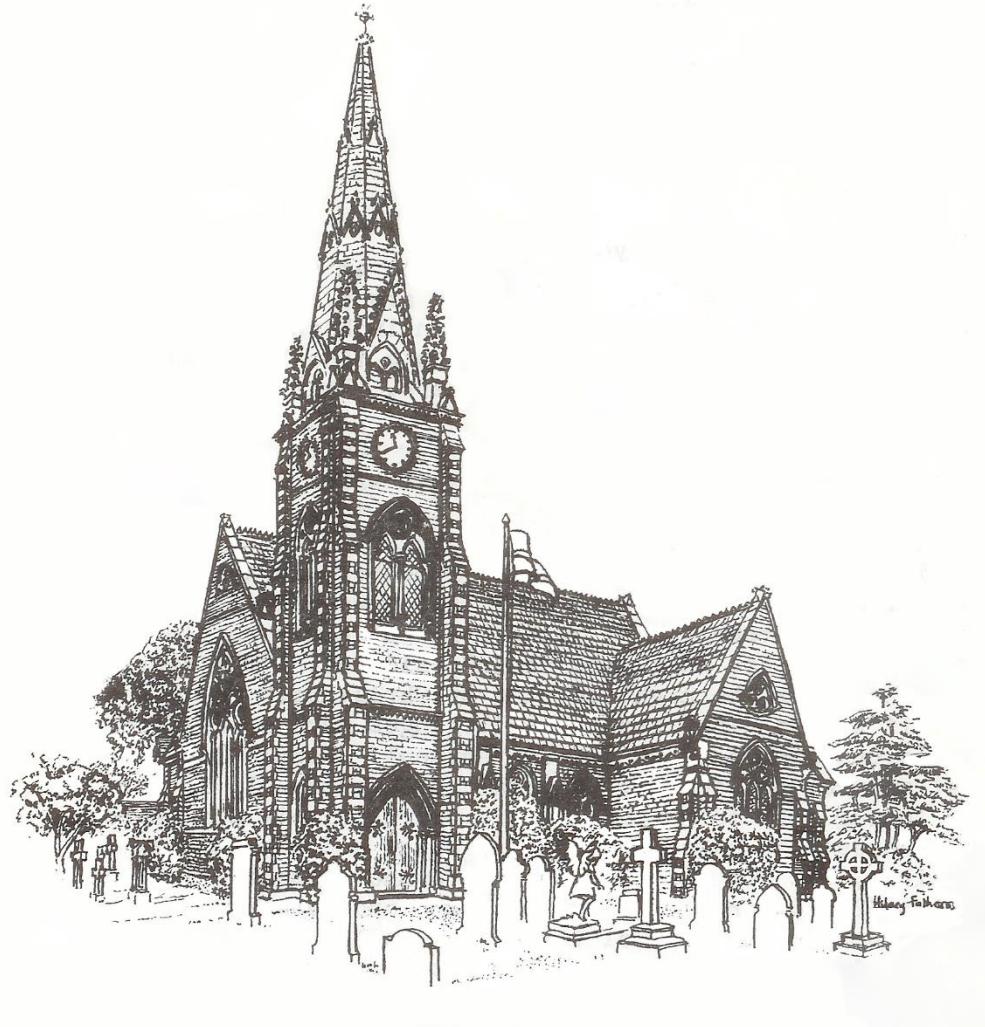


All Saints' Church Thornton Hough



**Morning Prayer
The Transfiguration / Sunday before Lent
Sunday 14th February 2021
Online (from 10:30am)**

Welcome

The Lord be with you
and also with you.

The Mighty One, God, the Lord,
speaks and summons the earth
from the rising of the sun to the place where it sets.
From Zion, perfect in beauty,
God shines forth. (Psalm 50: 1-2)

Hymn: Christ whose glory fills the skies

- 1 Christ, whose glory fills the skies,
 Christ, the true, the only light,
 Sun of Righteousness, arise,
 triumph o'er the shades of night;
Dayspring from on high, be near;
Daystar, in my heart appear.
- 2 Dark and cheerless is the morn
 unaccompanied by thee;
joyless is the day's return,
 till thy mercy's beams I see,
till they inward light impart,
glad my eyes, and warm my heart.
- 3 Visit then this soul of mine,
 pierce the gloom of sin and grief;
fill me, radiancy divine,
 scatter all my unbelief;
more and more thyself display,
shining to the perfect day.

Charles Wesley (1707–1788)

Confession

When the Lord comes,
he will bring to light the things now hidden in darkness,
and will disclose the purposes of the heart.
Therefore in the light of Christ let us confess our sins.

God be gracious to us and bless us,
and make your face shine upon us:
Lord, have mercy.

Lord, have mercy.

May your ways be known on the earth,
your saving power among the nations:
Christ, have mercy.

Christ, have mercy.

You, Lord, have made known your salvation
and reveal your justice in the sight of the nations.

Lord, have mercy.

Lord, have mercy.

Absolution

May almighty God,
who sent his Son into the world to save sinners,
bring you his pardon and peace, now and for ever.

Amen.

Bible readings

2 Kings 2: 1-12

Elijah taken up to heaven

When the Lord was about to take Elijah up to heaven in a whirlwind, Elijah and Elisha were on their way from Gilgal. Elijah said to Elisha, ‘Stay here; the Lord has sent me to Bethel.’

But Elisha said, ‘As surely as the Lord lives and as you live, I will not leave you.’ So they went down to Bethel.

The company of the prophets at Bethel came out to Elisha and asked, ‘Do you know that the Lord is going to take your master from you today?’

‘Yes, I know,’ Elisha replied, ‘so be quiet.’

Then Elijah said to him, ‘Stay here, Elisha; the Lord has sent me to Jericho.’

And he replied, ‘As surely as the Lord lives and as you live, I will not leave you.’ So they went to Jericho.

The company of the prophets at Jericho went up to Elisha and asked him, ‘Do you know that the Lord is going to take your master from you today?’

‘Yes, I know,’ he replied, ‘so be quiet.’

Then Elijah said to him, ‘Stay here; the Lord has sent me to the Jordan.’

And he replied, ‘As surely as the Lord lives and as you live, I will not leave you.’ So the two of them walked on.

Fifty men from the company of the prophets went and stood at a distance, facing the place where Elijah and Elisha had stopped at the Jordan. Elijah took

his cloak, rolled it up and struck the water with it. The water divided to the right and to the left, and the two of them crossed over on dry ground.

When they had crossed, Elijah said to Elisha, ‘Tell me, what can I do for you before I am taken from you?’

‘Let me inherit a double portion of your spirit,’ Elisha replied.

‘You have asked a difficult thing,’ Elijah said, ‘yet if you see me when I am taken from you, it will be yours – otherwise, it will not.’

As they were walking along and talking together, suddenly a chariot of fire and horses of fire appeared and separated the two of them, and Elijah went up to heaven in a whirlwind. Elisha saw this and cried out, ‘My father! My father! The chariots and horsemen of Israel!’ And Elisha saw him no more. Then he took hold of his garment and tore it in two.

Mark 9: 2-9

The Transfiguration

After six days Jesus took Peter, James and John with him and led them up a high mountain, where they were all alone. There he was transfigured before them. His clothes became dazzling white, whiter than anyone in the world could bleach them. And there appeared before them Elijah and Moses, who were talking with Jesus.

Peter said to Jesus, ‘Rabbi, it is good for us to be here. Let us put up three shelters – one for you, one for Moses and one for Elijah. (He did not know what to say, they were so frightened.)

Then a cloud appeared and covered them, and a voice came from the cloud: ‘This is my Son, whom I love. Listen to him!’

Suddenly, when they looked around, they no longer saw anyone with them except Jesus.

As they were coming down the mountain, Jesus gave them orders not to tell anyone what they had seen until the Son of Man had risen from the dead.

Reflection: Transfiguration: Glory in the Ordinary

I love our stained-glass windows at All Saints’ Church. They tell so many stories. However, on a very dull day, they can look rather flat and one-dimensional, as if the stories are being conveyed in the most basic of language, in terms of the baldest of facts and figures. The figures are waxen, the flowers, animals and birds look like paper cut-outs, trapped in their leaded frames.

But with only a tiny bit of sunlight, something special happens. The scenes become aglow with life. Bright splodges of colour, as if a child has been allowed to run wild with paint-pots, erupt and bloom on the walls and spill over the pews and along the floor, the light shining through the pictures becoming

reflected and refracted in myriads of ways. Not only does the glass itself come to life, but it transforms our church into a glorious kaleidoscope.

We don't always see the colours washing round the walls when we come into church, but once you know that this is what happens, you can anticipate that there will be a moment when the sun will come through the gloom; this dullness will pass.

What were Peter, James and John expecting when they followed Jesus up the high mountain, possibly walking a few steps in his wake, wrestling over his shocking prediction in the previous week that "he must be killed and after three days rise again", Peter still nursing the stinging rebuke of being likened to "Satan" as he tried to argue him out of this awful vision? The day would feel very gloomy indeed.

They had a lovely picture of Jesus in their minds: the great teacher, healer and their friend. Yet their picture was simple, one-dimensional. And now that picture was under threat.

What happens when they were on that mountain and saw Jesus conversing with Elijah and Moses takes that simple picture of Jesus and throws dazzling light upon it.

Jesus is Lord: as he talks with Elijah the prophet and Moses the lawgiver, he shows that he is the fulfilment of both all prophecy and the law. The voice of God the Father peals out in affirmation: "This is my Son, whom I love. Listen to him."

In that moment, heaven and earth come together. It is a dazzling vision, one which is both awesome and awful. It stops the disciples in their tracks, and it points to the fact that Jesus' prophecy that he will die and rise again is true. Elijah and Moses, the embodiments of prophecy and of law, and the voice of God himself all point to its truth.

As the disciples make their way back down the mountain, they can't unsee that vision they had at the summit. It is a reminder that Jesus' glory is always present, even though we may not always see it.

We have come to the last Sunday before we begin our journey through Lent. It is a searching journey, and can be very lean and harsh at times. Our days at present may feel like a repetitive slog, an uphill climb with no summit in sight, and uncertain footing beneath us.

Yet even in these straitened times, God's glory keeps creeping in. There is beauty around us, there are blessings in the kindness of others, answered

prayers and a peace in which heaven and earth touch, and moments when our lives are suffused with splashes of light and grace.

We are more likely to find those moments if we obey God's call to listen to his beloved Son. Jesus led his friends to be with him to pray, to listen. Lent is a time when we too can be led to pray, to find those moments when heaven and earth meet and transform us. Even if the journey is a hard slog at times, let's develop a habit of prayer and reflection this Lent.

The Apostles' Creed

*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.

Intercessions

Come, Lord of light, transfigure us,
increase our vision and reveal to us your glory.

May your Church seek to transform our darkest places with your light.

We pray for the mission and outreach of your whole church, and our place in it; that we would seek out the lost, the forgotten, the hurting, the poor and rejected.

We remember our Bishops: for Bishop Mark, for Bishop Keith as he prepares for his retirement and his new calling, for those whom you will draw as Bishops of Birkenhead and Stockport.

Come, Lord of light, transfigure our communities,
for those places wracked and rocked by the impact of Coronavirus,
for families who are struggling to provide food,
for schools educating children through different modes of learning;
for those who feel cut off from families, society, education and
opportunity; those drawn into crime, addiction and risk.

Come, Lord of light, transfigure our hospitals and care homes,
for all engaged in making these places safe, clean and welcoming.
We pray for those waiting for procedures, for diagnoses which may
be life-changing. For those who are in need of counselling and
guidance.

Come, Lord of light, transfigure our homes,
may they be places of welcome and safety. We pray for those who
are without a safe home; who are at risk of losing their home.
For those who are in refugee camps, living with fear and uncertainty.

We thank you for all who have passed beyond death and who have
been transformed in your glorious kingdom. We pray for the families
and friends of those who are left here to mourn, and ask that you
would transform their grief into comfort and peace.

The Collect for the Sunday next before Lent

Almighty Father,
whose Son was revealed in majesty before he suffered death upon
the cross;
give us grace to perceive his glory,
that we may be strengthened to suffer with him
and be changed into his likeness, from glory to glory;
who is alive and reigns with you,
in the unity of the Holy Spirit,
one God, now and for ever.

Amen.

Let us pray with confidence as our Saviour has taught us:

*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: 'Tis good, Lord, to be here

- 1 'Tis good, Lord, to be here,
 thy glory fills the night;
 thy face and garments, like the sun,
 shine with unborrowed light.
- 2 'Tis good, Lord, to be here,
 thy beauty to behold,
 where Moses and Elijah stand,
 thy messengers of old.
- 3 Fulfiller of the past,
 promise of things to be,
 we hail thy body glorified,
 and our redemption see.
- 4 Before we taste of death,
 we see thy kingdom come;
 we fain would hold the vision bright,
 and make this hill our home.
- 5 'Tis good, Lord, to be here,
 yet we may not remain;
 but since thou bidst us leave the mount,
 come with us to the plain.

Joseph Armitage Robinson (1858–1933)

The Grace

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

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