

**Second Sunday before Advent
Order of Service**

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.

Introduction

A short liturgy of lament

A candle is lit.

Gracious God:

**you are the love that created the world;
you are the light which shines in the dark;
you are the one who is here with me now.**

A brief silence is kept.

Holy God:

**there are times when we cannot feel your love;
times when we struggle to see your light,
times when you seem absent and we feel empty.**

The candle is extinguished: we watch the smoke dissipate.

Loving God:

**where the pain is raw, send relief;
when fear paralyses, pour out peace;
where anger festers, have mercy;
when doubts overwhelm, hold us fast.**

Amen.

Prayers of Penitence

We confess our sin, and the sins of our society
Remembering how far we fall short of God's generous love

We confess to you our selfishness and lack of love:
Fill us with your Spirit.
Lord, have mercy. **Lord, have mercy.**

We confess to you our fear and failure in sharing our faith:
Fill us with your Spirit.
Christ, have mercy. **Christ, have mercy.**

We confess to you our stubbornness and lack of trust:

Fill us with your Spirit.

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

Heavenly Lord,
You long for the world's salvation:
Stir us from apathy,
Restrain us from excess
And revive in us hope
That all creation will one day be healed
In Jesus Christ our Lord.

Amen.

First Reading –1 Thessalonians 5: 1-11

Now concerning the times and the seasons, brothers and sisters, you do not need to have anything written to you. For you yourselves know very well that the day of the Lord will come like a thief in the night. When they say, 'There is peace and security', then sudden destruction will come upon them, as labour pains come upon a pregnant woman, and there will be no escape! But you, beloved, are not in darkness, for that day to surprise you like a thief; for you are all children of light and children of the day; we are not of the night or of darkness. So then, let us not fall asleep as others do, but let us keep awake and be sober; for those who sleep sleep at night, and those who are drunk get drunk at night. But since we belong to the day, let us be sober, and put on the breastplate of faith and love, and for a helmet the hope of salvation. For God has destined us not for wrath but for obtaining salvation through our Lord Jesus Christ, who died for us, so that whether we are awake or asleep we may live with him. Therefore encourage one another and build up each other, as indeed you are doing.

Hymn

Father, hear the prayer we offer:
Not for ease that prayer shall be,
But for strength that we may ever
Live our lives courageously.

Not for ever in green pastures
Do we ask our way to be;
But the steep and rugged pathway
May we tread rejoicingly.

Not for ever by still waters
Would we idly rest and stay;
But would smite the living fountains
From the rocks along our way.

Be our strength in hours of weakness,
In our wanderings be our guide;
Through endeavour, failure, danger,
Father, be thou at our side.

Gospel Reading – Matthew 25: 14-30

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

Glory to you, O Lord.

'For it is as if a man, going on a journey, summoned his slaves and entrusted his property to them; to one he gave five talents, to another two, to another one, to each according to his ability. Then he went away. The one who had received the five talents went off at once and traded with them, and made five more talents. In the same way, the one who had the two talents made two more talents. But the one who had received the one talent went off and dug a hole in the ground and hid his master's money. After a long time the master of those slaves came and settled accounts with them. Then the one who had received the five talents came forward, bringing five more talents, saying, "Master, you handed over to me five talents; see, I have made five more talents." His master said to him, "Well done, good and trustworthy slave; you have been trustworthy in a few things, I will put you in charge of many things; enter into the joy of your master." And the one with the two talents also came forward, saying, "Master, you handed over to me two talents; see, I have made two more talents." His master said to him, "Well done, good and trustworthy slave; you have been trustworthy in a few things, I will put you in charge of many things; enter into the joy of your master." Then the one who had received the one talent also came forward, saying, "Master, I knew that you were a harsh man, reaping where you did not sow, and gathering where you did not scatter seed; so I was afraid, and I went and hid your talent in the ground. Here you have what is yours." But his master replied, "You wicked and lazy slave! You knew, did you, that I reap where I did not sow, and gather where I did not scatter? Then you ought to have invested my money with the bankers, and on my return I would have received what was my own with interest. So take the talent from him, and give it to the one with the ten talents. For to all those who have, more will be given, and they will have an abundance; but from those who have nothing, even what they have will be taken away. As for this worthless slave, throw him into the outer darkness, where there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth."

This is the Gospel of the Lord.

Praise to you, O Christ.

Sermon

Prayers of Intercession

Lord, as you call us, **make us worthy of our calling.**

Spiritual Communion

In this moment of Spiritual Communion we pause to reflect and ask God to help us be open to share our faith, our love and our lives with each other.

Music

Jesus said, 'I am the bread of life. Whoever comes to me will never be hungry, and whoever believes in me will never be thirsty.'

John 6.35

Rejoicing in God's new creation,
as our Saviour taught us, so we pray

**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.**

We give thanks for the saving death and resurrection of Jesus and ask him to be with us now.

**Thanks be to you, Lord Jesus Christ,
for all the benefits you have given me,
for all the pains and insults you have borne for me.
Since I cannot now receive you sacramentally,
I ask you to come spiritually into my heart.
O most merciful redeemer, friend and brother,
may I know you more clearly,
love you more dearly,
and follow you more nearly, day by day. Amen.**
after the Prayer of St Richard of Chichester

Lord, in these days of mercy,
make us quiet and prayerful;
in these days of challenge,
make us stronger in you;
in these days of emptiness,
take possession of us;
in these days of waiting,
open our hearts to the mystery of your cross.

Amen.

Angela Ashwin

Ending

For all that God can do within us,
For all that God can do without us,
Thanks be to God.

For all in whom Christ lived before us,
For all in whom Christ lives beside us,
Thanks be to God.

For all the Spirit wants to bring us,
For where the Spirit wants to send us,

Thanks be to God.

Listen, Christ has promised to be with us
In the world as in our worship.

Amen. We go in peace to love and serve the Lord.

God give you grace to follow his saints
In faith and hope and love;
and the blessing of God almighty,
the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit,
be among you and remain with you always.

Amen.

Music

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