

Sunday 9th March 2025: First Sunday in Lent

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

Theme for today is "What kind of God?"



Lent liturgy

Give us this day our daily bread to feed our soul.

We don't need distractions of a glitzy package, a brown paper bag does just fine.

Give us this day our daily bread to feed our soul.

To nourish our minds and warm our hearts, to enrich our faith, our belief, our life...

Give us this day our daily bread to feed our soul.

Let us never forget you are our God, the giver of love and joy and hope.

O Lord our God, on this Lenten journey, feed our souls this day we pray. Amen.

Hymn StF 470 Lord, for the years your love has kept and guided.

Our Lord Jesus Christ said: 'The first commandment is, "Hear, O Israel: The Lord our God, the Lord is one; you shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your mind, and with all your strength."

The second is this, "You shall love your neighbour as yourself." There is no other commandment greater than these.' 'I give you a new commandment, that you love one another. Just as I have loved you, you also should love one another.'

Amen. Lord, have mercy.

Prayer:

Lord, you are steadfast in your love and infinite in your mercy; you welcome sinners and invite them to be your guests. We confess our sins, trusting in you to forgive us.

Silence

We have yielded to temptation and sinned: Lord, have mercy.

We have turned from our neighbours in their need: Christ, have mercy.

We have resisted your word in our hearts: Lord, have mercy.

May almighty God have mercy on us, forgive us our sins, and keep us in life eternal.

Amen.

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 our Lord. **Amen.**

Hymn StF 459 H&P 62 Captain of Israel's host

Introduction:

I confess to being quite shocked by the behaviour of some of our world leaders today. Their role is played out in front of cameras and is jettisoned around the world via social media in seconds. I was deeply concerned by the disgusting televised conversation between President Trump, Vice President Vance and President Zelenskyy of Ukraine. If this is our best attempt at finding a peaceful end to the war between Russia and Ukraine, then I become deeply concerned. This example of playing to the media was just another example of the constant craving for supremacy among some of our world leaders and their actions scare me.

On this first Sunday in Lent our Bible readings focus on our understanding of the power and authority of God and his mission for the world in the 21st century, our readings from Deuteronomy and Romans reflects on our worshipful relationship with God. Please reflect on this as you read.

Bible readings: Deuteronomy 26: 1-11 Romans 10: 8-13 Luke 4: 1-13

Reflection *brought to us Rev Derek Grimshaw*

I can never read about the temptation of Jesus without thinking about the enormous task that rests on his shoulders. The mission of God has been throughout scripture to lead his people back to the perfect life in the perfect world he had created. The problem is that throughout generations, human beings have sought to BE God rather than WORSHIPPING God, they want to be in charge, they want to be worshipped, they want to be top dog.

God has come into the world in the form of a baby and, while still a young man aged around thirty years, Jesus is about to embark on an intense period of ministry, aimed at demonstrating the love of God as the central route back to that perfect world, where people can live in peace. After being baptised by John in the Jordan, Jesus is led into the wilderness where he wrestles with the devil.

I feel that what is happening here is Jesus weighing up the options of how he might win the people over and encourage them to follow him. God in the Old Testament has done this through amazing signs and wonders and the devil lays before him three options.

1. Simply give the people what they want. Jesus has power over the forces of nature, feed the bellies of the people and they will be like putty in your hands, be everybody's mate and they will love you. But Jesus reasons that this is a shallow approach and man can't simply live by bread alone, there is much more to the work than this.
2. Join forces with the devil. The devil knows that the people will always follow him, and the idea seems to be to sell out on the mission, to side with the devil and as mates concentrate on their own egos and encourage others to do the same, that is how to get people on your side. But Jesus says "no" he is here to serve God's mission, not the mission of the devil.
3. He could demonstrate some impressive stunts, showing how God will protect him and keep him safe, thus promoting the idea that God will always protect his people no matter how reckless they might be and armed with this knowledge they will follow Jesus. But Jesus reasons that scripture says do not put the Lord to the test.

In the twenty-first century we must ask ourselves

- What kind of leaders do we want in the world?
- What kind of God do we want to worship?
- What kind of people do we believe he wants us to be?

Hymn: StF 343

All of my days I will sing this song of gladness

Prayers of Intercession:

Let us pray for the Church of God throughout the world.

Lord, hear us. Lord, graciously hear us.

Let us pray for those who have power and influence and for all who govern the nations,

Lord, hear us. Lord, graciously hear us.

Let us pray for the powerless, for all victims of famine and war, and for all who strive for justice and peace,

Lord, hear us. Lord, graciously hear us.

Let us pray for the afflicted and sorrowful and for all who need our prayers,

Lord, hear us. Lord, graciously hear us.

Let us remember before God those who have passed from this life in faith and obedience,

Lord, hear us. Lord, graciously hear us.

Eternal God, through the self-offering of your Son you have filled our lives with your presence.

Help us in our sufferings and trials and strengthen us in our weakness;

through Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

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

Hymn: 357 StF 264 H&P

Jesus the name high over all

Closing blessing –

The God of all grace who has called us to eternal glory in Christ, make us perfect, confirming and strengthening us; and to him be the power for ever and ever.

Amen.