

Sunday March 20th 2022: Third Sunday in Lent

For use by the Central Norfolk Circuit at 10.30 am or other suitable time.

Today is the equivalent Sunday of the first Sunday in Lockdown 2 years ago. This is the 105th Worship at Home sheet as we begin the 3rd year of this way of worship in company with others.



A Methodist Prayer for 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 for 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. Lord have mercy. Amen



Hymn StF 693 MP 806

Beauty for broken-ness / hope for despair / Lord, in your suffering world / this is our prayer.

Bread for the children / justice, joy, peace / sunrise to sunset / your kingdom increase!

Shelter for fragile lives / cures for their ills / work for all people / trade for their skills;

land for the dispossessed / rights for the weak / voices to plead the cause / of those who can't speak.

*God of the poor / friend of the weak / give us compassion we pray: melt our cold hearts,
let tears fall like rain / come, change our love / from a spark to a flame.*

Refuge from cruel wars / havens from fear / cities for sanctuary / freedoms to share.

Peace to the killing-fields / scorched earth to green / Christ for the bitterness / his cross for the pain.

Lighten our darkness / breathe on this flame / until your justice / burns brightly again;

until the nations / learn of your ways / seek your salvation / and bring you their praise.

God of the poor...

Graham Kendrick (b 1950) CCL no. 5365402

To think about

Pippa Cook, in her reflection, refers to all four of the following readings. Read at least two of them and think about what connects them...

Psalm set for today: Psalm 63 v 1 – 8

Old Testament reading set for today: Isaiah 55 v 1 – 9

Epistle reading set for today: 1 Corinthians 10 v 1 – 13

Hymn StF 628 MP 825

Faithful One, so unchanging / Ageless One, you're my rock of peace.

Lord of all I depend on you / I call out to you again and again / I call out to you again and again.

You are my rock in times of trouble / you lift me up when I fall down.

All through the storm your love is the anchor / my hope is in you alone.

Brian Doerksen (b 1965) CCL no. 5365402

Gospel reading set for today: Luke 13 v 1 – 9

Message from a Circuit friend

I believe it was at the turn of the century that the Revised Common Lectionary came into being, and every three years the readings are repeated. The set readings for today, however, seem particularly relevant to the days we are living in now. Psalm 63, thought to have been written by David in the desert of Judah, brings to mind the people of the besieged cities of Ukraine who are being denied water and essential supplies. Isaiah offers water to those who are thirsty, and adds the promise that foreign nations will come to the aid of His people. He also points out that we cannot always understand what God is doing or why. Jesus, in Luke's gospel, says that we cannot assume that disasters are God's judgement on those who are most wicked.

Paul, writing to the Christians in Corinth, warns that just belonging to a nation does not guarantee any privileges, it is our behaviour in response to Christ, which brings us salvation.

If we were in a situation where our home was being destroyed and we needed to shelter in an underground bunker, if our country was invaded and we needed to escape to another one, would we be able to praise God for His constant love? Would we remember that God's hand would always keep us safe? If we were cold and hungry and far from home in those foreign lands, would we be confident that God is not judging us, or that He will judge our enemies?

In this period of Lent we are made aware of our need to give for those who have lost so much and our need to pray for peace in the world and in the lives of individuals.

Pippa Cook (Local Preacher and member of Stibbard Methodist Church)

Prayers of Intercession

Hold before God all your concerns for the world, your community, your family and friends.

A prayer marking 2 years since the first lockdown:

Loving God, we think about the last 2 years of lockdowns, restrictions, and periods of isolation. We reflect on the ways in which our lives have changed.

We remember those who have died of the virus and suffered in other ways.

We give thanks for the NHS, Social Care, Volunteers, Neighbourly support and action, and the Vaccination programme that has allowed us to return to some sort of normality.

We give thanks too for modern technology, for worship online, for worship on paper, for all the ways in which we have been enabled to continue as Christian communities and churches.

We pray for those throughout the world who continue to suffer because of covid-19 and for all those who work, in any way, to counter its spread and its effects.

In the name of Jesus Christ, we pray, Amen.

Offer to God your offertory for the week, and say the Lord's Prayer...

Hymn StF 696 H&P 402 (*if you don't know the tune, sing to 'Praise my soul, the King of heaven'*)

For the healing of the nations / Lord we pray with one accord;

for a just and equal sharing / of the things that earth affords.

To a life of love in action / help us rise and pledge our word.

Lead us forward into freedom / from despair your world release,

that, redeemed from war and hatred / all may come and go in peace.

Show us how through care and goodness / fear will die and hope increase.

You, Creator-God, have written / your great name on humankind;

for our growing in your likeness / bring the life of Christ to mind;

that by our response and service / earth its destiny may find.

Fred Kaan (1929 – 2009) CCL no. 5365402

May the blessing of God: Father, Son and Holy Spirit be with us, and all those we love, this day and always, Amen.