



Worship at Home – Sunday next before Lent – 14th February

Father God help us to come to you this morning with open and thankful hearts. Fill us with the joy and peace that comes with knowing you. Be with us as we walk in your light, rejoice in your love and reflect your glory.

Amen

Hymn 570: Praise the Lord, ye heav'ns adore him

Welcome

The Lord be with you,
and also with you

Prayer of Preparation

**Almighty God, to whom all hearts are open, all desires known and from whom no secrets are hidden: cleanse the thoughts of our hearts by the inspiration of your Holy Spirit, that we may perfectly love you and worthily magnify your holy name; through Christ our Lord.
Amen**

Prayer of Confession

Our Lord Jesus Christ said: The first commandment is this: "Hear, O Israel, the Lord our God is the only Lord. You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul, with all your mind, and with all your strength." The second is this: "Love your neighbour as yourself". There is no other commandment greater than these. On these two commandments hang all the law and the prophets.

Amen. Lord, have mercy.

Let us confess our sins in penitence and faith, firmly resolved to keep God's commandments and to live in love and peace with all.

Almighty God, our heavenly Father, we have sinned against you and against our neighbour in thought and word and deed, through negligence, through weakness, through our own deliberate fault. We are truly sorry and repent of all our sins. For the sake of your son Jesus Christ, who died for us, forgive us all that is past and grant that we may serve you in newness of life to the glory of your name. Amen

Lord have mercy

Lord have mercy

Christ have mercy

Christ have mercy

Lord have mercy

Lord have mercy

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**

Collect

Almighty Father, whose Son was revealed in majesty before he suffered death upon the cross: give us grace to perceive his glory, that we may be strengthened to suffer with him and be changed into his likeness, from glory to glory; who is alive and reigns with you, in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God, now and for ever. **Amen**

Old Testament Reading: 2 Kings 2: 1 – 12

Now when the LORD was about to take Elijah up to heaven by a whirlwind, Elijah and Elisha were on their way from Gilgal. Elijah said to Elisha, 'Stay here; for the LORD has sent me as far as Bethel.' But Elisha said, 'As the LORD lives, and as you yourself live, I will not leave you.' So they went down to Bethel. The company of prophets who were in Bethel came out to Elisha, and said to him, 'Do you know that today the LORD will take your master away from you?' And he said, 'Yes, I know; keep silent.'

Elijah said to him, 'Elisha, stay here; for the LORD has sent me to Jericho.' But he said, 'As the LORD lives, and as you yourself live, I will not leave you.' So, they came to Jericho. The company of prophets who were at Jericho drew near to Elisha, and said to him, 'Do you know that today the LORD will take your master away from you?' And he answered, 'Yes, I know; be silent.'

Then Elijah said to him, 'Stay here; for the LORD has sent me to the Jordan.' But he said, 'As the LORD lives, and as you yourself live, I will not leave you.' So, the two of them went on. Fifty men of the company of prophets also went, and stood at some distance from them, as they both were standing by the Jordan. Then Elijah took his mantle and rolled it up and struck the water; the water was parted to the one side and to the other, until the two of them crossed on dry ground.

When they had crossed, Elijah said to Elisha, 'Tell me what I may do for you, before I am taken from you.' Elisha said, 'Please let me inherit a double share of your spirit.' He responded, 'You have asked a hard thing; yet, if you see me as I am being taken from you, it will be granted you; if not, it will not.' As they continued walking and talking, a chariot of fire and horses of fire separated the two of them, and Elijah ascended in a whirlwind into heaven. Elisha kept watching and crying out, 'Father, father! The chariots of Israel and its horsemen!' But when he could no longer see him, he grasped his own clothes and tore them in two pieces.

Hymn 67: Be still, for the presence

Gospel Reading: Mark 9: 2 - 9

Hear the Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ according to Mark

Glory to you, O Lord

Six days later, Jesus took with him Peter and James and John, and led them up a high mountain apart, by themselves. And he was transfigured before them, and his clothes became dazzling white, such as no one on earth could bleach them. And there appeared to them Elijah with Moses, who were talking with Jesus. Then Peter said to Jesus, 'Rabbi, it is good for us to be here; let us make three dwellings, one for you, one for Moses, and one for Elijah.' He did not know what to say, for they were terrified. Then a cloud overshadowed them, and from the cloud there came a voice, 'This is my Son, the Beloved; listen to him!' Suddenly when they looked around, they saw no one with them anymore, but only Jesus. As they were coming down the mountain, he ordered them to tell no one about what they had seen, until after the Son of Man had risen from the dead.

This is the Gospel of the Lord.

Praise to you, O Christ

Sermon: Revd Petra Shakeshaft

Today is Valentine's day; the day when we think about love.

How do we know when people are in love?

When Paul and I met, I remember that people noticed a difference in both of us.

One of Paul's friends who hadn't seen him for a while, said he looked ten years younger – well, twenty-five years on, he doesn't anymore!

How do we know when people are in love?

Well, when they are in one another's company, they light up.

Jesus takes Peter, James and John up a high mountain.

While they are together, his appearance suddenly changes and he is transfigured before them.

His clothes became dazzling white, such as no one on earth could bleach them.

The vision is otherworldly, extraordinary ...

and with Jesus appear Moses and Elijah and Jesus seems to be talking to them.

I wonder if you have had the experience of hearing something, a piece of familiar Scripture, or a prayer, poem or words of a favourite hymn,

and suddenly the words are infused with new meaning;

suddenly the words link up with all sorts of other things and make a sense,

a truth you just hadn't seen before that seems to open up all sorts of possibilities,

or it may be a piece of music or a piece of art,

whose beauty moves you to the point of inexplicable tears.

And have you ever tried to recreate that moment,

to go back and read again, to listen again or look at again,

and it doesn't feel the same? The moment has gone.

Peter, I think is thus moved.

I believe that Peter suddenly understood something about Jesus,

about who he was, his connectedness to the Scriptures, the Prophets of old,

the things that were so familiar to Peter;

so familiar – and yet, he is suddenly drawn into something

far more profound and mysterious than he had imagined

as the veil is moved aside and he sees the extent, the depth, the height,

the fullness, the dazzling fullness of God's love.

Jesus shone with God's love, he was lit up with God's love and Peter sees it for the first time.

Peter wants to build three dwellings, one for Jesus and one each for Elijah and Moses. He wants to hold on to that moment; doesn't want it to slip away.

*Then a cloud overshadowed them, and from the cloud there came a voice,
'This is my Son, the Beloved; listen to him!'*

And the vision is gone. Jesus stands before them again, as he was, fully human, not dazzling, finite, not infinite, comprehensible, not incomprehensible.

In his book, *Celebrating Life*, Rabbi Jonathan Sacks says this:

The problem with faith is not God, but mankind.

The central task of religion is to create an opening in the soul.

Sacks then goes on to recall the construction of the tabernacle,

Israel's first collective 'house for God', and Solomon's own sense of bewilderment,

*But will God really dwell on earth? The heavens,
even the highest heaven cannot contain you. How much less this house I have built?*

As human, finite creatures, it is in our nature to want to understand;

to be able to define, pin down the mystery of God in terms of a material comprehensible world.

If we can do this, we can control, manipulate, guard, possess

and in so doing, we confine, diminish, veil, hide God from ourselves and others.

But God is beyond space and time.

Sacks also points out that when God commanded Moses to build the tabernacle He said,

I will dwell in them, not in it.

Sacks says this,

God lives not in the building but the builders;

not in holy places but in holy lives and deeds.

If we listen, God is closer to us than we are to ourselves.

If we do not, He is further away than the most distant star.

Religion is an elaborate discipline of paying attention.

Faith is the space we create for God.

High up on the mountainside, God's voice said,

'This is my Son, the Beloved; listen to him!'

Peter, James and John see the cloud clear away and Jesus reappear as he was

and so they make their way back down the mountainside

and into their lives; their messy, muddled, finite lives in the messy, muddled broken and finite world.

Jesus doesn't give his disciples straight answers.

Jesus takes them up mountains, or out on the sea in storms.

He asks them questions, tells them stories, heals people,

challenges traditions and authorities, unravels the Law and the prophets.

Listen to him, the voice says,

Listen to him and you will hear the voices of the prophets echo down the centuries.
Listen to him and you will hear not just Moses and Elijah,
but the voice of Isaiah, of Jeremiah, Ezekiel;
you'll hear the Psalms, the stories of the people,
the turning and returning, the brokenness and the healing,
the voice of God over the waters of creation.
Let there be light, and there was light -
And there was The Light dazzling on the mountainside.
Listen to him.

Faith is not about answers or certainty.
Sacks says,
[Faith] is the courage to live with uncertainty.
It is not knowing all the answers. It is often the strength to live with the questions ...
It is the knowledge that we are utterly vulnerable,
but that it is precisely in our vulnerability that we reach out to God.

Faith is listening to His voice, following him up the mountainside,
Opening ourselves to possibilities beyond our imagination,
waiting for those moments of the self-disclosure of God
when the veil draws back and we glimpse the extent of his love for us;
we see him shining with the bleached beyond whiteness of his love for us.

That's the thing about being loved, it makes us shine, makes us light up
it makes us lovely –

My song is love unknown; my Saviour's love to me
Love to the loveless shown, that they might lovely be.

We too, shine, radiant with love's light.
I'll leave these last words to Jonathan Sacks,

... We are a fragment of God's presence in the world ...
Knowing, we are known. Feeling we are felt, Acting we are acted upon.
If we make ourselves transparent to existence, then our lives too radiate that Divine presence
which, celebrating life, gives life to those whose lives we touch.

Go, light up the world with God's love.

Nicene Creed

We believe in one God, the Father, the Almighty, maker of heaven and earth, of all that is, seen and unseen.

We believe in one Lord, Jesus Christ, the only Son of God, eternally begotten of the Father, God from God, Light from Light, true God from true God, begotten, not made, of one Being with the Father; through him all things were made. For us and for our salvation he came down from heaven, was incarnate from the Holy Spirit and the Virgin Mary and was made man. For our sake he was crucified under Pontius Pilate; he suffered

death and was buried. On the third day he rose again in accordance with the Scriptures; he ascended into heaven and is seated at the right hand of the Father. He will come again in glory to judge the living and the dead, and his kingdom will have no end.

We believe in the Holy Spirit, the Lord, the giver of life, who proceeds from the Father and the Son, who with the Father and the Son is worshipped and glorified, who has spoken through the prophets.

We believe in one holy catholic and apostolic Church. We acknowledge one baptism for the forgiveness of sins. We look for the resurrection of the dead, and the life of the world to come. Amen.

Prayers

Today may bring for some a revelation of who their Valentine is. However, let us remember that God has shone His love and light in all our hearts in the loving face of Jesus Christ.

For Your church, Lord, we pray: for its Bishops, priests and deacons; for our Bishops, Stephen and Dagmar; for our Archdeacon, Alex; our Readers, Jose and Sara; Petra, our mainstay in the vacancy; our Wardens at St. Mary's and St. Peter's; and all who nourish what is going forward here.

For the upcoming season of Lent, we pray, that we may keep it well and happily; and for all planning ahead despite so many uncertainties about incumbency, government guidelines and conditions of life.

For the Mothers' Union forthcoming AGM, the Women's World Day of Prayer on various platforms and in various other parishes; and the Month of Accompanied Prayer starting next weekend, and for all participating to grow in prayer and grace.

Lord in Your mercy **Hear our prayer.**

"This is my Son; listen to Him." Mark 9:7

Lord, we pray to you for a world that does not want to listen to Your Son: for peace; for wisdom; and for sound diplomacy.

We remember countries seriously oppressed by the COVID pandemic, and all who legislate and advise with the aim of containing it and preserving life.

We remember relations between the UK and the European Union, and the issues with trade routes into Northern Ireland, and ask for constructive attitudes and solutions on all sides.

We remember all who campaign to improve care of others and care of our beautiful earth – and pray for ourselves with powers to say YES to many important initiatives.

Lord in Your mercy **Hear our prayer.**

Lord, You took 3 men with You to behold Your glory – and commissioned them to share with others.

We remember all those You have sent us to in this place, and pray for Your light and Your glory to be revealed among us.

We ask Your guidance for all our ideas, initiatives and dreams, and pray for all community connections at this time, and the role of our churches within them.

We pray for the work of AGE UK and their cafes in the village.

Lord in Your mercy **Hear our prayer.**

“Call on Me in the day of trouble; I will deliver You.” Psalm 50 – says today’s Psalm.

Lord, we pray for all whose need makes calling on You more difficult, including those who are sick:

-- Isobel Darling, Margaret Grey, Steve Burgess, their families and carers;

-- also Mavis, baptised in Addenbrooke’s Hospital, near the end of her journey;

-- all who suffer in isolation and sadness, cut off from families and friends;

-- all in Care Homes, such as our own Orchard House, and hospitals, who are without access to loved ones or nature

-- all who are at a crossroads, whether in learning, working or living arrangements;

-- all who are challenged or excluded when those around them celebrate romance and love.

Lord, please show us all You are the One Who draws us with cords of everlasting love:

Lord in Your mercy **Hear our prayer.**

Lord, we thank you that You are the God, not of the dead, but of the living, God of those we look back to and those we have lost, and God of all we shall be.

We thank You for those who have died, and pray for all approaching the end of life, their families and support figures.. and we ask for an encouragement from You that extends beyond this life.

Lord in Your mercy **Hear our prayer.**

Lord, You are coming in perfect beauty.

All these pangs of birth

Will turn to joy as our whole world is born

Again in You. The pain, the want, the dearth,

The dark will vanish in that rising dawn..

And even now we hear Your voice. ...

through our conscience, and our reason

through deep imagination

You call us to discern Your time and season.

..adapted from Malcolm Guite Psalm 50 in “David’s Crown” Canterbury Press, 2021

**Merciful Father, accept these prayers for the sake of Your Son, our Saviour Jesus Christ.
Amen**

The Peace

Take a moment and offer a prayer of thanksgiving to God for each other and our church family church community. Maybe call or text someone who would enjoy sharing the peace with you.

May the God of peace make you perfect and holy, that you may be kept safe and blameless in spirit, soul and body, for the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ.

The peace of the Lord be always with you.

And also with you.

Hymn 70: Be thou my vision

Lord's Prayer

**Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your name,
Your kingdom come, your will be done, on earth as in heaven.**

Give us today our daily bread.

Forgive us our sins, as we forgive those who sin against us.

Lead us not into temptation but deliver us from evil.

For the kingdom, the power, and the glory are yours.

Now and for ever.

Amen.

Hymn 365: Jesus, these eyes have never seen

Remembering the Lord's Supper

Take a moment to remember the final meal that Jesus shared with his disciples. As we think about this meal - with the washing of feet and bread and wine shared with friends - we remember Jesus' offering of himself on the cross. We rejoice in his resurrection from the dead and look forward to the coming of God's Kingdom. While we cannot receive Christ in the sacraments in the usual way, we can be the presence of Christ in our homes and communities and we can be a praying presence wherever we are.

Hymn 419: Shine, Jesus shine

Closing Prayer

Lord God, we thank you for this time of worship; may your love and peace remain with us in the coming days. Be with us in all that we will think, say and do so that our lives may reflect your glory. We ask this in the name of your Son Jesus Christ. **Amen.**

Go in peace to love and serve the Lord

In the name of Christ. Amen