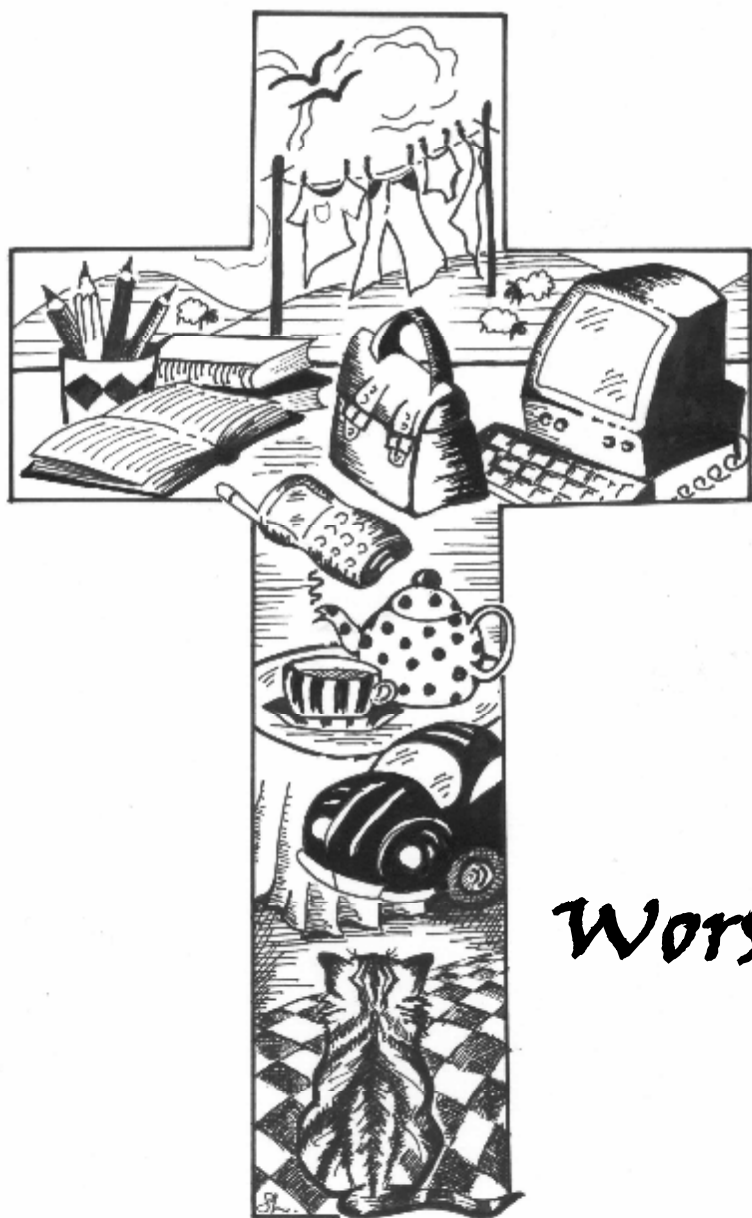


Transforming Lives



Worship Resources
Lent 2008

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Transforming Worship

From early times the season of Lent has been a period of preparation for the celebration of Easter. It is a good opportunity to refresh our faith and our worship.

Much of the material in this booklet is already available in the Common Worship books. It has been collected together for convenience with added material that has been written by members of the Diocesan Liturgy and Worship Group.

This material is offered as a resource and is in no way intended to be mandatory or prescriptive. Explicit step-by-step instructions have not been provided because every congregation is different. Take whatever will enhance your worship and use it imaginatively, leave the rest. Be selective! It is not intended that you use all the “alternative” material together or people will end up with spiritual indigestion.

May Lent be a time of enrichment and thoughtful preparation for the celebration of the resurrection of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, affirming that nothing, not even death, need separate us from the Love of God.

Confession

A variety of confessions are available which relate to the mood of the season. Some are set out in the weekly material. One particular form of Confession, the Beatitudes, works remarkably well in Lent. It affirms what is good in us and holds up an image of what we can be. Note that the Beatitudes are also used as part of the liturgy on Lent 3 for those using the Focal Display material.

The Beatitudes

Let us hear our Lord's blessing on those who follow him.

*We are invited to bring before God
the things that separate us from one another
and keep us from God's love*

Blessed are the poor in spirit,
for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.

Silence is kept

Blessed are those who mourn,
for they shall be comforted.

Silence is kept

Blessed are the meek,
for they shall inherit the earth.

Silence is kept

Blessed are those who hunger and thirst
after righteousness,
for they shall be satisfied.

Silence is kept

Blessed are the merciful,
for they shall obtain mercy.

Silence is kept

Blessed are the pure in heart,
for they shall see God.

Silence is kept

Blessed are the peacemakers,
for they shall be called children of God.

Silence is kept

Blessed are those who suffer persecution for
righteousness' sake,
for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.

Let us confess our many failures
to keep this way of truth and life.

**Most merciful God,
Father of our Lord Jesus Christ,
we confess that we have sinned
in thought, word and deed.
We have not loved you with our whole heart.
We have not loved our neighbours as ourselves.
In your mercy
forgive what we have been,
help us to amend what we are,
and direct what we shall be;
that we may do justly,
love mercy,
and walk humbly with you, our God.
Amen.**

We hear that our separation from God is healed.

Almighty God,
who forgives all who truly repent,
have mercy upon you,
pardon and deliver you from all your sins,
confirm and strengthen you in all goodness,
and keep you in life eternal;
through Jesus Christ our Lord.
Amen.

Focal Display

The Lenten journey starts in the desert. Material is provided for each of the first three Sundays to use in church, and for the rest of Lent to use at home that makes our worship a journey from the desert to the Cross and through that to the Resurrection.

The first Sunday reflects on the desert as a place of opportunity to be Christlike.

The second Sunday identifies the ways in which new life can be brought to the deserted places of the world, our community or ourselves. This is an opportunity for a contribution from the congregation which can either be “homework” in the preceding week, or space can be made either before or during the service for the congregation to make their contribution.

The third Sunday affirms us in what is good and sends people away with an aid to the meditations which they may wish to use at home for the remainder of Lent

These weeks rely on the visual aid of three “wildernesses”:

Deserted wilderness A large flat tray or box full of sand. There needn't be anything ornate or decorative about this. This place signifies emptiness and loneliness. It may be that the minister picks up a handful of sand and lets it run through their fingers as they speak.

Toy supermarkets have bags of play-pit sand that can be used, or builder's sand is fine. Prepare this a few days before it is needed so that the sand has a chance to dry out.

Overgrown wilderness A large mass of tangled thorns or brambles. Again, nothing ornate. This place signifies stress, anxiety and pressure. Take care when collecting the material for this – use gloves!

Manmade wilderness A small table, perhaps covered with a purple cloth with items that signify human inhumanity. Perhaps a toy gun, a large crucifix (in this case a crucifix rather than an empty cross will add significance), a handful (five?) large nails, pictures from a magazine or newspaper. No need to overcrowd the table. Just enough for people to get the message.

For Lent 3 there will also be a need for a pile of stones. These can be included in the displays from Lent 1. There is no need to say anything about them until Lent 3. The positioning of the pile of stones will depend on how they will fit into the liturgy – there is more information in the material for Lent 3.

Gathered stones A pile of small stones or pebbles, one per member of the congregation will be needed, plus spares. These need to be of a size that can be held comfortably – perhaps 3cm to 5cm across.

If suitable pebbles cannot be sourced “naturally”, packs of pebbles are often found in Garden Centres, toy supermarkets or educational suppliers (such as Yorkshire Purchasing).

Some churches have the layout and the possibility for movement. If there is space, it may be that the three “wildernesses” could be set up as three stations in three different parts of the church. The ministers, or even the whole congregation, could move from one station to another. The song provided (or another) can be used to cover the movement.

Many churches do not have the luxury of movement, but it is still possible to make a display in one place that includes all three elements. If there is the tradition of an Easter Garden, setting the Focal Display where the Easter Garden will be will emphasise the journey from desert to cross to resurrection.

The Focal Display can be prepared and left in church without explicit reference, or can be used as the focus for liturgical action using the material is provided. This material can be used as part of the Penitential rite, as part of the Sermon, or as part of the Intercessions. It may help the congregation to engage if it is used in the same way each week.

In many places Mothering Sunday has its own tradition so no additional material is provided.

For Lent 5 the Focal Display is adjusted by removing the Deserted Wilderness and the Overgrown Wilderness, leaving the table with the symbols of crucifixion and execution. If the displays were in different parts of the church this display could now be moved to where the Easter Garden will be.

Connecting Sunday worship to prayer at home

At the back of this book is a copy of Daily Prayer in Lent, a specially prepared daily office that can be used by individuals alone. Those who have the Transforming Lives folder will find it in the folder on an A5 card. The office is included here so that it can be copied and distributed to congregations that do not have the folder. It is designed so that if it is copied double-sided it can be cut in half to make two A5 copies per A4 sheet.

A second “pocket” version is also provided that can be copied double-sided, cut, and folded into an A6 format.

For those who wish to use them, resources are provided to link Sunday worship to people’s private prayer at home.

- Lent 1 People take a card home. As part of their private prayer they identify what “wildernesses” they are aware of in the world, in their community, in their family or themselves. Reflecting prayerfully they indicate on the card what it is that will bring new life to that particular situation.
- Lent 2 The card is brought into church and becomes part of the Focal Display.
- Lent 3 People are invited to take a small stone or pebble home which becomes a focus of meditation until Easter.
- Lent 4 Many places will have a tradition of giving cards or posies of flowers to the congregation

Palm Sunday Many places have a tradition of giving Palm Crosses to the congregation

At the back of this book there is a set of meditations that can be copied and distributed to the congregation for use with Daily Prayer. There are two meditations for the weeks of Lent 3, Lent 4, Lent 5 and one each for Holy week and Easter Week. These can be used in the designated weeks, or at any other time that seems appropriate. They can be copied as A5 double-sided and distributed each week, or included in the newsletter or bulletin.

Because the needs of congregations differ from one to another, we are relying on whoever is co-ordinating the worship to give appropriate instructions to the congregation.

Gospel

Some of the Gospel passages set in the Common Worship lectionary for Lent this year are particularly long. The reason for their length is that each tells a “whole story”. Lent 3, for example, has 37 verses from John 4 telling the story of the Woman at the Well, and the passage set for Lent 4 is even longer.

Some congregations may be able to retain concentration for the proclamation of a Gospel of this length, and some may not. If the Gospel reading is so long that the particular congregation disconnects it does a disservice to the Gospel, the worship and the congregation.

Those planning the worship should be sensitive to what will keep the congregation engaged. To assist, in addition to the full Gospel passage, an abbreviated version of the passage is offered that links to the texts used in other Transforming Lives material. There will also be a paraphrase on the Transforming Lives web site which may be used as an alternative with certain congregations.

It may be that the longer Lenten Gospel passages could be read in parts with different voices for different characters, or dramatized in some form, as a way of retaining both the whole passage and the congregation’s attention. Many places do this for the long Passion Gospel on Palm Sunday, so there may well be a local precedent. Subject to demand, dramatised forms of the longer Gospel passages will be made available on the Transforming Lives web site.

Readings

The readings, psalm and abbreviated Gospel are set out on a single page so that they can be copied to use as a pew sheet if desired.

Songs

Two songs are included in this material. They are:

The Lord is my Shepherd, Junior Praise no 244, arrangement Andy Silver

The steadfast love of the Lord never ceases, Complete Mission Praise no 666,
words and music Edith McNeill

Of course alternative chants, short songs or choruses may be used.

Downloading Transforming Lives material

All the material in this book, and more, will be available on the Transforming Lives website for download in PDF form for printing and in DOC form for copying.

www.wakefield.anglican.org/transforminglives

Further resources

Further resources may be found at:

www.transformingworship.org.uk

www.rootsontheweb.com

If you have any questions please contact John Hadjioannou, john@minster.co.uk, 01977 610497

The First Sunday of Lent

10 February 2008

Focal display

At the deserted wilderness

And this is the wilderness where nothing grows.

Desolate.

The place of despair and guilt.

The place of loneliness, and imprisonment.

The place of sadness and neglect.

The place of silence.

Silence means that we can hear the smallest whisper.

We can hear what our conscience is saying.

We can hear what our neighbour is saying.

We can hear what God is saying.

This is a desolate wilderness.

but listening can bring new life.

sing:

The Lord is my shepherd,

I'll trust in him always

He leads me by still waters,

I'll trust in him always.

Always, always, I'll trust in him always,

Always, always, I'll trust in him always.

At the overgrown wilderness

This is the wilderness that is thick and overgrown.

Impenetrable. Inescapable.

The place of agitation and frustration

The place of pressure and stress

The place of demands and worries

The place where the thorns force us to be still.

Stillness means that we can let the

cares and worries fall away

Stillness allows us to become refreshed

to become the people we are meant to be.

sing:

The Lord is my shepherd,

I'll trust in him always

He leads me by still waters,

I'll trust in him always.

Always, always, I'll trust in him always,

Always, always, I'll trust in him always.

At the man-made wilderness

This is the wilderness of hate.

Destructive.

The wilderness of war and killing

The wilderness of violence and abuse

The wilderness that preys on the vulnerable

The place of tears and wrong.

Where there are tears, there can be healing love

Where there is wrong, there can be restoring forgiveness

Where there is love, there is God.

sing:

The Lord is my shepherd,

I'll trust in him always

He leads me by still waters,

I'll trust in him always.

Always, always, I'll trust in him always,

Always, always, I'll trust in him always.

Focal display – preparation for next week

If the preparation for next week is to be done as “homework” provide some postcard sized pieces of card for people to take home with them, and give instructions along these lines:

For next week's meditation take a card home with you. During the week think about those places or those situations that are like a wilderness. Situations in our world, in our community, in your family, or in yourself.

On the card write what it is that could bring new life to that wilderness. If it is something private or personal, rather than writing it out in full you may wish to put just a word, a drawing or a symbol that only you and God recognise.

Bring the card to church with you next week, it will become part of our worship.

Confession

Jesus, full of the Holy Spirit, returned from the Jordan and was led by the Spirit into the wilderness, where for forty days he was tempted by the devil.

Let us confess our sins remembering before God the times when we have fallen from temptation into sin.

Wash me thoroughly from my wickedness and cleanse me from my sin.

Lord, have mercy.

Lord, have mercy.

Create in me a clean heart, O God, and renew a right spirit within me.

Christ, have mercy.

Christ, have mercy.

Cast me not away from your presence, and take not your Holy Spirit from me.

Lord, have mercy.

Lord, have mercy.

or

We prepare ourselves by saying “sorry” to God for the things that we do to harm the world around us, upset other people, or sadden God.

The world is a place of wonder and beauty, but we don’t always look after it.

Lord, have mercy.

Lord, have mercy.

Everyone is special to you, but sometimes we upset and hurt each other.

Christ, have mercy.

Christ, have mercy.

You love us and want the very best for us, but we often go our own way and forget you.

Lord, have mercy.

Lord, have mercy.

Collect

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.

or

Heavenly Father,
your Son battled with the powers of darkness,
and grew closer to you in the desert:
help us to use these days to grow in wisdom and prayer
that we may witness to your saving love
in Jesus Christ our Lord.

Post Communion

Lord God,
you have renewed us with the living bread from heaven;
by it you nourish our faith,
increase our hope,
and strengthen our love:
teach us always to hunger for him who is the true
and living bread,
and enable us to live by every word
that proceeds from out of your mouth;
through Jesus Christ our Lord.

or

God of every time and place,
you hold each moment and shape each day;
by the gentleness of your Spirit
transform us,
with the gifts of your Spirit
equip us,
in the boldness of your Spirit
send us out,
to serve you and transform the world,
in the name of Jesus Christ our Lord.

First reading

A reading from the book of Genesis

The LORD God took the man and put him in the garden of Eden to till it and keep it. And the LORD God commanded the man, 'You may freely eat of every tree of the garden; but of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil you shall not eat, for in the day that you eat of it you shall die.'

Now the serpent was more crafty than any other wild animal that the LORD God had made. He said to the woman, 'Did God say, "You shall not eat from any tree in the garden"?' The woman said to the serpent, 'We may eat of the fruit of the trees in the garden; but God said, "You shall not eat of the fruit of the tree that is in the middle of the garden, nor shall you touch it, or you shall die."' But the serpent said to the woman, 'You will not die; for God knows that when you eat of it your eyes will be opened, and you will be like God, knowing good and evil.' So when the woman saw that the tree was good for food, and that it was a delight to the eyes, and that the tree was to be desired to make one wise, she took of its fruit and ate; and she also gave some to her husband, who was with her, and he ate. Then the eyes of both were opened, and they knew that they were naked; and they sewed fig leaves together and made loincloths for themselves.

Genesis 2.15-17; 3.1-7

Psalm

- 1 Happy the one whose transgression is forgiven, ♦
and whose sin is covered.
- 2 Happy the one to whom the Lord imputes no guilt, ♦
and in whose spirit there is no guile.
- 3 For I held my tongue; ♦
my bones wasted away
through my groaning all the day long.
- 4 Your hand was heavy upon me day and night; ♦
my moisture was dried up like the drought in summer.
- 5 Then I acknowledged my sin to you ♦
and my iniquity I did not hide.
- 6 I said, 'I will confess my transgressions to the Lord,' ♦
and you forgave the guilt of my sin.
- 7 Therefore let all the faithful make their prayers to you
in time of trouble; ♦
in the great water flood, it shall not reach them.
- 8 You are a place for me to hide in;
you preserve me from trouble; ♦
you surround me with songs of deliverance.
- 9 'I will instruct you and teach you
in the way that you should go; ♦
I will guide you with my eye.
- 10 'Be not like horse and mule
which have no understanding; ♦
whose mouths must be held with bit and bridle,
or else they will not stay near you.'
- 11 Great tribulations remain for the wicked, ♦
but mercy embraces those who trust in the Lord.

12 Be glad, you righteous, and rejoice in the Lord; ♦
shout for joy, all who are true of heart.

Psalms 32

Second reading

A reading from the letter of Paul to the Romans

Just as sin came into the world through one man, and death came through sin, and so death spread to all because all have sinned – sin was indeed in the world before the law, but sin is not reckoned when there is no law. Yet death exercised dominion from Adam to Moses, even over those whose sins were not like the transgression of Adam, who is a type of the one who was to come.

But the free gift is not like the trespass. For if the many died through the one man's trespass, much more surely have the grace of God and the free gift in the grace of the one man, Jesus Christ, abounded for the many. And the free gift is not like the effect of the one man's sin. For the judgement following one trespass brought condemnation but the free gift following many trespasses brings justification. If, because of the one man's trespass, death exercised dominion through that one, much more surely will those who receive the abundance of grace and the free gift of righteousness exercise dominion in life through the one man, Jesus Christ.

Therefore just as one man's trespass led to condemnation for all, so the act of righteousness of one leads to justification and life for all. For just as by the one person's disobedience the many were made sinners, so by the one man's obedience the many will be made righteous.

Romans 5.12-19

Gospel

Hear the Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ
according to Matthew

Then Jesus was led up by the Spirit into the wilderness to be tempted by the devil. He fasted for forty days and forty nights, and afterwards he was famished. The tempter came and said to him, 'If you are the Son of God, command these stones to become loaves of bread.' But he answered, 'It is written,

"One does not live by bread alone,
but by every word that comes from the mouth of God."

Then the devil took him to the holy city and placed him on the pinnacle of the temple, saying to him, 'If you are the Son of God, throw yourself down; for it is written, "He will command his angels concerning you", and "On their hands they will bear you up, so that you will not dash your foot against a stone."' Jesus said to him, 'Again it is 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; and he said to him, 'All these I will give you, if you will fall down and worship me.' Jesus said to him, 'Away with you, Satan! for it is written,

"Worship the Lord your God, and serve only him."' Then the devil left him, and suddenly angels came and waited on him.

Matthew 4.1-11

The Second Sunday of Lent

17 February 2008

Focal display – preparation

Have some postcard sized cards ready. Even if the preparation has been done as “homework” there will be people who were not in church last week, and people who have forgotten.

Introduce the cards with something along the lines of:

We all know of places and situations that are like a wilderness.

Situations in our world, in our community, in our family, or in ourselves.

Spend a little time thinking prayerfully about what it is that could bring new life to that wilderness. Write on the card what it is that can bring new life. If it is something private or personal, rather than writing it out in full you may wish to put just a word, a symbol or a drawing.

Have some music playing while people reflect.

The cards can either be collected up in a basket, or brought up by individuals and placed in the relevant wilderness.

In the following text, the cards are read out at the place indicated by “...” either by a minister or by the person placing the card.

Focal display

At the deserted wilderness

And this is the wilderness where nothing grows.

Desolate.

The place of despair and guilt.

The place of loneliness, and imprisonment.

The place of sadness and neglect.

This is a wilderness,
but ... can bring new life

**The Lord is my shepherd,
I'll trust in him always
He leads me by still waters,
I'll trust in him always.
Always, always, I'll trust in him always,
Always, always, I'll trust in him always.**

At the overgrown wilderness

This is the wilderness that is thick and overgrown.

Impenetrable. Inescapable.

The place of pressure and stress

The place of demands and worries

This is a wilderness,
but ... can bring new life

**The Lord is my shepherd,
I'll trust in him always
He leads me by still waters,
I'll trust in him always.
Always, always, I'll trust in him always,
Always, always, I'll trust in him always.**

At the man-made wilderness

This is the wilderness of hate.

Destructive.

The wilderness of war and killing

The wilderness of violence and abuse

The wilderness that preys on the vulnerable

This is a wilderness,
but ... can bring new life

**The Lord is my shepherd,
I'll trust in him always
He leads me by still waters,
I'll trust in him always.
Always, always, I'll trust in him always,
Always, always, I'll trust in him always.**

Gospel (full)

Hear the Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ according to John

There was a Pharisee named Nicodemus, a leader of the Jews. He came to Jesus by night and said to him, ‘Rabbi, we know that you are a teacher who has come from God; for no one can do these signs that you do apart from the presence of God.’ Jesus answered him, ‘Very truly, I tell you, no one can see the kingdom of God without being born from above.’ Nicodemus said to him, ‘How can anyone be born after having grown old? Can one enter a second time into the mother’s womb and be born?’ Jesus answered, ‘Very truly, I tell you, no one can enter the kingdom of God without being born of water and Spirit. What is born of the flesh is flesh, and what is born of the Spirit is spirit. Do not be astonished that I said to you, “You must be born from above.” The wind blows where it chooses, and you hear the sound of it, but you do not know where it comes from or where it goes. So it is with everyone who is born of the Spirit.’ Nicodemus said to him, ‘How can these things be?’ Jesus answered him, ‘Are you a teacher of Israel, and yet you do not understand these things?’

‘Very truly, I tell you, we speak of what we know and testify to what we have seen; yet you do not receive our testimony. If I have told you about earthly things and you do not believe, how can you believe if I tell you about heavenly things? No one has ascended into heaven except the one who descended from heaven, the Son of Man. And just as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, so must the Son of Man be lifted up, that whoever believes in him may have eternal life. For God so loved the world that he gave his only Son, so that everyone who believes in him may not perish but may have eternal life. Indeed, God did not send the Son into the world to condemn the world, but in order that the world might be saved through him.’

John 3.1-17

Confession

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.

Wash away all my iniquity
and cleanse me from my sin.

Lord, have mercy.
Lord, have mercy.

Against you, you only have I sinned
and done what is evil in your sight.

Christ, have mercy.
Christ, have mercy.

Create in me a pure heart, O God,
and renew a steadfast spirit within me.

Lord, have mercy.
Lord, have mercy.

or

We prepare ourselves by saying “sorry” to God for
the things that we do to harm the world around us,
upset other people, or sadden God.

The world is a place of wonder and beauty,
but we don’t always look after it.

Lord, have mercy.
Lord, have mercy.

Everyone is special to you,
but sometimes we upset and hurt each other.

Christ, have mercy.
Christ, have mercy.

You love us and want the very best for us,
but we often go our own way and forget you.

Lord, have mercy.
Lord, have mercy.

Collect

Almighty God,
you show to those who are in error
the light of your truth,
that they may return to the way of righteousness:
grant to all those who are admitted
into the fellowship of Christ’s religion,
that they may reject those things
that are contrary to their profession,
and follow all such things
as are agreeable to the same;
through our Lord Jesus Christ,
who is alive and reigns with you,
in the unity of the Holy Spirit,
one God, now and for ever.

or

Almighty God,
by the prayer and discipline of Lent
may we enter into the mystery of Christ’s sufferings,
and by following in his Way
come to share in his glory;
through Jesus Christ our Lord.

Post Communion

Almighty God,
you see that we have no power of ourselves
to help ourselves:
keep us both outwardly in our bodies,
and inwardly in our souls;
that we may be defended from all adversities
which may happen to the body,
and from all evil thoughts
which may assault and hurt the soul;
through Jesus Christ our Lord.

or

God of every time and place,
you hold each moment and shape each day;
by the gentleness of your Spirit
transform us,
with the gifts of your Spirit
equip us,
in the boldness of your Spirit
send us out,
to serve you and transform the world,
in the name of Jesus Christ our Lord.

First reading

A reading from the book of Genesis

The LORD said to Abram, 'Go from your country and your kindred and your father's house to the land that I will show you. I will make of you a great nation, and I will bless you, and make your name great, so that you will be a blessing. I will bless those who bless you, and the one who curses you I will curse; and in you all the families of the earth shall be blessed.'

So Abram went, as the LORD had told him; and Lot went with him.

Genesis 12.1-4a

Psalm

- 1 I lift up my eyes to the hills; ♦
from where is my help to come?
- 2 My help comes from the Lord, ♦
the maker of heaven and earth.
- 3 He will not suffer your foot to stumble; ♦
he who watches over you will not sleep.
- 4 Behold, he who keeps watch over Israel ♦
shall neither slumber nor sleep.
- 5 The Lord himself watches over you; ♦
the Lord is your shade at your right hand,
- 6 So that the sun shall not strike you by day, ♦
neither the moon by night.
- 7 The Lord shall keep you from all evil; ♦
it is he who shall keep your soul.
- 8 The Lord shall keep watch over your going out
and your coming in, ♦
from this time forth for evermore.

Psalms 121

Second reading

A reading from the letter of Paul to the Romans

What are we to say was gained by Abraham, our ancestor according to the flesh? For if Abraham was justified by works, he has something to boast about, but not before God. For what does the scripture say? 'Abraham believed God, and it was reckoned to him as righteousness.' Now to one who works, wages are not reckoned as a gift but as something due. But to one who without works trusts him who justifies the ungodly, such faith is reckoned as righteousness.

For the promise that he would inherit the world did not come to Abraham or to his descendants through the law but through the righteousness of faith. If it is the adherents of the law who are to be the heirs, faith is null and the promise is void. For the law brings wrath; but where there is no law, neither is there violation. For this reason it depends on faith, in order that the promise may rest on grace and be guaranteed to all his descendants, not only to the adherents of the law but also to those who share the faith of Abraham (for he is the father of all of us, as it is written, 'I have made you the father of many nations'). Abraham believed in the presence of the God who gives life to the dead and calls into existence the things that do not exist.

Romans 5.12-19

Gospel

Hear the Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ according to John

There was a Pharisee named Nicodemus, a leader of the Jews. He came to Jesus by night and said to him, 'Rabbi, we know that you are a teacher who has come from God; for no one can do these signs that you do apart from the presence of God.' Jesus answered him, 'Very truly, I tell you, no one can see the kingdom of God without being born from above.' Nicodemus said to him, 'How can anyone be born after having grown old? Can one enter a second time into the mother's womb and be born?' Jesus answered, 'Very truly, I tell you, no one can enter the kingdom of God without being born of water and Spirit. What is born of the flesh is flesh, and what is born of the Spirit is spirit. Do not be astonished that I said to you, "You must be born from above." The wind blows where it chooses, and you hear the sound of it, but you do not know where it comes from or where it goes. So it is with everyone who is born of the Spirit.' Nicodemus said to him, 'How can these things be?' Jesus answered him, 'Are you a teacher of Israel, and yet you do not understand these things?

'Very truly, I tell you, we speak of what we know and testify to what we have seen; yet you do not receive our testimony. If I have told you about earthly things and you do not believe, how can you believe if I tell you about heavenly things?

John 3.1-12

The Third Sunday of Lent

24 February 2008

Focal display – preparation

A pile of stones has formed part of the focal display. Each person is invited to take a stone away with them to use as an aid to meditation between now and Easter. Depending on the size of the congregation and other practicalities, ways of achieving this could be to have people gather where the stones are for the Beatitudes and take one away at the end, come up after the Beatitudes in the place indicated in the rubric, collect a stone after receiving communion, or collect a stone on the way out. Alternatively, the stones could be “handed out” at an appropriate time.

Instruction will have to be given as to what to do and what the stone is for. The meditations should also be distributed, either one week at a time or all together.

Focal display

At the gathered stones

Let us hear our Lord’s blessing on those who follow him.

Blessed are the poor in spirit,
for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.

Silence is kept

Blessed are those who mourn,
for they shall be comforted.

Silence is kept

Blessed are the meek,
for they shall inherit the earth.

Silence is kept

Blessed are those
who hunger and thirst after righteousness,
for they shall be satisfied.

Silence is kept

Blessed are the merciful,
for they shall obtain mercy.

Silence is kept

Blessed are the pure in heart,
for they shall see God.

Silence is kept

Blessed are the peacemakers,
for they shall be called children of God.

Silence is kept

Blessed are those who suffer persecution for
righteousness’ sake,
for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.

All collect a stone as the refrain is sung

**The Lord is my shepherd,
I’ll trust in him always
He leads me by still waters,
I’ll trust in him always.
Always, always, I’ll trust in him always,
Always, always, I’ll trust in him always.**

Gospel (full)

Jesus came to a Samaritan city called Sychar, near the plot of ground that Jacob had given to his son Joseph. Jacob’s well was there, and Jesus, tired out by his journey, was sitting by the well. It was about noon.

A Samaritan woman came to draw water, and Jesus said to her, ‘Give me a drink.’ (His disciples had gone to the city to buy food.) The Samaritan woman said to him, ‘How is it that you, a Jew, ask a drink of me, a woman of Samaria?’ (Jews do not share things in common with Samaritans.) Jesus answered her, ‘If you knew the gift of God, and who it is that is saying to you, “Give me a drink,” you would have asked him, and he would have given you living water.’ The woman said to him, ‘Sir, you have no bucket, and the well is deep. Where do you get that living water? Are you greater than our ancestor Jacob, who gave us the well, and with his sons and his flocks drank from it?’ Jesus said to her, ‘Everyone who drinks of this water will be thirsty again, but those who drink of the water that I will give them will never be thirsty. The water that I will give will become in them a spring of water gushing up to eternal life.’ The woman said to him, ‘Sir, give me this water, so that I may never be thirsty or have to keep coming here to draw water.’

Jesus said to her, ‘Go, call your husband, and come back.’ The woman answered him, ‘I have no husband.’ Jesus said to her, ‘You are right in saying, “I have no husband”; for you have had five husbands, and the one you have now is not your husband. What you have said is true!’ The woman said to him, ‘Sir, I see that you are a prophet. Our ancestors worshipped on this mountain, but you say that the place where people must worship is in Jerusalem.’ Jesus said to her, ‘Woman, believe me, the hour is coming when you will worship the Father neither on this mountain nor in Jerusalem. You worship what you do not know; we worship what we know, for salvation is from the Jews. But the hour is coming, and is now here, when the true worshippers will worship the Father in spirit and truth, for the Father seeks such as these to worship him. God is spirit, and those who worship him must worship in spirit and truth.’ The woman said to him, ‘I know that Messiah is coming’ (who is called Christ). ‘When he comes, he will proclaim all things to us.’ Jesus said to her, ‘I am he, the one who is speaking to you.’

Just then his disciples came. They were astonished that he was speaking with a woman, but no one said, ‘What do you want?’ or, ‘Why are you speaking with her?’ Then the woman left her water-jar and went back to the city. She said to the people, ‘Come and see a man who told me everything I have ever done! He cannot be the Messiah, can he?’ They left the city and were on their way to him.

Meanwhile the disciples were urging him, ‘Rabbi, eat something.’ But he said to them, ‘I have food to eat that you do not know about.’ So the disciples said to one another, ‘Surely no one has brought him something to eat?’ Jesus said to them, ‘My food is to do the will of him who sent me and to complete his work. Do you not say, “Four months more, then comes the harvest”? But I tell you, look around you, and see how the fields are ripe for harvesting. The reaper is already receiving wages and is gathering fruit for eternal life, so that sower and reaper may rejoice together. For here the saying holds true,

“One sows and another reaps.” I sent you to reap that for which you did not labour. Others have laboured, and you have entered into their labour.’

Many Samaritans from that city believed in Jesus because of the woman’s testimony, ‘He told me everything I have ever done.’ So when the Samaritans came to him, they asked him to stay with them; and he stayed there for two days. And many more believed because of his word. They said to the woman, ‘It is no longer because of what you said that we believe, for we have heard for ourselves, and we know that this is truly the Saviour of the world.’

John 4.5-42

Confession

Compassion and forgiveness
belong to the Lord our God,
though we have rebelled against him.
Let us then renounce our wilfulness
and ask his mercy
by confessing our sins in penitence and faith.

We confess to you our selfishness and lack of love.
fill us with your Spirit.

Lord, have mercy.
Lord, have mercy.

We confess to you our fear
and failure in sharing our faith.
fill us with your Spirit.

Christ, have mercy.
Christ, have mercy.

We confess to you our stubbornness
and lack of trust.
fill us with your Spirit.

Lord, have mercy.
Lord, have mercy.

or

We prepare ourselves by saying “sorry” to God for the things that we do to harm the world around us, upset other people, or sadden God.

The world is a place of wonder and beauty,
but we don’t always look after it.

Lord, have mercy.
Lord, have mercy.

Everyone is special to you,
but sometimes we upset and hurt each other.

Christ, have mercy.
Christ, have mercy.

You love us and want the very best for us,
but we often go our own way and forget you.

Lord, have mercy.
Lord, have mercy.

Collect

Almighty God,
whose most dear Son went not up to joy
but first he suffered pain,
and entered not into glory before he was crucified:
mercifully grant that we,
walking in the way of the cross,
may find it none other
than the way of life and peace;
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.

or

Eternal God,
give us insight
to discern your will for us,
to give up what harms us,
and to seek the perfection we are promised
in Jesus Christ our Lord.

Post Communion

Merciful Lord,
grant your people grace to withstand the
temptations
of the world, the flesh and the devil,
and with pure hearts and minds
to follow you, the only God;
through Jesus Christ our Lord.

or

God of every time and place,
you hold each moment and shape each day;
by the gentleness of your Spirit
transform us,
with the gifts of your Spirit
equip us,
in the boldness of your Spirit
send us out,
to serve you and transform the world,
in the name of Jesus Christ our Lord.

First reading

A reading from the book of Exodus

From the wilderness of Sin the whole congregation of the Israelites journeyed by stages, as the LORD commanded. They camped at Rephidim, but there was no water for the people to drink. The people quarrelled with Moses, and said, 'Give us water to drink.' Moses said to them, 'Why do you quarrel with me? Why do you test the LORD?' But the people thirsted there for water; and the people complained against Moses and said, 'Why did you bring us out of Egypt, to kill us and our children and livestock with thirst?' So Moses cried out to the LORD, 'What shall I do with this people? They are almost ready to stone me.' The LORD said to Moses, 'Go on ahead of the people, and take some of the elders of Israel with you; take in your hand the staff with which you struck the Nile, and go. I will be standing there in front of you on the rock at Horeb. Strike the rock, and water will come out of it, so that the people may drink.' Moses did so, in the sight of the elders of Israel. He called the place Massah and Meribah, because the Israelites quarrelled and tested the LORD, saying, 'Is the LORD among us or not?'

Exodus 17.1-7

Psalm

- 1 O come, let us sing to the Lord; ♦
let us heartily rejoice in the rock of our salvation.
- 2 Let us come into his presence with thanksgiving ♦
and be glad in him with psalms.
- 3 For the Lord is a great God ♦
and a great king above all gods.
- 4 In his hand are the depths of the earth ♦
and the heights of the mountains are his also.
- 5 The sea is his, for he made it, ♦
and his hands have moulded the dry land.
- 6 Come, let us worship and bow down ♦
and kneel before the Lord our Maker.
- 7 For he is our God; ♦
we are the people of his pasture
and the sheep of his hand.
- 8 O that today you would listen to his voice: ♦
'Harden not your hearts as at Meribah,
on that day at Massah in the wilderness,
- 9 'When your forebears tested me,
and put me to the proof, ♦
though they had seen my works.
- 10 'Forty years long I detested that generation and said, ♦
'This people are wayward in their hearts;
they do not know my ways.'
- 11 'So I swore in my wrath, ♦
'They shall not enter into my rest.'

Psalms 95

Second reading

A reading from the letter of Paul to the Romans

Since we are justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ, through whom we have obtained access to this grace in which we stand; and we

boast in our hope of sharing the glory of God. And not only that, but we also boast in our sufferings, knowing that suffering produces endurance, and endurance produces character, and character produces hope, and hope does not disappoint us, because God's love has been poured into our hearts through the Holy Spirit that has been given to us.

For while we were still weak, at the right time Christ died for the ungodly. Indeed, rarely will anyone die for a righteous person – though perhaps for a good person someone might actually dare to die. But God proves his love for us in that while we still were sinners Christ died for us. Much more surely then, now that we have been justified by his blood, will we be saved through him from the wrath of God. For if while we were enemies, we were reconciled to God through the death of his Son, much more surely, having been reconciled, will we be saved by his life. But more than that, we even boast in God through our Lord Jesus Christ, through whom we have now received reconciliation.

Romans 5.1-11

Gospel

Hear the Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ according to John

Jesus came to a Samaritan city called Sychar, near the plot of ground that Jacob had given to his son Joseph. Jacob's well was there, and Jesus, tired out by his journey, was sitting by the well. It was about noon.

A Samaritan woman came to draw water, and Jesus said to her, 'Give me a drink.' (His disciples had gone to the city to buy food.) The Samaritan woman said to him, 'How is it that you, a Jew, ask a drink of me, a woman of Samaria?' (Jews do not share things in common with Samaritans.) Jesus answered her, 'If you knew the gift of God, and who it is that is saying to you, "Give me a drink," you would have asked him, and he would have given you living water.' The woman said to him, 'Sir, you have no bucket, and the well is deep. Where do you get that living water? Are you greater than our ancestor Jacob, who gave us the well, and with his sons and his flocks drank from it?' Jesus said to her, 'Everyone who drinks of this water will be thirsty again, but those who drink of the water that I will give them will never be thirsty. The water that I will give will become in them a spring of water gushing up to eternal life.' The woman said to him, 'Sir, give me this water, so that I may never be thirsty or have to keep coming here to draw water.'

The woman said to him, 'I know that Messiah is coming' (who is called Christ). 'When he comes, he will proclaim all things to us.' Jesus said to her, 'I am he, the one who is speaking to you.'

Just then his disciples came. They were astonished that he was speaking with a woman, but no one said, 'What do you want?' or, 'Why are you speaking with her?' Then the woman left her water-jar and went back to the city. She said to the people, 'Come and see a man who told me everything I have ever done! He cannot be the Messiah, can he?' They left the city and were on their way to him.

John 4.5-15, 25-30

The Fourth Sunday of Lent

2 March 2008

Gospel (full)

Hear the Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ according to John

As Jesus walked along, he saw a man blind from birth. His disciples asked him, 'Rabbi, who sinned, this man or his parents, that he was born blind?' Jesus answered, 'Neither this man nor his parents sinned; he was born blind so that God's works might be revealed in him. We must work the works of him who sent me while it is day; night is coming when no one can work. As long as I am in the world, I am the light of the world.' When he had said this, he spat on the ground and made mud with the saliva and spread the mud on the man's eyes, saying to him, 'Go, wash in the pool of Siloam' (which means Sent). Then he went and washed and came back able to see. The neighbours and those who had seen him before as a beggar began to ask, 'Is this not the man who used to sit and beg?' Some were saying, 'It is he.' Others were saying, 'No, but it is someone like him.' He kept saying, 'I am the man.' But they kept asking him, 'Then how were your eyes opened?' He answered, 'The man called Jesus made mud, spread it on my eyes, and said to me, "Go to Siloam and wash." Then I went and washed and received my sight.' They said to him, 'Where is he?' He said, 'I do not know.'

They brought to the Pharisees the man who had formerly been blind. Now it was a sabbath day when Jesus made the mud and opened his eyes. Then the Pharisees also began to ask him how he had received his sight. He said to them, 'He put mud on my eyes. Then I washed, and now I see.' Some of the Pharisees said, 'This man is not from God, for he does not observe the sabbath.' But others said, 'How can a man who is a sinner perform such signs?' And they were divided. So they said again to the blind man, 'What do you say about him? It was your eyes he opened.' He said, 'He is a prophet.'

The Jews did not believe that he had been blind and had received his sight until they called the parents of the man who had received his sight and asked them, 'Is this your son, who you say was born blind? How then does he now see?' His parents answered, 'We know that this is our son, and that he was born blind; but we do not know how it is that now he sees, nor do we know who opened his eyes. Ask him; he is of age. He will speak for himself.' His parents said this because they were afraid of the Jews; for the Jews had already agreed that anyone who confessed Jesus to be the Messiah would be put out of the synagogue. Therefore his parents said, 'He is of age; ask him.'

So for the second time they called the man who had been blind, and they said to him, 'Give glory to God! We know that this man is a sinner.' He answered, 'I do not know whether he is a sinner. One thing I do know, that though I was blind, now I see.' They said to him, 'What did he do to you? How did he open your eyes?' He answered them, 'I have told you already, and you would not listen. Why

do you want to hear it again? Do you also want to become his disciples?' Then they reviled him, saying, 'You are his disciple, but we are disciples of Moses. We know that God has spoken to Moses, but as for this man, we do not know where he comes from.' The man answered, 'Here is an astonishing thing! You do not know where he comes from, and yet he opened my eyes. We know that God does not listen to sinners, but he does listen to one who worships him and obeys his will. Never since the world began has it been heard that anyone opened the eyes of a person born blind. If this man were not from God, he could do nothing.' They answered him, 'You were born entirely in sins, and are you trying to teach us?' And they drove him out.

Jesus heard that they had driven him out, and when he found him, he said, 'Do you believe in the Son of Man?' He answered, 'And who is he, sir? Tell me, so that I may believe in him.' Jesus said to him, 'You have seen him, and the one speaking with you is he.' He said, 'Lord, I believe.' And he worshipped him. Jesus said, 'I came into this world for judgement so that those who do not see may see, and those who do see may become blind.' Some of the Pharisees near him heard this and said to him, 'Surely we are not blind, are we?' Jesus said to them, 'If you were blind, you would not have sin. But now that you say, "We see", your sin remains.

John 9.1-41

Confession

Compassion and forgiveness
belong to the Lord our God,
though we have rebelled against him.
Let us then renounce our wilfulness
and ask his mercy
by confessing our sins in penitence and faith.

We confess to you our selfishness and lack of love.
fill us with your Spirit.

Lord, have mercy.
Lord, have mercy.

We confess to you our fear
and failure in sharing our faith.
fill us with your Spirit.

Christ, have mercy.
Christ, have mercy.

We confess to you our stubbornness
and lack of trust.
fill us with your Spirit.

Lord, have mercy.
Lord, have mercy.

or

We prepare ourselves by saying “sorry” to God for
the things that we do to harm the world around us,
upset other people, or sadden God.

The world is a place of wonder and beauty,
but we don’t always look after it.

Lord, have mercy.
Lord, have mercy.

Everyone is special to you,
but sometimes we upset and hurt each other.

Christ, have mercy.
Christ, have mercy.

You love us and want the very best for us,
but we often go our own way and forget you.

Lord, have mercy.
Lord, have mercy.

Collect

Merciful Lord,
absolve your people from their offences,
that through your bountiful goodness
we may all be delivered from the chains of those sins
which by our frailty we have committed;
grant this, heavenly Father,
for Jesus Christ’s sake,
our blessed Lord and Saviour,
who is alive and reigns with you,
in the unity of the Holy Spirit,
one God, now and for ever.

or

Merciful Lord,
you know our struggle to serve you:
when sin spoils our lives
and overshadows our hearts,
come to our aid
and turn us back to you again;
through Jesus Christ our Lord.

Post Communion

Lord God,
whose blessed Son our Saviour
gave his back to the smiters
and did not hide his face from shame:
give us grace to endure the sufferings
of this present time
with sure confidence in the glory
that shall be revealed;
through Jesus Christ our Lord.

or

God of every time and place,
you hold each moment and shape each day;
by the gentleness of your Spirit
transform us,
with the gifts of your Spirit
equip us,
in the boldness of your Spirit
send us out,
to serve you and transform the world,
in the name of Jesus Christ our Lord.

The Fourth Sunday of Lent

2 March 2008

First reading

A reading from the first book of Samuel

The LORD said to Samuel, 'How long will you grieve over Saul? I have rejected him from being king over Israel. Fill your horn with oil and set out; I will send you to Jesse the Bethlehemite, for I have provided for myself a king among his sons.' Samuel said, 'How can I go? If Saul hears of it, he will kill me.' And the LORD said, 'Take a heifer with you, and say, "I have come to sacrifice to the LORD." Invite Jesse to the sacrifice, and I will show you what you shall do; and you shall anoint for me the one whom I name to you.' Samuel did what the LORD commanded, and came to Bethlehem. The elders of the city came to meet him trembling, and said, 'Do you come peaceably?' He said, 'Peaceably; I have come to sacrifice to the LORD; sanctify yourselves and come with me to the sacrifice.' And he sanctified Jesse and his sons and invited them to the sacrifice.

When they came, he looked on Eliab and thought, 'Surely the Lord's anointed is now before the LORD.' But the LORD said to Samuel, 'Do not look on his appearance or on the height of his stature, because I have rejected him; for the LORD does not see as mortals see; they look on the outward appearance, but the LORD looks on the heart.' Then Jesse called Abinadab, and made him pass before Samuel. He said, 'Neither has the LORD chosen this one.' Then Jesse made Shammah pass by. And he said, 'Neither has the LORD chosen this one.' Jesse made seven of his sons pass before Samuel, and Samuel said to Jesse, 'The LORD has not chosen any of these.' Samuel said to Jesse, 'Are all your sons here?' And he said, 'There remains yet the youngest, but he is keeping the sheep.' And Samuel said to Jesse, 'Send and bring him; for we will not sit down until he comes here.' He sent and brought him in. Now he was ruddy, and had beautiful eyes, and was handsome. The LORD said, 'Rise and anoint him; for this is the one.' Then Samuel took the horn of oil, and anointed him in the presence of his brothers; and the spirit of the LORD came mightily upon David from that day forward. Samuel then set out and went to Ramah.

1 Samuel 16.1-13

Psalm

- 1 The Lord is my shepherd; ♦
therefore can I lack nothing.
- 2 He makes me lie down in green pastures ♦
and leads me beside still waters.
- 3 He shall refresh my soul ♦
and guide me in the paths of righteousness
for his name's sake.
- 4 Though I walk through the valley
of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil; ♦
for you are with me;
your rod and your staff, they comfort me.

- 5 You spread a table before me
in the presence of those who trouble me; ♦
you have anointed my head with oil
and my cup shall be full.

- 6 Surely goodness and loving mercy shall follow me
all the days of my life, ♦
and I will dwell in the house of the Lord for ever.

Psalm 23

Second reading

A reading from the letter of Paul to the Ephesians

Once you were darkness, but now in the Lord you are light. Live as children of light - for the fruit of the light is found in all that is good and right and true. Try to find out what is pleasing to the Lord. Take no part in the unfruitful works of darkness, but instead expose them. For it is shameful even to mention what such people do secretly; but everything exposed by the light becomes visible, for everything that becomes visible is light. Therefore it says, 'Sleeper, awake! Rise from the dead, and Christ will shine on you.'

Ephesians 5.8-14

Gospel

Hear the Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ
according to John

As Jesus walked along, he saw a man blind from birth. His disciples asked him, 'Rabbi, who sinned, this man or his parents, that he was born blind?' Jesus answered, 'Neither this man nor his parents sinned; he was born blind so that God's works might be revealed in him. We must work the works of him who sent me while it is day; night is coming when no one can work. As long as I am in the world, I am the light of the world.' When he had said this, he spat on the ground and made mud with the saliva and spread the mud on the man's eyes, saying to him, 'Go, wash in the pool of Siloam' (which means Sent). Then he went and washed and came back able to see. The neighbours and those who had seen him before as a beggar began to ask, 'Is this not the man who used to sit and beg?' Some were saying, 'It is he.' Others were saying, 'No, but it is someone like him.' He kept saying, 'I am the man.' But they kept asking him, 'Then how were your eyes opened?' He answered, 'The man called Jesus made mud, spread it on my eyes, and said to me, "Go to Siloam and wash." Then I went and washed and received my sight.' They said to him, 'Where is he?' He said, 'I do not know.'

They brought to the Pharisees the man who had formerly been blind. Now it was a sabbath day when Jesus made the mud and opened his eyes. Then the Pharisees also began to ask him how he had received his sight. He said to them, 'He put mud on my eyes. Then I washed, and now I see.' Some of the Pharisees said, 'This man is not from God, for he does not observe the sabbath.' But others said, 'How can a man who is a sinner perform such signs?' And they were divided.

John 9.1-16

Mothing Sunday

2 March 2008

Confession

As we gather together to worship, we prepare ourselves by saying "sorry" to God for all the things that we do to harm the world around us, upset other people, or sadden God.

The world is a place of wonder and beauty, but we don't always look after it.
Lord, have mercy.

sing:

**The steadfast love of the Lord never ceases,
his mercies never come to an end;
they are new every morning,
new every morning,
great is your faithfulness O Lord,
great is your faithfulness.**

Everyone is special to you, but sometimes we upset and hurt each other.
Christ, have mercy.

sing:

**The steadfast love of the Lord never ceases,
his mercies never come to an end;
they are new every morning,
new every morning,
great is your faithfulness O Lord,
great is your faithfulness.**

You love us and want the very best for us, but we often go our own way and forget you.
Lord, have mercy.

sing:

**The steadfast love of the Lord never ceases,
his mercies never come to an end;
they are new every morning,
new every morning,
great is your faithfulness O Lord,
great is your faithfulness.**

Collect

God of compassion,
whose Son Jesus Christ, the child of Mary,
shared the life of a home in Nazareth,
and on the cross drew the whole human family to himself:

strengthen us in our daily living
that in joy and in sorrow
we may know the power of your presence
to bind together and to heal;
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.

or

God of love,
passionate and strong,
tender and careful:
watch over us and hold us
all the days of our life;
through Jesus Christ our Lord.

Post Communion

Loving God,
as a mother feeds her children at the breast
you feed us in this sacrament with the food and
drink of eternal life:
help us who have tasted your goodness
to grow in grace within the household of faith;
through Jesus Christ our Lord.

or

God of every time and place,
you hold each moment and shape each day;
by the gentleness of your Spirit
transform us,
with the gifts of your Spirit
equip us,
in the boldness of your Spirit
send us out,
to serve you and transform the world,
in the name of Jesus Christ our Lord.

First reading

A reading from the book of Exodus

A man from the house of Levi went and married a Levite woman. The woman conceived and bore a son; and when she saw that he was a fine baby, she hid him for three months. When she could hide him no longer she got a papyrus basket for him, and plastered it with bitumen and pitch; she put the child in it and placed it among the reeds on the bank of the river. His sister stood at a distance, to see what would happen to him. The daughter of Pharaoh came down to bathe at the river, while her attendants walked beside the river. She saw the basket among the reeds and sent her maid to bring it. When she opened it, she saw the child. He was crying, and she took pity on him, 'This must be one of the Hebrews' children,' she said. Then his sister said to Pharaoh's daughter, 'Shall I go and get you a nurse from the Hebrew women to nurse the child for you?'

Pharaoh's daughter said to her, 'Yes.' So the girl went and called the child's mother. Pharaoh's daughter said to her, 'Take this child and nurse it for me, and I will give you your wages.' So the woman took the child and nursed it. When the child grew up, she brought him to Pharaoh's daughter, and she took him as her son. She named him Moses, 'because,' she said, 'I drew him out of the water.'

Exodus 2.1-10

Psalm

- 11 Come, my children, and listen to me; ♦
I will teach you the fear of the Lord.
- 12 Who is there who delights in life ♦
and longs for days to enjoy good things?
- 13 Keep your tongue from evil ♦
and your lips from lying words.
- 14 Turn from evil and do good; ♦
seek peace and pursue it.
- 15 The eyes of the Lord are upon the righteous ♦
and his ears are open to their cry.
- 16 The face of the Lord is against those who do evil, ♦
to root out the remembrance of them from the earth.
- 17 The righteous cry and the Lord hears them ♦
and delivers them out of all their troubles.
- 18 The Lord is near to the brokenhearted ♦
and will save those who are crushed in spirit.
- 19 Many are the troubles of the righteous; ♦
from them all will the Lord deliver them.
- 20 He keeps all their bones, ♦
so that not one of them is broken.

Psalm 34.11-20

Second reading

A reading from the second letter of Paul to the Corinthians

Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of mercies and the God of all consolation, who consoles us in all our affliction, so that we may be able to console those who are in any affliction with the consolation with which we ourselves are consoled by God. For just as the sufferings of Christ are abundant for us, so also our consolation is abundant through Christ. If we are being afflicted, it is for your consolation and salvation; if we are being consoled, it is for your consolation, which you experience when you patiently endure the same sufferings that we are also suffering. Our hope for you is unshaken; for we know that as you share in our sufferings, so also you share in our consolation.

2 Corinthians 1.3-7

Gospel

Hear the Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ according to Luke

The child's father and mother were amazed at what was being said about Jesus. Then Simeon blessed them and said to his mother Mary, 'This child is destined for the falling and the rising of many in Israel, and to be a sign that will be opposed so that the inner thoughts of many will be revealed - and a sword will pierce your own soul too.'

Luke 2.33-35

The Fifth Sunday of Lent

9 March 2008

Gospel (full)

Hear the Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ according to John

A certain man was ill, Lazarus of Bethany, the village of Mary and her sister Martha. Mary was the one who anointed the Lord with perfume and wiped his feet with her hair; her brother Lazarus was ill. So the sisters sent a message to Jesus, 'Lord, he whom you love is ill.' But when Jesus heard it, he said, 'This illness does not lead to death; rather it is for God's glory, so that the Son of God may be glorified through it.' Accordingly, though Jesus loved Martha and her sister and Lazarus, after having heard that Lazarus was ill, he stayed two days longer in the place where he was.

Then after this he said to the disciples, 'Let us go to Judea again.' The disciples said to him, 'Rabbi, the Jews were just now trying to stone you, and are you going there again?' Jesus answered, 'Are there not twelve hours of daylight? Those who walk during the day do not stumble, because they see the light of this world. But those who walk at night stumble, because the light is not in them.' After saying this, he told them, 'Our friend Lazarus has fallen asleep, but I am going there to awaken him.' The disciples said to him, 'Lord, if he has fallen asleep, he will be all right.' Jesus, however, had been speaking about his death, but they thought that he was referring merely to sleep. Then Jesus told them plainly, 'Lazarus is dead. For your sake I am glad I was not there, so that you may believe. But let us go to him.' Thomas, who was called the Twin, said to his fellow-disciples, 'Let us also go, that we may die with him.'

When Jesus arrived, he found that Lazarus had already been in the tomb four days. Now Bethany was near Jerusalem, some two miles away, and many of the Jews had come to Martha and Mary to console them about their brother. When Martha heard that Jesus was coming, she went and met him, while Mary stayed at home. Martha said to Jesus, 'Lord, if you had been here, my brother would not have died. But even now I know that God will give you whatever you ask of him.' Jesus said to her, 'Your brother will rise again.' Martha said to him, 'I know that he will rise again in the resurrection on the last day.' Jesus said to her, 'I am the resurrection and the life. Those who believe in me, even though they die, will live, and everyone who lives and believes in me will never die. Do you believe this?' She said to him, 'Yes, Lord, I believe that you are the Messiah, the Son of God, the one coming into the world.'

When she had said this, she went back and called her sister Mary, and told her privately, 'The Teacher is here and is calling for you.' And when she heard it, she got up quickly and went to him. Now Jesus had not yet come to the village, but was still at the place where Martha had met him. The Jews who were with her in the house, consoling her, saw Mary get up quickly and go out. They followed her because they thought that she was going to the tomb to weep there. When Mary came where Jesus was and saw him, she knelt at his feet and said to him, 'Lord, if you had been here, my brother would not have died.' When Jesus saw her weeping, and the Jews who came with her also weeping, he was greatly disturbed in spirit and deeply moved. He said, 'Where have you laid him?' They said to him, 'Lord, come and see.' Jesus began to weep. So the Jews said, 'See how he loved him!' But some of them said, 'Could not he who opened the eyes of the blind man have kept this man from dying?'

Then Jesus, again greatly disturbed, came to the tomb. It was a cave, and a stone was lying against it. Jesus said, 'Take away the stone.' Martha, the sister of the dead man, said to him, 'Lord, already there is a stench because he has been dead four days.' Jesus said to her, 'Did I not tell you that if you believed, you would see the glory of God?' So they took away the stone. And Jesus looked upwards and said, 'Father, I thank you for having heard me. I knew that you always hear me, but I have said this for the sake of the crowd standing here, so that they may believe that you sent me.' When he had said this, he cried with a loud voice, 'Lazarus, come out!' The dead man came out, his hands and feet bound with strips of cloth, and his face wrapped in a cloth. Jesus said to them, 'Unbind him, and let him go.'

Many of the Jews therefore, who had come with Mary and had seen what Jesus did, believed in him.

John 11.1-45

Confession

God shows his love for us in that,
while we were still sinners,
Christ died for us.

Let us then show our love for him
by confessing our sins in penitence and faith.

O God, you know my foolishness,
and my sins are not hidden from you.

Lord, have mercy.
Lord, have mercy.

Let not the flood overwhelm me
nor the depths swallow me up.
let not the pit shut its mouth upon me.

Christ, have mercy.
Christ, have mercy.

Hear me, O Lord, as your loving kindness is good.
turn to me as your compassion is great.

Lord, have mercy.
Lord, have mercy.

or

Lord Jesus Christ,
we confess we have failed you as did your disciples.
We ask for your mercy and your help.

When we take our ease
rather than watch with you.
Lord, forgive us.
Christ have mercy.

When we bestow a kiss of peace
yet nurse enmity in our hearts.
Lord, forgive us.
Christ have mercy.

When we strike at those who hurt us
rather than stretch out our hands to bless.
Lord, forgive us.
Christ have mercy.

When we deny that we know you
for fear of the world and its scorn.
Lord, forgive us.
Christ have mercy.

Collect

Most merciful God,
who by the death and resurrection of your Son Jesus
Christ
delivered and saved the world:
grant that by faith in him who suffered on the cross
we may triumph in the power of his victory;
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.

or

Gracious Father,
you gave up your Son
out of love for the world:
lead us to ponder the mysteries of his passion,
that we may know eternal peace
through the shedding of our Saviour's blood,
Jesus Christ our Lord.

Post Communion

Lord Jesus Christ,
you have taught us
that what we do for the least of our brothers and
sisters
we do also for you:
give us the will to be the servant of others
as you were the servant of all,
and gave up your life and died for us,
but are alive and reign, now and for ever.

or

God of every time and place,
you hold each moment and shape each day;
by the gentleness of your Spirit
transform us,
with the gifts of your Spirit
equip us,
in the boldness of your Spirit
send us out,
to serve you and transform the world,
in the name of Jesus Christ our Lord.

First reading

A reading from the book of Ezekiel

The hand of the LORD came upon me, and he brought me out by the spirit of the LORD and set me down in the middle of a valley; it was full of bones. He led me all around them; there were very many lying in the valley, and they were very dry. He said to me, 'Mortal, can these bones live?' I answered, 'O Lord GOD, you know.' Then he said to me, 'Prophesy to these bones, and say to them: O dry bones, hear the word of the LORD. Thus says the Lord GOD to these bones: I will cause breath to enter you, and you shall live. I will lay sinews on you, and will cause flesh to come upon you, and cover you with skin, and put breath in you, and you shall live; and you shall know that I am the LORD.'

So I prophesied as I had been commanded; and as I prophesied, suddenly there was a noise, a rattling, and the bones came together, bone to its bone. I looked, and there were sinews on them, and flesh had come upon them, and skin had covered them; but there was no breath in them. Then he said to me, 'Prophesy to the breath, prophesy, mortal, and say to the breath: Thus says the Lord GOD: Come from the four winds, O breath, and breathe upon these slain, that they may live.' I prophesied as he commanded me, and the breath came into them, and they lived, and stood on their feet, a vast multitude.

Then he said to me, 'Mortal, these bones are the whole house of Israel. They say, "Our bones are dried up, and our hope is lost; we are cut off completely." Therefore prophesy, and say to them, Thus says the Lord GOD: I am going to open your graves, and bring you up from your graves, O my people; and I will bring you back to the land of Israel. And you shall know that I am the LORD, when I open your graves, and bring you up from your graves, O my people. I will put my spirit within you, and you shall live, and I will place you on your own soil; then you shall know that I, the LORD, have spoken and will act, says the LORD.'

Ezekiel 37.1-14

Psalm

- 1 Out of the depths have I cried to you, O Lord;
Lord, hear my voice; ♦
let your ears consider well the voice of my supplication.
- 2 If you, Lord, were to mark what is done amiss, ♦
O Lord, who could stand?
- 3 But there is forgiveness with you, ♦
so that you shall be feared.
- 4 I wait for the Lord; my soul waits for him; ♦
in his word is my hope.
- 5 My soul waits for the Lord,
more than the night watch for the morning, ♦
more than the night watch for the morning.
- 6 O Israel, wait for the Lord, ♦
for with the Lord there is mercy;
- 7 With him is plenteous redemption ♦
and he shall redeem Israel from all their sins.

Psalm 130

Second reading

A reading from the letter of Paul to the Romans

To set the mind on the flesh is death, but to set the mind on the Spirit is life and peace. For this reason the mind

that is set on the flesh is hostile to God; it does not submit to God's law – indeed it cannot, and those who are in the flesh cannot please God.

But you are not in the flesh; you are in the Spirit, since the Spirit of God dwells in you. Anyone who does not have the Spirit of Christ does not belong to him. But if Christ is in you, though the body is dead because of sin, the Spirit is life because of righteousness. If the Spirit of him who raised Jesus from the dead dwells in you, he who raised Christ from the dead will give life to your mortal bodies also through his Spirit that dwells in you.

Romans 8.6-11

Gospel

Hear the Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ according to John

When Jesus arrived at the house of Lazarus in Bethany, he found that Lazarus had already been in the tomb four days. Now Bethany was near Jerusalem, some two miles away, and many of the Jews had come to Martha and Mary to console them about their brother. When Martha heard that Jesus was coming, she went and met him, while Mary stayed at home. Martha said to Jesus, 'Lord, if you had been here, my brother would not have died. But even now I know that God will give you whatever you ask of him.' Jesus said to her, 'Your brother will rise again.' Martha said to him, 'I know that he will rise again in the resurrection on the last day.' Jesus said to her, 'I am the resurrection and the life. Those who believe in me, even though they die, will live, and everyone who lives and believes in me will never die. Do you believe this?' She said to him, 'Yes, Lord, I believe that you are the Messiah, the Son of God, the one coming into the world.'

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John 11.17-29, 32-45

