



AT HOME SERVICE

Sunday 22nd February 2026

First Sunday of Lent

*compiled by Michael Winter Local Preacher
& Anglican Lay Minister*

Welcome to our worship service for the First Sunday of Lent. May the readings, hymns and prayers give you peace and inspiration as we seek God's presence together.

Prayer of Confession

Blessed is the one whose transgressions are forgiven, whose sins are covered. Blessed is the one whose sin the Lord does not count against them and in whose spirit is no deceit. (Psalm 32)

Lord, we come before you acknowledging ours sins and shortcomings. Please cleanse our hearts and forgive us for the times we have turned away from your ways. *"If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just and will forgive us our sins and purify us from all unrighteousness"* (1 John 1:9). Help us to walk in humility and sincerity, always seeking your presence. Teach us to live a life that honours You in every thought and action. Amen

Blessed are you, God of compassion and mercy, to you be praise and glory for ever. In the darkness of our sin, your light breaks forth like the dawn and your healing springs up for deliverance. As we rejoice in the gift of your saving help, sustain us with your bountiful Spirit and open our lips to sing your praise, Father, Son and Holy Spirit: Blessed be God for ever. Amen

Hymn 504 StF

1] May the mind of Christ, my Saviour,
Live in me from day to day,
By His love and power controlling
All I do and say.

2] May the Word of God dwell richly
In my heart from hour to hour,
So that all may see I triumph
Only through His power.

3] May the peace of God my Father
Rule my life in everything,
That I may be calm to comfort
Sick and sorrowing.

4] May the love of Jesus fill me,
As the waters fill the sea;
Him exalting, self forgetting,
This is victory.

5] May I run the race before me,
Strong and brave to face the foe,
Looking only unto Jesus
As I onward go.

Katie Barclay Wilkinson (1859-1928)

Prayers

As we begin our Lenten journey with Christ in the desert and hear the call to choose obedience and life, let us place our prayers before God with humility and trust.

For the Church throughout the world:

that we may walk faithfully with Christ through this season of repentance, resisting the deceit of sin and

leading all people into the freedom of the Gospel.

Lord, hear us.

For those who govern nations and communities:

that they may reject the false promises of power and self-interest, and choose what serves life, justice, and the dignity of every human person.

Lord, hear us.

For those who struggle with temptation, guilt, or fear:

that Christ, who overcame the devil in the wilderness, may strengthen them to resist evil and begin again in repentance and hope.

Lord, hear us.

For the sick, the suffering, and the lonely, and for those who have died:

that the Lord who shared our weakness may bring healing to the living and eternal rest to the dead.

Lord, hear us.

For our homes and communities at the beginning of Lent:

that our prayers, fasting, and giving may be sincere, and that we may learn each day to choose obedience to God rather than the false freedom of sin.

Lord, hear us.

Almighty God,

whose Son Jesus Christ fasted forty days in the wilderness,

and was tempted as we are, yet without sin:

give us grace to discipline ourselves in obedience to your Spirit;

and, as you know our weakness, so may we know your power to save;

through Jesus Christ your Son our Lord, who is alive and reigns with you,

in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God, now and for ever.

The Lord's Prayer

Reading: Matthew 4: 1-11

Then Jesus was led by the Spirit into the wilderness to be tempted by the devil. After fasting forty days and forty nights, he was hungry. The tempter came to him and said, "If you are the Son of God, tell these stones to become bread."

Jesus answered, "It is written: 'Man shall not live on bread alone, but on every word that comes from the mouth of God.'"

Then the devil took him to the holy city and had him stand on the highest point of the temple. "If you are the Son of God," he said, "throw yourself down. For it is written: "'He will command his angels concerning you, and they will lift you up in their hands, so that you will not strike your foot against a stone.'"

Jesus answered him, "It is also written: 'Do not put the Lord your God to the test'!"

Again, the devil took him to a very high mountain and showed him all the kingdoms of the world and their splendour. "All this I will give you," he said, "if you will bow down and worship me."

Jesus said to him, "Away from me, Satan! For it is written: 'Worship the Lord your God, and serve him only.'"

Then the devil left him, and angels came and attended him.

Hymn 531 StF

1] What a friend we have in Jesus,
all our sins and griefs to bear!
What a privilege to carry
everything to God in prayer!
O what peace we often forfeit,
O what needless pain we bear,
all because we do not carry
everything to God in prayer!

2] Have we trials and temptations?
Is there trouble anywhere?
We should never be discouraged;
take it to the Lord in prayer!
Can we find a friend so faithful
who will all our sorrows share?
Jesus knows our every weakness;
take it to the Lord in prayer!

3] Are we weak and heavy laden,
cumbered with a load of care?
Precious Saviour, still our refuge--
take it to the Lord in prayer!
Do your friends despise, forsake you?
Take it to the Lord in prayer!
In his arms he'll take and shield you;
you will find a solace there.

Joseph Medlicott Scriven (1819-1886)

Reflection

This week's reflection is taken from an Ignatian website and is by the Catholic writer Eric Clayton. It speaks to me and I hope it speaks to you too:

"The high point of our tour through Morocco was always meant to be the camel ride in the desert.

The trip was designed that way; it was a big, country-wide loop. We began in the Moroccan port city of Tangier, having arrived from Spain by way of the Strait of Gibraltar. Our tour set out from there, weaving through towns big and small, but always with the promising allure of the Saharan Desert drawing nearer and nearer.

We're going to ride camels in the desert.

Even in a country so rich in culture and history, the mystique of the desert remained top of mind. My wife and I were giddy. What an adventure! I remember the night we arrived at the outskirts of the Sahara. Our little group was treated to a simple meal of roasted veggies and couscous. It was to be an early night, because it would be an early morning.

We were assigned tents out in the sands and advised to dress warmly. The desert was cold and unforgiving. "When we wake you up, get up," our guides said. "We need to leave on time if we're going to see the sun rise."

It was four o'clock when that wake-up call came. We stumbled out of our tent, groggy and irritable, but excited. We climbed atop our camels, clinging tightly to the animals as we plodded further into the desert in a line of camels, sleepy-eyed tourists, and Berber guides.

And then we saw the sunrise: that casting away of cold and dark and dreariness. Light tearing through the sands. Beauty and wonder and majesty. The promise of the desert.

In some ways, we're all in those tents now, cold but curious, as we wait upon the outskirts of our own Lenten deserts. That image of the desert is one we readily reach for as we reflect on those 40 days leading up to Easter. After all, Jesus spent that same amount of time in the desert. There, he was tempted.

But we know that temptations come fast and furious, desert or no desert. We don't need to seclude ourselves to experience what it means to be seduced by the Evil Spirit.

Instead, I like the image of the desert as one of mystery, promise, and potential. I remember the eagerness with which my wife and I curled up in our tent, wondering what that moment of adventure would bring.

We'd seen plenty of movies. We'd ridden camels at the zoo. But to enter into the real experience of feeling the harsh cold and grains of sand and then witnessing the glimmering sun bouncing off dunes as far as the eye could see was something very different.

As we stand here, now, on the cusp of Lent, I wonder how we might coax from the embers of our own spiritual selves that desire to be awed this season. What disposition do we need as we look out over the dunes at the journey we are about to undertake as the People of God? What of the *real* might we touch through our spiritual disciplines?

We plan to pray, fast, and give - sure. These are things we can readily see and do. And we should! But this Lent, my prayer for all of us is that we be struck by God's goodness, by God's great mystery, by Christ glimmering across every facet of our lives.

I believe God desires to share that beauty with us. And so, in the same way that my wife and I prepared ourselves for an experience we could only guess at, let us make ready ourselves for something even more awe-inspiring as we prepare to embark on our own Lenten desert journeys.

Because camel or no, early wake-up call or no, we all will have the opportunity to dance in that glorious sunrise of Easter."

Hymn 236 StF

1] Forty days and forty nights
You were fasting in the wild;
Forty days and forty nights
Tempted, and yet undefiled.

2] Buring heat throughout the day;
Bitter cold when light had fled;
Prowling beasts about 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] Watching, praying, struggling thus,
Victory shall be ours too;
Angels minister to us,
As they ministered to you.

6] Saviour, may we hear your voice;
Keep us constant at your side;
And with you we shall rejoice
At the eternal Eastertide.

George Hunt Smyttan (1822-1870)

Blessing

May Christ give us grace to grow in holiness, to deny yourselves, take up our cross, and follow Him;
and the blessing of God the Father, God the Soa and God the Holy Spirit rest and abide with us this day
and for evermore. Amen

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