

# Service of the Word

## Racial Justice Sunday

### February 8<sup>th</sup>, 2026



IS NOT THIS THE FAST THAT I CHOOSE: TO LOOSE THE BONDS OF WICKEDNESS,  
TO UNDO THE STRAPS OF THE YOKE, TO LET THE OPPRESSED GO FREE,  
AND TO BREAK EVERY YOKE?

Grac<sup>+</sup>e  
GRONINGEN ANGLICAN CHURCH

## **GATHERING**

All of creation belongs to God,  
**the world and all God's children.**

Heaven and earth rejoice.

**May our different voices, be joined in one song of praise to You.**

Justice and peace embrace.

**Bind us together in unity, for the sake of Your Kingdom.**

Open our hearts, O God of Love,

**that our loving actions may speak louder than words.**

**And now, we worship You together, in spirit and truth.**

### **Call to Worship**

All of creation declares the glory of God; the skies display the work of the Maker's hands; day after day the oceans pour forth chorus of God's great worth; night after night they reveal a deep knowledge of God's love. They use no words, yet so eloquently their declaration sings out to all the earth; their harmonies of praise echo to the ends of the world,

God our Maker, breathe life into our thinking, grace into our speaking and our singing, and mercy into our hearing and knowing. Join our praises with Your timeless rhythm and Your ageless melody. May every tongue confess, may every knee bow and may all our hearts be united in Your great love for all of Your dear children.

**May the words of our mouths,**

**The meditations of our hearts,**

**The work of our hands,**

**Be pleasing to you and instrumental**

**In the peaceful making of your kingdom –**

**Where all are loved, cherished and redeemed. Amen**

**SONG**    **God welcomes all**        Words & Music: John Bell (Iona)

God welcomes all, strangers and friends;  
God's love is strong and it never ends. (6x)

*Silence is kept and then the Collect (Prayer for the Day), is prayed.*

### **Collect Prayer (Racial Justice Sunday):**

Merciful God, you are righteous and love justice: stir the hearts of your people that, rejoicing in our diversity, we may repent of the wrongs of the past and in our present day, and, by your grace, seek the peaceable kingdom of your Son, our Saviour Jesus Christ, who lives and reigns with you, in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God, now and for ever. **Amen.**

## ¶ Prayer for Forgiveness

We come before the Vulnerable God, You who took on flesh and bone – willing to be all that we needed You to be and so much more. As we remember Your birth, in the midst of occupation and exile, we ask for forgiveness for all the things that we have done and continue to do that would oppress and dehumanise, when we speak words that would curse and condemn, when we are party to the sins of racism and oppression, when we stay silent or walk away because it is the easy option, forgive us, Lord.

As we remember Your death, in the midst of empire, corruption and systemic violence: we ask for forgiveness for all the choices we make that make us complicit in their evil. When we choose hate over love, violence over peace, division over unity, confront us, O God, with Your light and love, with Your grace and mercy, and forgive us we pray – in the strong name of Jesus Christ, the Prince of Peace, the Hope of the Nations, and the Saviour and Redeemer of all. **Amen.**

May the God of love and power forgive you and free you from your sins, heal and strengthen you by his Spirit, and raise you to new life in Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

## **SONG God of the Poor (Beauty for Brokenness)** Words&Music: Gaham Kendrick

Beauty for brokenness / Hope for despair / Lord, in the suffering  
This is our prayer / Bread for the children / Justice, joy, peace  
Sunrise to sunset / Your kingdom increase!

Shelter for fragile lives / Cures for their ills / Work for the  
craftsman / Trade for their skills/ Land for the dispossessed /  
Rights for the weak / Voices to plead the cause /  
Of those who can't speak

*Chorus* God of the poor / Friend of the weak  
Give us compassion we pray  
Melt our cold hearts / Let tears fall like rain  
Come, change our love from a spark to a flame

Refuge from cruel wars / Havens from fear / Cities for sanctuary /  
Freedoms to share / Peace to the killing-fields / Scorched earth to  
green / Christ for the bitterness / His cross for the pain *Chorus*

Rest for the ravaged earth / Oceans and streams / Plundered and  
poisoned / Our future, our dreams / Lord, end our madness /  
Carelessness, greed / Make us content with / The things that we  
need *Chorus*

Lighten our darkness / Breathe on this flame / Until Your justice  
Burns brightly again / Until the nations / Learn of Your ways /  
Seek Your salvation / And bring You their praise *Chorus*

**Old Testament Reading: Isaiah 58:1b-4, 6-9a (NRSV)**  
*False versus True Worship*

58:<sup>1b</sup> Announce to my people their rebellion, to the house of Jacob their sins. <sup>2</sup> Yet day after day they seek me and delight to know my ways, as if they were a nation that practised righteousness and did not forsake the ordinance of their God; they ask of me righteous judgements, they delight to draw near to God. <sup>3</sup> 'Why do we fast, but you do not see? Why humble ourselves, but you do not notice?' Look, you serve your own interest on your fast-day, and oppress all your workers. <sup>4</sup> Look, you fast only to quarrel and to fight and to strike with a wicked fist. Such fasting as you do today will not make your voice heard on high ... <sup>6</sup> Is not this the fast that I choose: to loose the bonds of injustice, to undo the thongs of the yoke, to let the oppressed go free, and to break every yoke? <sup>7</sup> Is it not to share your bread with the hungry, and bring the homeless poor into your house; when you see the naked, to cover them, and not to hide yourself from your own kin? <sup>8</sup> Then your light shall break forth like the dawn, and your healing shall spring up quickly; your vindicator shall go before you, the glory of the Lord shall be your rearguard. <sup>9</sup> Then you shall call, and the Lord will answer; you shall cry for help, and he will say, Here I am. This is the Word of the Lord: **Thanks be to God.**

**SONG Bind us together**

Words & Music: The Porter's Gate

Bind us together within your love  
Bind us together within your holy love  
As we shared in our sorrows/ We will share in your joy  
Bind us together in love  
Bind us together and be our peace  
Bind us together and be our perfect peace  
Though the tempest may rage / We will rest in your joy  
Bind us together in peace  
Bind us together and give us hope  
Bind us together and give us endless hope  
Though our tears were our bread / We will feast in your joy  
Bind us together in hope

Bind us together and make us one  
Bind us together and make us truly one  
In your love in your peace / In your hope in your joy  
Bind us together as one

**Gospel Reading Luke 4:18-21 (NRSV)** *Jesus speaks at Nazareth*

4:<sup>18</sup> '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, <sup>19</sup> to proclaim the year of the Lord's favour.'

<sup>20</sup> 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. <sup>21</sup> Then he began to say to them, 'Today this scripture has been fulfilled in your hearing.'

This is the Word of the Lord: **Thanks be to God.**

**SERMON**

**SONG When I needed a neighbour** Words and Music: Sydney Carter

When I needed a neighbour were you there, were you there?

When I needed a neighbour were you there?

*Refrain* And the creed and the colour and the name won't matter,  
were you there?

I was hungry and thirsty, were you there, were you there?

I was hungry and thirsty, were you there? *Refrain*

I was cold, I was naked, were you there, were you there?

I was cold, I was naked, were you there? *Refrain*

When I needed a shelter were you there, were you there?

When I needed a shelter were you there? *Refrain*

When I needed a healer were you there, were you there?

When I needed a healer were you there? *Refrain*

Wherever you travel I'll be there, I'll be there.

Wherever you travel I'll be there.

And the creed and the colour and the name won't matter,  
I'll be there.

**Affirmation of Faith**

**I believe in God, the Father almighty,  
creator of heaven and earth.**

**I believe in Jesus Christ, his only Son, our Lord,  
who was conceived by the Holy Spirit,  
born of the Virgin Mary, suffered under Pontius Pilate,  
was crucified, died, and was buried;  
he descended to the dead.**

**On the third day he rose again; he ascended into heaven,  
he is seated at the right hand of the Father,  
and he will come to judge the living and the dead.**

**I believe in the Holy Spirit,  
the holy catholic Church, the communion of saints,  
the forgiveness of sins, the resurrection of the body,  
and the life everlasting.**

**Amen.**

## **INTERCESSIONS**

*Prayers are offered, and this response may be used:*

Lord, in your mercy: **Hear our prayer**

*The prayers may end with:*

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

As our Saviour has taught us, so we pray:

**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.**

## **NOTICES**

### **An Act of Commitment to Racial Justice**

Dear people of God, we stand in the shadow of the prophets crying out for justice and peace. God calls us to be a people of reconciliation, serving a world in need. Courageous women and men have taken the risk of standing up and speaking out for the least and the lowest. This work involves risking ourselves for the sake of God's love and moving beyond ourselves in order to seek and serve Christ and one another. We are all called to the work of racial justice and reconciliation.

Will you persevere in prayer and fellowship?

**With the help of God, I will.**

Will you proclaim the good news of justice and reconciliation in both word and deed?

**With the help of God, I will.**

Will you acknowledge and address the prejudices that keep you from loving all God's children?

**With the help of God, I will.**

Will you strive to see Christ in all persons, and value those who are different from you?

**With the help of God, I will.**

Will you seek to mend what is broken by human sin and greed?

**With the help of God, I will.**

Will you strive to speak words that liberate and heal and break the bonds of silence?

**With the help of God, I will.**

Will you seek the perfect love which casts out all fear?

**With the help of God, I will.**

Will you work toward dismantling the sin of abuse of power?

**With the help of God, I will.**

May almighty God empower us to continue his work of reconciliation, give us the courage to overcome fears and embody love, give us grace to grow in self-awareness and personal integrity, and strengthen us to seek the unity that is in Christ, that we may rejoice with all God's children as disciples of God's Son. **Amen.**

***HYMN* Today we all are called to be disciples of the Lord**

Words: HK Carmichael; Music: R Vaughan-Williams

Today we all are called to be disciples of the Lord,  
To help to set the captives free, make plow-share out of sword,  
To feed the hungry, quench their thirst, make love and peace our fast,  
To serve the poor and homeless first, our ease and comfort last.

God made the world and at its birth ordained our human race  
To live as stewards of the earth, responding to God's grace.  
But we are vain and sadly proud, we sow not peace but strife,  
Our discord spreads a deadly cloud that threatens all of life.

Pray justice may come rolling down as in a mighty stream,  
With righteousness in field and town to cleanse us and redeem.  
For God is longing to restore an earth where conflicts cease,  
A world that was created for a harmony of peace.

May we in service to our God act out the living word,  
And walk the road the saints have trod till all have seen and heard.  
As stewards of the earth may we give thanks in one accord  
To God who calls us all to be disciples of the Lord.

## SHARING THE GRACE and GOING OUT TO SERVE

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

Let us bless the Lord: **thanks be to God.  
Blessing, honour and glory be yours, here and everywhere, now and for ever. Amen.**

Go in peace to love and serve the Lord.  
**In the name of Christ. Amen.**

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**Morning worship:** 2<sup>nd</sup> Sundays, Morning Prayer/Service of the Word at 10:30 am;  
4<sup>th</sup> Sundays (Holy Communion) at 10:30 am, all at St Maarten-langs-de-weg  
(Oud Katholieke Kerk), Witte de Withstraat, 2, Groningen.

Web-site: <http://gracechurchgroningen.com/>; Facebook (Grace Church Groningen).

Chaplain: the Ven Sam Van Leer, Mon-Wed-Fri, chaplaingracechurchgn@gmail.com or 050 785 0703.

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Safeguarding in Grace Church: <https://gracechurchgroningen.com/caring/safeguarding/>

Diocese: <https://www.europe.anglican.org/resources/safeguarding-diocese-europe>

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Our worship services and ministry in Groningen are made possible by people voluntarily offering their time, talents and financial support. As God has blessed us, so we thank Him by giving accordingly. To help support Grace Church, there is an opportunity to put an offering in the collection basket during the service or near the exit afterwards.

It is also possible to donate by electronic transfer to  
Grace Church (Groningen Anglican Church),  
account: NL 67 RABO 03012946 23. Or with this QR code:



### Grace Church Forthcoming Services & Activities:

- Sunday 22 February, 10:30: Grace Holy Communion, Old Catholic Church.
- Sunday 8 March, 10:30: Grace Service of the Word, Old Catholic Church.
- Sunday 22 March, 10:30: Grace Holy Communion, Old Catholic Church.
- Sunday 22 March, after the service: Grace Church Annual Meeting.
- Sunday 5 April (Easter), 10:30: Grace Holy Communion, Old Catholic Church.

For info on Home Groups, Bible Study gatherings & other events, please do ask us!