

Sunday 20th August 2023

Eleventh Sunday after Trinity

Grace mercy and peace from God our Father
and the Lord Jesus Christ be with you.

And also with you.

Hymn: Be Still

(Click link) <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ZugvUQ4m90U>

Invitation to Confession:

The word of God is living and active.

It judges the thoughts and intentions of the heart.

All is open and laid bare before the eyes of him to whom we give account.

We confess our sins in penitence and faith.

Confession:

O King enthroned on high,

filling the earth with your glory:

holy is your name, Lord God almighty.

In our sinfulness we cry to you

to take our guilt away,

and to cleanse our lips to speak your word, through Jesus Christ our Lord.

Amen.

Absolution:

May the Father forgive us

by the death of his Son

and strengthen us to live

in the power of the Spirit

all our days.

Amen.

Blessed be 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.

We listen to the word of God.

Old Testament Reading: Esther 4: 1-17

Esther Agrees to Help the Jews

When Mordecai learned all that had been done, Mordecai tore his clothes and put on sackcloth and ashes, and went through the city, wailing with a loud and bitter cry; ² he went up to the entrance of the king's gate, for no one might enter the king's gate clothed with sackcloth. ³ In every province, wherever the king's command and his decree came, there was great mourning among the Jews, with fasting and weeping and lamenting, and most of them lay in sackcloth and ashes.

⁴ When Esther's maids and her eunuchs came and told her, the queen was deeply distressed; she sent garments to clothe Mordecai, so that he might take off his sackcloth; but he would not accept them. ⁵ Then Esther called for Hathach, one of the king's eunuchs, who had been appointed to attend her, and ordered him to go to Mordecai to learn what was happening and why. ⁶ Hathach went out to Mordecai in the open square of the city in front of the king's gate, ⁷ and Mordecai told

him all that had happened to him, and the exact sum of money that Haman had promised to pay into the king's treasuries for the destruction of the Jews. ⁸ Mordecai also gave him a copy of the written decree issued in Susa for their destruction, that he might show it to Esther, explain it to her, and charge her to go to the king to make supplication to him and entreat him for her people. ⁹ Hathach went and told Esther what Mordecai had said. ¹⁰ Then Esther spoke to Hathach and gave him a message for Mordecai, saying, ¹¹ 'All the king's servants and the people of the king's provinces know that if any man or woman goes to the king inside the inner court without being called, there is but one law—all alike are to be put to death. Only if the king holds out the golden sceptre to someone, may that person live. I myself have not been called to come in to the king for thirty days.' ¹² When they told Mordecai what Esther had said, ¹³ Mordecai told them to reply to Esther, 'Do not think that in the king's palace you will escape any more than all the other Jews.' ¹⁴ For if you keep silence at such a time as this, relief and deliverance will rise for the Jews from another quarter, but you and your father's family will perish. Who knows? Perhaps you have come to royal dignity for just such a time as this.' ¹⁵ Then Esther said in reply to Mordecai, ¹⁶ 'Go, gather all the Jews to be found in Susa, and hold a fast on my behalf, and neither eat nor drink for three days, night or day. I and my maids will also fast as you do. After that I will go to the king, though it is against the law; and if I perish, I perish.' ¹⁷ Mordecai then went away and did everything as Esther had ordered him.

*This is the word of the Lord. **Thanks be to God.***

Gospel Reading: Matthew 15: 21-28

The Canaanite Woman's Faith

Jesus left that place and went away to the district of Tyre and Sidon. ²² Just then a Canaanite woman from that region came out and started shouting, 'Have mercy on me, Lord, Son of David; my daughter is tormented by a demon.' ²³ But he did not answer her at all. And his disciples came and urged him, saying, 'Send her away, for she keeps shouting after us.' ²⁴ He answered, 'I was sent only to the lost sheep of the house of Israel.' ²⁵ But she came and knelt before him, saying, 'Lord, help me.' ²⁶ He answered, 'It is not fair to take the children's food and throw it to the dogs.' ²⁷ She said, 'Yes, Lord, yet even the dogs eat the crumbs that fall from their masters' table.' ²⁸ Then Jesus answered her, 'Woman, great is your faith! Let it be done for you as you wish.' And her daughter was healed instantly.

*This is the Gospel of the Lord. **Praise to you O Christ.***

Sermon: (click link) <https://youtu.be/8lu3NGcppGg>

Hymn: When we walk with the Lord (Trust and Obey)
(Click link) <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=KB4KcleYiWM>

The Creed:

Let us declare our faith in God; Father, Son and Holy Spirit.

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.

Prayers of Intercession:

Father, thank you that you, in the person of Jesus,
came to make your home with humankind.
The welcome Jesus received when he started his ministry was mixed –
and as we know, he was finally crucified.
Thank you that he rose from the dead and,
that although he returned to you he continues to make
his home with us through his Holy Spirit.
We praise You that we can know your presence with us today
helping us, the Church, to do your will.
We pray for the Church the Body of Christ,
not only in Southminster and Steeple, but worldwide,
that your will may be done on earth as in heaven through its life and work.

Father, thank you that we can feel at home and
accepted in our Church family.
Help us welcome new members
so they may feel at home with us.
Today we thank you for bringing us together –
those who have been worshipping here for some time and
those who are newer members of our fellowship.
Help us focus on Jesus and
allow him to guide us in all we do.
As we prepare for this year's Holiday Club starting this week,
we pray for all the children who will come along
and the adults who have committed
to welcoming and teaching the children in each age group.

Father, thank you for the Southminster, Steeple
and Dengie community, the place we call home.
Thank you for all who make it a happy place with
opportunities for people of all ages to live life to the full.
We pray for our neighbours, those we get on with and

those we may find difficult to like.
Help us show your love to everyone so they may feel at home.
We pray for all community groups who work to improve the
quality of life for folk who live here.
We particularly pray today for the Steeple Vintage Gathering.

Father, we bring the people who have no home (whatever the reason).
We ask you to care for those locally who have become homeless and
need help from agencies like the Citizens' Advice Bureau and the
Food Pantry and Community Hub in its development.
Further afield we ask you to help and provide for those seeking asylum,
refugees no longer living in their homeland and those living
in areas where wildfires have destroyed their home.

Father, thank you that our planet is our home,
but it is also home to other living things –
animals and plants.
Forgive us for how we have failed to care for all you created.
Guide us to do a better job of this in the future to
prevent endangering animals and our land by how we live.
Help us ensure that the food produced is fairly shared between the rich and poor.

Father we pray for people who have problems at home –
those who are ill, those with financial problems,
those with relationship difficulties and those whose
present home is a hospital bed or a room in a residential home.
Father, help all who are in need and all who are supporting someone.
May the right decisions be made and those involved be willing to accept help.
We also remember those whose earthly life has recently ended
and we pray for their peaceful future and those
coping with their loss.

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

Silence is kept.

The Collect:
God of glory,
the end of our searching,
help us to lay aside
all that prevents us from seeking
your kingdom,
and to give all that we have
to gain the pearl beyond all price,
through our Saviour Jesus Christ. Amen.
Amen.

The Lord's Prayer:
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 forever.
Amen.

*Let us pause for a moment to bring ourselves
and all that we offer to God and give Him thanks.*

Hymn: Brothers, sisters let me serve you
(Click link) <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=07FBSrx5Oq4>

Blessing:

The love of the Lord Jesus
draw you to himself,
the power of the Lord Jesus
strengthen you in his service,
the joy of the Lord Jesus
fill your hearts ...

... and the blessing of God almighty;
Father Son and Holy Spirit,
be with us, and remain with us
and all those whom we love,
now and forever.

Amen.

Go in peace to love and serve the Lord.
In the name of Christ. Amen.