

This liturgy can be used for personal meditation and reflection

Call to Worship

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

All

And also with you.

We come as many stories, formed into one people.

We come as different gifts, called into one body.

We come not by our own strength, but by the grace of Christ who welcomes us.

All

Let us worship God.

Opening Prayer

Gracious and faithful God,
at the turning of the year
and at the beginning of this new parish,
we pause to acknowledge that all our times are in your hands.

You have brought us together from different places,
with different histories and experiences,
yet you call us to be one body in Christ.

Centre us again in your Son.

Shape us by your Spirit.

Teach us to welcome one another as Christ has welcomed us,
and to serve together for the sake of your kingdom.

We offer this time to you,
in the name of Jesus Christ our Lord.

Amen.

Scripture Reading

Colossians 3:12–17 – *“Clothe yourselves with compassion... and let the peace of Christ rule in your hearts.”*

¹² Therefore, as God’s chosen people, holy and dearly loved, clothe yourselves with compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness and patience.

¹³ Bear with each other and forgive one another if any of you has a grievance against someone. Forgive as the Lord forgave you.

¹⁴ And over all these virtues put on love, which binds them all together in perfect unity.

¹⁵ Let the peace of Christ rule in your hearts, since as members of one body you were called to peace. And be thankful.

¹⁶ Let the message of Christ dwell among you richly as you teach and admonish one another with all wisdom through psalms, hymns, and songs from the Spirit, singing to God with gratitude in your hearts.

¹⁷ And whatever you do, whether in word or deed, do it all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through him.

1 Corinthians 12:12–27 – *One body, many members*

Unity and Diversity in the Body

¹² Just as a body, though one, has many parts, but all its many parts form one body, so it is with Christ.

¹³ For we were all baptized by one Spirit so as to form one body—whether Jews or Gentiles, slave or free—and we were all given the one Spirit to drink.

Even so the body is not made up of one part but of many.

¹⁵ Now if the foot should say, “Because I am not a hand, I do not belong to the body,” it would not for that reason stop being part of the body.

¹⁶ And if the ear should say, “Because I am not an eye, I do not belong to the body,” it would not for that reason stop being part of the body.

¹⁷ If the whole body were an eye, where would the sense of hearing be? If the whole body were an ear, where would the sense of smell be?

¹⁸ But in fact God has placed the parts in the body, every one of them, just as he wanted them to be.

¹⁹ If they were all one part, where would the body be?

²⁰ As it is, there are many parts, but one body.

²¹ The eye cannot say to the hand, “I don’t need you!” And the head cannot say to the feet, “I don’t need you!”

²² On the contrary, those parts of the body that seem to be weaker are indispensable,

²³ and the parts that we think are less honourable we treat with special honour. And the parts that are unpresentable are treated with special modesty,

²⁴ while our presentable parts need no special treatment. But God has put the body together, giving greater honour to the parts that lacked it,

²⁵ so that there should be no division in the body, but that its parts should have equal concern for each other.

²⁶ If one part suffers, every part suffers with it; if one part is honoured, every part rejoices with it.

²⁷ Now you are the body of Christ, and each one of you is a part of it.

Reflection and Questions

1. What words or phrases in this passage speak most clearly to where we are as a new parish?
2. Where do you see your own gifts and experiences fitting into the life of this Christ-centred community?
3. What might it look like, in practical terms, for us to “welcome one another” in the year ahead?

Prayers for Others

Spend some time in intercessory prayer.

Closing Prayer

Faithful God,
we thank you for hearing our prayers,
spoken aloud and held in silence.

As we step into this new year and this shared life together,
send us out grounded in Christ,
open to one another,
and attentive to the needs of the world around us.

Make us a people of welcome,
a community of care,
and a church alive in your mission.

We place ourselves and our parish
into your gracious hands,
through Jesus Christ our Lord.
Amen.