

Sunday 6 February 2022

The Fourth Sunday before Lent



Sermon © Revd Dr Paul Monk.

Prayers of intercession © Revd Dr Paul Monk.

Liturgy © 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 hover the mouse over each link, press Ctrl and then return.

To see service transcripts from previous weeks, please visit the page,
<http://www.medlockhead.co.uk/resources/index.htm>

Introduction and welcome

HYMN 1 The Church's one foundation [\(click on this link to hear the hymn\)](#)

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.

God so loved the world that he gave his only Son Jesus Christ to save us from our sins, to be our advocate in heaven, and to bring us to eternal life.

Therefore, let us 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.

The Gloria

This Gloria is sung to the tune of 'Cwm Rhondda'. Click [here](#) for the tune.

All Glory be to God in Heaven,
Songs of joy and peace we bring,
Thankful hearts and voices raising,
To creation's Lord we sing.
Lord we thank you, Lord we praise you,
Glory be to God our King:
Glory be to God our King.

Lamb of God, who on our shoulders,
Bore the load of this world's sin;
Only Son of God the Father,
You have brought us peace within.
Lord, have mercy, Christ have mercy,

Now your glorious reign begin:

Now your glorious reign begin.

You O Son of God are Holy,

You we praise with one accord.

None in heav'n or earth is like you,

Only you are Christ the Lord.

With the Father and the Spirit,

Ever worshipped and adored:

Ever worshipped and adored.

The Collect for the Fourth Sunday before Lent

O God,

you know us to be set

in the midst of so many and great dangers,

that by reason of the frailty of our nature

we cannot always stand upright:

grant to us such strength and protection

as may support us in all dangers

and carry us through all temptations;

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.

All Amen.

First reading

A reading from the Book of the Prophet Isaiah

In the year that King Uzziah died, I saw the Lord sitting on a throne, high and lofty; and the hem of his robe filled the temple. Seraphs were in attendance above him; each had six wings: with two they covered their faces, and with two they covered their feet, and with two they flew. And one called to another and said: 'Holy, holy, holy is the Lord of hosts; the whole earth is full of his glory.' The pivots on the thresholds shook at the voices of those who called, and the house filled with smoke.

And I said: 'Woe is me! I am lost, for I am a man of unclean lips, and I live among a people of unclean lips; yet my eyes have seen the King, the Lord of hosts!' Then one of the seraphs flew to me, holding a live coal that had been taken from the altar with a pair of tongs. The seraph touched my mouth with it and said: 'Now that this

has touched your lips, your guilt has departed and your sin is blotted out.” Then I heard the voice of the Lord saying, ‘Whom shall I send, and who will go for us?’ And I said, ‘Here am I; send me!’ *Isaiah 6:1–8*

This is the Word of the Lord

All Thanks be to God.

Second reading

A reading from St Paul’s First Letter to the Corinthians

I would remind you, brothers and sisters, of the good news that I proclaimed to you, which you in turn received, in which also you stand, through which also you are being saved, if you hold firmly to the message that I proclaimed to you—unless you have come to believe in vain. For I handed on to you as of first importance what I in turn had received: that Christ died for our sins in accordance with the scriptures, and that he was buried, and that he was raised on the third day in accordance with the scriptures, and that he appeared to Cephas, then to the twelve. Then he appeared to more than five hundred brothers and sisters at one time, most of whom are still alive, though some have died. Then he appeared to James, then to all the apostles. Last of all, as to one untimely born, he appeared also to me. For I am the least of the apostles, unfit to be called an apostle, because I persecuted the church of God.

But by the grace of God I am what I am, and his grace toward me has not been in vain. On the contrary, I worked harder than any of them—though it was not I, but the grace of God that is with me. Whether then it was I or they, so we proclaim and so you have come to believe. *1 Corinthians 15:1–11*

This is the Word of the Lord

All Thanks be to God.

HYMN 2 Jesus remember me

[\(please click on this link to hear the hymn\)](#)

Gospel reading

Hear the Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ according to Luke

All Glory to you O Lord.

Once while Jesus was standing beside the lake of Gennesaret, and the crowd was pressing in on him to hear the word of God, he saw two boats there at the shore of the lake; the fishermen had gone out of them and were washing their nets. He got

into one of the boats, the one belonging to Simon, and asked him to put out a little way from the shore.

Then he sat down and taught the crowds from the boat. When he had finished speaking, he said to Simon, 'Put out into the deep water and let down your nets for a catch.' Simon answered, 'Master, we have worked all night long but have caught nothing. Yet if you say so, I will let down the nets.' When they had done this, they caught so many fish that their nets were beginning to break. So they signaled their partners in the other boat to come and help them. And they came and filled both boats, so that they began to sink.

But when Simon Peter saw it, he fell down at Jesus' knees, saying, 'Go away from me, Lord, for I am a sinful man!' For he and all who were with him were amazed at the catch of fish that they had taken; and so also were James and John, sons of Zebedee, who were partners with Simon.

Then Jesus said to Simon, 'Do not be afraid; from now on you will be catching people.' When they had brought their boats to shore, they left everything and followed him. *Luke 5:1-11*

This is the Gospel of the Lord

All Praise to you O Christ.

Sermon

God calls all humans to serve Him. That call will look and sound different according to the people we are. Our first reading describes God using a powerful vision to call Isaiah to become a prophet. Tradition says he was priest on duty in the Temple that day. Simon Peter by contrast saw a miracle at the end of a long night shift and underwent some kind of inner crisis. St Paul in the Epistle was writing to a small Church, presumably expecting the audience to hear it read aloud during worship; and part of his message describes Jesus appearing to potential disciples. Each call was framed differently but each was received in such a way that a lives changed.

While God wants all human beings to become people of faith and thence disciples and followers, His call comprises a great many strands.

First, God attracts our attention. He does so in a way that is (presumably) customised. Some of us require a dramatic revelation like Isaiah in the Temple. Other examples could include the vision St Paul experienced on the road to Damascus. While not exactly a vision, St Peter saw something that spoke so profoundly that he had to respond. But St Paul relies on the sound of someone's voice. Elijah heard a still small voice, a 'sound of sheer silence,' and so on.

It's likely that God calls us all the time, but we only actually notice that he is

speaking only after it crosses a certain threshold in terms of volume or drama. Maybe a different person than Isaiah would have needed a less spectacular vision, or a different vision, or would have responded long ago.

While God will not stoop to mere 'advertising' of course, He does *communicate*. Many of the modern methods of advertising were developed by the American Marshall McLuhan who famously said, 'The medium is the message.' Cynics say he devised a methodology in which style outweighs substance: a 'consumer' is in truth buying a dream and the actual product is peripheral: obvious examples could include adverts on TV for perfume or, to a lesser extent, cars, toys, and holidays.

Isaiah responded at a time of crisis. The vision he saw occurred in the year that King Uzziah died, and a regional superpower wanted to use his death as an opportunity to make territorial claims, much as Russia today makes claims on Ukraine. Peter responded when Jesus called. Perhaps he was merely searching in a spiritual sense. Some readers think he had recently lost his wife. We might also respond in a time of crisis: it could be a personal crisis that feels customised and unique to us and, indeed, maybe only known to us. God's call will speak into that crisis of faith.

That's why God customises both His method and His message, because we're different. But He also wants each of us to fulfil different tasks in His Church (think of St Paul's concept of 'the Body' in 1 Corinthians 12, for example). Isaiah said, 'Send me!' only after God first issued a specific invitation, saying 'Whom shall I send, and who will go for us?' And St Peter saw the harvesting of fish from the sea before becoming a 'fisher of men' in Palestine. He definitely will be calling us but maybe with a different approach, with a different message, and at different times.

Sometimes God repeats His call because we have, in effect, been avoiding Him for some time—for example, one ancient tradition says Isaiah responded to this vision in today's first reading but had refused previous invitations. We may be more courageous (or less stubborn!) than Isaiah and respond after God's first invitation.

We must understand that God does not call us in some general sense. Rather, *He calls us to a specific calling which is to be a particular person*. That person will always be called to share God's work in His world, our world, in places that matter. And it will also be a call to holiness of life.

God calls a person to become a particular disciple, for particular tasks, and in a particular place and time. The only way we can respond to all these considerations is by recognising that when God calls, that call is customised. My call will differ from yours. But that call, if genuine, will propel us into greater discipleship. It will propel us to become people who love God and neighbour. It will therefore invite us to ask God continually to inform our discipleship in order to please Him greatly.

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

Let us pray:

These prayers are inspired by Jesus' Sermon on the Mount as recorded in Matthew's Gospel. Let us pray.

Jesus taught that his disciples how to pray. Teach us how to pray, keep reminding us to pray. Help our relationships with you to grow.

In the following moment of silence, we pray especially for ...

Lord, in your mercy

All Hear our prayer

Jesus taught that we are we will see God if we are pure in heart. Make us pure so that we can see you as you really are. Heal in us any ideas and images of you that are false and unworthy.

In the following moment of silence, we pray especially for ...

Lord, in your mercy

All Hear our prayer

Jesus taught that he came to fulfil the law. Lord, we ask you to empower us to live lives that are worthy of the Gospel and forgive us when we do not.

Lord, in your mercy

All Hear our prayer

Jesus taught that we should not store up treasures on earth. We pray for the world and our relationships with it. Teach us how to live with fewer possessions and help those in the world who have too little.

In the following moment of silence, we pray especially for ...

Lord, in your mercy

All Hear our prayer

Jesus taught that we should be salt and light. We pray for our Christian witness and for those who see us.

In the following moment of silence, we pray especially for ...

Lord, in your mercy

All Hear our prayer

Jesus taught that we should love our enemies and pray for those who despise us. We pray for our enemies and those who do wrong. Help us grow in love, and give us the courage to take our love to the loveless.

In the following moment of silence, we pray especially for ...

Lord, in your mercy

All Hear our prayer

Merciful Father,

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

The peace

Christ is our peace.

If anyone is in Christ, there is a new creation.

The old has passed away: behold, everything has become new.

The peace of the Lord be always with you,

All And also with you.

HYMN 3 A new commandment

[\(please click on this link to hear the hymn\)](#)

[The liturgy of the Communion Service appears below](#)

The Dismissal

Christ the Son of God perfect in you the image of his glory
and gladden your hearts with the good news of his kingdom;
and the blessing of God the Almighty:
Father, Son, and Holy Spirit,
be with you now and remain with you always.

All Amen.

HYMN 4 Lord for the years [\(please click on this link to hear the hymn\)](#)

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

Go before us, Lord, in all we do
with your most gracious favour,
and guide us with your continual help,
that in all our works
begun, continued and ended in you,
we may glorify your holy name,
and finally by your mercy receive everlasting life;
through Jesus Christ our Lord.
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.