

Welcome and Call to Worship

On this first Sunday of Lent I would like to extend my heartfelt greetings and best wishes to everyone who receives this service wherever and whenever it is read.

Opening Prayer for lent

Lord Jesus, in this season of Lent, I want to draw closer to you. I believe that you walked amongst us to save us as an act of love beyond all human understanding.

I know I can count on you to carry me through each day. I know that in all circumstances you are with me. I want to love you more than myself and say “yes” to your will in every moment. I trust totally in your grace. Thank you Lord.

This Lent, I want to learn to love you as you deserve by being the person you want me to be.
Amen

Prayer for Peace in Ukraine

Holy and Gracious God

We pray for the people of Ukraine and the people of Russia; for their countries and their leaders.

We pray for all those who are afraid; that your everlasting arms hold them in this time of great fear.

We pray for all those who have the power over life and death; that they will choose for all people life, and life in all its fullness.

We pray for those who choose war; that they will remember that you direct your people to turn our swords into ploughshares and seek your peace.

We pray for leaders on the world stage; that they are inspired by the wisdom and courage of Christ.

Above all, Lord, today we pray for peace for Ukraine.

And we ask this in the name of your blessed Son, Jesus Christ our Lord.

Lord, have mercy.

Amen

Hymn Father Along

Tempted and tried we're oft made to wonder,
Why it should be thus all the daylong;
While there are others living about us,
Never molested though in the wrong.

Refrain:-

*Farther along we'll know all about it,
Farther along we'll understand why;
Cheer up, don't worry, live in the sunshine,
We'll understand it all by and by.*

2 When death has come and taken our loved ones,
It leaves our home so lonely and drear;
Then do we wonder why others prosper,
Living so wicked year after year.

[Refrain]

3 Faithful till death said our loving Master,
A few more days to labour and wait;
Toils of the road will then seem as nothing,
As we sweep through the beautiful gate.

[Refrain]

4 When we see Jesus coming in glory,
When He comes from His home in the sky;
Then we shall meet Him in that bright mansion,
We'll understand it all by and by.

[Refrain]

Philippians 4 6-7

6 Do not be anxious about anything, but in every situation, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God. 7 And the peace of God, which transcends all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.

Psalm 91

- 1 Whoever dwells in the shelter of the Most High
will rest in the shadow of the Almighty.[a]
- 2 I will say of the Lord, "He is my refuge and my
fortress,
my God, in whom I trust."
- 3 Surely he will save you
from the fowler's snare
and from the deadly pestilence.
- 4 He will cover you with his feathers,
and under his wings you will find refuge;
his faithfulness will be your shield and rampart.
- 5 You will not fear the terror of night,
nor the arrow that flies by day,
6 nor the pestilence that stalks in the darkness,
nor the plague that destroys at midday.
- 7 A thousand may fall at your side,
ten thousand at your right hand,
but it will not come near you.
- 8 You will only observe with your eyes
and see the punishment of the wicked.
- 9 If you say, "The Lord is my refuge,"
and you make the Most High your dwelling,
10 no harm will overtake you,
no disaster will come near your tent.
- 11 For he will command his angels concerning you
to guard you in all your ways;
12 they will lift you up in their hands,
so that you will not strike your foot against a stone.
- 13 You will tread on the lion and the cobra;
you will trample the great lion and the serpent.
- 14 "Because he[b] loves me," says the Lord, "I will
rescue him;
I will protect him, for he acknowledges my name.
- 15 He will call on me, and I will answer him;
I will be with him in trouble,
I will deliver him and honor him.
- 16 With long life I will satisfy him
and show him my salvation."

Hymn Jesus Lover Of My Soul

Jesus, lover of my soul,
Let me to thy bosom fly,
While the nearer waters roll,
While the tempest still is high.
Hide me, O my Saviour, hide,
Till the storm of life is past;
Safe into the haven guide;
O receive my soul at last.

Other refuge have I none,
Hangs my helpless soul on thee;
Leave, ah! leave me not alone,
Still support and comfort me.
All my trust on thee is stayed,
All my help from thee I bring;
Cover my defenceless head
With the shadow of thy wing.

Thou, O Christ, art all I want,
More than all in thee I find;
Raise the fallen, cheer the faint,
Heal the sick, and lead the blind.
Just and holy is thy name,
I am all unrighteousness;
False and full of sin I am;
Thou art full of truth and grace.

Plenteous grace with thee is found,
Grace to cover all my sin;
Let the healing streams abound,
Make and keep me pure within.
Thou of life the fountain art,
Freely let me take of thee;
Spring thou up within my heart;
Rise to all eternity.

Reading Please open your Bible
and read:

Luke 4 verses 1 to 13

Having read these verses spend a
few moments in personal prayer
opening your hearts to the words.

Reflection

Today is the 28th of February and I have just sat down to write my reflection on the gospel reading for the at home service for the 6th of March. Like most of you I awoke early and watched the news with a mixture of sadness, relief and guilt.

Sadness for those now entangled in the conflict in the Ukraine, relief that the conflict has not spread further and guilt that that I had that feeling knowing thousands of innocent people are suffering while I sit warm dry and safe sat at my computer.

I pray that by the time you are reading this at home service those in power will have managed to broker a peace deal and the world will have stepped away from darkness. So before reading today's reflection lets again take a moment to pray together for peace, tolerance and understanding.

Today's Gospel reading, the temptation of Christ, is one of the best know passages in the New Testament. Jesus has been baptised and God has spoken confirming Jesus as his beloved son after which Jesus is lead in to the wilderness by the Holy Spirit and is tempted by the Devil. It is worth noting it is when Jesus is at his most connected to God that he is tempted.

We ourselves must be aware that temptation is always with us, especially as we try to grow in our love for the Lord and work to enhance his kingdom here on earth. In fact as Christians temptation is a part of life. Until we no longer have a body of sin we will be tempted to commit sin, but, in reality, every temptation is an opportunity to overcome and to win victory over sin. With the word of God and the love of Jesus we can resist temptation.

Lent is a time to look afresh at our own lives, to renew our awareness of Christ's sacrifice and to become more aware of the suffering he endured on our behalf. Many of us will be making a token gesture over lent.

We will be telling ourselves that we are making a sacrifice by:

Giving up Chocolate, yet have that extra special Easter egg waiting to be eaten in the cupboard.

Giving up alcohol and already planning the cycle ride to a country pub over the Easter weekend.

Not watching your favourite TV soap but using the time to watch something else and following the plot lines in the TV papers.

Ask yourself are you truly making a sacrifice? Are you focused on Christ or focused on yourself this lent?

Our Lenten sacrifice should be something that brings us closer to Christ So this year why not remove two negatives and replace them with positives I will share mine but you are best placed to know your own.

Negativity I would like to say that on the whole I am a positive person but I have to admit recently I have a tendency to become negative and withdrawn. So I am going to reach out to family, friends and strangers, ensuring I do something positive each day to brighten both their day and mine it might a phone call, a text, a gesture or a random act of kindness but something to make a difference.

Procrastination I am a master at finding a reason not to do the simplest of tasks, it's too wet, I'm a bit busy today or I'll start that tomorrow. So over this Lenten period I am going to ensure that I do a task each week that has been on my to-do list for a while starting with the faith related ones.

Overcoming temptation is never easy and it is impossible without God's grace. When Jesus was tempted he showed us what our reference point should be: God. All three times the devil tempted him in the Gospel, he answered by putting God's word and God's will first. For us to persevere in our Lenten resolutions, we must centre ourselves on God and rely on his grace, which means living close to Christ reading his words and following his examples of love patience and tolerance for all.

So, over this Lenten period, make a difference to your life and the life of those around you, give up those things that are keeping you from truly knowing Christ and that are stopping you from reaching out to others as he would have done.

Prayers of intercession

Focus your thoughts and raise to the Lord all the concerns that are dear to your heart, events in foreign lands and within our own country, family, friends and whatever's on your heart at this time, take as long as you need. Focus on the Lord direct your prayers totally from your heart to the throne of God

Lords Prayer

Our Father, who art in heaven,
hallowed be thy name;
thy kingdom come;
thy will be done;
on earth as it is in heaven.
Give us this day our daily bread.
And forgive us our trespasses,
as we forgive those who trespass
against us.
And lead us not into temptation;
but deliver us from evil.
For thine is the kingdom,
the power and the glory,
for ever and ever. Amen.

Hymn Jesus in the desert

1 Jesus in the desert
fasting forty days,
wrestles with the devil,
offers God the praise;
2 Hears the tempter saying,
"Turn these stones to bread;"
answers with conviction,
"Feed upon God's Word!"
3 Soon the tempter beckons
at the temple roof -
"Angels will uphold you,
throw yourself right off."
4 Jesus, from the scriptures,
inwardly assured,
signals the commandment
"Do not tempt the Lord."
5 Daringly the tempter
promises the earth
if God's Son will only
recognise his worth.
6 Jesus reprimands him
in the Spirit's power:
"God alone is worthy!
Go, this very hour."
7 Undeterred, the tempter
softly steals away.
To us, as to Jesus,
he'll return some day.
8 When we face false choices
evil dressed as good -
give us wise discernment
and your courage. Lord.

Hymn Forty days and forty nights

1 Forty days and forty nights
You were fasting in the wild;
Forty days and forty nights
Tempted, and yet undefiled.
2 Shall not we your sorrow share
And from worldly joys abstain,
Fasting with unceasing prayer,
Strong with you to suffer pain?
3 Then if Satan on us press,
Flesh or spirit to assail,
Victor in the wilderness,
Grant we may not faint nor fail!
4 So shall we have peace divine;
Holier gladness ours shall be;
Round us, too, shall angels
shine,
Such as served You faithfully.
5 Keep, O keep us, Saviour dear,
Ever constant by your side,
That with you we may appear
At th'eternal Eastertide.

Lent is a journey to the Cross and on that journey there is a chasm wider than any person has ever seen or could ever imagine. Yet it is bridged by just two pieces of wood in the form of the cross of salvation.

Sending and Closing Prayer

Be with us Lord as we go out in your name:
May the lips that have sung your praises always speak the truth;
May the ears which have heard your word listen only to what is good
May our lives as well as our worship be always pleasing to you.
Merciful Father, accept these prayers for the sake of your son, Our Saviour, Jesus Christ. Amen.

Grace Prayer Wherever we are, we can share the grace together.

May the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with us all, now and evermore. Amen