

Sunday 15 August 2021  
The Eleventh Sunday after Trinity  
Led by Michael McNeill, ALM



## **Greeting**

O Lord, open our lips  
**and our mouth shall proclaim your praise.**

Give us the joy of your saving help  
**and sustain us with your life-giving Spirit.**

We have come together in the name of Christ  
to offer our praise and thanksgiving,  
to hear and receive God's holy word,  
to pray for the needs of the world,  
and to seek the forgiveness of our sins,  
that by the power of the Holy Spirit  
we may give ourselves to the service of God.

## **Hymn – Tell out my soul (tune Woodlands NEH 186)**

Tell out, my soul, the greatness of the Lord!  
Unnumbered blessings give my spirit voice;  
tender to me the promise of his word –  
in God my Saviour shall my heart rejoice.

Tell out, my soul, the greatness of his name!  
Make known his might, the deeds his arm has done;  
his mercy sure, from age to age the same –  
his holy name: the Lord, the Mighty One.

Tell out, my soul, the greatness of his might!  
Powers and dominions lay their glory by;  
proud hearts and stubborn wills are put to flight,  
the hungry fed, the humble lifted high.

Tell out, my soul, the glories of his word!  
Firm is his promise, and his mercy sure:  
tell out, my soul, the greatness of the Lord  
to children's children and for evermore!

### **Prayer of Penitence**

Jesus says, 'Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is close at hand'.  
So let us turn away from our sin and turn to Christ,  
confessing our sins in penitence and faith.

**Lord God,  
we have sinned against you;  
we have done evil in your sight.  
We are sorry and repent,  
Have mercy on us according to your love.  
Wash away our wrongdoing and cleanse us from our sin.  
Renew a right spirit within us  
and restore us to the joy of your salvation;  
through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.**

May the Father of all mercies  
cleanse us from our sins,  
and restore us in his image  
to the praise and glory of his name,  
through Jesus Christ our Lord.  
**Amen.**

Blessed is the Lord,  
**for he has heard the voice of our prayer;**

therefore shall our hearts dance for joy  
**and in our song will we praise our God.**

## **Meditation**

Holy, holy, holy Lord,  
God of power and might.  
Heaven and earth are full of your glory,

And that glory resides inside of me  
as I carry the light of the world,  
Our saviour, in my heart and womb.  
Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord  
Hosanna in the highest  
There is no Holy one like the Lord,  
No one besides you.  
And Holy is your name.  
His mercy is for those who fear him  
from generation to generation.  
And I am unafraid in my fearfulness.

## **Readings by Dona McCullagh**

### **Isaiah 61.10-end**

<sup>10</sup> I will greatly rejoice in the Lord,  
my whole being shall exult in my God;  
for he has clothed me with the garments of salvation,  
he has covered me with the robe of righteousness,  
as a bridegroom decks himself with a garland,  
and as a bride adorns herself with her jewels.

<sup>11</sup> For as the earth brings forth its shoots,  
and as a garden causes what is sown in it to spring up,  
so the Lord God will cause righteousness and praise  
to spring up before all the nations.

### **Luke 1.46-55**

<sup>46</sup> And Mary said,  
'My soul magnifies the Lord,  
<sup>47</sup> and my spirit rejoices in God my Saviour,

48 for he has looked with favour on the lowliness of his servant.  
Surely, from now on all generations will call me blessed;  
49 for the Mighty One has done great things for me,  
and holy is his name.  
50 His mercy is for those who fear him  
from generation to generation.  
51 He has shown strength with his arm;  
he has scattered the proud in the thoughts of their hearts.  
52 He has brought down the powerful from their thrones,  
and lifted up the lowly;  
53 he has filled the hungry with good things,  
and sent the rich away empty.  
54 He has helped his servant Israel,  
in remembrance of his mercy,  
55 according to the promise he made to our ancestors,  
to Abraham and to his descendants for ever.’

### **Sermon by Rev Priscilla Slusar**

Prior to ordination I spent a lot of time with teenagers. I taught in comprehensive schools for over 30 years and for 11 of those years I was a Headteacher. Although I loved my job, there were occasions when I found the behaviour of teenagers challenging as they tested the boundaries and coped with their personal frustrations of growing into adults. However, I always admired the idealism and energy of the young people I worked with. They held strong opinions and showed a commitment to create change that would support their view of the future. There was also a great feeling of hope for the future.

We have seen this recently in the Climate Change movement, under the leadership of Greta Thunberg. She has been fearless in challenging world leaders and in motivating other young people to take action. There are now advertisements on television using young people from around the world to motivate us to change our habits and address these pressing environmental issues.

Today's gospel reading is a reminder of this idealism and energy expressed by young people – it is the Magnificat of Mary. Mary was a young woman, probably a teenager, when God called her to give birth to our Saviour. The Magnificat expresses her trust in God and hope for the world.

Mary is often depicted as a meek and mild character, but consider what we know about her and what she faced in her life. She showed great faith in God and strength of character when she said “yes” to God. She accepted God's role for her even though her reputation would be destroyed and she would face prejudice from society for being pregnant prior to marriage. At the presentation in the Temple Simeon warned her that a sword would pierce her heart; he knew that she would face tragedy as the mother of Jesus. She later became a witness to the challenges that Jesus faced in his ministry. Finally, imagine what courage it took to stand at the foot of the cross as her beloved son was tortured and killed. Mary was a woman of great courage, determination and faith in God.

The Magnificat is a great hymn of praise that pours forth from this young woman as she travels to see her cousin Elizabeth. It has all the idealism and energy of a young person that I referred to earlier. It is also full of hope for the world – an image of the Kingdom of God here on earth.

Mary calls upon her own experience to pour forth her belief in the way in which God treats other people. She says that God works through the lowly, the humble, and the poor and brings low those who are proud and the powerful.

“He has scattered the proud”

“He has sent the rich away empty”

“He has brought down the powerful from their thrones and lifted up the lowly”

Mary's tenses are past tenses. She speaks as if the old order has already gone and a new order is in place. And yet, she lived at a time of the Roman occupation of her country when there was

great cruelty and powerful leaders exploited the poor and the weak. Mary believes so strongly in God's kingdom and the mission of Jesus to bring that kingdom on earth that she speaks with confidence of God's purposes already accomplished. The Magnificat forms an important part of the service of Evening Prayer or Evensong when it is said or sung by us, the congregation. It is an intensely personal statement but we say it as if these words were our words, rather than the words of Mary. When we say these phrases, we are challenged to have the same trust in God that she had.

Timothy Dudley-Smith wrote a wonderful hymn based on the Magnificat: "Tell out my soul the greatness of the Lord" (one of my favourites). Once again, as we sing, we are singing the words of Mary as if they are our words. But in the hymn the phrases are written in the present tense.

"Powers and dominions lay their glory by".

"Proud hearts and stubborn wills are put to flight".

"The hungry fed, the humble lifted high".

Is this a true reflection of the world and society as we know it? Can we really say that all these changes have taken place in our modern world? Have the powerful and proud been overthrown? Are there no more hungry people in the world? Do we show respect for humble people? No.

But when we sing these words, we are affirming our faith in the Kingdom of God that Jesus taught and demonstrated in his ministry. It is Jesus' mission statement for the world and it reminds us that we should strive for this to become a reality.

Today we honour Mary for her courage, her faith in God and her commitment to the future of the kingdom. We pray with her for a new order in the world, "Thy kingdom come".

Amen.

## **Creed**

**I believe in God, the Father almighty,  
creator of heaven and earth.**

**I believe in Jesus Christ, his only Son, our Lord,  
who was conceived by the Holy Spirit,  
born of the Virgin Mary,  
suffered under Pontius Pilate,  
was crucified, died, and was buried;  
he descended to the dead.  
On the third day he rose again;  
he ascended into heaven,  
he is seated at the right hand of the Father,  
and he will come to judge the living and the dead.**

**I believe in the Holy Spirit,  
the holy catholic Church,  
the communion of saints,  
the forgiveness of sins,  
the resurrection of the body,  
and the life everlasting. Amen.**

## **Intercessions by John Crang**

In the joy and hope of resurrection and as God's beloved children let us pray, taking on the words of Mary who the church remembers especially today:

the Almighty has done great things for me and holy is his Name. He has mercy on those who fear him in every generation. He has shown the strength of his arm, and has scattered the proud in their conceit. He has cast down the mighty from their thrones, and has lifted up the lowly. He has filled the hungry with good things, and the rich he has sent away empty.

Enlighten Justin and Stephen, our Archbishops, Stephen and Dagmar our Bishops and all who minister with knowledge and

understanding, that by their teaching and their lives they may proclaim your word. As the world looks for direction in these uncertain times may their words be timely and understood as we all navigate these uncharted territories.

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

Guide the leaders of the nations into the ways of peace and justice. In the continuing negotiations for relationships across continents and between nations may those with stronger economies and resources look to ways of balancing the needs of the less well off. Give wisdom and resolve to those who are striving to broker peace within the many countries of our world that are torn apart by internal strife. In a moment of quite can we bring to mind those parts of the world that are beneath the horizon of media awareness but that we are particularly aware of and concerned for...

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

We thank you that many countries have made available the resources to limit the spread of Covid. Give wisdom to those who plan for the way ahead and particularly for those places where establishing and administering strategies to control the spread of Covid throughout the world are limited.

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

Guard and strengthen your servant Elizabeth our Queen, that your Holy Spirit would council her and those around her bring wisdom as she seeks your honour and glory in the role that you have given.

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

Endue the High Court of Parliament and all the Ministers of the Crown with wisdom and understanding. That you would enable those who have chosen this service to find your balance in their

desire to honour one another and to seek the common good. We pray this too for the media in their pursuit truth and justice and for their balanced and fair reporting of complex issues. Bless those who administer the law, that they may uphold justice, honesty and truth. We pray for our police and emergency services as they endeavour to keep us all safe, especially during the coming weeks as we continue to discover how we need to adjust to our changing personal responsibilities.

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

As we enjoy the beauty of blue skies and warm days we also ponder the delicate balance of our individual lives, give us as individuals and the leaders of industries and nations the will to continue to consider and reset our use of the resources of the earth, remembering in thankfulness your provisions and for the good of all creation.

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

We pray for our local communities and for all those who care and support us. Bless and keep all your people that we may continue to look-out-for and provide a safe space for all whenever we meet. Bring your joy into our conversations whether in person, by phone, Zoom, Skype or however. Sustain us all and bring reconciliation to those in discord and peace to those in stress. Watch over children, young people, their families and carers in their summer holidays. We remember before you all families as they balance their work, rest and other responsibilities. We pray for all those who have received examination results this week as they consider their options and opportunities for the future. We ask too that you would give energy and wisdom to all those who are looking for reshaped approaches to schooling and examinations, that the present generation of young people may be equipped for the future challenges ahead of them.

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

Let us take a moment in silence to pray for those known to us who are unwell, lonely, bereaved or downcast at this time.  
Lord in your mercy, **hear our prayer**

Hear us as we remember those who have died in the peace of Christ, both those who have confessed the faith and those whose faith is known to you alone, and grant us with them a share in your eternal kingdom.

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

### **The Collect**

Almighty God,  
who looked upon the lowliness of the Blessed Virgin Mary and chose her to be the mother of your only Son:  
grant that we who are redeemed by his blood may share with her in the glory of your eternal kingdom; 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. **Amen**

### **The Lord's Prayer**

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.**

## **Hymn – Lord Jesus Christ (NEH 297)**

Lord Jesus Christ  
You have come to us  
You are one with us  
Mary's Son.  
Cleansing our souls from all their sin.  
Pouring your love and goodness in.  
Jesus our love for you we sing,  
Living Lord.

Lord Jesus Christ  
Now and every day  
Teach us how to pray,  
Son of God.  
You have commanded us to do  
This in remembrance Lord of you  
Into our lives your power breaks through,  
Living Lord.

Lord Jesus Christ  
You have come to us  
Born as one with us,  
Mary's Son.  
Led out to die on Calvary,  
Risen from death to set us free,  
Living Lord Jesus help us see  
You are Lord.

Lord Jesus Christ  
I would come to you  
Live my life for you,  
Son of God.  
All your commands I know are true,  
Your many gifts will make me new,

Into my life your power breaks through,  
Living Lord.

## **Conclusion**

The Lord bless us, and preserve us from all evil,  
and keep us in eternal life.

**Amen.**

Go in peace to love and serve the Lord.

**In the name of Christ. Amen.**