

# St Andrew's and St George's West

## Order of Service

21 January 2024 10:30



**Welcome** and announcements

**Call to Worship** Deuteronomy 32:3-4 (GNB)

Let us praise the name of the LORD, and ... tell of God's greatness.

**The LORD is our mighty defender, perfect and just are all God's ways.**

**The LORD is faithful and true; God does what is right and fair.**

**Hymn 41** (Psalm 61) O God, give ear unto my cry *Tune: St Columba (Erin) (CH4 598)*

**Prayer** and **Lord's prayer**

**Introduction to first reading**

**Reading** Habakkuk 2:1-20 (NRSVA)

1 I will stand at my watch-post,  
and station myself on the rampart;  
I will keep watch to see what he will say to me,  
and what he will answer concerning my complaint.

2 Then the Lord answered me and said:

Write the vision;  
make it plain on tablets,  
so that a runner may read it.

3 For there is still a vision for the appointed time;  
it speaks of the end, and does not lie.

If it seems to tarry, wait for it;  
it will surely come, it will not delay.

4 Look at the proud!  
Their spirit is not right in them,  
but the righteous live by their faith.

5 Moreover, wealth is treacherous;  
the arrogant do not endure.

They open their throats wide as Sheol;  
like Death they never have enough.

They gather all nations for themselves,  
and collect all peoples as their own.

6 Shall not everyone taunt such people and, with mocking riddles, say about them,  
'Alas for you who heap up what is not your own!'

How long will you load yourselves with goods taken in pledge?

7 Will not your own creditors suddenly rise,  
and those who make you tremble wake up?  
Then you will be booty for them.

8 Because you have plundered many nations,  
 all that survive of the peoples shall plunder you—  
 because of human bloodshed, and violence to the earth,  
 to cities and all who live in them.

9 'Alas for you who get evil gain for your house,  
 setting your nest on high  
 to be safe from the reach of harm!'

10 You have devised shame for your house  
 by cutting off many peoples;  
 you have forfeited your life.

11 The very stones will cry out from the wall,  
 and the plaster will respond from the woodwork.

12 'Alas for you who build a town by bloodshed,  
 and found a city on iniquity!'

13 Is it not from the Lord of hosts  
 that peoples labour only to feed the flames,  
 and nations weary themselves for nothing?

14 But the earth will be filled  
 with the knowledge of the glory of the Lord,  
 as the waters cover the sea.

15 'Alas for you who make your neighbours drink,  
 pouring out your wrath until they are drunk,  
 in order to gaze on their nakedness!'

16 You will be sated with contempt instead of glory.  
 Drink, you yourself, and stagger!  
 The cup in the Lord's right hand  
 will come around to you,  
 and shame will come upon your glory!

17 For the violence done to Lebanon will overwhelm you;  
 the destruction of the animals will terrify you—  
 because of human bloodshed and violence to the earth,  
 to cities and all who live in them.

18 What use is an idol  
 once its maker has shaped it—  
 a cast image, a teacher of lies?  
 For its maker trusts in what has been made,  
 though the product is only an idol that cannot speak!

19 Alas for you who say to the wood, 'Wake up!'  
 to silent stone, 'Rouse yourself!'  
 Can it teach?  
 See, it is plated with gold and silver,  
 and there is no breath in it at all.

20 But the Lord is in his holy temple;  
 let all the earth keep silence before him!

### **Responses** to first reading

**Hymn 235**            God is working his purpose out    *Tune: Benson*  
 verses 1, 3, 4 only

### **Introduction** to second reading

## Reading

## Acts 25 vv1-27 (NRSVA)

Three days after Festus had arrived in the province, he went up from Caesarea to Jerusalem 2 where the chief priests and the leaders of the Jews gave him a report against Paul. They appealed to him 3 and requested, as a favour to them against Paul, to have him transferred to Jerusalem. They were, in fact, planning an ambush to kill him along the way. 4 Festus replied that Paul was being kept at Caesarea, and that he himself intended to go there shortly. 5 'So', he said, 'let those of you who have the authority come down with me, and if there is anything wrong about the man, let them accuse him.'

6 After he had stayed among them for not more than eight or ten days, he went down to Caesarea; the next day he took his seat on the tribunal and ordered Paul to be brought. 7 When he arrived, the Jews who had gone down from Jerusalem surrounded him, bringing many serious charges against him, which they could not prove. 8 Paul said in his defence, 'I have in no way committed an offence against the law of the Jews, or against the temple, or against the emperor.' 9 But Festus, wishing to do the Jews a favour, asked Paul, 'Do you wish to go up to Jerusalem and be tried there before me on these charges?' 10 Paul said, 'I am appealing to the emperor's tribunal; this is where I should be tried. I have done no wrong to the Jews, as you very well know. 11 Now if I am in the wrong and have committed something for which I deserve to die, I am not trying to escape death; but if there is nothing to their charges against me, no one can turn me over to them. I appeal to the emperor.' 12 Then Festus, after he had conferred with his council, replied, 'You have appealed to the emperor; to the emperor you will go.'

13 After several days had passed, King Agrippa and Bernice arrived at Caesarea to welcome Festus. 14 Since they were staying there for several days, Festus laid Paul's case before the king, saying, 'There is a man here who was left in prison by Felix. 15 When I was in Jerusalem, the chief priests and the elders of the Jews informed me about him and asked for a sentence against him. 16 I told them that it was not the custom of the Romans to hand over anyone before the accused had met the accusers face to face and had been given an opportunity to make a defence against the charge. 17 So when they met here, I lost no time, but on the next day took my seat on the tribunal and ordered the man to be brought. 18 When the accusers stood up, they did not charge him with any of the crimes that I was expecting. 19 Instead they had certain points of disagreement with him about their own religion and about a certain Jesus, who had died, but whom Paul asserted to be alive. 20 Since I was at a loss how to investigate these questions, I asked whether he wished to go to Jerusalem and be tried there on these charges. 21 But when Paul had appealed to be kept in custody for the decision of his Imperial Majesty, I ordered him to be held until I could send him to the emperor.' 22 Agrippa said to Festus, 'I would like to hear the man myself.' 'Tomorrow', he said, 'you will hear him.'

23 So on the next day Agrippa and Bernice came with great pomp, and they entered the audience hall with the military tribunes and the prominent men of the city. Then Festus gave the order and Paul was brought in. 24 And Festus said, 'King Agrippa and all here present with us, you see this man about whom the whole Jewish community petitioned me, both in Jerusalem and here, shouting that he ought not to live any longer. 25 But I found that he had done nothing deserving death; and when he appealed to his Imperial Majesty, I decided to send him. 26 But I have nothing definite to write to our sovereign about him. Therefore I have brought him before all of you, and especially before you, King Agrippa, so that, after we have examined him, I may have something to write— 27 for it seems to me unreasonable to send a prisoner without indicating the charges against him.'

## **Sharing the peace**

Jesus said "... in me you may have peace. In this world you will have trouble..." John 16:33 (NIV)

Let us now greet one another with a sign of peace

## **Dedication of offering**

### **Anthem**

**Sermon** "Fairness needs faith: when it's hard to be fair"

**Hymn 259** Beauty for brokenness Verses 1-4

### **Prayers of the People**

**Hymn 263** God of freedom, God of justice *Tune: Westminster Abbey (CH4 200)*

### **Benediction**

**Worship leader: Brian Drummond**

**Organist: Jamie Turnbull**

**Reader: Jennifer Speirs**

**Prayers of the people: Diana Thurston Smith**

**St Andrew's & St George's West Church of Scotland Edinburgh**

**Charity SC008990**

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