

Worship for Sunday 21st February

Good morning and welcome to our service on this the first Sunday of Lent. Welcome if you are joining us on Zoom or following the service at home, it is lovely to have you with us as we gather to worship our forgiving God. Let us take a moment to still ourselves in the presence of God so that we are ready for worship this morning.

Call to worship

In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. **Amen**
The lord be with you. **And also with you.**

A prayer of approach

To you, O lord we light up our heart, offering worship and praise. Show us your path. Teach us to follow. Guide us in your truth. For our hope is in you all day long. **Amen**

Hymn: And can it be

Almighty God, to whom all hearts are open, all desires known, and from whom no secrets are hidden: cleanse the thoughts of our hearts by the inspiration of your Holy Spirit, that we may perfectly love you, and worthily magnify your holy name; through Christ our Lord. Amen.

Prayers of Penitence

Compassion and forgiveness belong to the Lord our God, though we have rebelled against him. Let us then renounce our wilfulness and ask his mercy by confessing our sins in penitence and faith. *Silence.*

Almighty God, our heavenly Father, we have sinned against you and against our neighbour in thought and word and deed, through negligence, through weakness, through our own deliberate fault. We are truly sorry and repent of all our sins. For the sake of your Son Jesus Christ, who died for us, forgive us all that is past and grant that we may serve you in newness of life to the glory of your name. Amen.

Almighty God, who forgives all who truly repent, have mercy upon us, pardon and deliver us from all our sins, confirm and strengthen us in all goodness, and keep us in life eternal, through Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen**

Collect for the first Sunday in Lent

Heavenly Father, your Son battled with the powers of darkness, and grew closer to you in the desert: help us to use these days to grow in wisdom and prayer that we may witness to your saving love in Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen**

Reading: Psalm 25: 1-9

Hymn: Jesus lover of my soul

To you, O Lord, I lift up my soul; **O my God, in you I trust.**
You are the God of my salvation; **To you, O Lord, I lift up my soul.**
In you I hope all the day long. **O my God, in you I trust.**
Remember, Lord, your compassion and love, for they are from everlasting.
To you, O Lord, I lift up my soul; O my God, in you I trust.

Reading: Mark 1: 9-15

A prayer

Lord Jesus Christ, as you wrestled in the wilderness with temptation, with the nature of your calling and your ability to meet what it would cost you, so help us today and throughout this time of Lent to hear your voice, to understand

what you ask of us and to consider our response. Fasten our thought on you, and direct all that we do, so that we might grow in grace and stand firm in faith, able to resist whatever might cause to fall. In your name we pray. **Amen**

Meditation

As I reflected on our reading today from Mark's gospel, I began to wonder what John the Baptist must have thought of Jesus going off into the wilderness almost immediately after he had baptised him. John had witnessed those powerful words God had spoken to Jesus, "You are my son, the beloved, with you I am well pleased", his expectation were high the Messiah was finally here. But instead of getting on with the job of being the Messiah, Jesus heads off alone into the wilderness. As I was prepared for the worship I can across an insightful meditation on our reading from John's perspective, that I would like to share with you this morning on this first Sunday in Lent.

What was he doing going off into the wilderness like that?

From the perspective of John the Baptist written by Nick Fawcett

What was he doing going off into the wilderness like that?

I'd just baptized him just moments earlier,

seen God's blessing rest upon him –

confirmation, if any were needed, that he was the one sent from God,

the Messiah for whom we longed-

and I'd expected him to hit the ground running,

to rally support,

energise the crowds,

lay claim at once to his throne.

But instead, he disappeared, heading off into the hills,

And no sight or sound of him for weeks to come.

Was he having second thoughts, I wondered?

Was the job too much for him?

Or had I simply misunderstood my man?

I watched.... and I waited....

torn between a mixture of dread and hope,

until, at last, word came that he was healing the sick, saving the lost, proclaiming the dawn of God's kingdom.

Suddenly I understood.

He'd needed to experience the wastelands of temptation.

Before he was ready to transform the desert of human life.

He'd faced the stark choice of self or others, of taking the easy or hard way,

and he'd resolved to give his all.

Quite simple, but wonderfully,

he's entered the wilderness to lead us out!

Take a moment to reflect on this meditation and hear what God might be saying to you through it as we begin our journey through Lent. *Silence.*

Creed

We believe in God the Father, from whom every family in heaven and earth is named. We believe in God the Son, who lives in our hearts through faith and fills us with his love. We believe in God the Holy Spirit, who strengthens us with power from on high. We believe in one God: Father, Son and Holy Spirit. Amen

Hymn: Lead us heavenly father lead us

Prayers

I have made a video of the prayers.

Let us by prayer and intercession with thanksgiving make our prayers to God. *Silence.*

Gracious God, we pray for peace, justice, and reconciliation throughout the world. We pray for an honouring of human rights and for the relief of the oppressed. We continue our prayers for all those affected by the coronavirus, for the sick, bereaved, lonely, fearful, those struggling with their mental health and wellbeing and for all those dealing with the economic impact, surround them with love, kindness, and peace. We give thanks for the vaccine and for all that is gracious in the lives of men, women, and children. Lord in your mercy. **Hear our prayer.**

Gracious God we pray for the renewal of the church in faith, love, and service. We pray for our Archbishops Justin and Stephen, our bishops Rachel and Robert, for all those in positions of leadership within the church and for the life of our benefice. We give thanks for the gifts of your word, the grace of the sacraments and the fellowship of your people. Help us to support each other during this season of Lent as we are reminded that we do not walk through the wilderness alone. Thank you, God, for your great love of each and every one of us, may we live in the light of this love as we share it with the world around us. Lord in your mercy. **Hear our prayer.**

Gracious God, we pray for this local community and for all people in their daily life and work. We pray for the young and the elderly, for families and all who live alone. We give thanks for human skill and creativity and for all that reveals your loveliness. Lord in your mercy. **Hear our prayer.**

Gracious God we pray for those who are in need, the sick, the sorrowful, and the bereaved. In a moment of silence, we name before you any we know who in particular need this day. *Silence.* Surround them with your love, comfort, and peace. We pray for all who bring comfort, care, and healing, remembering especially those who work in the NHS, Social services, care and nursing homes and all those who care for others in their own homes. We give thanks for human love and friendship and for all that enriches our daily lives. Lord in your mercy. **Hear our prayer.**

Gracious God, in a moment of silence and stillness we bring our own prayers and concerns before you. Let us commend ourselves, and all for whom we pray to the mercy and protection of God. Merciful Father **accept our prayer for the sake of your son our saviour Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.**

The Lord's Prayer

The peace

Since we are justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ, who has given us access to his grace. The peace of the Lord be always with you, **and also with you.** Let us offer one another a sign of peace.

I know that we are not together physically today and not able to share the peace in our normal way. However, this does not mean that we are not able to share the peace. Bring to mind members of our church family and as you do wish them God's peace. "..... (the name of a member of our church family) God's peace be with you.

Hymn: O Jesus I have promised

We go out

Almighty God, we thank you for the gift of your holy word. May it be a lantern to our feet, a light to our paths and a strength to our lives. Take us and use us to love and serve in the power of the Holy Spirit, and in the name of your Son Jesus Christ our lord. **Amen**

Christ give you grace to grow in holiness, to deny yourselves, take up your cross and follow him; and the blessing of God almighty the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit, be among you and remain with you always.

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