**21st February 2021 10.30 am First Sunday in Lent Kath**

**Welcome**

**Call to worship**

Psalm 25: To you God we offer our prayers.

In you we trust as we journey with you day by day.

**Hymn No. M.P. 48 Be still and know**

Be still and know that I am God,

Be still and know that I am God,

Be still and know that I am God.

I am the Lord that healeth thee.

I am the Lord that healeth thee.

I am the Lord that healeth thee.

In Thee, O Lord, I put my trust.

In Thee, O Lord, I put my trust.

In Thee, O Lord, I put my trust.

Anon CCLI 150801

**Opening Prayer & Lord’s Prayer**

Dear God, journey with us as we remember why your Son turned his back on Galilee and strode towards Jerusalem.

Journey with us and open our eyes to try to understand his commitment,

his fears and questions, his love and sacrifice.

By your spirit within every part of our worship speak to us so that Jesus’ example may be so much part of our experience that our own commitment

will be stronger, wiser and more gracious.

May this time of Lent renew and refresh us so that each day is lived nearer to you and each of our relationships is more reflective of your love

Dear God, Your commitment to us is complete. We see it in the life, death and resurrection of Jesus.

Our commitment to you is often mixed we give you part and keep part.

Help us through Lent to journey with Jesus to Calvary so that our commitment becomes clearer and our love more complete. Amen

We share the prayer Jesus taught us….

**We share our Mission Prayer & dedicate our monetary offering and ourselves to God’s work and witness in this place where he calls us to be.**

**Hymn No M.P. 201 Guide me O thou great Jehovah**

Guide me, O Thou great Jehovah,

pilgrim through this barren land;

I am weak, but Thou art mighty,

hold me with Thy powerful hand

Bread of heaven,

feed me now and evermore.

Open now the crystal fountain

whence the healing stream doth flow,

let the fiery, cloudy pillar

lead me all my journey through:

strong deliverer,

be Thou still my strength and shield.

When I tread the verge of Jordan,

bid my anxious fears subside;

death of death, and hell's destruction,

land me safe on Canaan's side:

songs of praises,

I will ever give to Thee.

v 1 tr PETER WILLIAMS (1722 96) altd

vv 2 3 tr WILLIAM WILLIAMS (or JOHN WILLIAMS, 1754 1828) altd CCLI 150801

**Reading OT** Genesis 9 v 8 - 17

**Reading NT** Mark 1 v 9 - 15

**Hymn No M.P. 181 God forgave my sin**

God forgave my sin in Jesus’ name;

I’ve been born again in Jesus’ name,

and in Jesus’ name I come to you

to share His love as He told me to.

He said:

‘Freely, freely you have received,

freely, freely give;

go in My name and because you believe,

others will know that I live.’

All power is given in Jesus’ name

in earth and heaven in Jesus’ name;

and in Jesus’ name I come to you

to share His power as He told me to.

He said:

‘Freely, freely you have received,

freely, freely give;

go in My name and because you believe,

others will know that I live.’

Carol Owens © 1972 Bud John Songs/EMI Christian MusicPublishing/CopyCare CCLI 150801

**Sermon: The right time has come**

It seems that the story of Noah is the favourite one of many children and young people, perhaps because of the sense of bringing all the different types of animals together and saving them from extinction.

When I led a Pilots group we tried to find an animal for every letter of the alphabet and as you might expect Q and X were problems but so were U and surprisingly N. For N, Newt was suggested and for U, Unicorn but one is really an amphibian and the other a mythical animal so a little challenge if you come across an animal with a name beginning with any of those 4 letters please let me know.

We tend to focus much more on those who were saved in the Noah story and less on those who perished and put aside those more difficult thoughts that any disaster such as that was seen as an act of God and particularly a punishment for human waywardness. The passage we read reflects first of all the sadness of a God seeing the majority of the human race die and only a small number saved. Sadness because they were all made in his image, sadness because he loved them as individuals, sadness that, as with ourselves, sometimes they didn’t behave the way they should. So there is the deep sadness of loss but the great joy of bringing Noah, his family and all the animals safely through the flood and enabling them to begin to recreate the species that would inhabit the earth.

There is also the joy of the promise that this new beginning will never be under threat from a similar disaster happening again and the rainbow we still see is God’s promise that even though there will be the rain the earth needs there will never be another flood like that one. That is a promise that still stands for us today.

When we then turn to the beginning of Mark’s gospel we have the preparation for the beginning of Jesus ministry.

The other gospels give us much more detail but in his urgency of writing Mark gives his readers what are only the bare outlines and yet the important facts as Jesus first approached John at the Jordan for Baptism. No detail about the conversation they had but the simplest of stories with an amazing depth of meaning. Jesus identifying himself with his people getting alongside them and being baptised like them even though there was no real need for him to do so. They were coming to repent and make a new beginning but, as the Son of God, it was neither necessary for him to repent nor to receive God’s forgiveness but the act of baptism symbolised this point of a new beginning for him and that was reinforced by the descending upon him of the Holy Spirit and the voice of God confirming who he was, why he had come and how the timing was right for him to begin his ministry. However, before that ministry could begin there was a time of preparation to come and the Holy Spirit led Jesus out into the wilderness for 40 days. Again, no detail from Mark but we know about the temptations from the other gospels.

**Firstly** - turning stones into bread.

To have fed himself would have been the first step to seeing his own needs as more important than the needs of those around him. And, what would start with a piece of bread could only lead to bigger things. Jesus, in the whole of his ministry, never did a miracle to help himself.

**Secondly** – leaping off the top of the Temple.

To encourage people to follow him because of the dramatic things he did was not the way of his ministry. The next event would always have to be greater than the last and anyway, Jesus came to be a suffering servant not a warrior king.

**Thirdly** – ruling the world.

The world would be his but only after going through the dreadful experience and pain of his crucifixion and resurrection. Bowing down to evil was not a shortcut he could take because it would condemn mankind to hell not open the door to heaven.

And so the preparation was complete. The timing was right, the people were ready for a new thing and Jesus had proved he understood the ministry he was to undertake. And that is what he did. He immediately went to Galilee where he would begin choosing the group of disciples who would be the central core of his followers and the ones from whom the church would be built.

Jesus message was just the same as that preached by John the Baptist; with the added phrase ‘The right time has come, ‘Turn away from your sins and believe the good news.’

So as we begin our Lenten journey towards Easter and though we are essentially good people there are those things in our lives which get in the way of our relationship with God. Things we do that we should not and things we don’t do that we should. Things we say that we should not and things we don’t say that we should. That is because we are not perfect and the period of Lent is an opportunity for us all to reflect on the wonderful things God has done for us all and help us to be ready to celebrate Easter.

We could put it off for a week or two but, as Jesus said to his listeners

“The right time has come”.

**As followers of Jesus our response must be:**

**“Now is the time for us to prepare.”**

**Prayers of Intercession**

Lord we would stay in Galilee, where the fishing is good and the people are crowding to see you. But you have other priorities - it’s time to move on and respond to the call.

**Help us to trust and obey.**

Lord, we would stay at Caesarea Philippi, where it’s safe and we can talk in peace. But you have other priorities - Jerusalem waits for a Saviour.

**Help us to trust and obey.**

Lord we would stay on the Mount of Transfiguration, where we can worship the past and glory in the present. But you have other priorities - down below people need healing.

**Help us to trust and obey.**

Lord we would stay at Bethany, where the hospitality is good and there are friends and laughter. but you have other priorities - the world needs to see your love.

**Help us to trust and obey.**

Lord we would stay within familiar walls, where fellowship is safe and sharing is comfortable. But you have other priorities - You need us to follow you wherever you lead.

**Help us to trust and obey.**

Where Christ walks - **We will follow**

Where Christ stumbles - **We will stop**

Where Christ cries - **We will listen**

Where Christ suffers - **We will hurt**

Where Christ dies - **We will bow our heads in sorrow**

Where Christ rises again in glory - **We will share his endless joy**

There is no other way to follow - **He is the only way.** Amen.

Dear God

We pray for all those exploring faith today those preparing for baptism and for those around the world persecuted for their faith. May they know you are with them at all times in all places.

We pray for the community you have placed us in, for those who need care, for those who support and look after them, for all those who provide a listening ear and a helping hand. May they feel the presence of Christ alongside them.

We pray especially today at the beginning of fairtrade fortnight, for all involved in fairtrade, for blessings for all the online events of fairtrade fortnight and for the commitment of those who promote fairtrade day by day.

We commend to your eternal arms all those who have come to the end of their earthly life recently. Strengthen and give peace to their loved ones and enable us all to support each other at times of grief as well as in the times of joy.

We pray for ourselves through this time of Lent that we will find renewed strength to resist temptation and will grow closer to you and to one another as we journey to Easter together.

Accept our prayers in the name of your Son, our Saviour, Jesus Christ. Amen

**Hymn No. M.P. 760 When we walk with the Lord**

When we walk with the Lord

in the light of His word,

what a glory He sheds on our way!

While we do His good will,

He abides with us still,

and with all who will trust and obey.

*Trust and obey,*

*for there’s no other way*

*to be happy in Jesus,*

*but to trust and obey.*

Not a shadow can rise,

not a cloud in the skies,

but His smile quickly drives it away;

not a doubt nor a fear,

not a sigh nor a tear,

can abide while we trust and obey.

*Trust and obey...*

Not a burden we bear,

not a sorrow we share,

but our toil He doth richly repay;

not a grief nor a loss,

not a frown nor a cross,

but is blest if we trust and obey.

*Trust and obey...*

But we never can prove

the delights of His love,

until all on the altar we lay;

for the favour He shows,

and the joy He bestows

are for them who will trust and obey.

*Trust and obey...*

Then in fellowship sweet,

we will sit at His feet,

or we’ll walk by His side in the way.

What He says we will do,

where He sends we will go,

never fear, only trust and obey.

*Trust and obey...*

John Henry Sammis (1846-1919) CCLI 150801

**Blessing:** We trust God and proclaim the Good news of Jesus Christ whatever each day brings. May the blessing of God, Father Son and Holy Spirit be with each one of us now and forever more. Amen