

**Sunday 14 July 2024**

# Seventh Sunday after Trinity



**Sermon and** © Revd Dr Paul Monk.

**Prayers of intercession** © Lay Anglican (adapted slightly)

**Liturgy** © 2000 The Archbishops' Council.

**Bible readings** © the publishers of the NRSV translation.

The liturgy assumes the service is Eucharistic. The prayers of consecration are included at the end.

The hymn can be accessed via a YouTube link. Please click on the links.

To see service transcripts from previous weeks, please visit the page,

## Introduction and welcome

**HYMN 1** [All my hope on God is founded](#) (click on this link to hear the hymn)  
[All my hope on God is founded](#) (different version)

## The Welcome

In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit

**All Amen.**

The Lord be with you

**All And also with you.**

## The Preparation

**All 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.**

Our Lord Jesus Christ said:

The first commandment is this:

‘Hear, O Israel, the Lord our God is the only Lord.

You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart,  
with all your soul, with all your mind,  
and with all your strength.’

And the second is this: ‘Love your neighbour as yourself.’

There is no other commandment greater than these.

On these two commandments hang all the law and the prophets.

**All Amen. Lord, have mercy.**

God so loved the world that he gave his only Son Jesus Christ to save us from our sins, to be our advocate in heaven, and to bring us to eternal life. Therefore, let us confess our sins in penitence and faith, firmly resolved to keep God’s commandments and to live in love and peace with all.

**All** Almighty God, our heavenly Father,  
we have sinned against you  
and against our neighbour  
in thought and word and deed,  
through negligence, through weakness,  
through our own deliberate fault.  
We are truly sorry  
and repent of all our sins.  
For the sake of your Son Jesus Christ,  
who died for us,  
forgive us all that is past  
and grant that we may serve you in newness of life  
to the glory of your name.  
**Amen.**

Almighty God,  
who forgives all who truly repent, have mercy upon you,  
pardon and deliver you from all your sins,  
confirm and strengthen you in all goodness,  
and keep you in life eternal;  
through Jesus Christ our Lord.

**All** Amen.

## **The Gloria**

**All** 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.**

### **The Collect for the Seventh Sunday after Trinity**

Lord of all power and might,  
the author and giver of all good things:  
graft in our hearts the love of your name,  
increase in us true religion,  
nourish us with all goodness,  
and of your great mercy keep us in the same;  
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.  
**All Amen.**

### **First reading**

A reading from the Book of the Prophet Amos

This is what [the Lord] showed me: [He] was standing beside a wall built with a plumb line, with a plumb line in his hand. And the Lord said to me, 'Amos, what do you see?' And I said, 'A plumb line.' Then the Lord said, 'See, I am setting a plumb line in the midst of my people Israel; I will never again pass them by; the high places of Isaac shall be made desolate, and the sanctuaries of Israel shall be laid waste, and I will rise against the house of Jeroboam with the sword.'

Then Amaziah, the priest of Bethel, sent to King Jeroboam of Israel, saying, 'Amos has conspired against you in the very centre of the house of Israel; the land is not able to bear all his words. For thus Amos has said, "Jeroboam shall die by the sword, and Israel must go into exile away from his land".'

Amaziah said to Amos, 'O seer, go, flee away to the land of Judah, earn your bread there, and prophesy there; but never again prophesy at Bethel, for it is the king's sanctuary, and it is a temple of the kingdom.' Then Amos answered Amaziah, 'I am

no prophet, nor a prophet's son; but I am a herdsman, and a dresser of sycamore trees, and the Lord took me from following the flock, and the Lord said to me, "Go, prophesy to my people Israel." Now therefore hear the word of the Lord. You say, "Do not prophesy against Israel, and do not preach against the house of Isaac." Therefore thus says the Lord: "Your wife shall become a prostitute in the city, and your sons and your daughters shall fall by the sword, and your land shall be parcelled out by line; you yourself shall die in an unclean land, and Israel shall surely go into exile away from its land".'

*Amos 7:7-15*

This is the Word of the Lord

**All Thanks be to God.**

## Second reading

A reading from St Paul's Letter to the Ephesians

Paul, an apostle of Christ Jesus by the will of God, To the saints who are in Ephesus and are faithful in Christ Jesus: Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.

Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us in Christ with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places, just as he chose us in Christ before the foundation of the world to be holy and blameless before him in love. He destined us for adoption as his children through Jesus Christ, according to the good pleasure of his will, to the praise of his glorious grace that he freely bestowed on us in the Beloved. In him we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of our trespasses, according to the riches of his grace that he lavished on us. With all wisdom and insight he has made known to us the mystery of his will, according to his good pleasure that he set forth in Christ, as a plan for the fullness of time, to gather up all things in him, things in heaven and things on earth. In Christ we have also obtained an inheritance, having been destined according to the purpose of him who accomplishes all things according to his counsel and will, so that we, who were the first to set our hope on Christ, might live for the praise of his glory. In him you also, when you had heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation, and had believed in him, were marked with the seal of the promised Holy Spirit; this is the pledge of our inheritance toward redemption as God's own people, to the praise of his glory.

*Ephesians 1:3-14*

This is the Word of the Lord

**All Thanks be to God.**

**HYMN 2** [What a friend we have in Jesus](#) (click on this link to hear the hymn)  
[What a friend we have in Jesus](#) (different version)

## Gospel reading

Hear the Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ according to Mark

**All** **Glory to you O Lord.**

King Herod heard of [Jesus, for [his] name had become known. Some were saying, 'John the baptizer has been raised from the dead; and for this reason these powers are at work in him.' But others said, 'It is Elijah.' And others said, 'It is a prophet, like one of the prophets of old.' But when Herod heard of it, he said, 'John, whom I beheaded, has been raised.'

For Herod himself had sent men who arrested John, bound him, and put him in prison on account of Herodias, his brother Philip's wife, because Herod had married her. For John had been telling Herod, 'It is not lawful for you to have your brother's wife.' And Herodias had a grudge against him, and wanted to kill him. But she could not, for Herod feared John, knowing that he was a righteous and holy man, and he protected him. When he heard him, he was greatly perplexed; and yet he liked to listen to him. But an opportunity came when Herod on his birthday gave a banquet for his courtiers and officers and for the leaders of Galilee. When his daughter Herodias came in and danced, she pleased Herod and his guests; and the king said to the girl, 'Ask me for whatever you wish, and I will give it.' And he solemnly swore to her, 'Whatever you ask me, I will give you, even half of my kingdom.' She went out and said to her mother, 'What should I ask for?' She replied, 'The head of John the baptiser.' Immediately she rushed back to the king and requested, 'I want you to give me at once the head of John the Baptist on a platter.' The king was deeply grieved; yet out of regard for his oaths and for the guests, he did not want to refuse her. Immediately the king sent a soldier of the guard with orders to bring John's head. He went and beheaded him in the prison, brought his head on a platter, and gave it to the girl. Then the girl gave it to her mother.

When his disciples heard about it, they came and took his body, and laid it in a tomb.

*Mark 6:14-29*

This is the Gospel of the Lord

**All** **Praise to you O Christ.**

## Sermon

Let's start with the story in today's Old Testament reading, from the Prophet Amos.

It starts by saying that Amos was a herdsman, a shepherd, 'and a dresser of sycamore trees.' We infer he is poor and therefore uneducated, but he appears devout and seems to be looking for God. Whether he's actively looking in the right places or not, God does reveal Himself. God gives him a vision but, hang on, it's a plumb-line! What's going on?

A plumbline is a piece of lead (hence 'plumb'—think of 'plumber'). It comprises a weight, hanging on the end of a piece of string. A builder holds the loose end while the line hangs taut and absolutely vertical beneath: he uses the plumbline as an instrument for testing whether a wall is built straight and true. In context, and as a visual metaphor, God is holding a plumbline against His people to assess their faith when tested against the absolute of God's own nature and the Commandments. The plumbline metaphor ascertaining our reaction to God, asking if we are play-acting or genuine about our faith. The reading therefore invites us to reflect on *our* sincerity and truth in responding to God.

Similarly, the reading from Ephesians starts, 'he chose us in Christ before the foundation of the world to be holy and blameless before him in love.' It's surely asking the same thing: God tells us what to do, we must respond, then God assesses.

At first sight the Gospel reading seems different: it tells the grisly story about John the Baptist and his execution. That killing is a blatant act of revenge. In context, John had told the truth about Herod, was imprisoned to shut him up, and then killed in the hideous manner we've just heard about. This time, we hear that John was speaking the words of God which had consequences: speaking truth to power does. We heard a moment ago the consequences for John the Baptist; Jesus also paid a deadly price for speaking the truth; ultimately, for us, the consequence for us is eternal life ... or not.

Taken together, then, today's three readings concern God speaking to us. We sometimes use the terms 'prophecy' in that context. The word sometimes means *foretelling* the future—we see an element of that in the story from Amos. But it's generally *forthtelling*—God is telling us what He wants of us. Having told us His will, He then places a plumbline against us to assess if we are obedient and actually do what he wants. God needs to see if we are true to Him, hence the plumbline.

God speaks to us in different ways. God spoke to Amos in the form of a direct vision. In the Ephesians passage, God spoke through Jesus so, in our case, through Scripture and (when it gets things right) through the Church. And the third reading suggests that God speaks through His prophets, so scripture again, but also through modern-day prophets. This time think of Martin Luther King Jr and his

message about racism and slavery then think of William Temple and his message that led to the welfare state here in Britain. Think too of sermons and friends: God speaks continually through people ... maybe through us.

To summarise, God speaks to us in a great many ways and to our immediate needs, jobs and, indeed, lives. Our duty as disciples is to respond. We must live lives that are true to God. He then places a plumbline against us and asks if we are true to our calling as disciples of the Lord Jesus and ambassadors of the faith.

Having spoken to us, we must respond. Being true to God is costly, and that cost is never less than everything. The prophet Amos spoke the message that God gave him—that's part of the story in today's first reading. In fact, the stories of all the prophets in the Old and New Testaments involve them speaking the truth, sometimes to common people, sometimes speaking truth to power. Amos was bitterly attacked by Amaziah the priest and, in effect, banished from Bethel. John the Baptist was imprisoned then beheaded. More recently, priests and bishops have been silenced and killed, in Britain and wider. It's happening today. Never mind: God placed a plumbline against their lives and they were judged as righteous.

As we tie these threads together, we discern that God is speaking to us telling us—directly, through scripture, through people past and present, and is telling us what to do. He's speaking to all of us: to you and to me. Our task is to respond. He will then place a plumbline against us to discern the truth, or otherwise, of our discipleship.

## The Creed

Do you believe and trust in God the Father,  
the source of all being and life,  
the one for whom we exist?

**All We believe and trust in him.**

Do you believe and trust in God the Son,  
who took our human nature,  
died for us and rose again?

**All We believe and trust in him.**

Do you believe and trust in God the Holy Spirit,  
who gives life to the people of God  
and makes Christ known in the world?

**All We believe and trust in him.**



This is the faith of the Church.

**All This is our faith.**

**We believe and trust in one God,**

**Father, Son and Holy Spirit.**

**Amen.**

## **Prayers of intercession**

### **The Church of Christ**

Lord, set on fire the hearts of all those who worship you! We come before you in beautiful surroundings, and give us a sense of permanence, always there, always changeless. But we know in our heart of hearts that the 'abiding city' is not here but in the life to come. In the here and now, you ask us to blaze with your love so that the whole world may catch fire with your joy.

For you are the king of glory, O Lord

**All In your mercy, hear our prayer**

### **Creation, human society, the Sovereign and those in authority**

For the night skies opening outwards, star upon star, expanse after expanse, thanks be to you, O Lord. For the mystery of your presence in and beyond all that can be seen, thanks be to you. For the music of the spheres, for the cosmic dance in which you invite us to join with King David, thanks be to you. For your grace, which shows us your glory even in the foothills of faith, thanks be to you.

For you are the king of glory, O Lord

**All In your mercy, hear our prayer**

### **The local community**

Lord, we thank you for all those who speak out on behalf of the communities to which we belong. Bless all those we live amongst and grant that we may truly behave like members one of another, supporting the weak and helping the afflicted while rejoicing in the shared reflection of that joy we know from our fellowship with you.

For you are the king of glory, O Lord

**All In your mercy, hear our prayer**

**Those who suffer**

Lord of life, we ask for the gift of courage: bind us in the fellowship of those who take the cup of necessary suffering, and drink from it. Hear the prayer of those who cry out in pain and those who cry out in fear; those who cry out in grief and those who cry out in despair; those who cry out to you to forgive because they can not; and those whose cries are inward and unheard. Pour upon their wounds the healing balm of your mercy.

For you are the king of glory, O Lord

**All** In your mercy, hear our prayer

**The communion of saints**

Lord, inspire us with the courage and faith of John the Baptist. We pray for all those who are facing persecution and death because of their Christian faith. Bring all who have died to the joy of your heavenly kingdom, and comfort those who mourn their death.

For you are the king of glory, O Lord

**All** In your mercy, hear our prayer

Merciful Father,

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

**The Peace**

The peace to this house from God our heavenly Father.

The peace to this house from his Son who is our peace.

The peace to this house from the Holy Spirit, the life-giver.

The peace of the Lord be always with you.

**All** And also with you

**HYMN 3** [Oh the bitter shame and sorrow](#) (click on this link to hear the hymn)

The liturgy of the Communion Service appears below

## The Dismissal

The Lord bless you and keep you.

The Lord make his face to shine upon you and be gracious to you.

The Lord lift up the light of his countenance upon you

and give you his peace;

and the blessing of God the Almighty:

Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.

**All Amen.**

**HYMN 4 My lighthouse**

[\(click on this link to hear the hymn\)](#)

Go in peace to love and serve the Lord.

**All In the name of Christ.**

**Amen.**

## The Liturgy of the Sacrament

### Eucharistic Prayer (prayer E)

The Lord be with you

**All and also with you.**

Lift up your hearts.

**All We lift them to the Lord.**

Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.

**All It is right to give thanks and praise.**

Father, you made the world and love your creation.  
You gave your Son Jesus Christ to be our Saviour.  
His dying and rising have set us free from sin and death.  
And so we gladly thank you,  
with saints and angels praising you, and saying,

**All 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.**

We praise and bless you, loving Father,  
through Jesus Christ, our Lord;  
and as we obey his command,  
send your Holy Spirit,  
that broken bread and wine outpoured  
may be for us the body and blood of your dear Son.

On the night before he died he had supper with his friends  
and, taking bread, he praised you.  
He broke the bread, gave it to them and said:  
Take, eat; this is my body which is given for you;  
do this in remembrance of me.

When supper was ended he took the cup of wine.  
Again he praised you, gave it to them and said:  
Drink this, all of you;  
this is my blood of the new covenant,  
which is shed for you and for many for the forgiveness of sins.  
Do this, as often as you drink it, in remembrance of me.

So, Father, we remember all that Jesus did,  
in him we plead with confidence his sacrifice made once for all upon the cross.

Bringing before you the bread of life and cup of salvation,  
we proclaim his death and resurrection  
until he comes in glory.

Great is the mystery of faith:

**All Christ has died.**  
**Christ is risen.**  
**Christ will come again.**

Lord of all life,  
help us to work together for that day  
when your kingdom comes  
and justice and mercy will be seen in all the earth.

Look with favour on your people,  
gather us in your loving arms  
and bring us with all the saints  
to feast at your table in heaven.

Through Christ, and with Christ, and in Christ,  
in the unity of the Holy Spirit,  
all honour and glory are yours, O loving Father,  
for ever and ever.

**All Amen.**

## **The Lord's Prayer**

As our Saviour taught us, so we pray

**All**     **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.**

## **Breaking of the Bread**

We break this bread to share in the body of Christ.

**All**     **Though we are many, we are one body,  
because we all share in one bread.**

**All**     **Lamb of God,  
you take away the sin of the world,  
have mercy on us.**

**Lamb of God,  
you take away the sin of the world,  
have mercy on us.**

**Lamb of God,  
you take away the sin of the world,  
grant us peace.**

Draw near with faith.

Receive the body of our Lord Jesus Christ  
which he gave for you,  
and his blood which he shed for you.

Eat and drink in remembrance that he died for you,  
and feed on him in your hearts  
by faith with thanksgiving.

**All** We do not presume  
to come to this your table, merciful Lord,  
trusting in our own righteousness,  
but in your manifold and great mercies.  
We are not worthy  
so much as to gather up the crumbs under your table.  
But you are the same Lord  
whose nature is always to have mercy.  
Grant us therefore, gracious Lord,  
so to eat the flesh of your dear Son Jesus Christ  
and to drink his blood,  
that our sinful bodies may be made clean by his body  
and our souls washed through his most precious blood,  
and that we may evermore dwell in him,  
and he in us. Amen.

Communion is distributed.

### **Prayer after Communion**

Lord God, whose Son is the true vine and the source of life,  
ever giving himself that the world may live:  
may we so receive within ourselves  
the power of his death and passion  
that, in his saving cup,  
we may share his glory and be made perfect in his love;  
for he is alive and reigns, now and for ever.

**All** Amen

**All** Almighty God,  
we thank you for feeding us  
with the body and blood of your Son Jesus Christ.  
Through him we offer you our souls and bodies  
to be a living sacrifice.  
Send us out in the power of your Spirit  
to live and work  
to your praise and glory.  
Amen.