of God, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit
Be with us now and always
Amen

HYMN

He who would valiant be
'gainst all disaster,
let him in constancy
follow the Master.
There's no discouragement
shall make him once relent
his first avowed intent
to be a pilgrim.

Who so beset him round
with dismal stories
do but themselves confound
his strength the more is.
No foes shall stay his might;
though he with giants fight,
he will make good his right
to be a pilgrim.

Since, Lord, thou dost defend
us with thy Spirit,
We know we at the end,
shall life inherit.
Then fancies flee away!
I'll fear not what men say,
I'll labour night and day
to be a pilgrim.