

The Methodist Church

Bury St Edmunds Circuit.

Worship Sheet for 21st February 2021
First Sunday in Lent

Welcome to worship

We still ourselves ready for worship, to focus on God and his loving presence with us.

Call to Worship:

We use week one of our Lent liturgy.



Hymn: StF 236 Forty days and forty nights

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=QmXn_0c0yJs

1 Forty days and forty nights
you were fasting in the wild;
forty days and forty nights
tempted and yet undefiled.

2 Burning heat throughout the day,
bitter cold when light had fled;
prowling beasts around your way,
stones your pillow, earth your bed.

3 Shall not we your trials share,
learn your discipline of will;
and with you by fast and prayer
wrestle with the powers of hell?

4 So if Satan, pressing hard,
soul and body would destroy:
Christ who conquered, be our guard;
give to us the victor's joy.

5 Saviour, may we hear your voice
keep us constant at your side;
and with you we shall rejoice
at the eternal Eastertide.

George H Smyttan (1822 - 1870)

Prayer of Praise

God is our refuge
in times of trouble,
keeping our feet steady upon the road,
watching over us and keeping us from harm.
Where does our help come from?

Our help comes from the Lord, maker of heaven and earth!

God is our fortress
in times of distress,
circling us in the safety of his arms,
granting peace when our lives are not at ease.
Where does our help come from?

Our help comes from the Lord, maker of heaven and earth!

God is our Father
who knows us so well,
wanting only the best for his children,
willing always to forgive and forget.
Where does our help come from?

Our help comes from the Lord, maker of heaven and earth! Amen.

Prayer of Confession and Assurance of forgiveness

Loving God,
Forgive those things we have done
which have caused you sadness,
and those things we should have done
that would have brought you joy.
In both we have failed
ourselves,
and you.
Bring us back to that place
where our journey began,
when we said that we would follow
the way that you first trod.
Lead us to the Cross
and meet
us there.

We pause to bring our own thoughts and prayers to God.

At the foot of the cross we hear your words 'Forgive them' and we know ourselves forgiven, we see your arms stretched out and we know your love. With you, our eyes turn to heaven and we commit ourselves to the Father's care. May your Spirit lead us on, into lives made new. **Amen.**

Hymn: StF 238 Lead us heavenly Father, lead us
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=OpkEeXWtWg0>

1 Lead us, heavenly Father, lead us
O'er this world's tempestuous sea;
guard us, guide us, keep us, feed us
for we have no help but thee,
yet possessing every blessing
if our God our Father be.

2 Saviour, breathe forgiveness o'er us;
all our weakness thou dost know,
thou didst tread this earth before us,
thou didst feel its keenest woe:
tempted, taunted, yet undaunted,
through the desert thou didst go.

3 Spirit of our God, descending,
fill our hearts with heavenly joy;
love with every passion blending,
pleasure that can never cloy:
thus provided, pardoned, guided,
nothing can our peace destroy.

James Edmeston (1791 - 1867)

Epistle reading: 1 Peter 3 v 18-22 NRSV

For Christ also suffered for sins once for all,
the righteous for the unrighteous, in order
to bring you to God.
He was put to death in the flesh,
but made alive in the spirit,
in which also he went and made a proclamation
to the spirits in prison, who in former times did not
obey,
when God waited patiently in the days of Noah,
during the building of the ark, in which a few, that is,
eight people were saved through water.
And baptism, which this prefigured, now saves you—
not
as a removal of dirt from the body, but as an appeal
to God for a good conscience, through the
resurrection of
Jesus Christ, who has gone into heaven and is at the
right
hand of God, with angels, authorities,
and powers made subject to him.

Gospel reading: Mark 1 v 9-15 NRSV

In those days Jesus came from Nazareth of Galilee

and was baptised by John in the Jordan.

And 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.

And a voice came from heaven,

“You are my Son the Beloved;

With you I am well pleased.”

And the Spirit immediately drove him out into the
wilderness.

He was in the wilderness for forty days, tempted by
Satan;

And he was with the wild beasts and the angels
waited on him.

Now after John was arrested, Jesus came to Galilee,
Proclaiming the good news of God, and saying,

‘The time is fulfilled and the kingdom of God

has come near, repent and believe in the good news.’

Reflection by Bill Humm :

‘Repent and believe in the good news.’

Lent, what does that mean to you who believe?

Perhaps it means spending a lot of time in prayer,
reflecting and thinking about our faith and our
Christian life, leading us up to Easter.

As we enter the period of Lent for many it was often a
time to give up something; in the past people gave up
certain foods, hence Shrove Tuesday and pancakes.

Anything that was considered a luxury: chocolates,
sweet or savoury had to be used up before Ash
Wednesday and the start of Lent. Some people even
gave up wearing nice clothes and wore sackcloth,
shaving their heads and fasting completely.

Peter in his Epistle, or letter, wrote of how Jesus had
suffered for us all, to bring us closer to God and of
how baptism saves us in the form of God’s grace
towards us through Jesus and his resurrection. For
those fasting and wearing sackcloth they did so to
make themselves suffer as they thought about their
Christian lives.

Of course, we do not have to make life uncomfortable
to think about our lives as his disciples, it is already
uncomfortable enough at this present time of
pandemic. Instead of giving up things we can start
something new, joining others in a Lent course or
studying the bible more, all on ‘zoom’ of course; and

spending more time with God the Father, Jesus the Son, and the Holy Spirit and reflecting on what he has done for us, so we can join Him in heaven when we die.

Mark in his Gospel does not go into the details of Jesus's trials, temptations, hardships and suffering while he is in the wilderness, like those of Matthew and Luke. He goes straight to the message of the Good News; repent, come back to God for the time is now here, Jesus, the son of God, the Messiah is among you.

I do not know what you are tempted by, perhaps you are not tempted by anything, but that could be a temptation in itself...

Whatever it may be, there are plenty of temptations in our daily lives; eating more than is healthy for us, not exercising enough, buying more toilet rolls than we need, stockpiling, taking a chance about COVID-19 restrictions, buying that non-essential clothing item- a new car or holiday -and doing nothing about the charities we are bombarded with as we watch the TV. I realise we cannot possibly contribute to them all, yet we can pray for the charities when we see the images they are using. Perhaps our temptation lies in our views on climate change, carbon footprints, recycling and pollution issues, and Lent may be time for thinking about what we do and how we can change. This time during Lent let each of us change just one thing in our daily habit for the good of us all.

We do not use the word 'repent' much these days. In the past many of the older preachers would have done, as they thumped the pulpit and spoke of fire and damnation for those who did not repent, Wesley was one of those who certainly did!

To repent - what does it mean to you and me today? Is it the act of being truly sorry for what we have done in the past, asking for forgiveness of someone and trying to be better in the future? Or is it more than that, does it mean changing your whole outlook on life?

Yes, by all means, use Lent as a time of repentance, saying sorry, making changes or commitments, reflection. Believe the Good News of what Jesus did

for us because he loves us personally forever, so we are able to spend eternity in his Kingdom of Heaven. As the weeks of Lent progress towards Easter may we find satisfaction, peace, knowledge, and a deeper experience with Jesus in how we have spent our time during Lent.

Hymn: StF 427 I'm accepted, I'm forgiven. (Twice through)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=hmJSEhn7DtU>

I'm accepted, I'm forgiven,
I am fathered by the true and living God.
I'm accepted, no condemnation,
I am loved by the true and living God.
There's no guilt or fear as I draw near
to the Saviour and Creator of the world.
There is joy and peace
as I release my worship to you, O Lord.

Rob Hayward

Prayers of Intercession

The LORD upholds all those who fall
and lifts up all who are bowed down.
(Psalm 145:14)

God of love
hear the cry of those who yearn for love;
fractured families, broken homes
neglected, unwanted, alone.

God of love
ALL: hear our prayer

God of justice
hear the cry of those who yearn for justice;
persecuted and oppressed,
exploited, ill-treated, broken.

God of justice
ALL: hear our prayer

God of peace
hear the cry of those who yearn for peace;
in battle zones and broken states,
frightened, fearful, anxious

God of peace
ALL: hear our prayer

God of healing
hear the cry of those who yearn for healing;
physical and spiritual
hurting, weakened, depressed
God of healing
ALL: hear our prayer

God of mercy
Hear the cry of those who yearn for mercy;
convicted, in need of your Grace,
contrite, humble, bowed down,
God of mercy
ALL: hear our prayer

I love the LORD, for he heard my voice;
he heard my cry for mercy.
Because he turned his ear to me,
I will call on him as long as I live.
(Psalm 116:1,2)

May you know
The peace of God
The love of God
The justice of God
The healing and mercy of God
This day and all days
Amen

We say together **Our Father...**

Blessing of our Gifts

Lord God, giver of all that is good, we offer you our
money and talent for your service and our lives and
gifts for your kingdom. Accept them and bless them
with your love we pray. **Amen.**

Hymn: StF 563 O Jesus I have promised
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=svgHDdzP5xY>

1 O Jesus, I have promised
To serve thee to the end;
Be thou forever 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.
And, Jesus, I have promised
To serve thee to the end;
O give me grace to follow,
My Master and my friend.

John Bode 1816 -1874

A prayer of dismissal

May God the Father
prepare your journey,
Jesus the Son
guide your footsteps,
The Spirit of Life
strengthen your body,
The Three in One
watch over you,
on every road
that you may follow.
This Lent and always. **Amen.**

THE GRACE

We say together...
**May the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, the love of
God and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with us
all ever more. Amen.**

Prayers taken from www.faithandworship.com ©John Birch 2016

CCLI:7749