

## THE BRIDE VALLEY CHURCHES: Telephone Service

### Sunday 6<sup>th</sup> March 2022 – The First Sunday of Lent

The service for today has been prepared by the Reverend Jane Williams and can be accessed by phone on Sunday morning on **01308 293062**.

Welcome to this act of worship for the Bride Valley churches for the First Sunday of Lent.

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

*Psalm 91.1,2*

#### Hymn: **Forty Days and Forty Nights**

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| 1 | Forty days and forty nights<br>thou wast fasting in the wild;<br>forty days and forty nights<br>tempted, and yet undefiled.              | 4 | And if Satan, vexing sore,<br>flesh or spirit should assail,<br>thou, his vanquisher before<br>grant we may not faint nor fail.     |
| 2 | Sunbeams scorching all the day;<br>chilly dew-drops nightly shed;<br>prowling beasts about thy way;<br>stones thy pillow, earth thy bed. | 5 | So shall we have peace divine;<br>holier gladness ours shall be;<br>round us too shall angels shine,<br>such as ministered to thee. |
| 3 | Let us thine endurance share,<br>and awhile from joys abstain,<br>with thee watching unto prayer,<br>strong with thee to suffer pain?    | 6 | Keep, O keep us, Saviour dear,<br>ever constant by thy side;<br>that with thee we may appear<br>at the eternal Eastertide.          |

George Hunt Smyttan (1822-1870)

Francis Pott (1832-1909)

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#### *Invitation to Confession*

By the mercies of God, let us confess our sins and present our bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable to him, which is our spiritual worship.

#### *Prayers of Penitence*

You raise the dead to life in the Spirit:

Lord, have mercy.

**Lord, have mercy.**

You bring pardon and peace to the broken in heart:

Christ, have mercy.

**Christ, have mercy.**

You make one by your Spirit the torn and divided:

Lord, have mercy.

**Lord, have mercy.**

*Absolution*

May the God of love and power forgive us and free us from our sins, heal and strengthen us by his Spirit, and raise us to new life in Christ our Lord.

**Amen.**

*The Collect*

Heavenly Father, your Son battled with the powers of darkness, and grew closer to you in the desert: help us to use these days to grow in wisdom and prayer that we may witness to your saving love in Jesus Christ our Lord.

**Amen.**

*Old Testament Reading*

**Deuteronomy 26.1-11**

**First Fruits and Tithes**

When you have come into the land that the Lord your God is giving you as an inheritance to possess, and you possess it, and settle in it, you shall take some of the first of all the fruit of the ground, which you harvest from the land that the Lord your God is giving you, and you shall put it in a basket and go to the place that the Lord your God will choose as a dwelling for his name. You shall go to the priest who is in office at that time, and say to him, 'Today I declare to the Lord your God that I have come into the land that the Lord swore to our ancestors to give us.' When the priest takes the basket from your hand and sets it down before the altar of the Lord your God, you shall make this response before the Lord your God: 'A wandering Aramean was my ancestor; he went down into Egypt and lived there as an alien, few in number, and there he became a great nation, mighty and populous. When the Egyptians treated us harshly and afflicted us, by imposing hard labour on us, we cried to the Lord, the God of our ancestors; the Lord heard our voice and saw our affliction, our toil, and our oppression. The Lord brought us out of Egypt with a mighty hand and an outstretched arm, with a terrifying display of power, and with signs and wonders; and he brought us into this place and gave us this land, a land flowing with milk and honey. So now I bring the first of the fruit of the ground that you, O Lord, have given me.' You shall set it down before the Lord your God and bow down before the Lord your God. Then you, together with the Levites and the aliens who reside among you, shall celebrate with all the bounty that the Lord your God has given to you and to your house.

*Epistle*

Romans 10. 8b-13

'The word is near you, on your lips and in your heart'

(that is, the word of faith that we proclaim); because 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. For one believes with the heart and so is justified, and one confesses with the mouth and so is saved. The scripture says, 'No one who believes in him will be put to shame.' For there is no distinction between Jew and Greek; the same Lord is Lord of all and is generous to all who call on him. For, 'Everyone who calls on the name of the Lord shall be saved.'

**Luke 4:1-13**

Jesus, full of the Holy Spirit, returned from the Jordan and was led by the Spirit in the wilderness, 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. The devil said to him, "If you are the Son of God, command this stone to become a loaf of bread." Jesus answered him, "It is written, 'One does not live by bread alone.'" Then the devil led him up and showed him in an instant all the kingdoms of the world. 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. If you, then, will worship me, it will all be yours." Jesus answered him, "It is written, 'Worship the Lord your God, and serve only him.'" 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, for it is written, 'He will command his angels concerning you, to protect you,' and 'On their hands they will bear you up, so that you will not dash your foot against a stone.'" Jesus answered him, "It is said, 'Do not put the Lord your God to the test.'" When the devil had finished every test, he departed from him until an opportune time.

*Reflection*

Lent is a time to examine our hearts and say no to temptation. Coming where it does in Luke's version of events we hear God's words of affirmation to Jesus at his baptism, then Luke's own genealogy, which establishes the proper place for Jesus in our memory of God's dealings with the world throughout. I think there is a pivotal moment in Luke's version of the story of Jesus in the wilderness where we are looking forward as well as looking back over the past.

Memories are key in all our readings today, we are urged to remember the faithfulness of God. In Deuteronomy we have a ritual for remembering what God did for his people, bringing them out of slavery in Egypt. At Harvest time we see them now in a settled domestic state, having arrived in the luxury of the time of God's fulfilled promises to them. Their thanksgiving action is small, easy even, but its significance lies in the act of recitation and memory. Then there is a party and the party is absolutely for everyone, not just for those to whom the promise was made.

These passages are all about remembering, accepting and re-enacting who you are. Memory on its own can be debilitating. It can make you think of what you once were, or what you might have become had your circumstances been different. Even accepting what your history has made you can be a passive thing, undermining your individuality and choices. But all of these passages are about a dynamic acceptance of what the meaning of that self-knowledge might offer you now. And that's not just for you who do the remembering, but also to encourage those to whom you are willing to share with about God's blessing and faithfulness over your life. Your experience of God may be the thing that helps others in their faith journey. Go ahead, talk about it.

*Prayers*

And so let us pray to the Lord for courage to give ourselves to God this Lent and to let go of what is unhelpful and hurtful.

Give your Church the courage to give up her preoccupation with herself and to give more time to your loving mission in the world.

*(Time for silent prayer)*

Lord, meet us in the silence,  
**give us strength and hear our prayer.**

Give your world the courage to give up war, bitterness and hatred, and to seek peace.

*(Time for silent prayer)*

Lord, meet us in the silence,  
**give us strength and hear our prayer.**

Give us the courage to give up quarrels, strife and jealousy in our families, neighbourhoods and communities.

*(Time for silent prayer)*

Lord, meet us in the silence,  
**give us strength and hear our prayer.**

Give us the courage to give up our selfishness as we live for others, and to give time, care and comfort to the sick and those in need.

*(Time for silent prayer)*

Lord, meet us in the silence,  
**Give us strength and hear our prayer.**

Give us the courage to give up our fear of death and to rejoice with those who have died in faith.

*(Time for silent prayer)*

Lord, meet us in the silence,  
**give us strength and hear our prayer, here and in eternity. Amen.**

*The Lord's Prayer*

As our Saviour taught us, so we pray  
**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: **Lead Us Heavenly Father Lead Us**

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| 1 Lead us, heavenly Father, lead us<br>o'er the world's tempestuous sea;<br>guard us, guide us, keep us, feed us<br>for we have no help but thee;<br>yet possessing every blessing,<br>if our God our Father be.       | 3 Spirit of our God, descending,<br>fill our hearts with heavenly joy,<br>love with every passion blending,<br>pleasure that can never cloy:<br>thus provided, pardoned, guided,<br>nothing can our peace destroy. |
| 2 Saviour, breathe forgiveness o'er us;<br>all our weakness thou dost know;<br>thou didst tread this earth before us,<br>thou didst feel its keenest woe;<br>self denying, death defying,<br>thou to Calvary didst go. |  |

James Edmeston (1791-1867)  
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A Prayer for Ukraine

God of peace and justice,  
we pray for the people of Ukraine today.  
We pray for peace and the laying down of weapons.  
We pray for all those who fear for tomorrow,  
that your Spirit of comfort would draw near to them.  
We pray for those with power over war or peace,  
for wisdom, discernment and compassion to guide their decisions.  
Above all, we pray for all your precious children, at risk and in fear,  
that you would hold and protect them.  
We pray in the name of Jesus, the Prince of Peace.  
Amen

*God's blessing*

May God the Father, who does not despise the broken spirit, give to you a contrite heart. **Amen.**

May Christ, who bore our sins in his body on the tree, heal you by his wounds. **Amen.**

May the Holy Spirit, who leads us into all truth, speak to you words of pardon and peace. **Amen.**

And the blessing of God Almighty, the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit, be with you and remain with you now and always. **Amen.**