



Welcome to
All Saints
Kings Heath
Your Parish Church
in the Diocese of Birmingham

God is temptingly close

Morning Prayer: Lent I

Sunday 21st February 2021

We “gather”

*The service should flow as well with one worshipper as with more. Some words are printed plain and some **bold**. If you are on your own, you can either read all aloud, or read the plain silently and the **bold aloud**. If there are several praying together, you could share out the parts.*

Music: click on the links to hear and join in the music. Click stop at the end of each.

HYMN [Forty days and forty nights](#)

1. Forty days and forty nights
you were fasting in the wild;
forty days and forty nights,
tempted still, yet unbeguiled.
2. Sunbeams scorching all the day,
chilly dew-drops nightly shed,
prowling beasts about your way,
stones your pillow, earth your bed.
3. Let us your endurance share,
and from earthly greed abstain,
with you vigilant in prayer,
with you strong to suffer pain.
4. Then if evil on us press,
flesh or spirit to assail,
Victor in the wilderness,
help us not to swerve or fail.
5. So shall peace divine be ours;
holy gladness, pure and true:
come to us, angelic powers,
such as ministered to you.
6. Keep, O keep us, Saviour dear,
ever constant by your side,
that with you we may appear
at th’eternal Eastertide.

*(words: George Hunt Smyttan, adapted by Michael Forster;
music: Melody from 'Nürnbergisches Gesangbuch' [1676])*

We call upon God:

O Lord, open our lips
and our mouth shall proclaim your praise.

Hear our voice, O Lord, according to your faithful love,
according to your judgement give us life.

To you, O Lord, I lift up my soul.
O my God, in you I trust.

(Psalm 25:1)

We say to each other, and imagine hearing from each other all around the parish:

Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.

(1 Corinthians 1:3)

We pause, separately in our homes, but united in Christ, to offer our praise and thanksgiving, to hear and receive God's holy Word, to pray for the needs of the world, and to seek the forgiveness of our sins, that by the power of the Holy Spirit we may find new ways to serve God.

OPENING PRAYER

Blessed are you, God of compassion and mercy, to you be praise and glory for ever. In the darkness of our sin, your light breaks forth like the dawn and your healing springs up for deliverance. As we rejoice in the gift of your saving help, sustain us with your bountiful Spirit and open our lips to sing your praise. Blessed be God, Father, Son and Holy Spirit.
Blessed be God for ever.

Prayers of Penitence

The sacrifice of God is a broken spirit; a broken and contrite heart God will not despise. Let us come to the Lord who is full of compassion and acknowledge our transgressions in penitence and faith. (cf Psalm 51)

Silence

God, mired in fear of shame, we struggle to hear your affirmation.
Lord, have mercy.

God, burdened by regret, we struggle to see the promising path ahead you clear for us.
Christ, have mercy.

God, inhibited by pride, we struggle to give in to your wise instruction.
Lord, have mercy.

(responding to Psalm 25)

Silence

May the Father of all mercies cleanse us from our sins, and restore us in his image, to the praise and glory of his name, through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

The Word of God

OLD TESTAMENT READING

[Genesis 9:8-17](#) (click [here](#) for text; readings from Becky Cuthbert)

[All my soul to God I raise](#) (from PSALM 25)

1. All my soul to God I raise:
be my guardian all my days.
Confident in hope I rest,
daily prove your path is best.
Ever work in me your will,
faithful to your promise still.
2. Graciously my sins forgive;
help me by your truth to live.
In your footsteps lead me, Lord,
joy renewed and hope restored,
knowing every sin forgiven,
learning all the ways of heaven.
3. Mercies manifold extend,
not as judge but faithful friend.
O my Saviour, hear my prayer,
pluck my feet from every snare;
quietude be mine at last,
rest from all my guilty past.
4. Sheltered safe when troubles fret,
trusting God I triumph yet!
Undismayed in him I stand,
victor only by his hand.
Worship, homage, love and praise,
all my soul, to God I raise.

(words: Timothy Dudley-Smith; music: D Bortnianski)

NEW TESTAMENT READING [1 Peter 3:18-end](#) (click [here](#) for text)

HYMN [Do not be afraid](#)

*Do not be afraid, for I have redeemed you.
I have called you by your name; you are mine.*

1. When you walk through the waters, I'll be with you.
You will never sink beneath the waves.
2. When the fire is burning all around you,
you will never be consumed by the flames.
3. When the fear of loneliness is looming,
then remember I am at your side.
4. When you dwell in the exile of the stranger,
remember you are precious in my eyes.
5. You are mine, O my child, I am your Father,
and I love you with a perfect love.

(words: Gerard Markland, based on Isaiah 43:1-4; music: Gerard Markland, arr Andrew Moore)

GOSPEL READING [Mark 1:9-15](#) (click [here](#) for text)

AFFIRMATION OF FAITH

We stand, if able, and turn to look in the direction of Church, aware of our small part in God's long story of being with humankind:

**All: 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.**

We pray for the world

[INTERCESSIONS](#) led by Christopher Pietroni

The response to the bidding Creator, Redeemer, Inspirer is **Hear our prayer.**

We so often hold tight to what is familiar even when it harms us and others. We are so often unwilling to pick up the challenges and gifts you lay before us because we find them threatening.

In this season of Lent we pray for the willingness to reverse these instincts. To let go of the familiar when it is destructive and to embrace the newness and unfamiliarity of the life you call us to.

Creator, Redeemer, Inspirer

Hear our prayer

As your Church we can cling to the rituals, habits and beliefs we have become accustomed to. We turn our backs on people and ideas we find too uncomfortable to embrace or too discordant to listen to.

This Lent we pray for the willingness to let go of our preconceptions and prejudices. Give us the openness of heart to be inspired anew by the gift of your self-emptying love, and the courage to be a Church that loves as you do.

Creator, Redeemer, Inspirer

Hear our prayer

At a time when politics seems to speak the language of division, and we draw ever tighter circles around those we recognise as 'us' and those we characterise as 'them, we are dangerously prone to see value only in those we already agree with.

This Lent disturb our comfortable self-righteousness and loosen our mental grip on the certainties that prevent us from hearing others. Grant us the disruptive gift of hearing your voice in the mouths of those we would prefer to dismiss.

Creator, Redeemer, Inspirer

Hear our prayer

When we hold onto the memory of hurtful words spoken in the heat of an argument, or a wrong done to us by someone we love, the contours of our justified resentment can become their own kind of comfort. When we grip tight to our ideas about loved ones, how they should act, the choices they should make and how they should live their lives, our belief in our own rightness deepens.

This Lent gives us the grace to practice the unclenching of our hearts where we have become stuck in familiar but destructive patterns with our families and friends. Allow us to trust the unfathomable depths of your love and to know that all are held in its embrace.

Creator, Redeemer, Inspirer

Hear our prayer

At this time when illness has become pervasively familiar, we are at risk of taking it for granted. As the daily litany of infection rates, hospital admissions and vaccinations continues, help us recall with an individual freshness that each number is a person whose life touches innumerable others.

We pray in particular for Bishop Mark as he recovers from surgery and for his wife Sabine who is also in hospital.

For Rowland Cotterill as he recovers from surgery and prepares for his father's funeral.

For Iain Galloway as he recovers from surgery.

Creator, Redeemer, Inspirer

Hear our prayer

The very familiarity of the life you have given us with its joys, sorrows and daily ordinariness, can blunt our awareness of how unknowable are the wonders of the life yet to come. As we are forced to face death, our own or of those we love, the unutterably newness of what follows can seem frightening.

This Lent comfort all who mourn with the knowledge that those they love are now with You, the source and originator of love itself. Allow that strange and wonderful promise to loosen our grip on familiar fears and replace them with awe.

With gratitude for her life, we remember in our prayers Barbara Osborn who has recently died.

Creator, Redeemer, Inspirer

Hear our prayer

THE COLLECT for the First Sunday of Lent

Almighty God, whose Son Jesus Christ fasted forty days in the wilderness, and was tempted as we are, yet without sin, give us grace to discipline ourselves in obedience to your Spirit, and as you know our weakness, so may we know your power to save; through Jesus Christ your Son our Lord, who is alive and reigns with you, in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God, now and for ever. **Amen.**

THE LORD'S PRAYER *We pray with confidence as our Saviour has taught us:*

**Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your name,
your kingdom come,
your will be done on earth as in heaven.
Give us this day our daily bread
and forgive us our sins as we forgive those who sin 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 for ever.
Amen.**

ANTHEM [Lent prose](#)

*Hear us, O Lord, have mercy upon us:
for we have sinned against thee.*

1. To thee, Redeemer, on thy throne of glory:
lift we our weeping eyes in holy pleadings:
listen O Jesu, to our supplications.
2. O thou chief Cornerstone, Right Hand of the Father:
Way of Salvation, Gate of Life Celestial:
cleanse thou our sinful souls from all defilement.
3. God, we implore thee, in thy glory seated:
bow down and hearken to thy weeping children:
pity and pardon all our grievous trespasses.
4. Sins oft committed now we lay before thee:
with true contrition, now no more we veil them:
grant us, Redeemer, loving absolution.
5. Innocent, captive, taken unresisting:
falsely accused, and for us sinners sentenced,
save us, we pray thee, Jesu our Redeemer.

*(words: Anonymous, adapted by W J Birkbeck;
music: Anonymous, arr J H Arnold)*

HYMN [Christ is the world's Light](#)

1. Christ is the world's Light, he and none other:
born in our darkness, he became our Brother;
if we have seen him, we have seen the Father:
Glory to God on high.
2. Christ is the world's Peace, he and none other:
no-one can serve him and despise another;
who else unites us, one in God the Father?
Glory to God on high.

3. Christ is the world's Life, he and none other:
sold once for silver, murdered here, our Brother –
he who redeems us, reigns with God the Father:
Glory to God on high.

4. Give God the glory, God and none other;
give God the glory, Spirit, Son and Father;
give God the glory, God in Man my brother;
Glory to God on high.

*(words: Fred Pratt Green;
music: Melody from 'Paris Antiphoner' [1681])*

SERMON from David

Curtains of rain swept across the Fowey estuary most of the day. Across on the Fowey side, waves reaching in past the narrow neck of the inlet thudded against the rocks. High above an elegant Victorian esplanade stood unmoved by the surge, but windows, no doubt, rattling in the wind. Surprisingly often, sun broke through enough over the hunched hill on the East side where the village of Polruan shelters in a curve reminiscent of a child's shoulder protecting exam answers from prying eyes. Viewed from there, rainbows kept appearing, sometimes several at a time, over the river. One sat there doggedly for half an hour. Whatever the weather, that view, that inlet, holds the tender feeling of human courage and foolhardiness; of strength and vulnerability. For the inscrutable sea is so serene, then so terrifying by turns. The protective harbour stirs primeval feelings of survival, haven, danger. The narrow mouth of the estuary suggests an intimacy Freud might have something to say about, although for him probably the danger would be inside. The high elegant houses and the stocky trawlers heading out to sea are differently defiant; differently foolhardy.

The quay with quaint pub, and moored fishing boats seem benign. The remains of block house towers on either side of the estuary recall the chains pulled across to break the masts of invading ships, evoking centuries of human conflict generated as if the sea were not threat enough. To and fro in all weathers, the little orange ferry ploughs its way seriously, tiny but determined.

So when rainbows appear over that estuary, smudging the unseeing town with pride colours, all the severity and tenderness of God and the courage and foolishness of humanity is stirred to new depths.

At a time when tense negotiations over Iran's nuclear programme are demanded by superior sounding countries with their own nuclear arsenal, and as snipers pick out children in Yemeni streets, it is heart rending to picture God's bow, a weapon bent, not in aggression, but upwards to the sky, with disarmingly camp colours, an exquisite, tear jerking emblem of peace between God and creation. Like the harbour, it highlights how beautiful is human tenacity; how dismaying is human violence.

Mark seems to want us to feel that confusion; or is it elation? It's as though Mark wants us to feel alert, senses acute, expectations high. In this rapid opening chapter, he has the heavens violently torn apart, but then the Spirit of God descending with exquisite tenderness, evoking Song of Solomon where the turtle dove is the sound of God's Spirit (SoS 2:12); the Spirit in the same Wisdom tradition is also a woman embodying God's wisdom, seeking her lost children (Proverbs Ch 8). So the motherly Spirit of God affirms Jesus, the Father speaks his affirmation and declares Jesus' belonging, but then suddenly the same Spirit, with some violence, "drives" him into the wilderness. Made by Mark to expect immediate action, we find Jesus in silence, alone,

disorientated for more than a month. The same verb "drive" is the one used when Jesus drives demons out of troubled souls. In a couple of phrases, Mark has evoked the tenderness and severity of God. It is a confusion we know and feel often, quivering on a difficult cusp between feeling the world is benevolent and feeling the world is threatening.

At the same time as heightening our expectation, Mark emphasises the obscurity from which Jesus comes. While Matthew and Luke carefully trace genealogies, Mark does the opposite, John the Baptist bursting on the scene in the wilderness, Jesus coming from Nazareth and Galilee, then going into the wilderness, then Capernaum, then by the lake. It's not until Chapter 11 that he turns to the religious HQ of Jerusalem. Our expectation of God's activity in obscure places should be very, very high. But then he does mention crowds coming *from* Jerusalem to see John (1:5), then mentions John's execution horribly suddenly in passing (1:14), so in brilliant dramatisation, with hardly a mention of the powers that be, Mark keeps our eyes fixed vividly on Jesus while letting the huge shadow of deathly state powers rise, like storm clouds, in the background. From the outset, Jesus' proclamation of "good news" is against a worrying backdrop. Is it defiant or naïve? That confusion again.

The Hebrew scriptures caught our ambivalence about God so well with the rainbow, the threatening clouds still present, the irrepressible hope shining out of them with mesmerising colour. Characterising God not as sending a message to us, but reminding *himself* not to be violent is touching humour, dense with the complexities of faith, projection, self-doubt and god-doubt, human resilience and curiosity. It is a foreshadowing, no, fore-glowing of the baptism of Jesus.

Unlike Moses at the Red Sea, or Joshua, Elijah and Elisha at the Jordan, when Jesus entered the waters they did not part. He sank beneath and whooshed out again, enacting his death and resurrection. Mark says little about the baptism or the nature of the testing in the wilderness that followed, but his swift account leaves us feeling Jesus is with us. This is the Word made flesh, dwelling among us (John 1:14 and Matthew 1:23). He will attend plenty of dinners genteel enough for a Victorian Esplanade and will get caught in a storm with fishermen. But first he is sent into the wilderness alone.

In his heightened sense of belonging with God, Jesus finds himself tested by the deceiver (Satan, a heavenly figure sent to test the faithful, as in Job). He faces the bodily threat of wild beasts and receives the tender attentions of deacon-angels. In the experience of both severity and tenderness, it seems, he learns about God and about his calling. Ambivalence is a good word. Ambi-valence. We have two ways of connecting with God, as felt in the severity and the tenderness. They are both connecting.

We probably hear the phrase "good conscience" (1 Peter 3:15) as "not having done anything wrong so we don't have to worry." In fact it is about our innate way of reading the world being aligned with God. It is about being with God, or God being with us, as we behold the world. It's not so much about goodness as the togetherness with God that our Baptism enacts. Jesus, the anointed Son of God, knows how we experience God. Having him as our advocate in heaven would be no reassurance at all had he not taken the strain with us; had he not felt the confusion of tenderness and severity; had he not felt the disorientation of wondering what is right; not thirsted like us; not felt life's dissonance.

If you feel tested at the moment, it may be God is especially close to you. We must acknowledge that temptation comes from our proper ambivalence as faithful humans, not from weakness. Jesus was tempted precisely when he was full of the Holy Spirit (Luke 4:1). He was tempted because of his spiritual gifts, not in some brief moment of frailty. Temptation is about

vulnerability rather than sinfulness and the vulnerability is precisely the vulnerability which opens us to one another and to God. I know many, threatened by wild beasts of loss and physical illness, find themselves ministered to by unexpected people, their angelic presence recognised often in retrospect. We are not to be held in contempt for being tested nor for needing help. Nor should we despair. We should look up.

Against a dark grey sky, God's multi coloured bow is ready to fire upwards, firing arrows like the warrior in Psalm 127 whose arrows are his children. God's bow launches multi-coloured life upon the world, not death. If the rainbow fore-glow with the baptism of Jesus, it does also with our baptism. If Jesus is the Son of God, it is so we can all be counted children of God, launched into the world. The last entry in our Baptism register before the trials of 2020 was from 16th February when we celebrated Vicki Okoosi's baptism. Like the Samaritan woman saying to her friends "come and see" and bringing them to the well (John 4), at Vicki's invitation two or three hundred astonishingly diverse people gathered around the font. What a glow there was that day. What glory was revealed. There was someone capable of severity and tenderness. What candour about conflict. What a day of testing. It was a day that made room for faithful ambivalence and shone with irrepressible hope.

When you are tested, remember your baptism and find a place to stand from where you can see a rainbow. You can see them looking into, not away from the darkness. Feel Christ's company in testing; feel the Spirit's warmth at your back even as she seems to push you towards the testing; and in the rainbow's colours see God's pleasure in you.

HYMN [God is working his purpose out](#)

1. God is working his purpose out
as year succeeds to year.
God is working his purpose out,
and the day is drawing near.
Nearer and nearer draws the time,
the time that shall surely be,
when the earth shall be filled with the glory of God
as the waters cover the sea.
2. From the east to the utmost west
wherever foot has trod,
through the mouths of his messengers
echoes forth the voice of God:
"Listen to me, ye continents,
ye islands, give ear to me,
that the earth shall be filled with the glory of God
as the waters cover the sea."
3. How can we do the work of God,
how prosper and increase
harmony in the human race,
and the reign of perfect peace?
What can we do to urge the time,
the time that shall surely be,
when the earth shall be filled with the glory of God
as the waters cover the sea.

4. All our efforts are nothing worth
unless God bless the deed;
vain our hopes for the harvest tide
till he brings to life the seed.
Yet ever nearer draws the time,
the time that shall surely be,
when the earth shall be filled with the glory of God
as the waters cover the sea.

*(words: Arthur Campbell Ainger, adapted by Michael Forster;
music: Millicent Kingham, in 'Church Hymns' [1903])*

A closing prayer

Christ give us grace to grow in holiness, to deny ourselves, take up our cross and follow him, and the blessing of God almighty, the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit be among us and remain with us always. **Amen.**

VOLUNTARY [Emergence](#) *(composed and played by Sarah Baker)*

Common Worship: Services and Prayers for the Church of England

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Entering Lent reminds me of "Friday" by Walter Dendy Sadler (1854-1923) in the Walker Art Gallery, Liverpool.

Without buying into cheap anticlericalism, I do love this ironic swipe at supposed monastic discipline. Every Friday echoes Good Friday, so was a fast day, meaning no meat. Far from disappointed, the rotund monks are delighted at the banquet of fish,

perhaps the most lavish of the week. I recognise myself in their self indulgence.

(We also have the Benedictines to thank for the popularity of chicken in Britain. They were not allowed meat from four footed animals on many fast days so... now we have Nandos.)

Here are two recent fishy favourites, fresh bread ideal to mop up at the end of both.

Scallops

From the Venetian style "Polpo" in Covent Garden, this was a delightful surprise. It all started because I had some mint I wanted to use. The packets of herbs and salads that have travelled considerable food miles are among the more environmentally costly sludgy wastes from that bottom drawer in the fridge.

Put the juice of 1 ½ lemons, four table spoons of olive oil, a finely chopped clove of garlic, a small handful of mint leaves in a frying pan with a lid. Bring to a simmer and scatter in some sustainably sourced scallops. Put the lid on and simmer for four or five minutes, depending on their size. Scatter some salad leaves on a serving plate and put the scallops on them. Reduce the sauce rapidly for a few seconds and pour over the plate. Season with salt and plenty of pepper.

Bass with saffron potatoes and mussels (Raymond Blanc)

I cooked this in the week of the rainbows, eating it looking over the Fowey estuary.

In a wide pan with a lid, sweat a finely sliced large onion in olive oil with plenty of sliced garlic, some thyme, a bay leaf and a generous pinch of saffron until the onion is translucent. Add a pile of peeled, diced King Edward, Maris Piper or Desiree potatoes. Stir well to combine the flavours. Add just enough water to cover the potatoes and simmer them gently for ten or fifteen minutes until just soft. Scatter over a large handful of well-scrubbed live mussels and cover with a lid. Simmer rapidly for 2 minutes until the mussels open. (Discard any that don't). Season with pepper as many fillets of Bass as you have diners. (There should be enough salt in the dish from the mussels). Lay the fish over the potatoes and mussels. Cover the pan again and simmer gently for about three minutes until the fish is cooked.

It's also good with Bream or Red Mullet.

Lent Group: The Greatest Showman

The Revd Canon Rachel Mann, Parish Priest and Poet in Residence at Manchester Cathedral, is our guide for reflection on themes of redemption in this vibrant film.

*You are invited to watch the film in your own time and join Zoom discussion on Wednesday evenings **7.30pm from 24th February**.. We will finish by 8.45 in time for any wishing to share in **Compline**.*

*If you would like to take part, please email David info@davidwarbrick.co.uk and title your message **Lent Group**. You can order Rachel's book (**From now on** DLT 2019) if you wish, but can join in discussion without . Here is a link to the book: <https://blackwells.co.uk/bookshop/product/From-Now-On-by-Rachel-Mann-author/9780232533927> We have one copy of the DVD if anyone wants to borrow it. If there are too many participants, a second day will be offered.*

We use this Lent resource as the PCC negotiate with Circusmash for the use of our Church space for their high level training.

*Here's a link to the film trailer <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=AXCTMGYUg9A> **From now on** is a brilliant new Lent Course for 2019, based on the hugely popular film *The Greatest Showman*. The 2018 Golden Globe-nominated movie starring Hugh Jackman, about the founder and stars of the Barnum & Bailey Circus is ideal for Lenten study of Christian themes of hope, redemption and new life. The five-week course offers discussion points, biblical reflections and prayers based on short excerpts from the film. The themes are: (1) 'A Million Dreams', exploring what liberation and hope might look like for an 'outsider' in the world; (2) 'Come Alive', exploring how the family of faith can bring hope and purpose; (3) 'Rewrite the stars', asks what forms of resistance can be placed in the way of salvation; (4) 'Never Enough', questions the temptations of false fulfilment that can lead us to betrayal; (5) 'The Greatest Show', shows how redemption is found when we discover 'the circus is our home'.*