



**COLLECT, READINGS AND REFLECTION
SUNDAY 26 JANUARY 2025 – Epiphany 3**

COLLECT

Almighty God,
whose Son revealed in signs and miracles
the wonder of your saving presence:
renew your people with your heavenly grace,
and in all our weakness
sustain us by your mighty power;
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.

Psalm 19

- 1 The heavens are telling the glory of God ♦
and the firmament proclaims his handiwork.
- 2 One day pours out its song to another ♦
and one night unfolds knowledge to another.
- 3 They have neither speech nor language ♦
and their voices are not heard,
- 4 Yet their sound has gone out into all lands ♦
and their words to the ends of the world.
- 5 In them has he set a tabernacle for the sun, ♦
that comes forth as a bridegroom out of his chamber
and rejoices as a champion to run his course.
- 6 It goes forth from the end of the heavens and runs to the very end again, ♦
and there is nothing hidden from its heat.
- 7 The law of the Lord is perfect, reviving the soul; ♦
the testimony of the Lord is sure and gives wisdom to the simple.
- 8 The statutes of the Lord are right and rejoice the heart; ♦
the commandment of the Lord is pure and gives light to the eyes.
- 9 The fear of the Lord is clean and endures for ever; ♦
the judgements of the Lord are true and righteous altogether.
- 10 More to be desired are they than gold, more than much fine gold, ♦
sweeter also than honey, dripping from the honeycomb.
- 11 By them also is your servant taught ♦
and in keeping them there is great reward.
- 12 Who can tell how often they offend ♦

O cleanse me from my secret faults!

13 Keep your servant also from presumptuous sins lest they get dominion over me; ♦
so shall I be undefiled, and innocent of great offence.

14 Let the words of my mouth and the meditation of my heart be acceptable in your sight, ♦
O Lord, my strength and my redeemer.

A reading from the first letter to Corinthians, chapter 12, verses 12-31a.

For just as the body is one and has many members, and all the members of the body, though many, are one body, so it is with Christ. For in the one Spirit we were all baptized into one body—Jews or Greeks, slaves or free—and we were all made to drink of one Spirit.

Indeed, the body does not consist of one member but of many. If the foot were to say, 'Because I am not a hand, I do not belong to the body', that would not make it any less a part of the body. And if the ear were to say, 'Because I am not an eye, I do not belong to the body', that would not make it any less a part of the body. If the whole body were an eye, where would the hearing be? If the whole body were hearing, where would the sense of smell be? But as it is, God arranged the members in the body, each one of them, as he chose. If all were a single member, where would the body be? As it is, there are many members, yet one body. The eye cannot say to the hand, 'I have no need of you', nor again the head to the feet, 'I have no need of you.' On the contrary, the members of the body that seem to be weaker are indispensable, and those members of the body that we think less honourable we clothe with greater honour, and our less respectable members are treated with greater respect; whereas our more respectable members do not need this. But God has so arranged the body, giving the greater honour to the inferior member, that there may be no dissension within the body, but the members may have the same care for one another. If one member suffers, all suffer together with it; if one member is honoured, all rejoice together with it.

Now you are the body of Christ and individually members of it. And God has appointed in the church first apostles, second prophets, third teachers; then deeds of power, then gifts of healing, forms of assistance, forms of leadership, various kinds of tongues. Are all apostles? Are all prophets? Are all teachers? Do all work miracles? Do all possess gifts of healing? Do all speak in tongues? Do all interpret? But strive for the greater gifts.

This is the word of the Lord.

Thanks be to God.

At Morning Prayer, the Gospel is simply the second reading, people sit to hear it and is introduced in the same way as the first:

The second reading is from Luke, chapter 4, verses 14-21

and then at the end:

For the word of the Lord

Thanks be to God.

For Eucharists/ Communion people stand to hear the Gospel. Everywhere except Fitz introduces it with an Acclamation (the blue bit), and then we all use the introduction and ending (the green bit):

Alleluia. **Alleluia.**

Christ was revealed in flesh, proclaimed among the nations and believed in throughout the world.

Alleluia.

Hear the Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ, according to Luke, Chapter 4, verses 14-21.

Glory to you, O Lord

And then at the end:

This is the Gospel of the Lord.

Praise to you, O Christ.

Luke 4. 14-21

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.'

A reflection from Peter

At a time in America when people of colour were facing outright hostility and discrimination and most of the African American population tried to keep a low profile something outrageous was happening in the jazz community. A black woman jazz trumpeter called Valeida Snow lived as though none of the hostility was there. She was driven around New York by her chauffeur in a lavender convertible, in a lavender outfit with a pet monkey who also wore a lavender suit! Now that's style.

In today's Gospel we see something similarly outrageous. Jesus, rather like a youngster who has been away to university and is home for a visit, goes to the synagogue in Nazareth. At the point when the reading happens, he stands up – and so the scroll of the prophet is given to him – and he reads, "The spirit of the Lord is upon me..." At the end of the reading he sits down, as you would expect. But then he begins to speak. Things are a little confusing here because, unlike today, sitting down was the normal practice for preaching. What we can be sure about is that the people in the synagogue did not expect a sermon from Jesus. As a courtesy they let him read – he obviously wanted to – but preach?

Here we see the setting aside of convention, the breaking through the barrier of expectation, the disruption that herald the presence of God's new way in the world. And the beginning of the sermon couldn't be more explosive: "Today this scripture has been fulfilled in your hearing!"

Everywhere we look there is an awareness that convention and the weight of expectation that things will proceed in a certain way are preventing us from tackling the things that matter. Despite a landslide victory, the Government is struggling to break through and enable a leap forward. Perhaps the Americans are most likely to see dramatic change – but will it be for the better? Today, we are reminded that God is always more creative than human imagination; that God has already opened doors we didn't even know were there; that God is calling us into God's new world. As we hear those words "Today this scripture has been fulfilled in your hearing" may we not just feel a passing tingle down the spine, but a lasting commitment to let our hearts and minds be one with the God who calls us to life.