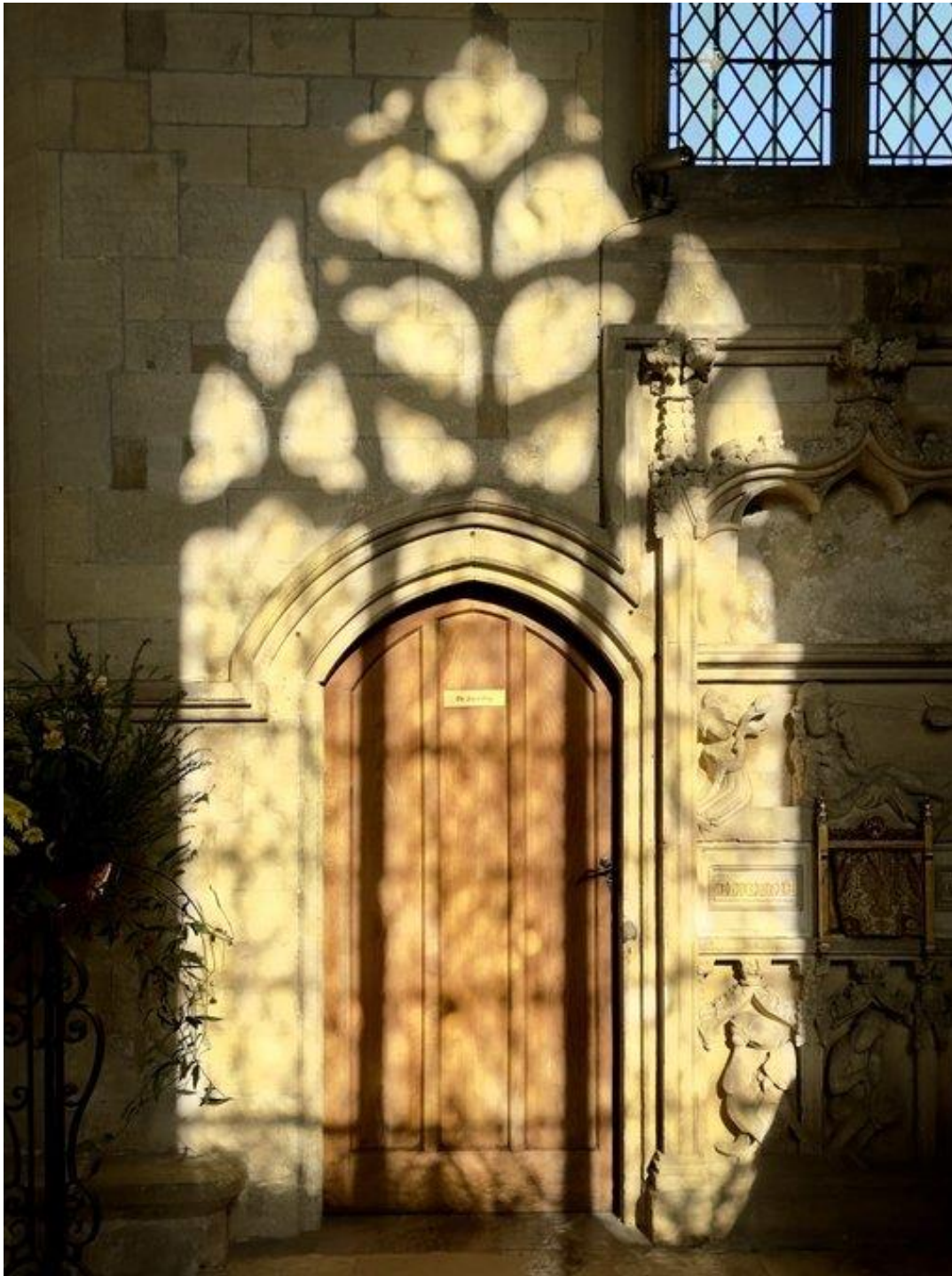


**Sunday 5 March 2023**

# The Second Sunday of Lent



**Sermon** © the Revd Denise Owen.

**Liturgy and prayers of intercession** © 2000 The Archbishops' Council.

**Bible readings** © the publishers of the NRSV translation.

The liturgy assumes the service is Eucharistic. The prayers of consecration appear at the end.

The hymns are YouTube links. To hear the hymns please click on the links.

To see service transcripts from previous weeks, please visit the page,

<http://www.medlockhead.co.uk/resources/index.htm>

## Introduction and welcome

**HYMN 1 Fairest Lord Jesus**

(please click on this link to hear the hymn)

## The Welcome

In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit

**All Amen.**

The Lord be with you

**All And also with you.**

## The Preparation

**All Almighty God,  
to whom all hearts are open,  
all desires known,  
and from whom no secrets are hidden:  
cleanse the thoughts of our hearts  
by the inspiration of your Holy Spirit,  
that we may perfectly love you,  
and worthily magnify your holy name;  
through Christ our Lord. Amen.**

Our Lord Jesus Christ said:

The first commandment is this:

‘Hear, O Israel, the Lord our God is the only Lord.

You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart,  
with all your soul, with all your mind,  
and with all your strength.’

And the second is this: ‘Love your neighbour as yourself.’

There is no other commandment greater than these.

On these two commandments hang all the law and the prophets.

**All Amen. Lord, have mercy.**

The sacrifice of God is a broken spirit; a broken and contrite heart God will not despise. Let us come to the Lord, who is full of compassion, and confess our sins in penitence and faith, firmly resolved to keep God’s commandments and to live in love and peace with all.

**All**    **Almighty God, our heavenly Father,  
we have sinned against you  
and against our neighbour  
in thought and word and deed,  
through negligence, through weakness,  
through our own deliberate fault.  
We are truly sorry  
and repent of all our sins.  
For the sake of your Son Jesus Christ,  
who died for us,  
forgive us all that is past  
and grant that we may serve you in newness of life  
to the glory of your name.  
Amen.**

Almighty God,  
who forgives all who truly repent, have mercy upon you,  
pardon and deliver you from all your sins,  
confirm and strengthen you in all goodness,  
and keep you in life eternal;  
through Jesus Christ our Lord.

**All**    **Amen.**

It is usual to omit the Gloria during Lent.

### **The Collect for the Second Sunday of Lent**

Almighty God,  
you show to those who are in error the light of your truth,  
that they may return to the way of righteousness:  
grant to all those who are admitted  
    into the fellowship of Christ's religion,  
that they may reject those things  
    that are contrary to their profession,  
and follow all such things as are agreeable to the same;  
through our Lord Jesus Christ,  
who is alive and reigns with you,  
in the unity of the Holy Spirit,  
one God, now and for ever.

**All**    **Amen.**

## First reading

A reading from the First Book of Moses called Genesis

Now the Lord said to Abram, 'Go from your country and your kindred and your father's house to the land that I will show you. I will make of you a great nation, and I will bless you, and make your name great, so that you will be a blessing. I will bless those who bless you, and the one who curses you I will curse; and in you all the families of the earth shall be blessed.'

So Abram went, as the Lord had told him; and Lot went with him. *Genesis 12:1-4a*

This is the Word of the Lord

**All Thanks be to God.**

## Second reading

A reading from St Paul's Letter to the Romans

What then are we to say was gained by Abraham, our ancestor according to the flesh? For if Abraham was justified by works, he has something to boast about, but not before God. For what does the scripture say? 'Abraham believed God, and it was reckoned to him as righteousness.' Now to one who works, wages are not reckoned as a gift but as something due. But to one who without works trusts him who justifies the ungodly, such faith is reckoned as righteousness.

For the promise that he would inherit the world did not come to Abraham or to his descendants through the law but through the righteousness of faith. If it is the adherents of the law who are to be the heirs, faith is null and the promise is void. For the law brings wrath; but where there is no law, neither is there violation. For this reason it depends on faith, in order that the promise may rest on grace and be guaranteed to all his descendants, not only to the adherents of the law but also to those who share the faith of Abraham (for he is the father of all of us, as it is written, 'I have made you the father of many nations')—in the presence of the God in whom he believed, who gives life to the dead and calls into existence the things that do not exist. *Romans 4:1-5, 13-17*

This is the Word of the Lord

**All Thanks be to God.**

**HYMN 2 I am the great sun** (please click on this link to hear the hymn)  
**Oh, Lord you're beautiful** (please click on this link to hear the hymn)

## Gospel reading

Hear the Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ according to John

**All**    **Glory to you O Lord.**

Now there was a Pharisee named Nicodemus, a leader of the Jews. He came to Jesus by night and said to him, 'Rabbi, we know that you are a teacher who has come from God; for no one can do these signs that you do apart from the presence of God.' Jesus answered him, 'Very truly, I tell you, no one can see the kingdom of God without being born from above.' Nicodemus said to him, 'How can anyone be born after having grown old? Can one enter a second time into the mother's womb and be born?' Jesus answered, 'Very truly, I tell you, no one can enter the kingdom of God without being born of water and Spirit. What is born of the flesh is flesh, and what is born of the Spirit is spirit. Do not be astonished that I said to you, "You must be born from above." The wind blows where it chooses, and you hear the sound of it, but you do not know where it comes from or where it goes. So it is with everyone who is born of the Spirit.' Nicodemus said to him, 'How can these things be?' Jesus answered him, 'Are you a teacher of Israel, and yet you do not understand these things? 'Very truly, I tell you, we speak of what we know and testify to what we have seen; yet you do not receive our testimony. If I have told you about earthly things and you do not believe, how can you believe if I tell you about heavenly things? No one has ascended into heaven except the one who descended from heaven, the Son of Man. And just as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, so must the Son of Man be lifted up, that whoever believes in him may have eternal life. For God so loved the world that he gave his only Son, so that everyone who believes in him may not perish but may have eternal life. Indeed, God did not send the Son into the world to condemn the world, but in order that the world might be saved through him.'

*John 3:1-17*

This is the Gospel of the Lord

**All**    **Praise to you O Christ.**

## Sermon

In the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit. Amen

**Last week** we looked at Lent through the lens of the Bible: that is, how the idea of a Lenten season of penitence and discipline has its roots in scripture, and how we read that Biblical characters, John the Baptist and Jesus himself used these disciplines in their lives to draw closer to God. Last week's gospel was the story of Jesus spending forty days and nights fasting in the desert, for example.



Today I'm going to take that a little further and think about how we as faithful people of God should see Lent as a time when we ourselves grow closer to God and grow also in holiness. Holiness is a word we might be a little wary of. It might be a word that we wouldn't want to apply to ourselves or our lives. It sounds as though we are expected to live to an impossibly high standard of ethical, moral and spiritual behaviour, one that only Jesus in his sinlessness could meet. Didn't Jesus warn against outward shows of religious practice ... making a big fuss of fasting or praying or almsgiving very publicly so that everyone can see what good Christians we are? Well, yes Jesus did warn against those things, the outward show of piety without the inner humility and purpose of serving God. But Jesus didn't say don't fast or pray or give alms, he just said do these things for the right reason... to know and to serve God. St Paul wrote that we should become more like Christ or have the mind of Christ, and in Matthew's gospel Jesus said 'Be perfect, therefore, as your heavenly Father is perfect': as [last week's sermon](#) reminded us, a very big ask you may think! In effect, we as Christians are expected to grow in holiness, and Lent is the liturgical season when we are most encouraged to consider the state of our personal holiness ... our spiritual health.

So, as I've said Lent is a time when we are encouraged to examine ourselves; to be honest with God and ourselves about what may need to change in our lives, perhaps to consider where we have compromised too much with worldly attractions and temptations, and to say well actually, that needs some attention, or maybe even that attitude or behaviour I see in myself needs to stop, because it is preventing me from becoming more like Christ and growing in holiness.

But how do the disciplines of Lent help us do this?

Well, I think it's obvious that we start with prayer. We start with that most fundamental of Christian disciplines. We spend time with God. Ideally we spend time with God daily, if we don't already, and we come to God acknowledging our sinfulness and need for forgiveness. We ask God, Godself, to show us what in our lives needs to be amended. That comes with a health warning, because if we do that honestly and openly, then God will respond, and we might not like it. Can I suggest here that if you do come to God in this way, and feel God answering and challenging, you may find it helpful to speak to another Christian you trust about it. We don't have to be alone in our spiritual lives and disciplines. When we come to God in this way, we should also be aware that we need to stop talking, which is very difficult, and try to listen or attend to God. There may not be an obvious voice or sign, but there may be little hints or stray thoughts that point us in the right and holy direction. As I said, prayer is the obvious place to start.

What about fasting, and giving alms? Do they really help us grow in faith and holiness? Fasting can include a number of things, obviously giving up a favourite treat or kind of food spring to mind. It could also mean fasting from gossip, or judgement of others, or impatience ... it can mean being deliberate and loving in response to people and situations that we would usually find annoying, or make us angry. Fasting is the intentional taking on of a spiritual discipline that involves our will and appetite and turning it or them towards God. Making those things which seem bodily and out of our control into holy offerings to God. The giving of alms, so generosity to those in need or to the Church similarly makes us examine our financial priorities ... what we actually spend our money on, and making sure that that too, is made holy and acceptable to God. Lent can be challenging, as you can see.

One phrase that I am praying about this Lent is 'Where your treasure is, there will your heart be also', from Matthew chapter 6. If we take treasure in a wide sense it opens up many possibilities for self-examination. What do I truly love and value? Are they the holy things of God, or have I been tempted by the empty attractions of the world?

I haven't yet mentioned that other fundamental of the Christian life, Bible reading. If we don't read God's word we don't have access to the wisdom of God, and we don't have access to that rich source of prayer and contemplation and knowledge of the Lord. Reading the Bible opens up new understandings of God's will and purposes, and even the most familiar of stories have new depths for us to explore.

I'm going to finish with some words that are read at the Ash Wednesday service:

I invite you, therefore, in the name of the Church,  
to the observance of a holy Lent,  
by self-examination and repentance;  
by prayer, fasting, and self-denial;  
and by reading and meditating on God's holy word.

May you grow in holiness with Lent. Amen

## The Creed

Do you believe and trust in God the Father,  
the source of all being and life,  
the one for whom we exist?

**All We believe and trust in him.**

Do you believe and trust in God the Son,  
who took our human nature,  
died for us and rose again?

**All We believe and trust in him.**

Do you believe and trust in God the Holy Spirit,  
who gives life to the people of God  
and makes Christ known in the world?

**All We believe and trust in him.**

This is the faith of the Church.

**All This is our faith.  
We believe and trust in one God,  
Father, Son and Holy Spirit.  
Amen.**

## **Prayers of intercession**

We pray to the Lord for courage to give up other things  
and to give ourselves to him this Lent.

Give your Church the courage  
to give up her preoccupation with herself  
and to give more time to your mission in the world.  
[Especially we pray for ...]  
May the blood and water flowing from the side of Jesus  
bring forgiveness to your people  
and help us to face the cost of proclaiming salvation.  
Lord, meet us in the silence,

**All Give us strength and hear our prayer.**

Give your world the courage  
to give up war, bitterness and hatred,  
and to seek peace. [Especially we pray for ...]  
May the shoulders of the risen Jesus,  
once scourged by soldiers,  
bear the burden of political and military conflict in our world.  
Lord, meet us in the silence,

**All Give us strength and hear our prayer.**



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

[Especially we pray for ...]

May the presence of the risen Jesus,  
his body once broken and now made whole,  
bring peace and direction as we live with one another.

Lord, meet us in the silence,

**All 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.

[Especially we pray for ...]

May the wounded hands of Jesus bring his healing touch,  
and the light of his presence fill their rooms.

Lord, meet us in the silence,

**All 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.

[Especially we hold ... in our minds.]

May the feet of the risen Lord Jesus, once nailed to the cross,  
walk alongside the dying and bereaved in their agony,  
and walk with us and all your Church  
through death to the gate of glory.

Lord, meet us in the silence,

**All give us strength and hear our prayer,  
here and in eternity.  
Amen.**

Merciful Father,

**All accept these prayers  
for the sake of your Son,  
our Saviour Jesus Christ.  
Amen.**

## The peace

Since we are justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ, who has given us access to his grace.

The peace of the Lord be always with you,

**All**    **And also with you.**

**HYMN 3** [Come thou long expected Jesus](#)    (click on this link to hear the hymn)

The liturgy of the Communion Service appears below

## The Dismissal

The peace of God which passes all understanding,  
keep your hearts and minds in the knowledge and love of God,  
and of his Son Jesus Christ our Lord;  
and the blessing  
and the blessing of God almighty,  
the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit,  
be among you and remain with you always.

**All**    **Amen.**

**HYMN 4** [I heard the voice of Jesus say](#)    (click on this link to hear the hymn)

Go in peace to love and serve the Lord.

**All**    **In the name of Christ. Amen.**

# The Liturgy of the Sacrament

## Eucharistic Prayer (prayer E)

The Lord be with you

**All and also with you.**

Lift up your hearts.

**All We lift them to the Lord.**

Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.

**All It is right to give thanks and praise.**

Father, you made the world and love your creation.  
You gave your Son Jesus Christ to be our Saviour.  
His dying and rising have set us free from sin and death.  
And so we gladly thank you,  
with saints and angels praising you, and saying,

**All Holy, holy, holy Lord,  
God of power and might,  
heaven and earth are full of your glory.  
Hosanna in the highest.  
Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord.  
Hosanna in the highest.**

We praise and bless you, loving Father,  
through Jesus Christ, our Lord;  
and as we obey his command,  
send your Holy Spirit,  
that broken bread and wine outpoured  
may be for us the body and blood of your dear Son.

On the night before he died he had supper with his friends  
and, taking bread, he praised you.  
He broke the bread, gave it to them and said:  
Take, eat; this is my body which is given for you;  
do this in remembrance of me.

When supper was ended he took the cup of wine.  
Again he praised you, gave it to them and said:  
Drink this, all of you;  
this is my blood of the new covenant,  
which is shed for you and for many for the forgiveness of sins.  
Do this, as often as you drink it, in remembrance of me.

So, Father, we remember all that Jesus did,  
in him we plead with confidence his sacrifice made once for all upon the cross.

Bringing before you the bread of life and cup of salvation,  
we proclaim his death and resurrection  
until he comes in glory.

Great is the mystery of faith:

**All Christ has died.**  
**Christ is risen.**  
**Christ will come again.**

Lord of all life,  
help us to work together for that day  
when your kingdom comes  
and justice and mercy will be seen in all the earth.

Look with favour on your people,  
gather us in your loving arms  
and bring us with all the saints  
to feast at your table in heaven.

Through Christ, and with Christ, and in Christ,  
in the unity of the Holy Spirit,  
all honour and glory are yours, O loving Father,  
for ever and ever.

**All Amen.**

## **The Lord's Prayer**

As our Saviour taught us, so we pray

**All**     **Our Father in heaven,  
hallowed be your name,  
your kingdom come,  
your will be done,  
on earth as in heaven.  
Give us today our daily bread.  
Forgive us our sins  
as we forgive those who sin against us.  
Lead us not into temptation  
but deliver us from evil.**

**For the kingdom, the power,  
and the glory are yours  
now and for ever. Amen.**

## **Breaking of the Bread**

We break this bread to share in the body of Christ.

**All**     **Though we are many, we are one body,  
because we all share in one bread.**

**All**     **Lamb of God,  
you take away the sin of the world,  
have mercy on us.**

**Lamb of God,  
you take away the sin of the world,  
have mercy on us.**

**Lamb of God,  
you take away the sin of the world,  
grant us peace.**

Draw near with faith.

Receive the body of our Lord Jesus Christ  
which he gave for you,  
and his blood which he shed for you.

Eat and drink in remembrance that he died for you,  
and feed on him in your hearts  
by faith with thanksgiving.

**All** We do not presume  
to come to this your table, merciful Lord,  
trusting in our own righteousness,  
but in your manifold and great mercies.  
We are not worthy  
so much as to gather up the crumbs under your table.  
But you are the same Lord  
whose nature is always to have mercy.  
Grant us therefore, gracious Lord,  
so to eat the flesh of your dear Son Jesus Christ  
and to drink his blood,  
that our sinful bodies may be made clean by his body  
and our souls washed through his most precious blood,  
and that we may evermore dwell in him,  
and he in us. Amen.

Communion is distributed.

### **Prayer after Communion**

Almighty God,  
you see that we have no power of ourselves to help ourselves:  
keep us both outwardly in our bodies,  
and inwardly in our souls;  
that we may be defended from all adversities  
which may happen to the body,  
and from all evil thoughts which may assault and hurt the soul;  
through Jesus Christ our Lord.

**All** Amen

**All** Almighty God,  
we thank you for feeding us  
with the body and blood of your Son Jesus Christ.  
Through him we offer you our souls and bodies  
to be a living sacrifice.  
Send us out in the power of your Spirit  
to live and work  
to your praise and glory.  
Amen.