



*First*  
SUNDAY  
IN  
LENT

**Worship at Home**

**21 February 2021**

**Opening Call To Worship**

As surely as the seasons unfold  
And spring follows winter,  
So sure is your steadfast love, O God.  
As rivers, released from icy bondage  
Leap joyously to the sea,  
So melt our cold hearts that we may worship you.

**Opening Prayer**

God, Creator of every landscape  
who shapes on the earth gardens lush and green  
who hollows out of rock the desert scrubland  
who sets the seas in their mighty depths  
who sends the ice to carve out mountains –You we worship  
God, creator of life above and below  
who sends rain to water the field  
who placed sun and moon in their heights to lighten the world  
Your mystery and wonder have captured the eyes of our souls.  
Our senses are stirred to see and touch the works of Your hand.  
God, creator of love and relationship  
who lights the cloud with the rainbow's arc  
who promises after the rain a day washed new  
It is a balm to come to you and know you are present with us.  
We bring you our secret thoughts,  
our saddest discouragements, our noblest dreams  
And find you here to listen, to forgive and to renew us.  
We do confess our reluctance to understand your will  
And our hesitancy to act upon it.  
We are sometimes quick to blame others  
And slow to accept responsibility.  
We wish for signs of your power even while we take for granted  
All the gifts of beauty and love which surround us.



It is with great sadness that  
we have to intimate the death  
of  
Alastair Hardie at  
Findlay House on Saturday  
13 February

Alastair's funeral will take  
place in the Kirk Graveyard on  
Friday 19 March  
at 11.00 am

Please pray for the family

In times of uncertainty we desire some guarantee of your favour  
And at the same time  
We shudder to think about the suffering of the cross  
And all that you have done for us and for the salvation of our world.  
Loving God restore our minds and hearts by the power of your Spirit  
Grant us faith to perceive the good things that you are doing  
How your light still overcomes evil  
And your presence brings us solitude and peace.  
We ask that you would hear us now as we share the prayer that Jesus, Your son, Our saviour and Lord taught us to pray.

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 debts, as we forgive our debtors.  
Lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil.  
For thine is the kingdom, the power, and the glory, for ever.

Amen.

#### **Matthew 4: 1-11—Jesus Is Tested in the Wilderness**

Then Jesus was led by the Spirit into the wilderness to be tempted by the devil. After fasting forty days and forty nights, he was hungry. The tempter came to him and said, “If you are the Son of God, tell these stones to become bread.”

Jesus answered, “It is written: ‘Man shall not live on bread alone, but on every word that comes from the mouth of God.’”



Then the devil took him to the holy city and had him stand on the highest point of the temple. “If you are the Son of God,” he said, “throw yourself down. For it is written:

“‘He will command his angels concerning you, and they will lift you up in their hands, so that you will not strike your foot against a stone.’”

Jesus answered him, “It is also written: ‘Do not put the Lord your God to the test.’”

Again, the devil took him to a very high mountain and showed him all the kingdoms of the world and their splendour. “All this I will give you,” he said, “if you will bow down and worship me.”

Jesus said to him, “Away from me, Satan! For it is written: ‘Worship the Lord your God, and serve him only.’”

Then the devil left him, and angels came and attended him.

### **Meditation: A very reasonable Man**

In modern times we listen to the story of Jesus being tempted by the devil in the desert, but we find it hard to imagine the idea of a personalised devil for ourselves. In ancient times people used all sorts of images to create a caricature of the devil’s features. In the ancient world Hades was the brother of Zeus who was God of the underworld. . . Sometimes the devil was described as a multi-headed beast, as in the mythological ‘Cerberus’ dog or a snake-like the ‘Hydra’ -or the serpent in the Garden of Eden. Sometimes we hear of the Devil as a fallen angel called Lucifer. CS Lewis wrote fictional stories in which the senior devil Screwtape was writing to his nephew Wormwood. JK Rowling has given us the vivid image of a life-sucking, evil plotting, malevolent devil in the character of Voldemort.

Whilst the idea of a devil perplexes us, it is easier to escape to jokes or cartoons. We also imagine the red-horned cartoon devil fighting with the angel in the Oor Wullie or Simpsons cartoons.

There is a story of two chimney sweeps who were working out in a rural area one weekend and on the Saturday night, rather than going all the way home they saw an inviting barn so they climbed up into the rafters, faces all blackened from their hard day's work and tried to sleep. There were lots of old items and tools but they cleared a place in the hay and soon slept. However they did not know that this barn was used on Sunday mornings by a group of fiery evangelical Christians and their very loud preacher. The chimney sweeps were awoken by loud singing and shouty preaching condemning everyone for their sins before the end time. One chimney sweep looked around him, grabbed a battered old trumpet and lifting a latch, peered down with his dirty face and blew the trumpet as hard as he could. Everyone fled apart from one older lady who looked pleadingly up and said, "Please Mr Devil, don't hurt me, I am not a regular attender here!".

We don't know and cannot really imagine what the devil looked like when he sought to tempt Jesus, but the dialogue makes him seem very pleasing and persuasive, attractive and seductive in his temptations. He was a handsome devil- not asking Jesus to steal or murder anyone, but his suggestions (temptations) were appealingly good and entirely reasonable.

First this devil tempted Jesus to turn stones to bread. The devil knew that Jesus was famished after fasting for so long and so he suggests, "If you are the Son of God, Command those stones to become loaves of bread." Notice the goading tone . . . If you are the Son of God. . . Truly in the desert there were many small rocks on the ground and they could look very much like bread to a starving soul. Considering not only his own hunger, but the hunger of thousands of men women and children in the world, this would be a very attractive offer. But Jesus knows that it is really just a false bribe, an attempt to weaken him and deter him from his real spiritual calling. And so he counter-punched the devil with scripture, "Man does not live by bread alone but by every word that comes from the mouth of God."

We look at the second temptation. This time, the devil took Jesus to the pinnacle of the temple, saying, "If you are the son of God, throw yourself down." What a shrewd, subtle suggestion. Angels would surely rescue the very Son of God. In his weakened state, Jesus might have surrendered—such a leap of faith would be the talk of the city in Jerusalem and would mean instant fame. But in his heart Jesus knew that such sensationalism would compromise his mission as the Son of God. Almost defiantly, Jesus again quotes scripture to the devil: "You shall not tempt the Lord your God."

Undeterred, the crafty devil offers a third attractive choice. He showed Jesus all the kingdoms of the world and promised, "all these I will give you if you fall down and worship me!" If Jesus would give into this temptation, he could bypass his suffering and death upon the cross. This could be a short cut—a life without pain, where he could seize power. What a cunning idea and yet a third time, Jesus wins a final blow by relying on the strength and the power of scripture—the very Word of God.

In the Harry Potter books, Harry and Hermione learn spells to ward off evil. But it is a very important message to us that Jesus does not need magic. He relies on the power of God's Word to defeat the enemy, to resist the devil and keep him in his place.

At the start of Lent, perhaps one strong reminder of this passage is to centre our lives in Lockdown by focusing on the power of scripture—and how scripture helps us in daily life. I came across a statistic that 87 percent of Christians said they own a bible, but only 35 percent of them said they used it in their daily walk with God.

It is clear in our gospels that Jesus not only read scripture, he memorised it, prayed it, lived it and it anchored his life. He was able to quote scripture and it shaped his views—in fact his whole mission was centred in the words of the Prophets and elders before him who had been faithful to God. Sometimes Jesus would challenge the Pharisees and the lawyers because he knew that they were NOT being faithful to scripture. This landed him in hot water when he overthrew the tables of the corrupt money lenders in the temple and quoted from Isaiah 56 verse 7, "My house shall be called a house of prayer." And lamented, "But you have made it a den of thieves."

In his book, "The Walk", Adam Hamilton talks about his sweet dog Mabelle. "At night, before bed", he writes, "I let her out one last time. Usually she comes right back. But sometimes there are coyotes howling in the distance and her ears perk up. She is hearing the call of the wild and clearly wants to run with the pack of wild things.

I say to her, 'Come on, let's go inside but her head turns toward the coyotes. Usually the offer of a treat will get her heading to the door, but sometimes the call of the wild is too great and she runs full tilt towards the howls in the distance and I run after her, hoping to save her from being eaten by coyotes.'" "Like Maybelle", he writes, "we all hear voices aside from our Master which beckon us; voices which may be alluring, yet like the coyotes, sometimes those voices are also the sound of beasts that would actually devour us."

If, during Lent, we seek to follow Jesus and walk with him on his journey to Jerusalem and ultimately the cross, the story of Jesus' temptation in the wilderness is a real encouragement to take our Lenten Lockdown Life and reinvigorate our relationship with God through His word in scripture. Simple verses carried in our hearts can be all we need to stay focused or positive, to sense God's spirit within and to defend us from any negative or alluring distractions.

The Word of God in scripture is like armour for everyday life to help us live faithfully and to help us to hear God speaking to us, keeping us on the path. A minister friend in London used to say that daily prayer and scripture is like a cordon sanitaire. In French that is like a barrier to keep all the bad germs or unhealthy things out.

In Saint Paul's second letter to Timothy, he writes, "you have known the sacred writings that are able to instruct you for salvation through faith in Christ Jesus. All scripture is inspired by God and useful for teaching, for reproof, for correction, and for training in righteousness, so that everyone who belongs to God may be proficient, equipped for every good work." 2 Timothy 3:15-17.

To finish, here is a prayer from the Iona Community.

Lord Jesus Christ,  
you refused to turn stones into bread,  
Save us from using our power,  
however little,  
to satisfy the demands of selfishness  
in the face of the needs of others.

Lord Jesus Christ,  
you refused to leap from the temple top.  
Save us from displaying our skills,  
however modest,  
to win instant popularity  
in the face of nobler calls on our abilities.

Lord Jesus Christ,  
you refused to bend the knee to a false god.  
Save us from offering our devotion,  
however weak,  
to cheap or easy religion  
in the face of the harder path  
on which you bid us to follow you.

Saviour of the World,  
You saw Satan masquerading as an angel of light  
and shunned him.  
Give us wisdom  
to discern behind each subtle temptation  
the ploy of the prince of darkness;  
and in the face of all that is hellishly attractive,  
help us to choose the will of God. Amen

## Closing Prayer

God, In Jesus you have entered into the world's wilderness and ventured into the dark and thorny places the forbidden and forbidding places the hot and the hungry please and therefore you have heard the cries of the starving, the agonies of the uprooted and nationless.

Here us as we hold out to you our prayers for all those children of the wilderness who are desperate in their struggles

Give us compassion like yours

Disturb our comfort

Disturb our governments until they respond so that for those who are powerless, exiled and downtrodden, for those who are grief stricken, ill or depressed the forty days and forty nights of wilderness may be over. and all may have the gifts you give to life water, bread, health, shelter and peace. AMEN.

Amen

### Lenten Studies

Easter will be holding a series of Lenten Studies starting this **Wednesday 24 February at 1pm**. Each session should last about an hour and will be conducted via zoom. If you are interested in taking part, please email

Louise:

[elf.lamont@blueyonder.co.uk](mailto:elf.lamont@blueyonder.co.uk)

by Tuesday morning and she will send you the link.



## Currie Kirk Guild

Thankfully the snow has disappeared and we have been having blue skies and sunshine instead. I managed to get to the foodbank on Tuesday and delivered food for packed lunches as well as £275 in cash. Many thanks to all of you who have contributed to this very worthwhile cause.

On Tuesday we also had a semi informal meeting. Due to no speaker, I regaled everyone with a short quiz – nobody had to reveal their score to protect the innocent.

This Tuesday we will be holding another informal coffee/tea and chat session starting at 11am so please join us if you wish.

Take care and look after each other.

Louise Lamont Guild President

Sunday Club is taking place on Zoom this term. Fortnightly beginning on Sunday 24th January at 4.30pm. We'll have a Bible story, games and activities together for around 45 minutes. If your child would like to join in then contact Heather at [familyworker\\_jvp@outlook.com](mailto:familyworker_jvp@outlook.com) for details.



## **Kirk Contacts**

Minister: Rev Dr Easter Smart—Tel: 449 4719 email: [esmart@churchofscotland.org.uk](mailto:esmart@churchofscotland.org.uk)

Session Clerk: Hamish Leal—Tel: 449 3288 email: [hamish@hamishleal.co.uk](mailto:hamish@hamishleal.co.uk)

Family worker: Heather Merriman email: [Familyworker\\_JVP@outlook.com](mailto:Familyworker_JVP@outlook.com)

Please get in touch with Nina at the Kirk Office—451 5141

email [currie\\_kirk@btconnect.com](mailto:currie_kirk@btconnect.com) if you need anything.

We have friends willing to listen, shop, walk a dog, fix a garden.

Website: [//www.curriekirk.org/](http://www.curriekirk.org/) or [//www.facebook.com/CurrieKirk/](https://www.facebook.com/CurrieKirk/)

All sermons from Currie Kirk can be found on the Kirk's website and on YouTube—search Currie Kirk

## Jesus is tempted

These resources are designed to help you explore the Bible as a family together at home while we can't go to church. Be as creative as you want to be and enjoy spending time with each other and with God.

### Prepare yourself...

Come together to be God's people.  
Come together and be yourselves.  
Bring to God your joys and your struggles.  
Bring to God your hopes and your fears.  
Come together to be God's people,  
and let us worship the living God.  
Amen.



### Question...



What has been good about this week?  
What has been difficult?

### Challenge...

Use playdoh to make models of things you would need to survive in the desert.  
If you don't have playdoh just chat or draw.



### Read the Bible...

Today's verses are found in Matthew 4:1-11. You can read them in a Bible or find them here.  
You could try reading the verses in different versions to see if it adds to your understanding of the passage.

Here's a video of the story too: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=mc-x4qKY6Wc>

## Talk together...



- \* What is temptation?
- \* What are some things you (or people) are tempted by?
- \* What did the devil try to tempt Jesus with?
- \* I wonder why this was an important experience for Jesus?
- \* What can encourage us from this story?
- \* What situations do you find difficult?
- \* Can you think of any promises from God that might help us when we're struggling?
- \* What else could help us when we're being tempted?
- \* Do you know any Bible verses by heart? If so, share them and tell why they're important to you.

## Play together...

Have a tug of war competition.

After the game talk about what it's like to be pulled in two directions.

That's a bit like what temptation is, being pulled in the direction of right or wrong.

Even Jesus was tempted, but he knew to rely on God to help him to do what was right.

## Pray together...

Speak this prayer over each other:

**Go in the knowledge that you are cherished by the God who made you and rejoice, in Jesus' name. Amen.**

## Do something...

Write a note of encouragement for someone you know and give it to them. Perhaps even share a Bible verse that is important to you.

## Make something...

One of the challenges when we face when things are hard is remembering that God is with us. Take some time to make a bracelet out of thread or cord. When completed put it round your wrist and use it as a reminder that God is always with you no matter what. Every time you notice it this week say a quick prayer to God about what's going on – a thank you for something good, help if it's needed, courage to be brave etc. Here are step by step instructions for some simple bracelets: <https://craftjam.co/blog/how-to-make-friendship-bracelets>



## Praise together...



[Our God is a great big God](#)  
[Stand firm](#)