

Liturgical Service to Mark the Start of the Legal Year

The Kirby Laing Centre in partnership with the Lawyers' Christian Fellowship

14 October 2021 | 5:15-6:15PM UK time

Introit: Even When He is Silent, by Kim André Arnesen

I believe in the sun, even when it's not shining.

I believe in love, even when I feel it not.

I believe in God, even when He is silent.



Leader: The first service to mark the start of the Legal Year was held in Paris in 1245. The first service in England was held around 1310. The service traditionally includes a prayer for the gift of the Holy Spirit to be poured out on Christian lawyers and judges and for the Holy Spirit to be at work in the administration of justice in our land.

Bidding Prayer: We gather in the presence of almighty God, who is the judge of all and who knows the secrets of our hearts, to renew our commitment to the service of others that we may, together, do right.

We acknowledge a shared high calling, a common commitment to a justice that all can recognise. So we seek God's strength and guidance that we might remain true to our calling; informed, wise, and just.

We ask God to sustain us in our life and work, to grant us humility and sound judgment, to forgive our errors, and to inspire our service. Through us and in us, may the words of the prophet find fulfilment and justice roll down like waters and righteousness like an ever-flowing stream.

Prayer of Confession:

**Lord God, we know that you are life, the life which is the light of the world
But sometimes we allow the darkness to close in
We find ourselves driven apart from you
We confess that we do not always trust Christ's gifts
Sacrificing grace and truth in order to get ahead in the world
We do not always listen to your Spirit's teaching and direction
Trusting instead in our own intellect or hard work
Please forgive our thoughtlessness, carelessness, wilful ignorance and
disobedience.**

Leader: And now, Lord, in the silence, we bring to you those situations in our lives which are causing us and you pain.

[SILENCE IS KEPT]

The Apostle John wrote in 1 John chapter 2:

My dear children, I write this to you so that you will not sin. But if anybody does sin, we have an advocate with the Father—Jesus Christ, the Righteous [and Just] One. ² He is the atoning sacrifice for our sins, and not only for ours but also for the sins of the whole world.

³ We know that we have come to know him if we keep his commands. ⁴ Whoever says, "I know him," but does not do what he commands is a liar, and the truth is not in that person. ⁵ But if anyone obeys his word, love for God is truly made complete in them. This is how we know we are in him: ⁶ Whoever claims to live in him must live as Jesus did.

Prayer of Offering:

Lord, we bring to you our work as lawyers. We bring to you the hours spent staring at screens or poring through books looking for the right answer. We bring to you the time spent drafting documents to protect and promote our clients' interests. We bring to you our conversations with colleagues, our interactions

with other legal professionals and court staff, and with all those others with whom we come into contact. May we treat them with respect and show the love of Christ to them.

Lord, we bring our clients to you. May our service to them be a faithful witness to Christ. Give us wisdom by your Holy Spirit in all our dealings with others. May we speak truth in the places you have called us to serve.

Lord, we bring to you the structures of authority within which we work. We ask that you might grant wisdom, a commitment to truth, and a heart of justice to the senior partners and managers in our firms, to the Heads of Chambers, to judges, to civil servants and to politicians. We pray that there might be a greater sense of the importance of justice and of the rule of law in our land.

Lord, we bring our families, friends and churches to you. May we honour you as we love and serve them.

Keep us free from a love of money. Deliver us from finding our sense of worth in our work. Equip us to know how to balance the responsibilities to which you have called us. Breathe on us by your Holy Spirit, renewing the flame of our first love. Grant that all we do may be an act of worship to you.

We pray all this, not trusting in our own strength, but wholly dependent on the love of God the Father, the grace we have received through Jesus Christ, and the renewing, sustaining power of the Holy Spirit. Amen.

The Psalm Jon Hyde will be speaking about is Psalm 82.

Reading: Psalm 82

- ¹God presides in the great assembly;
he renders judgment among the “gods”:
- ²“How long will you defend the unjust
and show partiality to the wicked?”
- ³Defend the weak and the fatherless;
uphold the cause of the poor and the oppressed.
- ⁴Rescue the weak and the needy;
deliver them from the hand of the wicked.

⁵“The ‘gods’ know nothing, they understand nothing.

They walk about in darkness;
all the foundations of the earth are shaken.

⁶“I said, ‘You are “gods”;
you are all sons of the Most High.’

⁷But you will die like mere mortals;
you will fall like every other ruler.”

⁸Rise up, O God, judge the earth,
for all the nations are your inheritance.

**Response: Give thanks to the Lord for He is good,
His love endures forever.**

Now let us pray for the coming of God’s kingdom on earth, saying, as Jesus taught us:

Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your name; your kingdom come; your will be done; on earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread. And forgive us our sins, as we forgive those who have sinned against us. And lead us not into temptation; but deliver us from evil. For the kingdom, the power, and the glory are yours, now and forever. Amen.

Gospel Reading: Luke 4

¹⁴Jesus returned to Galilee in the power of the Spirit, and news about him spread through the whole countryside. ¹⁵He was teaching in their synagogues, and everyone praised him.

¹⁶He went to Nazareth, where he had been brought up, and on the Sabbath day he went into the synagogue, as was his custom. He stood up to read, ¹⁷and the scroll of the prophet Isaiah was handed to him. Unrolling it, he found the place where it is written:

¹⁸“The Spirit of the Lord is on me,
because he has anointed me
to proclaim good news to the poor.

He has sent me to proclaim freedom for the prisoners
and recovery of sight for the blind,
to set the oppressed free,

¹⁹ to proclaim the year of the Lord's favour."

²⁰ Then he rolled up the scroll, gave it back to the attendant and sat down. The eyes of everyone in the synagogue were fastened on him. ²¹ He began by saying to them, "Today this scripture is fulfilled in your hearing."

Talk - Jon Hyde

Prayers of Thanksgiving:

[Opportunity for free prayer to thank God for His blessings to us]

Leader: Lord, your faithfulness and patience and desire to bless is constantly astonishing to us. We thank you that you have called us, jars of clay that we are, and you have entrusted us with sharing the good news about the One who is Justice In Person, with witnessing to the truth of the One who is Truth In Person, and in showing what it means to follow the One who is Love in Person. Amen.

Sending Prayer:

Almighty God,
who by the redemption that is in Christ,
will be worshipped by people from every tribe, tongue and nation,
Work in us such love towards you, and knowledge of your ways
That our hearts being wide open to all people
Your kingdom of justice, peace and love may be built among us,
Through Jesus Christ, our Lord. Amen.

Anthem: **God of Justice, Tim Hughes**

God of Justice, Saviour to all
Came to rescue the weak and the poor
Chose to serve and not be served

Jesus, You have called us

Freely we've received
Now freely we will give

We must go live to feed the hungry
Stand beside the broken
We must go
Stepping forward keep us from just singing
Move us into action
We must go

To act justly everyday
Loving mercy in every way
Walking humbly before You God

You have shown us, what You require
Freely we've received
Now freely we will give

We must go live to feed the hungry
Stand beside the broken
We must go
Stepping forward keep us from just singing
Move us into action
We must go

Fill us up and send us out
Fill us up and send us out
Fill us up and send us out Lord (x4)

Acting humbly
Loving mercy
We must go, we must go
To the broken
And the hurting
We must go, we must go

We must go live to feed the hungry
Stand beside the broken
We must go
Stepping forward keep us from just singing
Move us into action
We must go