

## Morning Worship (and Spiritual Communion) Lent 5



*Daffodils outside St Stephen's – thanks Betsy*

(You may like to have a Bible handy, light a candle and have some reflective music playing in the background. This service also includes some music on YouTube so if you can easily access this during this time, you can be prepared. Otherwise do visit the site at a later time.)

### **Opening Sentences**

O Lord, open our lips and our mouth shall proclaim your praise.

The night has passed, and the day lies open before us;  
let us pray with one heart and mind.

As we rejoice in the gift of this new day,  
so may the light of your presence, O God,  
set our hearts on fire with love for you;  
now and for ever. Amen.

*Silence is kept.*

## **Reading and reflection (Thanks to Richard)**

After his baptism in the Jordan by John, Jesus was led (or 'driven') by the Spirit into the wilderness where he experienced and resisted three temptations, as recounted briefly in the gospel according to Mark, and in more detail in those of Matthew and Luke.

We have just one of Richard's three sonnets which follow Matthew's account below and give voice not to Jesus, nor to the Tempter, but to the stones- the unwitting accessories in the temptations.

### Matthew 3: 4-11 (RSV)

Then Jesus was led up by the Spirit into the wilderness to be tempted by the devil. And he fasted forty days and forty nights, and afterward he was hungry. And the tempter came and said to him, "If you are the Son of God, command these stones to become loaves of bread." But he answered, "It is written, 'Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceeds from the mouth of God.'" Then the devil took him to the holy city, and set him on the pinnacle of the temple, and said to him, "If you are the Son of God, throw yourself down; for it is written, 'He will give his angels charge of you,' and 'On their hands they will bear you up, lest you strike your foot against a stone.'" Jesus said to him, "Again it is written, 'You shall not tempt the Lord your God.'" Again, the devil took him to a very high mountain, and showed him all the kingdoms of the world and the glory of them; and he said to him, "All these I will give you, if you will fall down and worship me." Then Jesus said to him, "Begone, Satan! for it is written, 'You shall worship the Lord your God and him only shall you serve.'" Then the devil left him, and behold, angels came and ministered to him.

The Stone  
*Matthew 4:1-4*

I am the stone which, had he so chosen,  
would, at his command, have changed into bread;  
satisfied hunger, though far from ambrosian:  
forty days banished of going unfed.  
I know I was tempting, my colour, my shape,  
lying nearby and so easy to grasp;  
I swear that his mouth was just briefly agape  
as he visualised eating me, his voice a harsh rasp.

It would have been weird to be what I'm not;  
stone is my nature and stone I remain.  
To change me to bread would have robbed me of what  
is truly myself, my self would be slain.  
He resisted; respected my right to be stone,  
and that all I require is to be left alone.

**Prayer** (One of the pre-Lenten collects)

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 our Lord.

**Prayer for Others**

Keep us, good Lord, under the shadow of your mercy  
in this time of uncertainty and distress.  
Sustain and support the anxious and fearful,  
and lift up all who are brought low;  
that we may rejoice in your comfort  
knowing that nothing can separate us from your love  
in Christ Jesus our Lord. Amen.

*You may wish to pray for the nation, the church, our city, our parish and our friends and family.*

Lord Jesus Christ, you said to your disciples, 'I am with you always'.  
Be with me today, as I offer myself to you.  
Hear my prayers for others and for myself,  
and keep me in your care. Amen.

The Lord's Prayer

### **A short Spiritual Communion**

The Book of Common Prayer reminds us that if we offer ourselves in penitence and faith, giving thanks for the redemption won by Christ crucified, we may truly 'eat and drink the Body and Blood of our Saviour Christ', even when we cannot receive the sacrament physically in ourselves.

*You may wish to say or pray*

Lord, have mercy.  
Christ, have mercy.  
Lord, have mercy.

O God,  
help me to trust you,  
help me to know that you are with me,  
help me to believe that nothing can separate me from your love  
revealed in Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

*If you have easy access to the internet, go to this website*

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3dtbzFdFTnc&feature=youtu.be>

where you will hear the choir of St David's church sing an anthem by Nigel Walsh – (Christ has no body but you - a setting of words attributed to St Teresa of Avila.) Thanks to Nigel for this.

*Giving thanks for Christ's death and resurrection you may wish to say*

Thanks be to you, Lord Jesus Christ,  
for all the benefits you have given me,  
for all the pains and insults you have borne for me.

Since I cannot now receive you sacramentally,  
I ask you to come spiritually into my heart.  
O most merciful redeemer, friend and brother,  
may I know you more clearly,  
love you more dearly,  
and follow you more nearly, day by day. Amen.  
*(after the Prayer of St Richard of Chichester)*

### **The Conclusion**

God our Father, by whose mercy  
the world turns safely into darkness and returns again to light:  
we place in your hands our unfinished tasks,  
our unsolved problems, and our unfulfilled hopes,  
knowing that only what you bless will prosper.  
To your love and protection  
we commit each other and all those we love,  
knowing that you alone are our sure defender,  
through Jesus Christ our Lord.

Let us bless the Lord.  
Thanks be to God.

**Scroll to next page for this Sunday evening**

## **This Sunday Evening**

Churches Together in Devon in common with Churches Together throughout England are asking that at 7pm each Sunday evening, you light a candle in the windows of your home as a visible symbol of the light of life, Jesus Christ, our source and hope in prayer.

## **Night Prayer**



If you are able to do so, you might wish to light a candle near a window.

### **Opening prayer:**

Come, O Spirit of God,  
and make within us your dwelling place and home.  
May our darkness be dispelled by your light,  
and our troubles calmed by your peace;  
may all evil be redeemed by your love,  
all pain transformed through the suffering of Christ,  
and all dying glorified in his risen life. Amen.

### **Psalm 46.**

God is our refuge and strength, a very present help in trouble;  
Therefore we will not fear, though the earth be moved,  
and though the mountains tremble in the heart of the sea;  
Though the waters rage and swell,  
and though the mountains quake at the towering seas.

There is a river whose streams make glad the city of God,  
the holy place of the dwelling of the Most High.  
God is in the midst of her; therefore shall she not be removed;  
God shall help her at the break of day.

The nations are in uproar and the kingdoms are shaken,  
but God utters his voice and the earth shall melt away.  
The Lord of hosts is with us; the God of Jacob is our stronghold.

Come and behold the works of the Lord,  
what destruction he has wrought upon the earth.  
He makes wars to cease in all the world;  
he shatters the bow and snaps the spear and burns the chariots in the fire.  
'Be still, and know that I am God;  
I will be exalted among the nations;  
I will be exalted in the earth.'  
The Lord of hosts is with us; the God of Jacob is our stronghold.

**Prayers for the nation, for those in need, and for those close to you.**

Let us pray to the Lord, who is our refuge and stronghold.  
For the health and well-being of our nation, that all who are fearful and  
anxious may be at peace and free from worry:  
*Lord, hear us, Lord, graciously hear us.*

For the isolated and housebound, that we may be alert to their needs, and  
care for them in their vulnerability:  
*Lord, hear us, Lord, graciously hear us.*

For our homes and families, our schools and young people, and all in any kind  
of need or distress:  
*Lord, hear us, Lord, graciously hear us.*

For a blessing on our local community, that our neighbourhoods may be places  
of trust and friendship, where all are known and cared for:  
*Lord, hear us, Lord, graciously hear us.*

We commend ourselves, and all for whom we pray, to the mercy and  
protection of God.

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

### **The Conclusion**

In peace we will lie down and sleep;  
for you alone, Lord, make us dwell in safety.  
Abide with us, Lord Jesus,  
for the night is at hand  
and the day is now past.

As the night watch looks for the morning,  
so do we look for you, O Christ.  
The Lord bless us and watch over us;  
The Lord make his face to shine upon us and be gracious to us;  
The Lord look kindly upon us and give us peace. Amen.