

Christ Church, Ipswich
Sunday 9th March 2025
Worship for the First Sunday of Lent

Hello. I hope all is well. Let us worship God together:

Call to worship and opening prayer

As we gather together, may we feel among us
 the presence of the Father, Son and Holy Spirit,
 in our worship, our prayer,
 in hearing God's Word
 and in the fellowship we shall enjoy. **Amen.**

God of the mountains and the sky,
 of our minds and our hearts:
 we look up to you in awe;
 we reach out to you in longing;
 we worship you in gratitude;
 we sing to you in joy.
 For you are our God,
 and we are your people –
 today and always. **Amen.**

GG 21 Name of all Majesty

1 Name of all majesty,
 fathomless mystery,
 King of the ages
 by angels adored;
 power and authority,
 splendour and dignity,
 bow to His mastery,
 Jesus is Lord!

2 Child of our destiny,
 God from eternity,
 love of the Father
 on sinners outpoured;
 see now what God has done
 sending His only Son,
 Christ the beloved One,
 Jesus is Lord!

3 Saviour of Calvary,
 costliest victory,
 darkness defeated
 and Eden restored;
 born as a man to die,
 nailed to a cross on high,
 cold in the grave to lie,
 Jesus is Lord!

4 Source of all sovereignty,
 light, immortality,
 life everlasting
 and heaven assured;
 so with the ransomed, we
 praise Him eternally,
 Christ in His majesty –
 Jesus is Lord!

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A prayer of adoration

Living God, creator and sustainer of the world,
 we pledge to live well and with humility, in harmony with your creation;
 we pledge to look to your Son for truth and guidance;
 we pledge to make time for prayer and to be open to your Holy Spirit;
 we pledge to read your Word, and to be guided by the example of your Son.
 We give you our lives to be transformed as we worship and adore you,
 and we thank you for your love. **Amen.**

A prayer of confession

God of all creation,
forgive us when we lose perspective
and our world shrinks to our size, not yours.

Forgive us and nourish our vision.

Forgive us when we look away from you when we feel empty
and grasp what is not ours to take.

Forgive us and nourish our vision.

Forgive us when the choices we make are self-centred,
and we are indifferent to the needs of the wider community.

Forgive us and nourish our vision.

In Jesus' name we pray. **Amen.**

Assurance of forgiveness

God of all,
you transfigure our smallness with your greatness;
you unlock our limitations with your grace;
you calm our confusion with your faithfulness;
you forgive our mistakes with your generosity;
you inspire our dreams with your love –
enabling, empowering and encouraging us
to serve you and your whole creation
with all we are and all we have.

In Jesus' name. **Amen.**

A prayer of thanksgiving

Father God, thank you for your Word,
an effective weapon that equips us for survival.
We give thanks for the unshakeable truths
on which we can stand firm.

Lord Jesus, we praise you for always watching over us,
through good times, bad times and desert times.
Thank you that when we falter all we need do
is cry out to you and we are heard.

Holy Spirit, thank you that no matter what hardships we encounter,
whatever dry wilderness places we may find ourselves in,
you always guide us through.

We praise you for the angelic help we receive in times of
weariness from neighbours, friends, colleagues or strangers.
Father, Son and Holy Spirit,
thank you for helping us to survive and thrive. **Amen.**

The Lord's Prayer

Our Father, who art in heaven, hallowed be thy name; thy kingdom come; thy will be done;
on earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread, and forgive us our trespasses,
as we forgive those who trespass against us. Lead us not into temptation; but deliver us from evil.
For thine is the kingdom, the power and the glory, for ever and ever. **Amen.**

Family Talk

R&S 598 Will your anchor hold in the storms of life

1 Will your anchor hold in the storms of life
when the clouds unfold their wings of strife?
When the strong tides lift, and the cables strain,
will your anchor drift, or firm remain?

*We have an anchor that keeps the soul
steadfast and sure while the billows roll;
fastened to the Rock which cannot move,
grounded firm and deep in the Saviour's love!*

2 Will your anchor hold in the straits of fear,
when the breakers roar and the reef is near?
While the surges rave, and the wild winds blow,
shall the angry waves your boat o'erflow?

3 Will your anchor hold in the floods of death,
when the waters cold chill your latest breath?
On the rising tide you can never fail;
while your anchor holds you will still prevail.

4 Will your eyes behold through the morning light
the city of gold and the harbour bright?
Will you anchor safe by the heavenly shore,
when life's storms are past for evermore?

Priscilla J. Owens (1829-1907) altd.*

Our children and young people go to Junior Church with our love and blessing**Old Testament Reading Psalm 91:1-2, 9-16**

¹You who live in the shelter of the Most High,
who abide in the shadow of the Almighty,
²will say to the Lord, 'My refuge and my fortress;
my God, in whom I trust.'

⁹Because you have made the Lord your refuge,
the Most High your dwelling-place,
¹⁰no evil shall befall you,
no scourge come near your tent.
¹¹For he will command his angels concerning you
to guard you in all your ways.
¹²On their hands they will bear you up,
so that you will not dash your foot against a stone.
¹³You will tread on the lion and the adder,
the young lion and the serpent you will trample under foot.
¹⁴Those who love me, I will deliver;
I will protect those who know my name.
¹⁵When they call to me, I will answer them;
I will be with them in trouble,
I will rescue them and honour them.
¹⁶With long life I will satisfy them,
and show them my salvation.

Epistle Reading Romans 10:8b-13

⁸But what does it say?
'The word is near you,
on your lips and in your heart'
(that is, the word of faith that we proclaim); ⁹because if you confess with your lips that Jesus is Lord and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved. ¹⁰For one believes with the heart and so is justified, and one confesses with the mouth and so is saved. ¹¹The scripture says, 'No one who believes in him will be put to shame.' ¹²For there is no distinction between Jew and Greek; the same Lord is Lord of all and is generous to all who call on him. ¹³For, 'Everyone who calls on the name of the Lord shall be saved.'

Gospel Reading**Luke 4:1-13***The Temptation of Jesus*

⁴ Jesus, full of the Holy Spirit, returned from the Jordan and was led by the Spirit in the wilderness, ² where for forty days he was tempted by the devil. He ate nothing at all during those days, and when they were over, he was famished. ³ The devil said to him, 'If you are the Son of God, command this stone to become a loaf of bread.' ⁴ Jesus answered him, 'It is written, "One does not live by bread alone."' "

⁵ Then the devil led him up and showed him in an instant all the kingdoms of the world. ⁶ And the devil said to him, 'To you I will give their glory and all this authority; for it has been given over to me, and I give it to anyone I please.' ⁷ If you, then, will worship me, it will all be yours.' ⁸ Jesus answered him, 'It is written, "Worship the Lord your God, and serve only him."' "

⁹ Then the devil took him to Jerusalem, and placed him on the pinnacle of the temple, saying to him, 'If you are the Son of God, throw yourself down from here, ¹⁰ for it is written, "He will command his angels concerning you, to protect you",

¹¹ and

"On their hands they will bear you up, so that you will not dash your foot against a stone.' "

¹² Jesus answered him, 'It is said, "Do not put the Lord your God to the test.'" ¹³ When the devil had finished every test, he departed from him until an opportune time.

R&S 356 O Jesus, King most wonderful

1 O Jesus, King most wonderful,
thou conqueror renowned,
thou sweetness most ineffable,
in whom all joys are found!

2 Jesus, the very thought of thee
with sweetness fills the breast;
but sweeter far thy face to see,
and in thy presence rest.

3 O hope of every contrite heart,
O joy of all the meek,
to those who fall how kind thou art,
how good to those who seek!

4 But what to those who find? Ah, this
nor tongue nor pen can show;
the love of Jesus, what it is
none but his loved ones know.

5 When once thou visitest the heart
then truth begins to shine,
then earthly vanities depart,
then kindles love divine.

6 Thee may our tongues for ever bless,
thee may we love alone,
and ever in our lives express
the image of thine own.

7 Jesus, our only joy be thou,
as thou our prize wilt be;
Jesus, be thou our glory now,
and through eternity.

Latin, 12th cent.
tr. Edward Caswall (1814-78) altd

Reflection

A moment for reflection as Stephen plays for us

R&S 509 O Jesus, I have promised

1 O Jesus, I have promised
to serve thee to the end;
be thou for ever near me,
my Master and my Friend;
I shall not fear the battle
if thou art by my side,
nor wander from the pathway
if thou wilt be my guide.

2 O let me feel thee near me;
the world is ever near,
I see the sights that dazzle,
the tempting sounds I hear;
my foes are ever near me,
around me and within;
but, Jesus, draw thou nearer,
and shield my soul from sin.

3 O let me hear thee speaking
in accents clear and still,
above the storms of passion,
the murmurs of self-will.
O speak to reassure me,
to hasten or control;
O speak, and make me listen,
thou guardian of my soul.

4 O Jesus, thou hast promised,
to all who follow thee,
that where thou art in glory
there shall thy servant be;
O guide me, call me, draw me,
uphold me to the end;
O give me grace to follow,
my Saviour and my Friend.

John Ernest Bode (1816-74)*

Prayers

Lord, we acknowledge that we cannot live without you.

Give us each day our daily bread.

Lord, as we pause to pray, we ponder for a moment the meaning of wilderness... For some it will be a time of pain and travail. For others it will be a time of oasis and calm in a busy world. For others it will be a space for development and change. Lord, whatever shape our wilderness is taking in this season of our lives, help us to know your presence throughout the journey.

Lord, we acknowledge that we cannot live without you.

Give us each day our daily bread.

Lord, we first consider the wilderness as a place of pain and difficulty; a desert place where nothing seems to be growing and life is hard. We pray for those in that season right now. We particularly remember those who are sick, especially... We remember those who are sad because someone they love has died We pray for those who are just finding life tough for whatever reason. For each person we name out loud or in our hearts, we ask for your comfort and courage as they tread this difficult path.

Lord, we acknowledge that we cannot live without you.

Give us each day our daily bread.

Lord, we pray also for situations in the news this week that feel stale and dry. Those places which are no longer in the news but where poverty and hunger has been a reality for many, many years. Lord, we so often feel helpless in the face of these global problems. But Jesus showed us a way to trust you. Help us to follow his example.

Lord, we acknowledge that we cannot live without you.

Give us each day our daily bread.

We also pray for those who are trying to find you but keep getting pulled in other directions and are tempted away from following your path. We pray for those struggling with addiction; those who are in and out of prison; those who are homeless and feel they have no future. Lord, draw close to them, we pray, and give them wells of living water.

Lord, we acknowledge that we cannot live without you.

Give us each day our daily bread.

Lord, we bring to you situations in our world that need the oasis of calm and peace: Continuing war in Ukraine, Gaza, the DRC. Wars of words between world leaders...

And we remember those in our community who need to find peace in a busy world: we pray for teachers... for students... new parents... commuters... doctors and nurses in a busy hospital... all those we know (and maybe ourselves) who need this season to be a welcome time of rest.

Lord, we acknowledge that we cannot live without you.

Give us each day our daily bread.

Lord, we rejoice with those who are finding the wilderness a place of growth and joy right now. We pause to think of anything new we have learnt from you this week. What signs of new growth have we seen around us?: flowers/blossom/lambs? And what have we seen in our locality or on the news that has demonstrated new hope and the potential for flourishing?

Lord, we acknowledge that we cannot live without you.

Give us each day our daily bread.

Lord, challenge us at the start of this Lent to consider what we can do that will bring us closer to you. In the stillness now, we think of those situations where we *could* spend more time with you but *don't*. Perhaps our phone is just a little too close to hand; maybe checking our social media feeds is a little too tempting; or are we just too wedded to our work to carve out time to be with you? Lord, we know that we cannot thrive without nourishment from you. Give us the wisdom to see what we can put aside for now. May searching for you be our deepest treasure, even though it is a lifelong journey. Forgive us for the times when we are tempted away to seek for more immediate gratification...

Lord, we acknowledge that we cannot live without you.

Give us each day our daily bread.

Lord, help us this week, whatever our circumstances, to look for signs of hope and newness even in the tiniest of details. Help us to rejoice in even the seemingly insignificant achievements: getting out of bed when life is hard; running for that extra two minutes; getting that difficult maths problem right; smiling at the person on the checkout in the supermarket. Lord, you are with us in the big and small things of life, help us to recognise your presence in everything we do, in everyone we meet and wherever we go.

Lord, we acknowledge that we cannot live without you.

Give us each day our daily bread. Amen.

R&S 521 Lord of all hopefulness, Lord of all joy,

1 Lord of all hopefulness, Lord of all joy,
whose trust, ever child-like, no cares could destroy,
be there at our waking, and give us, we pray,
your bliss in our hearts, Lord, at the break of the day.

2 Lord of all eagerness, Lord of all faith,
whose strong hands were skilled at the plane and the lathe,
be there at our labours, and give us, we pray,
your strength in our hearts, Lord, at the noon of the day.

3 Lord of all kindness, Lord of all grace,
your hands swift to welcome, your arms to embrace,
be there at our homing, and give us, we pray,
your love in our hearts, Lord, at the eve of the day.

4 Lord of all gentleness, Lord of all calm,
whose voice is contentment, whose presence is balm,
be there at our sleeping, and give us, we pray,
your peace in our hearts, Lord, at the end of the day.

A sending out prayer

Lord Jesus,
 may we see you more clearly,
 love you more dearly
 and follow you more nearly
 day by day. **Amen.**

The Blessing

And may the blessing of God Almighty,
 Creator, Redeemer and Sustainer,
 be upon us and those we love, this day and always. **Amen.**

The Grace

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

Closing Hymn R&S 498 God be in my head

God be in my head,
 And in my understanding;
 God be in mine eyes,
 and in my looking;
 God be in my mouth,
 and in my speaking;
 God be in my heart,
 and in my thinking;
 God be at mine end,
 and at my departing.

Henry Walford Davies (1869–1941)