

# The Gathering

## 1 - Welcome - [OLIVER]

Grace and peace to you from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ. **Amen.**

Welcome to St Mary's Cathedral, Glasgow, a meeting place for those who seek God. For years, people have gathered like this to read the scriptures, debate, and pray. In fact, Jesus himself made it a regular practice on the Sabbath Day. So, let us, like him, engage in this custom, and listen to what the Spirit is saying.

## 3 - Collect for Purity - [LESLEY]

**Almighty God,  
to whom all hearts are open,  
all desires known,  
and from whom no secrets are hidden:  
cleanse the thoughts of our hearts  
by the inspiration of your Holy Spirit,  
that we may perfectly love you,  
and worthily magnify your holy name;  
through Christ our Lord.  
Amen.**

## 5 - Confession

[MAGGIE] God is love and we are God's children.  
There is no room for fear in love.  
We love because God loved us first.

Let us confess our sins in penitence and faith.

[Silence]

**God our Father, we confess to you and to our fellow members  
in the Body of Christ that we have sinned in thought, word**

**and deed, and in what we have failed to do. We are truly sorry. Forgive us our sins, and deliver us from the power of evil, for the sake of your Son who died for us, Jesus Christ, our Lord.**

[OLIVER] God, who is both power and love, forgive you and free you from your sins, heal and strengthen you by the Holy Spirit, and raise you to new life in Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

### **7 - Gloria - [MAGNUS]**

Glory to God in the highest,  
and peace to his people on earth.

Lord God, heavenly King,  
almighty God and Father,  
we worship you, we give you thanks,  
we praise you for your glory.

Lord Jesus Christ, only Son of the Father,  
Lord God, Lamb of God,  
you take away the sin of the world:  
have mercy on us;  
you are seated at the right hand of the Father:  
receive our prayer.

For you alone are the Holy One,  
you alone are the Lord,  
you alone are the Most High,  
Jesus Christ,  
with the Holy Spirit,  
in the glory of God the Father. Amen.

### **8 - Collect - [OLIVER]**

Lord God, whose compassion embraces all peoples, whose law is wisdom, freedom, and joy for the poor, fulfil in our midst your promise of favour, that we may receive the gospel of salvation with faith and, anointed by the Spirit, freely proclaim it. Grant this through our Lord Jesus Christ, your Son, who lives and reigns with you in the unity of the Holy Spirit, God for ever and ever.

**Amen.**

## The Ministry of the Word

### **11 - GOSPEL: Luke 4:14-21 – [BILLIE]**

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

**Glory to Christ our Saviour.**

Then Jesus, filled with the power of the Spirit, returned to Galilee, and a report about him spread through all the surrounding country. He began to teach in their synagogues and was praised by everyone.

When he came to Nazareth, where he had been brought up, he went to the synagogue on the sabbath day, as was his custom. He stood up to read, and the scroll of the prophet Isaiah was given to him. He unrolled the scroll and found the place where it was written:

‘The Spirit of the Lord is upon me,  
because he has anointed me  
to bring good news to the poor.  
He has sent me to proclaim release to the captives  
and recovery of sight to the blind,  
to let the oppressed go free,  
to proclaim the year of the Lord’s favour.’

And he rolled up the scroll, gave it back to the attendant, and sat down. The eyes of all in the synagogue were fixed on him. Then he began to say to them, ‘Today this scripture has been fulfilled in your hearing.’

Give thanks to the Lord for his glorious Gospel.

**Praise to Christ our Lord.**

### **12 - Sermon [MAGGIE]**

As I approached our gospel reading for this week, several questions went through my mind. The first question was this –

who picked the reading that Jesus gave in the synagogue? Did synagogues in the first century have a lectionary like the one that we use to guide them through their scripture readings? I guess that's exactly the sort of question a preacher would ask, isn't it?

The answer is that they probably did. Since mediaeval times, synagogues have followed a set pattern of readings from the torah, with a reading from the prophets chosen that related to the Torah reading. It's likely that in the first century there was a set reading from the Torah, however, the set of readings from the prophets was probably not set at this time, so it was probably up to the man leading the service to select a reading from the prophets. And so it was most likely Jesus's choice to read this passage.

Which of course leads to the second question – why did Jesus choose this passage to read? Well we know the answer to this question because Jesus tells us – after reading the scripture, he looks at the congregation and declares: “Today this scripture has been fulfilled in your hearing”. Jesus selected this reading to identify himself as God's chosen one, God's Messiah, who had come in fulfilment of these words.

This begs a third question – what does it mean that this scripture was fulfilled in Jesus? The verses that Jesus reads come from the later chapters of Isaiah, and they were spoken originally to the people of Israel when they were living in exile, in Babylon. The very first hearers of these prophetic would have been looking for God to rescue them from their exile, and restore their fortunes in the land God had given them. The Jews in the synagogue in Nazareth listening to Jesus were by this time living back in their ancestral land, but they were still in a form of exile, living under the authority of the Roman empire. They were looking to God to set them free from this oppression, that they might be released from the dominion of the Romans. So when they heard these words, they would likely have been hoping that God's chosen one would raise up an army to defeat the Romans and to restore the line of David as the rightful rulers of Jerusalem – a promise of revolution.

When Jesus speaks these words in the synagogue in Nazareth, however, he is speaking about something different. The prophecy proclaims the coming of the year of the Lord's favour, that is, the year of Jubilee – you can read about it in Leviticus 25. According to God's plan for Israel, every 50 years all debts were to be cancelled, all slaves released, and all land returned to those who had originally owned it. This was how God's people would live together in a fair and equitable way. As far as we can know, the people of Israel never lived put these principles into practice, and gradually inequality worked its way through Israelite society. But this is the freedom that Jesus is promising – a promise of restoration.

And this is the promise that is fulfilled in the coming of Jesus.

Jesus came not to win a victory over the Roman empire, but to defeat the powers of sin and death, once and for all, by his death on the cross – his life for ours in a wonderful exchange. Because of what Jesus did, there will come a day when all of creation will be set free from its bondage and will be restored to all that God intended for it, and for us. We may not know the day or the hour, but we know for certain that this day will come. It is a sure and certain hope – each one of us will have our place in God's creation restored, the kingdom of justice and joy.

But it is a prophecy that is also still being fulfilled. If the original hearers were looking for a material fulfilment as well as an eternal fulfilment, they were not wrong, though if they were looking for God to raise up an army against the Romans, they were missing the mark. God's way is not to defeat power with power, but with love, and most especially love for those on the margins. We see throughout Jesus's life his concern for the poor and the oppressed. If a day is coming when all will be put right, then Jesus used his time on earth to show how that day can be brought closer by how we choose to live now, and our calling as the body of Christ on earth today, is to live and work for the kingdom of God.

Which brings me to my fourth and final question – how is this prophecy being fulfilled in the church today? It's a question for the

church as a whole, and it's a question for each one of us. For some, it's a call to repentance – to acknowledge how their lives may, intentionally or not, be complicit with forces in society that are harmful or oppressive, and to challenge them to turn around, change their ways and to turn to God. For some, it's a call to action, a call to speak out against injustice, and to step out towards those on the margins, to see where God's kingdom is breaking into the world and to join in with that work. And for some it's a call of grace – for anyone who is struggling, who doesn't have what they need to live, who is oppressed or feels held captive in any way. Know that God is with you in your struggle. And know that you have a sure and certain hope that one day, you will receive the promise that is in these words of Jesus, you will find your place in God's kingdom of justice and joy.

**Amen.**

#### **14 - Intercessions [SHONA]**

Let us pray for the coming of God's kingdom, saying  
O Lord, **your kingdom come.**

Eternal God, we pray for all the peoples of the world—for the people of Tonga in the wake of the recent volcanic eruption and tsunami, and for those working to bring them help—that they may know you as the God of peace, we pray to you,

O Lord, **your kingdom come.**

We pray for the communities in which we live—remembering especially today all those who work in the different areas of national and local media here in Glasgow—that you watch over their going out and their coming in, we pray to you,

O Lord, **your kingdom come.**

We pray for nations, for leaders and governments—for those making decisions about Covid restrictions and provisions for those responsible for setting the tone and the standard of public life, and

those who hold them to account that integrity may mark all their dealings, we pray to you,

O Lord, **your kingdom come.**

We pray for all who labour for righteousness—those who work with the marginalised and excluded those who work for justice brings them into danger—that your presence and help may give them courage, we pray to you,

O Lord, **your kingdom come.**

We pray for communities torn by dissension and strife—that your forgiveness may bring them healing, we pray to you,

O Lord, **your kingdom come.**

We pray for the anxious, the lonely, the bereaved; for the family, friends, colleagues and pupils of Ashling Murphy—that consolation and peace may be theirs, we pray to you,

O Lord, **your kingdom come.**

We pray for the Church, your household and family—for the the Hong Kong Anglican Church and the churches of St Bartholomew's Gourock and St John's, Greenock; for all involved here at St Mary's in working for the protection of vulnerable groups and for Matt Cavanagh as he coordinates this—that your people may be firm in the confession of their hope, we pray to you,

O Lord, **your kingdom come.**

We pray for Kevin our Bishop, and for all who bear Christ's name—that their lives may proclaim your glory, we pray to you,

O Lord, **your kingdom come.**

We pray for those who are separated from us by death—remembering at his year's mind Edward Gordon

Scott—that theirs may be the kingdom which is unshakeable, we pray to you,

O Lord, **your kingdom come.**

**Amen.**

## Communion

### 17 - Offertory - [OLIVER]

Sharing the Good News, announcing forgiveness and freedom—what the Lord did in the synagogue—is something people do in church today. It happens here and now. This is a place where God’s message is proclaimed.

I invite you to contribute to this work. To find out more, visit [www.thecathedral.org.uk](http://www.thecathedral.org.uk) and click DONATE TO ST MARY’S CATHEDRAL.

Let us present our offerings to the Lord.

**Yours, Lord, is the greatness, the power, the glory, the splendour, and the majesty; for everything in heaven and on earth is yours.**

**All things come from you, and of your own we give you.**

### 18 - Eucharistic Prayer

[OLIVER] The Lord be with you.

[MAGGIE] **And also with you.**

[OLIVER] Lift up your hearts.

[MAGGIE] **We lift them to the Lord.**

[OLIVER] Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.

[MAGGIE] **It is right to give God thanks and praise.**

Worship and praise belong to you, Father,  
in every place and at all times.



All power is yours.  
You created the heavens and established the earth;  
you sustain in being all that is.

In Christ your Son our life and yours  
are brought together in a wonderful exchange.  
He made his home among us  
that we might for ever dwell in you.

Through your Holy Spirit  
you call us to new birth  
in a creation restored by love.

As children of your redeeming purpose,  
we offer you our praise,  
with angels and archangels  
and the whole company of heaven,  
singing the hymn of your unending glory:

### **SANCTUS & BENEDICTUS - [MAGNUS]**

**Holy, Holy, Holy Lord,  
God of power and might.  
Heaven and earth are full of your glory.  
Hosanna in the highest.  
Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord.  
Hosanna in the highest.**

Glory and thanksgiving be to you,  
most loving Father,  
for the gift of your Son born in human flesh  
He is the Word existing beyond time,  
both source and final purpose,  
bringing to wholeness all that is made.  
Obedient to your will he died upon the Cross.  
By your power you raised him from the dead.  
He broke the bonds of evil  
and set your people free  
to be his Body in the world.

On the night when he was given up to death,  
knowing that his hour had come,  
having loved his own,  
he loved them to the end.  
At supper with his disciples  
he took bread and offered you thanks.  
He broke the bread,  
and gave it to them, saying:  
"Take, eat.  
This is my Body: it is broken for you."  
After supper, he took the cup,  
he offered you thanks,  
and gave it to them saying:  
"Drink this, all of you.  
This is my Blood of the new covenant;  
it is poured out for you, and for all,  
that sins may be forgiven.  
Do this in remembrance of me."

**We now obey your Son's command.  
We recall his blessed passion and death,  
his glorious resurrection and ascension;  
and we look for the coming of his Kingdom.  
Made one with him, we offer you these gifts  
and with them ourselves,  
a single, holy, living sacrifice.**

Hear us, most merciful Father,  
and send your Holy Spirit upon us  
and upon this bread and this wine,  
that, overshadowed by his life-giving power,  
they may be the Body and Blood of your Son,  
and we may be kindled with the fire of your love  
and renewed for the service of your Kingdom.

**Help us, who are baptised into the fellowship of Christ's Body  
to live and work to your praise and glory;  
may we grow together in unity and love**

**until at last, in your new creation,  
we enter into our heritage  
in the company of the Virgin Mary,  
the apostles, and prophets,  
and of all God's children living and departed.**

Through Jesus Christ our Lord,  
with whom, and in whom,  
in the unity of the Holy Spirit,  
all honour and glory be to you,  
Lord of all ages,  
world without end.

**Amen.**

#### **19 - Breaking of the Bread - [OLIVER]**

The living bread is broken for the life of the world.  
**Lord, unite us in this sign.**

#### **20 - Lord's Prayer - [MAGGIE]**

As our Saviour has 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.  
Do not bring us  
to the time of trial  
but deliver us from evil.  
For the kingdom, the power  
and the glory are yours,**

**now and for ever.**

**Amen.**

## **21 - Communion - [OLIVER]**

God is with us wherever we are.

As we gaze in adoration we feed on God in our hearts and minds that we may in turn feed the world.

O God, even as this broken bread was scattered over the hills, and was gathered together and became one, so let Your Church be gathered together from the ends of the earth into your kingdom; for yours is the glory and the power through Jesus Christ for ever.

**Amen.**

## **24 - Post Communion Prayer - [IAIN]**

Gracious God, our hands have taken holy things; our lives have been nourished by the body of your Son. May we who have eaten at this holy table be strengthened for service in your world. We ask this in the name of Jesus Christ the Lord.

**Amen.**

## **25 - Blessing - [OLIVER]**

Thanks to all who have joined in today's service, proclaiming God's Good News.

Christ the Son of God gladden your hearts with the good news of his kingdom; and the blessing of God almighty, the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit, be among you and remain with you always.

## **Voluntary - [STEVEN]**

Fiat Lux - Th. Dubois