

WORSHIP AT HOME

SUNDAY, February 7th 2021

Call to Worship:

Lift your eyes to gaze on God.
Hear God's Word and receive God's peace.
With all that you have been, all that you are,
and all that you hope to be,
offer yourself now to God in worship and praise.

Hymn God moves in a mysterious way

(StF 104)

- 1 God moves in a mysterious way
his wonders to perform ;
he plants his footsteps in the sea,
and rides upon the storm.
- 2 Come all you saints, fresh courage take,
the clouds you so much dread
are big with mercy, and shall break
in blessings on your head.
- 3 Judge not the Lord by feeble sense,
but trust him for his grace ;
behind a frowning providence
he hides a smiling face.
- 4 His purposes will ripen fast,
unfolding every hour ;
the bud may have a bitter taste,
but sweet will be the flower.
- 5 Blind unbelief is sure to err,
and scan his work in vain ;
God is his own interpreter,
and he will make it plain.

William Cowper (1731–1800)

Prayer:

Everlasting God, creator of heaven and earth,
your love causes our hearts to soar.
You know the number of stars in the universe
– just as you know the number of hairs on our
head.
Mighty God: **We love you.**
You call each star by name
– just as you call us each by name.
Mighty God...
You supply the earth with rain to make the grass
grow;
and provide food for the animals and birds
– just as you provide all we need to sustain us.
Mighty God...

You care about the details, seeing every tiny part
of the bigger picture

– just as you care about
the tiniest detail in our
lives;
for you know the person
you created each of us
to be.
Mighty God...

Amen.

Prayers

People. People. Everywhere! Day in. Day out.
Seeking you, Lord. Hunting you. Following you.
Hungry for your presence. Wanting your
attention.
Yet not once did you complain.
We're sorry, Lord, that the weight of life's
demands causes us to stumble,
to lose our temper and at times to buckle under
the pressure.
Help us to be more like you, Lord.
We're sorry for not getting our priorities right.
Help us to know, as you did,
the importance of spending time with and
drawing refreshment from the Father.
We're sorry for allowing other people and things
to take over and squeeze out our time with you.
Help us to draw daily on your refreshing strength
in order to cope with whatever our day holds.

Lord, hear our prayer.

Amen.

The Lord's Prayer - Our Father.....Amen

Today's Readings:

Mark Ch1 V29-39

Reflection:

In our reading the people queued at the door of
Simon and Andrew, they had heard about Jesus
healing Simon's Mother in Law. At the moment
about the only place we might queue is at the
door of a Supermarket if we arrive at the wrong
time. Having said that Hilary and I had a long
queue on a Sunday morning recently, we were
summonsed for our Covid jab and had to queue
for quite a while. It was well worth the wait for
us.

In different times I have queued for sports events
and to go to a show. In days gone by when we
used to go to Easter People regularly we even
queued to get into Bible Studies and Worship



events. In general, however, it is very rare to think of people queuing at a Church door to attend our regular acts of worship. How can we recover some of the excitement of meeting with Jesus on the home ground of our own Churches. Maybe we would be better employed going to the places where people are gathered and taking with us the joy of being with Jesus.

Later in the passage the disciples went looking for Jesus to take him back to carry on where he had left off. Jesus disappointed them by saying that he was going elsewhere. Do we fall into the same trap, expecting to carry on doing just the same thing day after day, week after week in our journey with Jesus, or are we prepared to look for new opportunities. If we are what resources will we need as 'slower individuals' to keep up with the Lord of the Dance.

Just a few thoughts for the coming days as we plough on, looking for the light at the end of the tunnel.

Prayer:

We pray at this time for all those who have been and still are affected by the Covid 19 epidemic. We think of all those who have lost their lives and their families. We think of all in the medical profession, Doctors, Nurses, Paramedics and all who work in Hospitals. We think of those who work on treatments and on vaccines. We especially pray for all those who are involved with the roll out of the vaccines and pray for all who are anxiously waiting to receive their vaccinations.

We pray for all politicians making decisions that are often not popular, we pray that someday soon there will be a world after Covid when we can resume some sort of more normal life.

We ask all these prayers in Jesus name.
Amen

Hymn For all the saints who from their labours rest, (StF 745)

1 For all the saints who from their labours rest,
who thee by faith before the world confessed,

thy name, O Jesus, be for ever blest :
Alleluia, alleluia !

- 2 Thou wast their rock, their fortress and their might ;
thou, Lord, their captain in the well-fought fight ;
thou in the darkness still their one true light :
Alleluia, alleluia !
- 3 O may thy soldiers, faithful, true, and bold,
fight as the saints who nobly fought of old,
and win, with them, the victor's crown of gold !
Alleluia, alleluia !
- 4 O blest communion, fellowship divine !
We feebly struggle, they in glory shine ;
yet all are one in thee, for all are thine :
Alleluia, alleluia !
- 5 And when the strife is fierce, the warfare long,
steals on the ear the distant triumph song,
and hearts are brave again, and arms are strong :
Alleluia, alleluia !
- 6 The golden evening brightens in the west ;
soon, soon to faithful warriors comes their rest ;
sweet is the calm of paradise the blest :
Alleluia, alleluia !
- 7 But lo, there breaks a yet more glorious day :
the saints triumphant rise in bright array ;
the King of Glory passes on his way !
Alleluia, alleluia !
- 8 From earth's wide bounds, from ocean's farthest coast,
through gates of pearl streams in the countless host,
singing to Father, Son, and Holy Ghost :
Alleluia, alleluia !

William Walsham How (1823–1867)

Blessing:

God of power and light,
you have called us into light and friendship.
Send us, now, into more light,
with more of the power of friendship.
This love is the love at the heart of all things –
that you call us friends.
Empower us in this friendship, this power, this
glory.

Amen.

(Prepared by Bob Mantle, CCL No. 315086)

WORSHIP AT HOME: Sunday before Lent

SUNDAY, February 14th 2021

Opening Prayer

Keep a few moments of silence before saying
Almighty God,
we ask you to show us
something more of who you are
and how awesome your presence is.
Overcome our fear of the unknown,
and lead us into a new experience of you.
May our worship today be as on a mountain-top,
a transforming encounter
that empowers our discipleship. **Amen.**

Hymn (StF 55)

1. Immortal, invisible, God only wise,
in light inaccessible hid from our eyes,
most blessed, most glorious, the Ancient of Days,
almighty, victorious, thy great name we praise.

2. Unresting, unhasting, and silent as light,
nor wanting, nor wasting, thou rulest in might —
thy justice like mountains high soaring above
thy clouds which are fountains of goodness and
love.

3. To all life thou givest, to both great and small ;
in all life thou livest, the true life of all ;
we blossom and flourish as leaves on the tree,
and wither and perish ; but naught changeth
thee.

4. Great Father of glory, pure Father of light,
thine angels adore thee, all veiling their sight ;
all praise we would render : O help us to see
'tis only the splendour of light hideth thee.

5. Immortal, invisible, God only wise,
in light inaccessible hid from our eyes,
most blessed, most glorious, the Ancient of Days,
almighty, victorious, thy great name we praise.

Walter Chalmers Smith (1824–1908)

Prayer:

Day and night, dark and light,
the glory of God shines out.
Sunshine and rain, joy and pain,
the love of God breaks through.
Glistening evergreens brave the winter chill,
bare branches stir in longing for spring,
creation proclaims the care and provision of God.
Mountain peaks, rolling hills, craggy rocks,

crashing seas, rushing rivers,
surging streams,
marshlands, peat bogs,
heaths and moors,
fields and downs,
hamlets, villages, towns and
cities



and all who live there, call with one voice:

**God made us
and we are in God's good and generous hand,
great is the Lord and worthy of praise. Amen.**

The Lord's Prayer - Our Father.....Amen

Reading

This year the lectionary is going through Mark's Gospel. Church tradition has often associated Mark's gospel with Peter, suggesting that it reflects the preaching and teaching of Peter. Some think Peter lived in Rome at one time and this gospel was written in Rome. With this in mind, read what follows in italics, and imagine you are someone who lives in Rome in the 1st century AD. You have gone to one of the piazzas to listen to this new preacher, Peter.

...as I have already said I was with Jesus on many occasions when strange and wonderful things happened, times when we recognised Jesus for who he was – the Messiah, the Anointed One of God. Perhaps you don't believe me, so let me tell you about the day I went up a mountain with him, and James and John, another two of Jesus disciples. He'd singled the three of us out from the rest of disciples. We didn't originally know where we were going but it soon became clear as we started climbing up the mountain side – we wondered if we were going to the top to pray, for that was the sort of thing Jesus did. We were short of breath from the effort when we reached the top and as our heart rates calmed down we looked out over the view. Suddenly, our hearts pounded again - but this this from fright – as, right there in front of us, Jesus' appearance completely changed. His face shone like the sun, his clothes shimmered, turned a dazzling white, whiter than anything we had ever seen in our whole lives. We shielded our eyes against the sudden, inexplicable, overwhelming glow of his whole body. Unbelievably, two more people just appeared on the top of the mountain - we recognised them as Elijah and Moses and they started talking to Jesus. On the one hand we

were petrified, one the other, it was such a beautiful moment we wanted it to last forever. Completely unsettled by the occasion, I felt I needed to say something, so I blurted out to Jesus: 'Teacher, it is such an honour to be here with you, let us make three shelters, one for each of you.' As soon as I said it I knew it had been foolish...and I felt even more I should have kept quiet as a radiant light-filled cloud enveloped them and we heard a voice from deep within the cloud saying: 'This is my Son, whom I love. Listen to him.' We knew instantly it was the voice of God – imagine that! The voice of God! We were trying to take in the awesomeness of all that was happening when we looked around and saw just Jesus. We rubbed our eyes almost in disbelief, for only Jesus remained, looking as 'normal' as any other time.

Now don't think this is a cleverly invented story - James, John and I were true eye-witnesses of this most amazing scene. Neither was it a magic trick. The three of us knew, absolutely knew deep down in our hearts, that we had been in the presence of God and that Jesus was not simply a man – he was also the Lord. All that we had seen had been brought about by God's hand. And the message was - we had to listen to Jesus. Come back tomorrow to hear more about Jesus, the one whom Jews like me have waited for over many, many years. The Messiah we called him, but now I call him my Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, the one I want to listen to, to follow and obey...

(to read this in the Bible go to **Mark 9: 2-9**)

Reflection:

Listen to him. Listen to Jesus. Easier for the original disciples than us as Jesus was right there with them, but even they may not have found it simple to truly listen to Jesus, take in what he said and apply it to their situations. How do we listen to Jesus? I find it's easy to forget that to really listen I have to stop speaking! Do we have any silences for listening in a prayer time? Do we ever just gaze, say, on the moon and stars, and enter into a silence of wonderment so we can listen? Have we ever sat still enough, to the point where we are conscious only of our pulse and breathing, to prepare ourselves to listen? Are we ever quiet whilst walking (even with friends), so that by imagining Jesus as our walking companion, we can listen to him?

Can we listen to the one whose entire being shone with glory – so that in listening we might be changed, transformed, and allow God's perfect light to push out any darkness within us? 'This is my Son, whom I love. Listen to him.'

Reading: 2 Cor 4: 3-6

'Out of darkness the light shall shine'

Prayer:

Lord Jesus let your light shine on...
those who are afraid
those who are hungry
those who are grieving
those who have Covid 19 or 'long Covid'
those who feel no one cares about them
the exhausted NHS and care workers
(add your own prayers here)
And humbly we ask let your light also shine on us.

Amen

Hymn (StF 59)

- 1 Lord, the light of your love is shining,
in the midst of the darkness, shining :
Jesus, Light of the world, shine upon us ;
set us free by the truth you now bring us,
shine on me, shine on me.
*Shine, Jesus, shine,
fill this land with the Father's glory ;
blaze, Spirit, blaze, set our hearts on fire.
Flow, river, flow,
flood the nations with grace and mercy ;
send forth your word,
Lord, and let there be light !*
- 2 Lord, I come to your awesome presence,
from the shadows into your radiance ;
by your blood I may enter your brightness :
search me, try me, consume all my darkness,
shine on me, shine on me...*chorus*
- 3 As we gaze on your kingly brightness
so our faces display your likeness,
ever changing from glory to glory :
mirrored here, may our lives tell your story,
shine on me, shine on me...*chorus*
Graham Kendrick (b. 1950)

Blessing:

May the LORD bless you and keep you.
May the LORD smile down on you
and show you his kindness.
May the LORD answer your prayers and give you
peace.

(prepared by Ann Hufton, CCL No. 315086)

WORSHIP AT HOME

SUNDAY 21st February 2021 Lent 1

Call to Worship: prayer

Lord, though some of us may be physically alone as we are worshipping you, may we remember that you are with us, whatever time or day of the week it is, you hear us. And, so, as we bring our joys and struggles, our hopes and fears, to you, you are there to heal and bless, to forgive and show us we are loved. **Amen.**

Hymn – For the beauty of the earth (StF 102(i))

1 . For the beauty of the earth,
For the beauty of the skies
For the love which from our birth
Over and around us lies.

Chorus:

*Gracious God to thee we raise
This our sacrifice of praise*

2. For the beauty of each hour
Of the day and of the night,
Hill and vale and tree and flower
Sun and moon and stars of light:

Chorus

3. For the joy of ear and eye
For the heart and mind's delight'
For the mystic harmony
Linking sense to sound and sight:

Chorus

4. For the joy of human love'
Brother, sister, parent, child,
Friends on earth, and friends above,
Pleasures pure and undefiled:

Chorus

5. For each perfect gift and sign
Of your love so freely given,
Graces human and divine,
Flowers of earth and buds of heaven

Chorus.

Folllott Sandford Pierpoint (1835-1917)

The Lord's Prayer - Our Father.....Amen

Today's Readings: Mark

1: 9 – 15

Not long after Jesus came from Nazareth in Galilee and was baptised by John in the Jordan.



Just as Jesus was coming up out of the water, he saw heaven being torn open and the Spirit descending upon him like a dove. And a voice came from heaven: "you are my son, whom I love; with you I am well pleased" At once the Spirit sent him out into the desert, where he stayed forty days, being tempted by Satan. He was with the wild animals and angels attended him. After John was put in prison, Jesus went into Galilee proclaiming the good news of God. "The time has come," he said- The Kingdom of God has come near. Repent and believe the good news."

Reflection:

Jesus' baptism by John was at the very least confusing!

John's baptism was said to be for the forgiveness of sins, but Jesus was without sin (see 2 Corinthians 5.21 and 1 Peter 2.22). You can see why it should apply to us, but not to Jesus.

However, to Jesus, it meant four things:

1 . This was the time to decide. For 30 years he had worked faithfully at the family business and spent a lot of time wondering what the sign would be and when it would come that he should take up God's task for him. When John arrived at the Jordan, Jesus realised that John was that sign and Jesus could see, this was where he fitted in.

2. He decided he would work for the good of all, by showing them the love of God. But he needed God's approval, and, as he came up out of the water, it came. The voice from heaven: "You are my own dear son. I am pleased with You"

3. Jesus needed to be equipped for the job and God sent the Holy Spirit. But the symbolism here must not be lost! The spirit came down on him like a dove, the symbol of peace and love. John's message had been the axe to the root of the tree and the all-consuming fire! But from the very start the holy spirit's message through Jesus was to be

one of peace and love. He will succeed, he will win but it will be by love!

"Then, the spirit made him go into the desert, where he stayed for 40 days being tempted by Satan. Wild animals were there also, but angels came and helped Him."

It was the Spirit that sent him to be tempted! Obviously not to make him fail, but to strengthen him as he overcame them. Are we not strengthened when we resist temptation? We know what we should do, and when we do it, we grow stronger and more able to resist next time. Jesus had to decide how he was going to do his work. God was telling him: "Take my love to all people. Be ready to die for them." Satan was saying: "You have great power, use it to break their resistance."

Jesus had to choose! And we know what he chose. And, how God helped him. Has he not also promised to help us? **Amen.**

Prayer:

We thank you, faithful Lord, for your patience, Provision and power;
For your tenderness, trust and triumph;
For your security and strength;
For your compassion and wisdom.
We thank you Lord that through your grace and mercy, the blessings of faith and your covenant love, you equip, teach and guide us as we cross today's world, ever mindful of your steadfast love. **Amen.**

**Hymn – When I survey the wondrous cross
(StF 287 (i))**

1. When I survey the wondrous Cross
On which the Prince of Glory died,
My richest Gain I count but loss,
And pour Contempt on all my Pride.

2. Forbid it, Lord, that I should boast,
Save in the Death of Christ my God:
All the vain Things that charm me most,
I sacrifice them to his Blood.

3. See from his Head, his Hands, his Feet,
Sorrow and Love flow mingled down!
Did e'er such Love and Sorrow meet,
Or Thorns compose so rich a Crown?

4. His dying Crimson, like a Robe,
Spreads o'er his Body on the Tree;
Then am I dead to all the Globe,
And all the Globe is dead to me.

5. Were the whole Realm of Nature mine,
That were a offering far too small;
Love so amazing, so divine,
Demands my Soul, my Life, my All.

Isaac Watts (1674 – 1748)

Prayers: *pause after each sentence to bring your own thoughts to be personal to you.*

Lord, we bring you our prayers for others. You know the needs and concerns of your world at this time. You know of those who are suffering, in many different ways – We bring before you those who are dear to us – And, finally, Holy God, open our hearts and minds to know who you made us to be. Help us to live every day knowing that we are your children. Open our eyes to see not only others, but also ourselves, through the eyes of your love. Creator God, you made us in your own image to be your people wherever we go. This coming week, wherever we find ourselves, help us to know that you are with us – guiding, revealing, and sustaining – always. **Amen.**

Blessing:

**May the grace of our Lord, Jesus Christ,
The love of God, and the fellowship of
the Holy Spirit, be with us always. Amen.**

(Alan Ladds CCL No. 315086)

WORSHIP AT HOME
SUNDAY 28th February 2021

Second Sunday in Lent

As an Advent Ring helps us prepare for Christmas, many of our Area's churches use a Lent Cross during this period: a bare wooden cross to which different symbols are added each week. Usually week 1 is bread and wine, and week 2 adds a bowl/basin and towel: if you like, you could have these symbols near you as you worship.

Call to Worship (Lent Cross Liturgy):

On our journey through Lent, may these symbols be reminders of the road Jesus took – the road of pain and suffering, the path of self-giving love. Today the towel and basin remind us of Jesus' humility, the way he washed the feet of his friends. We remember all those today who lack such basic needs as washing facilities, in a time of pandemic when hygiene is crucial.

Lord Jesus,
As you suffered, so many in our world still suffer today. Challenge us to make a difference through our actions and our prayers. Amen

Hymn – Give me joy in my heart (Sing Hosanna)
Singing the Faith 76, Anonymous

Give me joy in my heart, keep me praising,
give me joy in my heart, I pray;
give me joy in my heart, keep me praising,
keep me praising till the break of day:

Sing hosanna! Sing hosanna!
Sing hosanna to the King of kings!
Sing hosanna! Sing hosanna!
Sing hosanna to the King!

Give me peace in my heart, keep me loving...

Sing hosanna.....

Give me love in my heart, keep me serving...

Sing hosanna.....

Prayer:

Lord Jesus, we praise and thank you for your life and ministry on earth, and the example you set us of Christian life and service. Grant us joy in the simple, homely things: sunlight on frost, the early flowers of spring, the gradual increase in light and warmth, the opportunities to help those around us, a smile and a wave when we can't get closer.

Forgive us when we find it hard to count our blessings, when we fail to praise and thank you and when our lives fall short of the service that we could and should give. Loving Lord, you understand our weaknesses and in your grace you are always ready to forgive all who turn to you in humility and repentance. Amen



The Lord's Prayer - Our Father Amen

Today's Readings: Mark 8 v31-38
Romans 4 v13-25

Reflection:

As I write, Joe Biden is in his first week as US President and the world has breathed a huge sigh of relief that, in the end, the transfer of power was peaceful after a turbulent build-up based on Donald Trump's refusal to accept that he had simply lost the election. In the UK Covid death rates remain high and yet some people still disregard the rules – finding it impossible to accept that their lives could be so restricted, however good and pressing the reasons. When there is a truth we don't like, it is all too easy to reject or ignore it: not because we've weighed up the evidence and really believe that's the right approach, but because we'd prefer things that way. This attitude can cause all sorts of harm. In today's gospel passage Peter is confronted with a truth that he finds very difficult to accept and he too protests, going as far as rebuking Jesus - who he has just acknowledged as the Messiah (v29) so really shouldn't be arguing with! Peter naturally doesn't want his friend and teacher to suffer and die – probably he's also wondering what they would do without him, and fearful of the extra responsibility that would then fall on him and the other disciples. Jesus puts him in his place, urging him to focus on God's will and plans, then turns to a wider crowd and openly teaches them that a life as his disciple will involve self-denial and challenges along the way. For many people, this last year will have involved more of both than we would ever have imagined or expected.

The reward for facing our challenges, for accepting the difficult truths in our own situations and meeting them with faith and hope, is the only gain that really matters: eternal life with Christ.

The world is full of empty gains, of people who have achieved success or fame or money yet still feel incomplete and find no joy in what they have. Followers of Jesus are urged to give everything for his sake and for the gospel, without shame. Paul's message to the Romans explores God's promises to Abraham and the importance of faith and grace, as well as living in hope and trusting in God. These are testing times, but we know that Jesus walked the darkest of roads himself for our sake, strengthened and upheld by his faith in God. As we follow him, we accept that there will be difficulties on the way, but we hold on to the fundamental hope at the heart of the gospel message.

Hymn – We have a gospel to proclaim StF 418, by Edward Joseph Burns

We have a gospel to proclaim,
good news for all throughout the earth;
the gospel of a Saviour's name:
we sing his glory, tell his worth.

Tell of his birth at Bethlehem –
not in a royal house or hall,
but in a stable dark and dim,
the Word made flesh, a light for all.

Tell of his death at Calvary:
hated by those he came to save,
in lonely suffering on the cross,
for all he loved his life he gave.

Tell of that glorious Easter morn:
empty the tomb, for he was free.
He broke the power of death and hell
that we might share his victory.

Tell of his reign at God's right hand,
by all creation glorified.
He sends his Spirit on his Church
to live for him, the Lamb who died.

Now we rejoice to name him King:
Jesus is Lord of all the earth.
This gospel-message we proclaim:
we sing his glory, tell his worth.

Circles of Prayer:

Imagine that our prayers are like circles in a pond made by throwing a stone into the water. The stone drops in, breaking the surface....

We see the first circle emerge – those in our homes with us now; those who would usually be

with us in church as we worship. Members of our family and the family of God, people we know well and journey with on the road to God. We need each other, even when apart. Let's pray for each other's well-being, as fully as we know how.

The ripples spread and form a second circle. Here are the people living around our homes and churches, in the wider community – the teachers, local politicians, postal workers, checkout staff etc. our towns depend on, people we see but don't often register, let alone pray for. At present we particularly think of healthcare workers and all charities helping and supporting those in need. Who stands out for you, in this second circle? What might they need from God right now?

Imagine a third circle forming – people with a national profile, seen on TV and heard on the radio. These are often people under colossal pressure, with their every move scrutinised and difficult decisions to take: particularly, at present, relating to the Covid-19 response. So many to pray for... choose one or two now to hold up to the embrace and the mercy of God.

Ripples keep spreading until they lap against the edges of the pond. Here are the places distant to us, perhaps known only to God – the struggle of our whole creation to live up to God's glorious purposes, and the threats faced by creation itself. Everywhere, God constantly urges his world into freedom and wholeness. Let us gladly align our hearts with his as he serves and saves his world.

Lord God our Father, our prayer this day is only a stone thrown into a pool, a tiny offering of love in an ocean of need. Please take all our prayers and bring about your purposes of love, healing and hope to the very edges of the world - through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen

(Adapted from a prayer idea by John Pritchard, in 'The Second Intercessions Handbook')

Blessing:

Keep in mind those you have prayed for as you say these words from Numbers 6, v24-26:

**The Lord bless you and keep you;
the Lord make his face to shine upon you,
and be gracious to you;
the Lord lift up his countenance upon you,
and give you peace. Amen**

Prepared by Karen Edmondson