

**St Andrew's and St George's West
Order of Service
14 January 2024 10:30**



Welcome and announcements

Call to Worship Deuteronomy 16:20, and Matthew 6:33 and 7:12 (REB)

Justice, and justice alone, must be your aim, so that you may live...

**Set your mind on God's kingdom and God's justice before everything else, ...
Always treat others as you would like them to treat you..."**

Hymn 54 (Psalm 90) Lord, you have always been our home *Tune: Athchuinge*

Prayer and Lord's prayer

Introduction to first reading

Scripture reading Habakkuk 1:1-17

1 The oracle that the prophet Habakkuk saw.

2

O Lord, how long shall I cry for help,
and you will not listen?

Or cry to you 'Violence!'
and you will not save?

3

Why do you make me see wrongdoing
and look at trouble?

Destruction and violence are before me;
strife and contention arise.

4

So the law becomes slack
and justice never prevails.
The wicked surround the righteous—
therefore judgement comes forth perverted.

5

Look at the nations, and see!
Be astonished! Be astounded!
For a work is being done in your days
that you would not believe if you were told.

6

For I am rousing the Chaldeans,
that fierce and impetuous nation,
who march through the breadth of the earth
to seize dwellings not their own.

7

Dread and fearsome are they;
their justice and dignity proceed from themselves.

8

Their horses are swifter than leopards,
more menacing than wolves at dusk;
their horses charge.
Their horsemen come from far away;
they fly like an eagle swift to devour.

9

They all come for violence,
with faces pressing forward;
they gather captives like sand.

10

At kings they scoff,
and of rulers they make sport.
They laugh at every fortress,
and heap up earth to take it.

11

Then they sweep by like the wind;
they transgress and become guilty;
their own might is their god!

12

Are you not from of old,
O Lord my God, my Holy One?
You shall not die.
O Lord, you have marked them for judgement;
and you, O Rock, have established them for punishment.

13

Your eyes are too pure to behold evil,
and you cannot look on wrongdoing;
why do you look on the treacherous,
and are silent when the wicked swallow
those more righteous than they?

14

You have made people like the fish of the sea,
like crawling things that have no ruler.

15

The enemy brings all of them up with a hook;
he drags them out with his net,
he gathers them in his seine;
so he rejoices and exults.

16

Therefore he sacrifices to his net
and makes offerings to his seine;
for by them his portion is lavish,
and his food is rich.

17

Is he then to keep on emptying his net,
and destroying nations without mercy?

Responses to first reading

Hymn 488 Teach us, O loving heart of Christ

Introduction to second reading

Scripture reading Acts 24 vv1-27

Five days later the high priest Ananias came down with some elders and an attorney, a certain Tertullus, and they reported their case against Paul to the governor. 2 When Paul had been summoned, Tertullus began to accuse him, saying:

‘Your Excellency, because of you we have long enjoyed peace, and reforms have been made for this people because of your foresight. 3 We welcome this in every way and everywhere with utmost gratitude. 4 But, to detain you no further, I beg you to hear us briefly with your customary graciousness. 5 We have, in fact, found this man a pestilent fellow, an agitator among all the Jews throughout the world, and a ringleader of the sect of the Nazarenes. 6 He even tried to profane the temple, and so we seized him. 8 By examining him yourself you will be able to learn from him concerning everything of which we accuse him.’

9 The Jews also joined in the charge by asserting that all this was true.

10 When the governor motioned to him to speak, Paul replied:

‘I cheerfully make my defence, knowing that for many years you have been a judge over this nation. 11 As you can find out, it is not more than twelve days since I went up to worship in Jerusalem. 12 They did not find me disputing with anyone in the temple or stirring up a crowd either in the synagogues or throughout the city. 13 Neither can they prove to you the charge that they now bring against me. 14 But this I admit to you, that according to the Way, which they call a sect, I worship the God of our ancestors, believing everything laid down according to the law or written in the prophets. 15 I have a hope in God—a hope that they themselves also accept—that there will be a resurrection of both the righteous and the unrighteous. 16 Therefore I do my best always to have a clear conscience towards God and all people. 17 Now after some years I came to bring alms to my nation and to offer sacrifices. 18 While I was doing this, they found me in the temple, completing the rite of purification, without any crowd or disturbance. 19 But there were some Jews from Asia—

they ought to be here before you to make an accusation, if they have anything against me. 20 Or let these men here tell what crime they had found when I stood before the council, 21 unless it was this one sentence that I called out while standing before them, “It is about the resurrection of the dead that I am on trial before you today.”

22 But Felix, who was rather well informed about the Way, adjourned the hearing with the comment, ‘When Lysias the tribune comes down, I will decide your case.’ 23 Then he ordered the centurion to keep him in custody, but to let him have some liberty and not to prevent any of his friends from taking care of his needs.

24 Some days later when Felix came with his wife Drusilla, who was Jewish, he sent for Paul and heard him speak concerning faith in Christ Jesus. 25 And as he discussed justice, self-control, and the coming judgement, Felix became frightened and said, ‘Go away for the present; when I have an opportunity, I will send for you.’ 26 At the same time he hoped that money would be given to him by Paul, and for that reason he used to send for him very often and converse with him.

27 After two years had passed, Felix was succeeded by Porcius Festus; and since he wanted to grant the Jews a favour, Felix left Paul in prison.

Sharing peace

Paul writes “the kingdom of God is ... justice, peace, and joy, inspired by the Holy Spirit. ... Let us, then, pursue the things that make for peace.” Romans 14:17, 19 (REB)
Let us now greet one another with a sign of peace

Anthem

Sermon Faith implies fairness: resisting structural violence

Hymn 708 O Lord, the clouds are gathering (*verses 1, 3, 4*)

Prayers of the People

Hymn 468 Son of God, eternal Saviour

Benediction

Worship leader: Brian Drummond

Organist: Jamie Turnbull

Reader: Jimmy Campbell

Prayers of the people: Michael and Jocelyn Cunliffe

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St Andrew’s & St George’s West Church of Scotland Edinburgh

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