

9th Sunday after Trinity

Bread from Heaven

ALL-AGE SERVICE



Welcome

This month's All Age Service is exploring the theme of manna from heaven, and Jesus saying "I am the bread of life."

You might enjoy colouring in the line-drawing above?

Geoffrey

Hymn – Guide me, O thou great redeemer

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2lCi6lMoatc>

Guide me, O thou great Redeemer,
pilgrim through this barren land;
I am weak, but thou art mighty;
hold me with thy powerful hand:
bread of heaven, bread of heaven,
feed me now and evermore,
feed me now and evermore.

Open now the crystal fountain,
whence the healing stream doth flow;
let the fire and cloudy pillar
lead me all my journey through:
strong deliverer, strong deliverer,
be thou still my strength and shield;
be thou still my strength and shield.

When I tread the verge of Jordan,
bid my anxious fears subside;
death of death, and hell's destruction,
land me safe on Canaan's side:
songs and praises, songs and praises,
I will ever give to thee,
I will ever give to thee.

Opening

**The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ,
and the love of God,
and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit
be with us all.**

**Lord, direct our thoughts,
teach us to pray,
lift up our hearts to worship you
in Spirit and in truth,
through Jesus Christ. Amen**

Confession

**Lord God, our maker and our redeemer,
this is your world and we are your people:
come among us and save us.**

**We have wilfully misused your
gifts of creation;**

Lord be merciful: forgive us our sin.

**We have seen the ill-treatment of others
and have not gone to their aid;**

Lord be merciful: forgive us our sin.

**We have ignored evil and dishonesty
and failed to strive for justice;**

Lord be merciful: forgive us our sin.

**We have heard the good news of Christ,
but have failed to share it with others;**

Lord be merciful: forgive us our sin.

**We have not loved you with all our heart,
nor our neighbours as ourselves;**

Lord be merciful: forgive us our sin.

Absolution

God who is both power and love,
forgive us and free us from our sins,
heal and strengthen us by his Spirit,
and raise us to new life in Christ our Lord.

Amen.

Jubilate

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8qS-7qh9tz0>

Jubilate, ev'rybody.

Serve the Lord in all your ways,
And come before His presence singing,
Enter now His courts with praise.
For the Lord our God is gracious,
And His mercy's everlasting.

Jubilate, Jubilate,

Jubilate Deo! *(repeat a few times!)*

Scripture Readings

Exodus 16:2-4, 9-15

The whole congregation of the Israelites complained against Moses and Aaron in the wilderness. The Israelites said to them, 'If only we had died by the hand of the Lord in the land of Egypt, when we sat by the fleshpots and ate our fill of bread; for you have brought us out into this wilderness to kill this whole assembly with hunger.'

Then the Lord said to Moses, 'I am going to rain bread from heaven for you, and each day the people shall go out and gather enough for that day. In that way I will test them, whether they will follow my instruction or not.'

Then Moses said to Aaron, 'Say to the whole congregation of the Israelites, "Draw near to the Lord, for he has heard your complaining." ' And as Aaron spoke to the whole congregation of the Israelites, they looked towards the wilderness, and the glory of the Lord appeared in the cloud. The Lord spoke to Moses and said, 'I have heard the complaining of the Israelites; say to them, "At twilight you shall eat meat, and in the morning you shall have your fill of bread; then you shall know that I am the Lord your God." '

In the evening quails came up and covered the camp; and in the morning there was a layer of dew around the camp. When the layer of dew lifted, there on the surface of the wilderness was a fine flaky substance, as fine as frost on the ground. When the Israelites saw it, they said to one another, 'What is it?' For they did not know what it was. Moses said to them, 'It is the bread that the Lord has given you to eat.'

This is the word of the Lord.

Thanks be to God.

John 6:30-35

The crowd said to Jesus:

'What sign are you going to give us then, so that we may see it and believe you? What work are you performing? Our ancestors ate the manna in the wilderness; as it is written, "He gave them bread from heaven to eat." '

Then Jesus said to them, 'Very truly, I tell you, it was not Moses who gave you the bread from heaven, but it is my Father who gives you the true bread from heaven. For the bread of God is that which comes down from heaven and gives life to the world.' They said to him, 'Sir, give us this bread always.'

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

This is the word of the Lord.

Thanks be to God.

Hymn – Seek ye first the kingdom of God

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=FFxZeY2D5tc>

Seek ye first the kingdom of God
and His righteousness;
and all these things shall be added unto you
Allelu, Alleluia!

Alleluia, alleluia, alleluia, alleluia!

Man shall not live by bread alone,
But by ev'ry word
that proceeds from the mouth of God;
Allelu, Alleluia!

Alleluia, alleluia, alleluia, alleluia!

Ask, and it shall be given unto you;
Seek, and ye shall find.
Knock, and the door shall be opened unto you.
Allelu, Alleluia!

Alleluia, alleluia, alleluia, alleluia!

Talk

Many years ago I travelled across a desert in a coach – it was cool and comfortable inside the coach and I was watching the endless dry sand stretching into the distance, with just a few prickly, brown, thorny bushes to be seen.

The coach was eating up the miles and I was very pleased that I wasn't outside. We passed a few people walking along with a pony or camel and I tried to imagine what it was like having to walking for days through that heat.

I was excited – I'd always wanted to see a desert – I'd often read about them, and now I knew what they were like. They were desolate.

To the south was a great dry lake of salt – shimmering white. To the north, somewhere, was the Caspian sea.

I was really enjoying looking at the desert, watching the miles slip pass, but then the coach sort of hesitated a moment, and then stopped. We had a puncture....

And then it started being rather less fun. We were asked to go outside (presumably to make the coach lighter) while the driver examined the wheel and puzzled over what to do next .

Outside, in the boiling sun, it was a different story. The sun burnt down, there was no breeze. There was nowhere to go – no shade or shelter. There was a little bottled water to drink, but not enough, and nothing to eat. I was getting hotter and hotter, drier and drier and then hungry as well.

How long was this going to go on for?

I can't remember, but it was dusk before a breakdown truck turned up to change the wheel. Eventually the puncture was fixed and we continued on our way.

It made me realise that living in a desert was very challenging. No sign of water, no crops, nothing to eat.

I wasn't that far from where the people from Israel found themselves after they had escaped from Egypt – they had gone north into a desert just like the one that I'd crossed – and they'd been wandering for months, if not years.

They were fed up, and blamed their two leaders, Moses and Aaron for landing them in this mess.

Moses had found them a spring of water when he struck a rock with his staff, so they were able to quench their thirst. But the food had run out...

I've never tried this, but there are stories of people who are GETTING hungrier and hungrier, so they "tighten their belts". Maybe an empty tummy feels better when it's squeezed a bit?

I know what it feels like to go without food for half a day, or even the whole

of a day, but imagine having no food day after day?

So the people complained – even though Moses and Aaron would have been just as hungry as they were. “Do something!” they were told. “This is your fault.”

But it wasn't – Moses and Aaron had been guided by God, so they turned to God and said “Do something. This is your fault!”. Which is exactly what God wanted. Whatever is wrong, God wants to told!

They were hungry for food, but then became hungry for God – they really wanted God to help them. And when they asked him to help, he did. They felt lonely and desolate, and they wanted God to comfort them, and he did.

He arranged that two types of food would appear in the desert each night – a flock of quail, and some very small, flat flakes of something like bread that they called “manna”.

In the picture you can see men gathering manna, and a girl with a basket, full of manna, ready to take to the tents that were their homes.

And so the people in the desert cheered up – they had food to eat, and they had discovered that God was with them. They were comforted. They needn't feel lonely, because they learnt that they were not alone.

Just as we are never alone, because God is always near. Some people feel his presence is like Jesus travelling beside them.

Jesus tries to explain this to his disciples – God will not only provide for our physical needs, but also fill us with his comfort and his love. Which is why Jesus said “I am the bread of life. Whoever comes to me will never be hungry.”

This is first of seven amazing statements that Jesus makes about himself in St John's gospel – statements that show how Jesus can be to us everything we need:

I am the bread of life.

I am the light of the world.

I am the gate.

I am the good shepherd.

I am the resurrection, and the life.

I am the way, the truth, and the life.

I am the true vine.

It takes a lifetime to begin to understand these wonderful sayings, but each time we encounter them we can give new thanks to God for his son.

Amen.

Affirmation of faith

**We believe in God the Father,
from whom every family
in heaven and on earth is named.**

**We believe in God the Son,
Who lives in our hearts through faith,
And fills us with his love.**

**We believe in God the Holy Spirit,
who strengthens us
with power from on high.**

**We believe in one God,
Father, Son and Holy Spirit. Amen.**

The Peace

Jesus says to his disciples,
'Peace I leave with you; my peace I give you.
Not as the world gives do I give to you.
Let not your hearts be troubled or afraid.'

The peace of the Lord be always with us.

Hymn – One more step along the world I go

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=81zv93rznYs>

One more step along the world I go,
one more step along the world I go;
from the old things to the new
keep me travelling along with you:
*And it's from the old I travel to the new;
keep me travelling along with you.*

Round the corner of the world I turn,
more and more about the world I learn;
all the new things that I see
you'll be looking at along with me:

As I travel through the bad and good,
keep me traveling the way I should;
where I see no way to go
you'll be telling me the way, I know:

Give me courage when the world is rough,
keep me loving though the world is tough;
leap and sing in all I do,
keep me travelling along with you:

You are older than the world can be,
you are younger than the life in me;
ever old and ever new,
keep me travelling along with you:

Prayers

Pause for a while and jot down situations or people you would like to pray for, under the appropriate heading. Then read the prayers to yourself or out loud.

In the power of the Spirit, and in union with Christ, let us pray to the Father.

World events, strife & conflict

Today I pray for ...

Lord, in your mercy:
Hear our prayer.

Local needs, us and our families

Today I pray for ...

Lord, in your mercy:
Hear our prayer.

The sick

Today I pray for ...

Lord, in your mercy:
Hear our prayer.

The departed and those who mourn

Today I pray for ...

Lord, in your mercy:
Hear our prayer.

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

Gathering our prayers and praises into one,
as our Saviour has taught us, so we pray:

**Our Father, who art in heaven,
hallowed be thy name;
thy kingdom come;
thy will be done;
on earth as it is in heaven.
Give us this day our daily bread.
And forgive us our trespasses,
as we forgive those who trespass against us.
And lead us not into temptation;
but deliver us from evil.
For thine is the kingdom,
the power and the glory,
for ever and ever. Amen.**

Collect

Almighty God,
who sent your Holy Spirit
to be the life and light of your Church:
open our hearts to the riches of your grace,
that we may bring forth the fruit of the Spirit
in love and joy and peace;
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

Hymn – Lord enthroned in heavenly splendour

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=i9aKk_gHnpA

Lord, enthroned in heavenly splendour,
first-begotten from the dead.
Thou alone, our strong defender,
liftest up thy people's head.
Alleluia! Alleluia!
Jesu, true and living bread!

Here our humblest homage pay we,
here in loving reverence bow;
here for faith's discernment pray we,
lest we fail to know thee now.
Alleluia! Alleluia!
Thou art here, we ask not how.

Though the lowliest form doth veil thee
as of old in Bethlehem,
here as there thine angels hail thee,
branch and flower of Jesse's stem.
Alleluia! Alleluia!
We in worship join with them.

Paschal Lamb, thine offering, finished
once for all when thou was slain,
in its fullness undiminished
shall for evermore remain.
Alleluia! Alleluia!
Cleansing souls from every stain.

Life-imparting heavenly Manna,
stricken Rock with streaming side,
heaven and earth with loud hosanna
worship thee, the Lamb who died.
Alleluia! Alleluia!
Risen, ascended, glorified!

Closing Responses

The Lord God almighty is our Father:
he loves us and tenderly cares for us.

The Lord Jesus Christ is our Saviour:
he has redeemed us and will defend us to the end

The Lord, the Holy Spirit is among us:
he will lead us in God's holy way.

To God almighty, Father, Son and Holy Spirit,
be praise and glory today and for ever. Amen.

The Blessing

The peace of God,
which passes all understanding,
keep our hearts and minds
in the knowledge and love of God,
and of his Son Jesus Christ our Lord;
and the blessing of God almighty,
the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit,
be among us and remain with us always. **Amen.**