

# St Mary's Church, Tadley

First Sunday in Lent  
21st February, 2021



## 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**

## **Welcome and introduction**

Grace, mercy and peace  
from God our Father  
and the Lord Jesus Christ  
be with you  
**and also with you.**

This is the day that the Lord has made.  
**Let us rejoice and be glad in it.**

## **Confession**

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 acknowledge our transgressions in penitence and faith.

**Most merciful God,  
Father of our Lord Jesus Christ,  
we confess that we have sinned  
in thought, word and deed.  
We have not loved you with our whole heart.  
We have not loved our neighbours as ourselves.  
In your mercy  
forgive what we have been,  
help us to amend what we are,  
and direct what we shall be;  
that we may do justly,  
love mercy,  
and walk humbly with you, our God.  
Amen.**

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**

Reading: **Genesis 9.8-17**

**9** <sup>8</sup>Then God said to Noah and to his sons with him, <sup>9</sup>'As for me, I am establishing my covenant with you and your descendants after you, <sup>10</sup>and with every living creature that is with you, the birds, the domestic animals, and every animal of the earth with you, as many as came out of the ark. <sup>11</sup>I establish my covenant with you, that never again shall all flesh be cut off by the waters of a flood, and never again shall there be a flood to destroy the earth.' <sup>12</sup>God said, 'This is the sign of the covenant that I make between me and you and every living creature that is with you, for all future generations: <sup>13</sup>I have set my bow in the clouds, and it shall be a sign of the covenant between me and the earth. <sup>14</sup>When I bring clouds over the earth and the bow is seen in the clouds, <sup>15</sup>I will remember my covenant that is between me and you and every living creature of all flesh; and the waters shall never again become a flood to destroy all flesh. <sup>16</sup>When the bow is in the clouds, I will see it and remember the everlasting covenant between God and every living creature of all flesh that is on the earth.' <sup>17</sup>God said to Noah, 'This is the sign of the covenant that I have established between me and all flesh that is on the earth.'

This is the word of the Lord.

**Thanks be to God.**

## **Hymn:** Colours of Day

Colours of day dawn into the mind,  
The sun has come up, the night is behind.  
Go down in the city, into the street,  
And let's give the message to the people we meet.

*So light up the fire and let the flame burn,  
Open the door, let Jesus return.*

*Take seeds of His Spirit, let the fruit grow,  
Tell the people of Jesus, let His love show.*

Go through the park, on into the town;  
The sun still shines on, it never goes down.  
The light of the world is risen again;  
The people of darkness are needing a friend.

Chorus

Open your eyes, look into the sky,  
The darkness has come, the Son came to die.  
The evening draws on, the sun disappears,  
But Jesus is living, His Spirit is near.

Chorus

by Sue McClellan, John Paculabo, Keith Rycroft. St. Mary's, Tadley North CCL 4581

Gospel Reading: **Mark 1.9-15**

Hear the Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ according to Mark.

**Glory to you, O Lord**

**1**<sup>9</sup> In those days Jesus came from Nazareth of Galilee and was baptized by John in the Jordan. **10** 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. **11** And a voice came from heaven, 'You are my Son, the Beloved; with you I am well pleased.'

**12** And the Spirit immediately drove him out into the wilderness. **13** He was in the wilderness for forty days, tempted by Satan; and he was with the wild beasts; and the angels waited on him.

**14** Now after John was arrested, Jesus came to Galilee, proclaiming the good news of God, **15** and saying, 'The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God has come near; repent, and believe in the good news.'

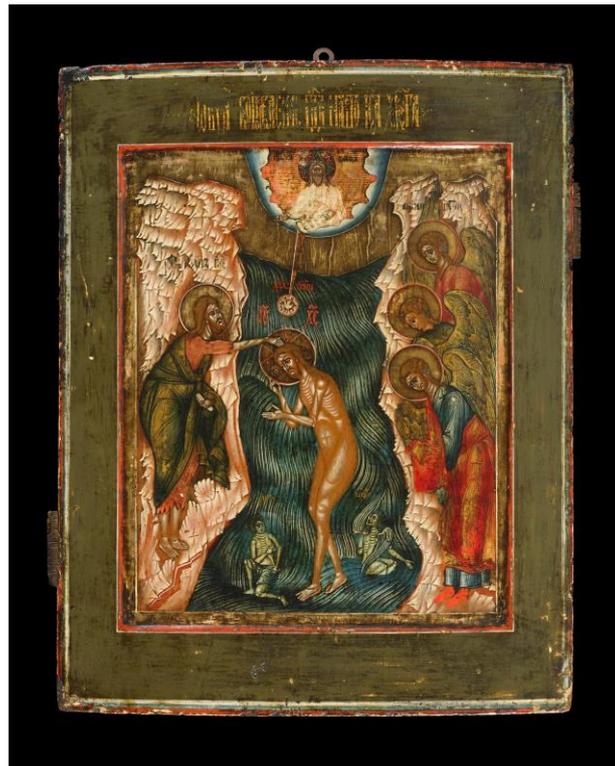
This is the Gospel of the Lord.

**Praise to you, O Christ.**

## Reflection – Rev'd Gill

I wonder if you agree that there is an unusually large amount of mud around these days? I know there's been a lot of rain but still - the mud seems disproportionate to me! Although mud does not feature in today's readings, rain and water do. In Genesis, God sends enormous quantities of rain and floods the earth because he's truly fed up with the way the people he created are behaving and even regrets making them! However, God, in his mercy and love saves Noah and his family, a selection of animals, and the whole earth, as we know from the familiar story. He decides to give everyone the opportunity to start over and cements his words in a strong promise or covenant through the symbol of the rainbow.

There's water in the second passage we heard Ava read, but the water



doesn't evoke a fear of drowning, instead it's about total washing. I'm drawn to some of the early images of Jesus' baptism because the topsy-turvy perspective emphasises the deep water where Jesus is engulfed in a kind of gully. Even though Jesus had no sin to wash away he accepted John's baptism, and the more important part is God's voice in the

presence of a dove as he came up from the water. It was a significant public yet personal announcement: *'You are my Son, the Beloved, with you I am well pleased'*. (v11)

Let's return to mud for a moment. I wonder how you imagine the opposite of it?

Yes, it might be a desert with dry, cracked earth, a bit like the summer of 1976, for those who remember that incredible drought. What was it like? Lawns turned brown, plants shrivelled up, etc. It's into a wilderness that the Holy Spirit drives Jesus, even as God's praises are ringing in his ears. Mark's choice of the word 'driven' rather than 'led' suggests intentionality and that this is an essential test to get through. Unlike other gospel writers, Mark gives no details except that the angels waited on him.

How do we enter Lent 2021?

- We enter a period of 40 days with an invitation to look at our lives with bald honesty but without judgement. We can check in with ourselves. What do we notice? Is there anything we'd like to change? For what are we sorry? Have a conversation with God then listen. After all it was in the wilderness that God spoke powerfully and purposefully to Moses, Elijah, Jonah, Job and others.
- We enter Lent remembering the waters of baptism. You may have noticed a publicity campaign at the moment with posters saying: *'Act like you've got the virus'* reminding us to behave in ways that protect everyone. What if we *'act like we know we've been baptised'*? When we remember our baptism we remember we've died to sin, once and for all, plunged literally or metaphorically under the water, and have been raised with Christ in complete forgiveness.
- We enter Lent, "Held in a burst of colour" as if angels are waiting on us, leaning down, catching us, lifting us, holding us tight even as we hold on by our fingertips for the loosening of restrictions.

- We enter the Lenten wilderness with God's voice ringing in our ears assuring us of his loving acceptance. We too are beloved, God is pleased with us. This is good news.

I can tell you  
that you will know  
the strange graces  
that come to our aid  
only on a road  
such as this,  
that fly to meet us  
bring comfort  
and strength,  
that come alongside us  
for no other cause  
than to lean themselves  
toward our ear  
and with their  
curious insistence  
whisper our name:



*Beloved*  
*Beloved*  
*Beloved*

Jan Richardson

## Prayers

Let us pray.

Gracious and merciful God,

On this first Sunday of Lent we worship you, praise you, and thank you. We seek your forgiveness and ask for renewal.

Create in us a clean heart, O Lord,  
**and put a right spirit within us.**

We come in the name of Christ,  
remembering his lonely days in the wilderness,  
his time wrestling with temptation,  
and the ministry that followed,  
restoring and transforming so many lives.

Create in us a clean heart, O Lord,  
**and put a right spirit within us.**

Help us to learn from his example –  
to search our hearts as he did,  
to consider our calling,  
to reflect on our faith,  
to resist temptation,  
and to commit ourselves more wholly to you.

Create in us a clean heart, O Lord,  
**and put a right spirit within us.**

We pray for the church — especially for us at St Mary's.

We thank you for your continued presence with us  
even though we cannot gather physically.

We pray for our Bishops, Tim, David, and Debbie  
and ask for your leading and guiding as they seek to follow  
you in all their decisions.

Create in us a clean heart, O Lord,  
**and put a right spirit within us.**

We bring to mind people who need your healing,  
your love, or your wisdom.

Help us to know how to respond, how to pray, and how to support  
them and one another.



We remember all those who have died or whose anniversaries fall at this time.

Comfort Greg, Lewis, Jane, Ian, Kieran, Hayden, and all those who mourn and grant the peace which passes understanding. Create in us a clean heart, O Lord,  
**and put a right spirit within us.**

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

**Amen.**

Taken and adapted from *Prayers for All Seasons* by Nick Fawcett. © 1998 Kevin Mayhew Ltd

## **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: I heard the voice of Jesus say**

*sung by St Martin's Voices, please join in!*

- 1 I heard the voice of Jesus say:  
'Come unto me and rest;  
lay down, thou weary one, lay down  
thy head upon my breast.'

I came to Jesus as I was,  
weary and worn and sad,  
I found in him a resting-place,  
and he has made me glad.

2 I heard the voice of Jesus say:  
'Behold, I freely give  
the living water; thirsty one,  
stoop down and drink and live.'  
I came to Jesus, and I drank  
of that life-giving stream;  
my thirst was quenched, my soul revived,  
and now I live in him.

3 I heard the voice of Jesus say:  
'I am this dark world's Light;  
look unto me, thy morn shall rise,  
and all thy day be bright.'  
I looked to Jesus, and I found  
in him my star, my sun;  
and in that light of life I'll walk,  
till travelling days are done.

*Horatius Bonar (1808-1889). St. Mary's, Tadley North. CCL 4581*

## **Blessing and dismissal**

May the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing,  
so that you may abound in hope by the power of the Holy Spirit.

[Romans 15.13]

And the blessing of God almighty,  
the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit  
be among you and remain with you  
and those you love always.

**Amen.**

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Readings taken from the **New Revised Standard Version, Anglicised (NRSVA)**

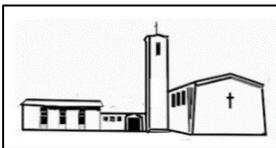
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## Thank you for joining in our service today.

### How can I donate to St Mary's Tadley?

The best way to give regularly to the work of St Mary's Tadley is through the [Parish Giving Scheme](#). You can find out more about how to do this on their website. Let them know you want your gift to go to **St Mary's Tadley**.

You can support the work of St Mary's Tadley by an online donation [here!](#) You may also access the donate button at this URL: <https://st-marys-church-tadley.org.uk/donate/>



### From Rev'd Gill:



#### CTAT Unity Service.

**Today, Sunday 21st February 4pm**

Online gathering to give thanks for what God has done among the churches of Tadley over the past year, and to say our farewells to Gill and Steve Sakakini. The Zoom joining details will be sent by email – contact Gill if you have not received the details and would like them.

#### The week beginning 22<sup>nd</sup> February, 2021:

- Morning Prayer on **Wednesday 24<sup>th</sup> February** and each Wednesday. All are welcome! Please contact Charles Lewis for the Zoom joining details using this email address: [c\\_m.lewis@btinternet.com](mailto:c_m.lewis@btinternet.com).

#### Looking forward

- **Luke in Lent** - throughout Lent we will be able to hear/read/see daily reflections (on Facebook, by email or printed). These take us through the gospel of Luke, with different voices across the benefice, including some of our own from St Mary's! If you **do not** want to receive these by email please let **Peter Wood** know, ([peter.wood487@btinternet.com](mailto:peter.wood487@btinternet.com)).

- **Farewell Zooms** – We are not able to say farewell in the way we'd love to, but we are arranging a number of opportunities to say 'good-bye'. Some will be 'doorstep' encounters, and some are over tea and coffee on Zoom. The Zoom joining details will be sent separately by email.

**Farewell Morning coffee** - Feb 22, 2021 11:00am

**Farewell drinks** (of any kind) with the Sakakinis - Feb 23, 2021 7:30pm

**Farewell afternoon cuppa** - Feb 24, 2021 4:00pm



Things are happening at **Garden 23!** Steve spotted this tiny iris in bloom while casually walking through the labyrinth. Come, walk the garden path and take a look at what plants and flowers you can find! Surely signs of *good things* to come!

You can watch the Garden 23 video on the St Mary's website **here:** <https://st-marys-church-tadley.org.uk/garden-23-video/>

If you have any questions or would like to contact Rev Gill, please phone the Vicarage on **01189 279 321**.



You can find us on [Facebook](#) and connect with us on our website at <https://st-marys-church-tadley.org.uk/>

**[Welcome to St Mary's Tadley](#)**