**Sunday 21st February** WORSHIP AT HOME: 1st in Lent **Mark 1.9-15**

Welcome to our act of Worship

A Prayer of Approach

To you, O Lord, we lift up our hearts,  
offering worship and praise.  
Show us your path.  
Teach us to follow.  
Guide us in your truth.  
For our hope is in you.  
**Amen.**

Call to worship Psalm 25v1-2a, 4-5

1 To you, O Lord, I lift up my soul.  
2 O my God, in you I trust;

4 Make me to know your ways, O Lord;  
   teach me your paths.  
5 Lead me in your truth, and teach me,  
   for you are the God of my salvation…

HYMN

**Amazing grace, How sweet the sound**  
That saved a wretch like me.  
I once was lost, but now I am found,  
Was blind, but now I see.  
  
'Twas grace that taught my heart to fear,  
And grace my fears relieved.  
How precious did that grace appear  
The hour I first believed.  
  
Through many dangers, toils and snares  
I have already come,  
'Tis grace has brought me safe thus far  
And grace will lead me home.  
  
The Lord has promised good to me  
His word my hope secures;  
He will my shield and portion be,  
As long as life endures.  
  
When we've been there ten thousand years  
Bright shining as the sun,  
We've no less days to sing God's praise  
Than when we've first begun.

HP215, MP31, RS92, STF440

(Some of the hymn books widely used in the Wiltshire United Area)

*Prayers of Praise*

Jesus Saviour,

You came to share our lives,

Crossed the bridge from Creator to creation,

Took on flesh and blood,

And called us your sisters and brothers;

For us you suffered upon the cross and broke the power of death to set us free to become whole in our humanity and to live in your way.

To you belongs all glory, honour and praise

from all peoples in all places and for all time. **Amen.**

*Prayer of Confession*

God of justice,  
do not remember our sins,  
our transgressions, our offences,  
and the failings of our community and nation.  
Remember us according to your love.  
In your compassion, forgive us our sins,  
and teach us to be faithful to your ways.  
Give us humility and wisdom,  
that we might journey through Lent  
as a people worthy of your name,  
and that of your son, Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

HYMN

**From heav’n You came, helpless Babe**  
Entered our world, Your glory veiled;  
Not to be served but to serve  
And give Your life that we might live

*This is our God, the Servant King  
He calls us now to follow Him  
To bring our lives as a daily offering  
Of worship to the Servant King*

There in the garden of tears  
My heavy load He chose to bear;  
His heart with sorrow was torn  
‘Yet not my will but Yours,’ He said  
  
Come see His hands and His feet  
The scars that speak of sacrifice;  
Hands that flung stars into space  
To cruel nails surrendered  
  
So let us learn how to serve  
And in our lives enthrone Him;  
Each other’s needs to prefer  
For it is Christ we’re serving

HP, MP162, RS522, STF272

Ministry of the Word of God

Lectionary Bible readings for RCL Lent 1 Year B

Genesis 9.8-17; Psalm 25.1-10; 1 Peter 3.18-22; **Mark 1.9-15**

**In those days Jesus came from Nazareth of Galilee and was baptized by John in the Jordan. 10And just as he was coming up out of the water, he saw the heavens torn apart and the Spirit descending like a dove on him. 11And a voice came from heaven, ‘You are my Son, the Beloved; with you I am well pleased.’**

**12 And the Spirit immediately drove him out into the wilderness. 13He was in the wilderness for forty days, tempted by Satan; and he was with the wild beasts; and the angels waited on him.**

**14 Now after John was arrested, Jesus came to Galilee, proclaiming the good news of God, 15and saying, ‘The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God has come near; repent, and believe in the good news.’**

This is the Gospel of Christ.

**Praise to Christ our Lord.**

Reflection

On Tuesday wearing full PPE, I visited a young man in his early twenties, who is in Intensive Care, sedated and on a ventilator, due to having Covid. As often as the chaplains are able, we facilitate a video call with his mother. As well as being able to see her son I held the phone next to his ear so she could speak to him before she and I prayed.

His whole family have had Covid, some have been in hospital, all are still recovering, yet in their debilitated state they seek to hold a 24hour prayer vigil each day for the young man. Medically he is not expected to recover.

As I looked at the absolute anguish in his mother’s face it reminded me of Mary at the foot of the cross. Also etched into her face was wilderness.

Wilderness is where Jesus is today and will remain for 40 days and we are encouraged to journey there with him. That is not easy this Lent, because within the last 12 months we have each experienced too much of it in our own lives due to Covid.

**12 And the Spirit immediately drove him out into the wilderness.**

Wilderness in the Bible is a place on the edge. It can be a place of conflict or, a place of the unexpected; a place where little is hidden, much is exposed. It is a place of activity simply to survive, but also a place where one is passive - where events happen, where suffering is endured which is beyond the control of those who experience it.

It is very easy to conclude that ‘wilderness’ is a singularly negative place. But the Bible would suggest that that is not so. It can be a place of refuge, of miracles, guidance or revelation; in short, a place where God’s glory is revealed. You only have to think of the episodes from Exodus to recognise this - pillars of fire and cloud, manna from heaven, water from the rock, fire and thunder on the mountain, the shining face of Moses himself.

**12 And the Spirit immediately drove him out into the wilderness.**Jesus, Son of God chooses to identify himself with the experience of human beings - to endure what they endure, to suffer what they suffer. Too often we think only of Jesus’ sufferings in Holy Week, but they appear in the blistering heat and freezing nights of the wilderness.

If we are utterly honest, and this is painful to write as well as read - the wilderness experience is part of being human. There are times when everyone can feel out on a limb, abandoned by friends and God, lonely, attacked by demons, real or imaginary, lost and wandering aimlessly.

It is an experience known not only by individuals, but also communities. Think of the millions of refugees, displaced by war and conflict – in Syria, Yemen, South Sudan and Myanmar(Burma).

Lent challenges us to journey into the wilderness with Christ but to recognise the wilderness - not solely as a place of suffering and difficulty - but as a place where we may encounter God. Hold in your minds the Footprints story, *‘When you saw only one set of footprints in the sand, it was there that I carried you’.* That is the story I used with that young man in the video call with his mother in Intensive Care on Tuesday.

Prayer of Response:

Creator God, you made us in your image  
to be your people, wherever we go.  
This coming week, whatever we experience,  
wherever we find ourselves,  
help us to know that you are with us –  
guiding, revealing and sustaining – always.  
**Amen.**

HYMN *T Gatesgarth*

Give to me, Lord, a thankful heart  
And a discerning mind;  
Give, as I play the Christian’s part,  
The strength to finish what I start  
And act on what I find.  
  
When, in the rush of days, my will  
Is habit bound and slow,  
Help me to keep in vision, still,  
What love and power and peace can fill  
A life that trusts in you.  
  
By your divine and urgent claim,  
And by your human face,  
Kindle our sinking hearts to flame,  
And as you teach the world your name  
Let it become your place.  
  
Jesus, with all your church I long  
To see your kingdom come:  
Show me your way of righting wrong  
And turning sorrow into song  
Until you bring me home.

HP548, MP, RS497, STF520

Our Prayers

As we walk into the long weeks of Lent,  
we begin a journey into the wilderness:  
may your Spirit rest upon us.  
We travel from suffering to hope: through death to new life.  
As we look to the example of Jesus,  
who in the wilderness chose the difficult path,  
help us to know that you are with us.

Though the way ahead may be hard and we so often falter and fail, strengthen us and teach us to trust in you.

Your kingdom comes near to those who call on your name; your pathway is surrounded by love.  
**Teach us to walk in it**

We walk in our troubled world,  
full of anxiety at the conflict we see -  
in Iraq, in Iran, in the Sahel region,  
in Myanmar, Somalia and in Yemen:  
bring your peace we pray.  
We are aware of the finite resources of our earth:  
may we limit our destructive habits.  
As we look to the example of Jesus,  
who lived in simplicity and trust,  
and as we are asked again to follow him;  
may we free ourselves from all that holds us back,  
and trust in your promise that you will never leave us,

Your kingdom comes near to those who call on your name;  
your pathway is surrounded by love.  
**Teach us to walk in it**

We walk in separation,  
apart from friends and those we love:  
give us strength to endure in hope.  
We pray especially for all who are burdened by loneliness;  
for all who are in pain;  
for the bereaved and the despairing;  
the sick and the dying:  
may we work to make our communities places of warmth and friendship  
where all are included and each one finds a place.  
As we look to the example of Jesus,  
who welcomed the least and the lost  
and brought the overlooked into the light,  
may we extend our circle of belonging  
and believe that you love is big enough for all to enter in.  
                 
Your kingdom comes near to those who call on your name;  
your pathway is surrounded by love.  
**Teach us to walk in it**

We walk in hope for a future  
as the rollout of the vaccine continues.  
May we be mindful of countries yet to begin vaccination,  
and countries who cannot afford the vaccines,  
and we ask that governments would enable fair distribution.  
When we begin to emerge from crisis,  
may we work to build a better world where the poorest are protected.  
As we look to the example of Jesus,  
who placed such great value on children,  
may we create a space where the young can dream again,  
and all of us can grow, rest and be secure.

Your kingdom comes near to those who call on your name;  
your pathway is surrounded by love.  
**Teach us to walk in it**

In love you made us;  
in love you call us;  
in love you lead us –  
through this world,  
through sorrow and joy,  
until we see you face to face.

Your kingdom comes near to those who call on your name;  
your pathway is surrounded by love.  
**Teach us to walk in it. 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.  
And 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.**

HYMN *T Meine Hoffnung*

**All my hope on God is founded**;  
he doth still my trust renew.  
Me through change and chance he guideth,  
only good and only true.  
God unknown,  
he alone  
calls my heart to be his own.

Human pride and earthly glory,  
sword and crown betray his trust;  
what with care and toil he buildeth,  
tower and temple, fall to dust.  
But God's power,  
hour by hour,  
is my temple and my tower.

God's great goodness aye endureth,  
deep his wisdom, passing thought:  
splendour, light, and life attend him,  
beauty springeth out of naught.  
Evermore  
from his store  
new-born worlds rise and adore.

Daily doth the Almighty giver  
bounteous gifts on us bestow;  
his desire our soul delighteth,  
pleasure leads us where we go.  
Love doth stand  
at his hand;  
joy doth wait on his command.

Still from earth to God eternal  
sacrifice of praise be done,  
high above all praises praising  
for the gift of Christ his Son.  
Christ doth call  
one and all:  
ye who follow shall not fall.

HP63, MP16, RS586, STF455

Blessing

May you know God’s peace over all that troubles you.  
May you know that Jesus is with you on your journey in the week to come.  
May you know the Holy Spirit strengthening and sustaining you, this day and forever more.  
**Amen**

The Gospel for Little People

Using simple actions (*italics*)

When John baptized Jesus,  
*Mime pouring water.*  
the Holy Spirit came down like a dove,  
*Flutter hands down*.  
and a voice came from heaven:  
*Cup ear*.  
‘You are my beloved Son.’  
*Hug yourself*.  
The Holy Spirit sent Jesus into the  
wilderness.  
*Shoo with hands*.  
He stayed there for 40 days.  
*Show 10 fingers four times*.  
Wild animals were there,  
*Roar*.  
and the angels came to care for him.  
*Flap wings*.

Rev David Coppard Superintendent @ Wiltshire United Area

Team Chaplain @ Musgrove Park Hospital, Taunton

***Our churches may not all be open, but the Church is active and alive.***

*This is service is offered to any and all, with love and prayers.*

**PLEASE NOTE** There will not be a Service on March 7th as I am on holiday.

CCL LICENCE

Steeple Ashton Methodist CCL 291605

Warminster United CCL 1221052

Westbury Methodist CCL 781988

Westbury URC CCL 293641