

COLLECT

O God,
the strength of all those who put their
trust in you,
mercifully accept our prayers
and, because through the weakness of
our mortal nature
we can do no good thing without you,
grant us the help of your grace,
that in the keeping of your
commandments
we may please you both in will and
deed;
through Jesus Christ your Son our
Lord,
who is alive and reigns with you,
in the unity of the Holy Spirit,
one God, now and for ever.

FIRST READING

Either **Deuteronomy 5:12-15**

A reading from the book of Deuteronomy.

The LORD says this: Observe the sabbath day and keep it holy, as the LORD your God commanded you. For six days you shall labour and do all your work. But the seventh day is a sabbath to the LORD your God; you shall not do any work – you, or your son or your daughter, or your male or female slave, or your ox or your donkey, or any of your livestock, or the resident alien in your towns, so that your male and female slave may rest as well as you. Remember that you were a slave in the land of Egypt, and the LORD your God brought you out from there with a mighty hand and an outstretched arm; therefore the LORD your God commanded you to keep the sabbath day.

Or **1 Samuel 3:1-10 [11-20]**

PSALM Psalm 81:1-10

R *Sing with joy to God our strength.*

Sing with joy to God our strength
and raise a loud shout to the God of
Jacob.
Raise a song and sound the timbrel,
the merry harp and the lyre.
Blow the ram's-horn at the new moon,
and at the full moon, the day of our
feast. **R**

For this is a statute for Israel, a law of
the God of Jacob.

He laid it as a solemn charge upon
Joseph,
when he came out of the land of
Egypt. **R**

I heard an unfamiliar voice saying,
"I eased his shoulder from the
burden;
his hands were set free from bearing
the load."
You called on me in trouble and I
saved you;
I answered you from the secret place
of thunder
and tested you at the waters of
Meribah. **R**

Hear, O my people, and I will
admonish you:
O Israel, if you would but listen to me!
There shall be no strange god among
you;
you shall not worship a foreign god.
I am the Lord your God,
who brought you out of the land of
Egypt and said,
"Open your mouth wide and I will fill
it." **R**

SECOND READING

2 Corinthians 4:5-12

A reading from the second letter of Paul to the Corinthians.

We do not proclaim ourselves; we
proclaim Jesus Christ as Lord and
ourselves as your slaves for Jesus'
sake. For it is the God who said, "Let
light shine out of darkness," who
has shone in our hearts to give the
light of the knowledge of the glory
of God in the face of Jesus Christ.
But we have this treasure in clay jars,
so that it may be made clear that
this extraordinary power belongs to
God and does not come from us. We
are afflicted in every way, but not
crushed; perplexed, but not driven to
despair; persecuted, but not forsaken;
struck down, but not destroyed;
always carrying in the body the death
of Jesus, so that the life of Jesus may
also be made visible in our bodies.
For while we live, we are always being
given up to death for Jesus' sake, so

that the life of Jesus may be made
visible in our mortal flesh. So death is
at work in us, but life in you.

GOSPEL Mark 2:23 – 3:6

Hear the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ according to Mark.

One sabbath Jesus was going through
the cornfields; and as they made
their way his disciples began to pluck
heads of grain. The Pharisees said to
him, "Look, why are they doing what
is not lawful on the sabbath?" And
he said to them, "Have you never
read what David did when he and his
companions were hungry and in need
of food? He entered the house of
God, when Abiathar was high priest,
and ate the bread of the Presence,
which it is not lawful for any but the
priests to eat, and he gave some to
his companions." Then he said to
them, "The sabbath was made for
humankind and not humankind for
the sabbath; so the Son of Man is
lord even of the sabbath." Again he
entered the synagogue, and a man
was there who had a withered hand.
They watched him to see whether he
would cure him on the sabbath, so
that they might accuse him. And he
said to the man who had the withered
hand, "Come forward." Then he said
to the Pharisees, "Is it lawful to do
good or to do harm on the sabbath,
to save life or to kill?" But they were
silent. He looked around at them
with anger; he was grieved at their
hardness of heart and said to the man,
"Stretch out your hand." He stretched
it out, and his hand was restored. The
Pharisees went out and immediately
conspired with the Herodians against
Jesus, how to destroy him.

POST COMMUNION

Eternal Father,
we thank you for nourishing us
with these heavenly gifts:
may our communion strengthen us in
faith,
build us up in hope,
and make us grow in love;
for the sake of Jesus Christ our Lord.

Additional Text and Prayers

Call to worship

Lord of the Sabbath,
we come to you this morning with our praise,

for you are our God.

We come with our worries,

for you are our God.

We bring those on our hearts,

for you are our God.

We bring the concerns of the world,

for you are our God.

We know that you welcome us,

for you are our God.

We know that you love us,

for you are our God.

Lord of the Sabbath,

we come to you this morning rejoicing,

for you are our God.

Dismissal

As you have been blessed, go and bless others,
this Sabbath day and every day.

In the name of Christ. Amen.

COLLECT

Lord, you have taught us
that all our doings without love are
nothing worth:
send your Holy Spirit
and pour into our hearts that most
excellent gift of love,
the true bond of peace and of all
virtues,
without which whoever lives is
counted dead before you.
Grant this for your only Son Jesus
Christ's sake,
who is alive and reigns with you,
in the unity of the Holy Spirit,
one God, now and for ever.

FIRST READING

Either **Genesis 3:8-15**

A reading from the book of Genesis.

The man and the woman heard the sound of the LORD God walking in the garden at the time of the evening breeze, and the man and his wife hid themselves from the presence of the LORD God among the trees of the garden. But the LORD God called to the man, and said to him, "Where are you?" He said, "I heard the sound of you in the garden, and I was afraid, because I was naked; and I hid myself." He said, "Who told you that you were naked? Have you eaten from the tree of which I commanded you not to eat?" The man said, "The woman whom you gave to be with me, she gave me fruit from the tree, and I ate." Then the LORD God said to the woman, "What is this that you have done?" The woman said, "The serpent tricked me, and I ate." The LORD God said to the serpent, "Because you have done this, cursed are you among all animals and among all wild creatures; upon your belly you shall go, and dust you shall eat all the days of your life. I will put enmity between you and the woman, and between your offspring and hers; he will strike your head, and you will strike his heel."

Or **1 Samuel 8:4-11 [12-15]**

R *With the Lord there is mercy
and plenteous redemption.*

Out of the depths have I called to
you, O Lord;
Lord, hear my voice;

let your ears consider well the voice of
my supplication.

If you, Lord, were to note what is
done amiss,

O Lord, who could stand?

For there is forgiveness with you;
therefore you shall be feared. **R**

I wait for the Lord; my soul waits for
him;

in his word is my hope.

My soul waits for the Lord,
more than the night-watch for the

morning,

more than the night-watch for the
morning. **R**

O Israel, wait for the Lord,

for with the Lord there is mercy;

With him there is plenteous

redemption,

and he shall redeem Israel from all
their sins. **R**

SECOND READING

2 Corinthians 4:13 – 5:1

*A reading from the second letter of
Paul to the Corinthians.*

Just as we have the same spirit
of faith that is in accordance with
scripture – "I believed, and so I
spoke" – we also believe, and so we
speak, because we know that the
one who raised the Lord Jesus will
raise us also with Jesus, and will bring
us with you into his presence. Yes,
everything is for your sake, so that
grace, as it extends to more and more
people, may increase thanksgiving,
to the glory of God. So we do not
lose heart. Even though our outer
nature is wasting away, our inner
nature is being renewed day by day.
For this slight momentary affliction is
preparing us for an eternal weight of
glory beyond all measure, because
we look not at what can be seen but
at what cannot be seen; for what
can be seen is temporary, but what
cannot be seen is eternal. For we
know that if the earthly tent we live in
is destroyed, we have a building from
God, a house not made with hands,
eternal in the heavens.

GOSPEL Mark 3:20-end

*Hear the gospel of our Lord Jesus
Christ according to Mark.*

The crowd came together again, so
that Jesus and his companions could

not even eat. When his family heard
it, they went out to restrain him, for
people were saying, "He has gone
out of his mind." And the scribes
who came down from Jerusalem
said, "He has Beelzebul, and by the
ruler of the demons he casts out
demons." And he called them to
him, and spoke to them in parables,
"How can Satan cast out Satan? If
a kingdom is divided against itself,
that kingdom cannot stand. And if a
house is divided against itself, that
house will not be able to stand. And
if Satan has risen up against himself
and is divided, he cannot stand,
but his end has come. But no one
can enter a strong man's house and
plunder his property without first
tying up the strong man; then indeed
the house can be plundered. Truly I
tell you, people will be forgiven for
their sins and whatever blasphemies
they utter; but whoever blasphemes
against the Holy Spirit can never have
forgiveness, but is guilty of an eternal
sin" – for they had said, "He has
an unclean spirit." Then his mother
and his brothers came; and standing
outside, they sent to him and called
him. A crowd was sitting around him;
and they said to him, "Your mother
and your brothers and sisters are
outside, asking for you." And he
replied, "Who are my mother and my
brothers?" And looking at those who
sat around him, he said, "Here are my
mother and my brothers! Whoever
does the will of God is my brother
and sister and mother."

POST COMMUNION

Loving Father,
we thank you for feeding us at the
supper of your Son:
sustain us with your Spirit,
that we may serve you here on earth
until our joy is complete in heaven,
and we share in the eternal banquet
with Jesus Christ our Lord.

Additional Text and Prayers

Call to worship

I wait for the Lord, my soul waits, and in his word I hope.

Lord, hear my voice! Let your ears be attentive to the voice of my supplications!

Jesus went home; and the crowd came together again, so that they could not even eat.

We too gather as the crowd did, waiting excitedly to meet with God.

Introduction to confession

Lord, you tell us that anyone who does your will is part of your family.

Help us to put aside our differences and be united in you,

ready to worship in spirit and in truth.

Amen.

A prayer of confession

We don't always put other people before ourselves.

Forgive us, Lord.

We don't always go the first mile, never mind the extra one.

Forgive us, Lord.

We don't always give each other the space we need.

Forgive us, Lord.

We don't always hear what you are telling us.

Forgive us, Lord.

Help us to see the good in everyone and to share your love as freely as it is given to us. Amen.

An absolution is given.

COLLECT

Almighty God,
you have broken the tyranny of sin
and have sent the Spirit of your Son
into our hearts whereby we call you
Father:
give us grace to dedicate our freedom
to your service,
that we and all creation may be
brought to the glorious liberty of
the children of God;
through Jesus Christ your Son our
Lord,
who is alive and reigns with you,
in the unity of the Holy Spirit,
one God, now and for ever.

FIRST READING

Either **Ezekiel 17:22-end**

A reading from the book of the prophet Ezekiel.

Thus says the Lord GOD: I myself will take a sprig from the lofty top of a cedar; I will set it out. I will break off a tender one from the topmost of its young twigs; I myself will plant it on a high and lofty mountain. On the mountain height of Israel I will plant it, in order that it may produce boughs and bear fruit, and become a noble cedar. Under it every kind of bird will live; in the shade of its branches will nest winged creatures of every kind. All the trees of the field shall know that I am the LORD. I bring low the high tree, I make high the low tree; I dry up the green tree and make the dry tree flourish. I the LORD have spoken; I will accomplish it.

Or **1 Samuel 15:34 – 16:13**

PSALM Psalm 92:1-4. 11-end

R *It is a good thing to give thanks to the Lord.*

It is a good thing to give thanks to the Lord,
and to sing praises to your name,
O Most High;
To tell of your loving-kindness early in the morning
and of your faithfulness in the night season; **R**

On the psaltery and on the lyre
and to the melody of the harp.
For you have made me glad by your acts, O Lord;

and I shout for joy because of the works of your hands. **R**

The righteous shall flourish like a palm tree,
and shall spread abroad like a cedar of Lebanon.

Those who are planted in the house of the Lord
shall flourish in the courts of our God; **R**

They shall still bear fruit in old age;
they shall be green and succulent;
That they may show how upright the Lord is,
my rock, in whom there is no fault. **R**

SECOND READING

2 Corinthians 5:6-10 [11-13] 14-17

A reading from the second letter of Paul to the Corinthians.

Brothers and sisters, we are always confident; even though we know that while we are at home in the body we are away from the Lord – for we walk by faith, not by sight. Yes, we do have confidence, and we would rather be away from the body and at home with the Lord. So whether we are at home or away, we make it our aim to please him. For all of us must appear before the judgement seat of Christ, so that each may receive recompense for what has been done in the body, whether good or evil. [Therefore, knowing the fear of the Lord, we try to persuade others; but we ourselves are well known to God, and I hope that we are also well known to your consciences. We are not commending ourselves to you again, but giving you an opportunity to boast about us, so that you may be able to answer those who boast in outward appearance and not in the heart. For if we are beside ourselves, it is for God; if we are in our right mind, it is for you.] The love of Christ urges us on, because we are convinced that one has died for all; therefore all have died. And he died for all, so that those who live might live no longer for themselves, but for him who died and was raised for them. From now on, therefore, we regard no one from a human point of view; even though we once knew Christ from a human point of view, we

know him no longer in that way. So if anyone is in Christ, there is a new creation: everything old has passed away; see, everything has become new!

GOSPEL Mark 4:26-34

Hear the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ according to Mark.

Such a large crowd gathered around Jesus that he got into a boat and began to teach them using many parables. Jesus said, "The kingdom of God is as if someone would scatter seed on the ground, and would sleep and rise night and day, and the seed would sprout and grow, he does not know how. The earth produces of itself, first the stalk, then the head, then the full grain in the head. But when the grain is ripe, at once he goes in with his sickle, because the harvest has come." Jesus also said, "With what can we compare the kingdom of God, or what parable will we use for it? It is like a mustard seed, which, when sown upon the ground, is the smallest of all the seeds on earth; yet when it is sown it grows up and becomes the greatest of all shrubs, and puts forth large branches, so that the birds of the air can make nests in its shade." With many such parables he spoke the word to them, as they were able to hear it; he did not speak to them except in parables, but he explained everything in private to his disciples.

POST COMMUNION

O God, whose beauty is beyond our imagining
and whose power we cannot comprehend:
show us your glory as far as we can grasp it,
and shield us from knowing more than we can bear
until we may look upon you without fear;
through Jesus Christ our Saviour.

Additional Text and Prayers

Call to worship

God has planted us like trees
to flourish and grow.

Give thanks to the Lord.

Our soil is God's garden.

Give thanks to the Lord.

Daily we grow towards the light.

Give thanks to the Lord.

We give coolness,
shade and beauty to God's garden.

Give thanks to the Lord.

God makes us blossom in our youth.

Give thanks to the Lord.

God makes us produce fruit in our maturity.

Give thanks to the Lord.

God renews our life, season by season.

Give thanks to the Lord.

Blessing

May God the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ,
who is the source of all goodness and growth,
pour his blessing upon all things created,
and upon you his children,
that you may use his gifts to his glory
and the welfare of all peoples;
and the blessing...

Final Hymn

Dismissal

Just as the seed grows silently, slowly,
so, God, the life of your Spirit
grows in us unseen.

Teach us to know your Spirit.

Teach us to make time in our lives
to be with you

in stillness, in silence,

letting your peace settle,

letting our love for you grow,

letting what is bitter in our lives

be ripened into good, sweet fruit.

Amen.

Silence is kept.

Dismissal (continued)

Caring God,

just as we look after plants to give them what
they need to grow,

give us what we need so that we can become
the people we are meant to be
and welcome others to your kingdom.

In the name of Christ. Amen.

COLLECT

O God, the protector of all who trust in you,
without whom nothing is strong,
nothing is holy:
increase and multiply upon us your mercy;
that with you as our ruler and guide
we may so pass through things temporal
that we lose not our hold on things eternal;
grant this, heavenly Father,
for our Lord Jesus Christ's sake,
who is alive and reigns with you,
in the unity of the Holy Spirit,
one God, now and for ever.

FIRST READING

Either **Job 38:1-11**

A reading from the book of Job.

The LORD answered Job out of the whirlwind: "Who is this that darkens counsel by words without knowledge? Gird up your loins like a man, I will question you, and you shall declare to me. Where were you when I laid the foundation of the earth? Tell me, if you have understanding. Who determined its measurements – surely you know! Or who stretched the line upon it? On what were its bases sunk, or who laid its cornerstone when the morning stars sang together and all the heavenly beings shouted for joy? Or who shut in the sea with doors when it burst out from the womb? – when I made the clouds its garment, and thick darkness its swaddling band, and prescribed bounds for it, and set bars and doors, and said, 'Thus far shall you come, and no farther, and here shall your proud waves be stopped?'"

Or **1 Samuel 17:[1a. 4-11. 19-23] 32-49**

PSALM Psalm 107:1-3. 23-32

R Give thanks to the Lord for he is good, and his mercy endures for ever.

Give thanks to the Lord, for he is good,
and his mercy endures for ever.
Let all those whom the Lord has redeemed proclaim
that he redeemed them from the hand of the foe.

He gathered them out of the lands;
from the east and from the west,
from the north and from the south. **R**

Some went down to the sea in ships
and plied their trade in deep waters;
They beheld the works of the Lord
and his wonders in the deep.
Then he spoke and a stormy wind
arose,
which tossed high the waves of the sea. **R**

They mounted up to the heavens
and fell back to the depths;
their hearts melted because of their peril.
They reeled and staggered like drunkards
and were at their wits' end.
Then they cried to the Lord in their trouble,
and he delivered them from their distress. **R**

He stilled the storm to a whisper
and quieted the waves of the sea.
Then were they glad because of the calm,
and he brought them
to the harbour they were bound for. **R**

Let them give thanks to the Lord for his mercy
and the wonders he does for his children.
Let them exalt him in the congregation of the people
and praise him in the council of the elders. **R**

SECOND READING

2 Corinthians 6:1-13

A reading from the second letter of Paul to the Corinthians.

As we work together with Christ,
we urge you also not to accept the grace of God in vain. For he says, "At an acceptable time I have listened to you, and on a day of salvation I have helped you." See, now is the acceptable time; see, now is the day of salvation! We are putting no obstacle in anyone's way, so that no fault may be found with our ministry, but as servants of God we have commended ourselves in every way: through great endurance, in afflictions, hardships, calamities, beatings, imprisonments, riots,

labours, sleepless nights, hunger; by purity, knowledge, patience, kindness, holiness of spirit, genuine love, truthful speech, and the power of God; with the weapons of righteousness for the right hand and for the left; in honour and dishonour, in ill repute and good repute. We are treated as impostors, and yet are true; as unknown, and yet are well known; as dying, and see – we are alive; as punished, and yet not killed; as sorrowful, yet always rejoicing; as poor, yet making many rich; as having nothing, and yet possessing everything. We have spoken frankly to you Corinthians; our heart is wide open to you. There is no restriction in our affections, but only in yours. In return – I speak as to children – open wide your hearts also.

GOSPEL Mark 4:35-end

Hear the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ according to Mark.

When evening had come, Jesus said to his disciples, "Let us go across to the other side." And leaving the crowd behind, they took him with them in the boat, just as he was. Other boats were with him. A great gale arose, and the waves beat into the boat, so that the boat was already being swamped. But he was in the stern, asleep on the cushion; and they woke him up and said to him, "Teacher, do you not care that we are perishing?" He woke up and rebuked the wind, and said to the sea, "Peace! Be still!" Then the wind ceased, and there was a dead calm. He said to them, "Why are you afraid? Have you still no faith?" And they were filled with great awe and said to one another, "Who then is this, that even the wind and the sea obey him?"

POST COMMUNION

Eternal God,
comfort of the afflicted and healer of the broken,
you have fed us at the table of life and hope:
teach us the ways of gentleness and peace,
that all the world may acknowledge the kingdom of your Son Jesus Christ our Lord.

Additional Text and Prayers

Call to worship

God is here.

The Spirit is with us.

In strength of faith.

In seas of doubt.

The Spirit is with us.

In brightness of hope.

In heaviness of despair.

The Spirit is with us.

In safety and certainty.

In distrust and danger.

The Spirit is with us.

In songs of wonder.

In dumb astonishment.

The Spirit is with us.

Let God move among us.

In all things we are God's people.

Dismissal

Now may he

who laid the foundations of the earth,

who stills the storm,

and hushes the waves of the sea,

speak his peace to you,

as you go on your journey.

May you have grace

to perceive the one whom even

the wind and the sea obey,

and strength to persevere in walking in his way,

now and always.

Amen.

Gradual Hymn

Earth's fragile beauties we possess

as pilgrim gifts from God,

and walk the slow and dangerous way

his wounded feet have trod.

Though faith by tragedy is rocked,

and love with pain is scored,

we sing the pilgrims' song of hope:

'Your kingdom come, O Lord!'

Earth's human longings we possess

by love or grief compelled

to take and bear the heavy cross

Christ's wounded hands have held.

By cloud and fire he leads us on

through famine, plague or sword,

singing with faith the pilgrims' song:

'Your kingdom come, O Lord!'

God's own true image we possess

in innocence first known,

now tainted by the hate and spite

to Christ's own body shown.

By that same wounded heart of love

God's image is restored,

to sing again the pilgrims' song:

'Your kingdom come, O Lord!'

Words: Robert Willis (1947 -)

Tune: KINGSFOLD (NEH 376; HO&N (Orange) 310;

HO&N (Blue) 334) English folk song arr. Vaughan

Williams (1872-1958)