



SUNDAY 7TH FEBRUARY 2021

As we are unable to meet together in church, this service will give you an outline of a service you can do at home. If you have them, gather a few things that will help you create a sacred space – we suggest a cross, Bible and candle.



INTRODUCTION

Today we move out of our Christmas/ Epiphany season and now we are 2nd Sunday before Lent and soon we will get information about team Lent groups . If we were in church then we would be back onto green for the altar coverings etc. I went into church to remove the Christmas decorations this week it seemed such a shame as we didn't see as much of them as we usually do but anyone who needs their contribution let me know, as at the moment they are all stored in the vestry. Some lovely Christmas trees, angels and crib picture are there. Thankfully, Don has removed the tree, as that would have been a bit difficult.

Things are changing in the diocese as we move from 20 Deaneries to just 7 and Bolton will operate as one deanery, there is a lot of speculation on how churches will be grouped together and as things transpire, we will keep you up to date.

Chris Jamieson is doing our reflection today, he is now based at St. Peter's at Belmont and we thank him for his input.

Jan B

PRAYER OF PREPARATION

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.

PRAYERS OF PENITENCE



Lord God, we have sinned against you; we have done evil in your sight. We are sorry and repent. Have mercy on us according to your love. Wash away our wrongdoing and cleanse us from our sin. Renew a right spirit within us and restore us to the joy of your salvation, through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

GLORIA

Glory to God in the highest and peace to his people on earth. Lord God heavenly King almighty God and Father, we worship you, we give you thanks, we praise you for your glory. Lord Jesus Christ only Son of the Father, Lord God Lamb of God you take away the sins of the world; have mercy upon us; you are seated at the right hand of the Father receive our prayer. For you alone are the Holy One, you alone are the Lord, you alone are the Most High, Jesus Christ, with the Holy Spirit. In the glory of God the Father. Amen.



THE COLLECT

Almighty God, you have created the heavens and the earth and made us in your own image: teach us to discern your hand in all your works and your likeness in all your children; through Jesus Christ your Son our Lord, who with you and the Holy Spirit reigns supreme over all things, now and for ever.

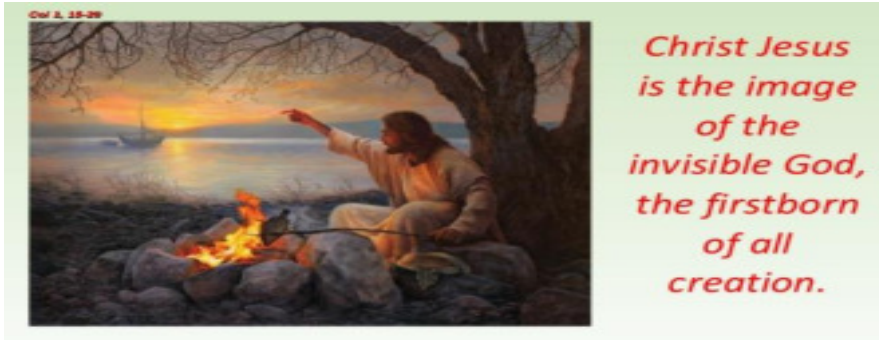
THE OLD TESTAMENT READING - PROVERBS 8,1,22-31

Does not wisdom call, and does not understanding raise her voice?

The LORD created me at the beginning of his work, the first of his acts of long ago. Ages ago I was set up, at the first, before the beginning of the earth. When there were no depths I was brought forth, when there were no springs abounding with water. Before the mountains had been shaped, before the hills, I was brought forth— when he had not yet made earth and fields, or the world's first bits of soil. When he established the heavens, I was there, when he drew a circle on the face of the deep, when he made firm the skies above, when he established the fountains of the deep, when he assigned to the sea its limit, so that the waters might not transgress his command, when he marked out the foundations of the earth, then I was beside him, like a master worker; and I was daily his delight, rejoicing before him always, rejoicing in his inhabited world and delighting in the human race.

This is the word of the Lord – **Thanks be to God**

THE NEW TESTAMENT READING - COLOSSIANS 1, 15-20



He is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn of all creation; for in him all things in heaven and on earth were created, things visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or rulers or powers—all things have been created through him and for him. He himself is before all things, and in him all things hold together. He is the head of the body, the church; he is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead, so that he might come to have first place in everything. For in him all the fullness of God was pleased to dwell, and through him God was pleased to reconcile to himself all things, whether on earth or in heaven, by making peace through the blood of his cross.

This is the word of the Lord – **Thanks be to God**

THE GOSPEL - JOHN 1, 1-14

Hear the Gospel of our Lord according to John – **Glory to you, O lord**

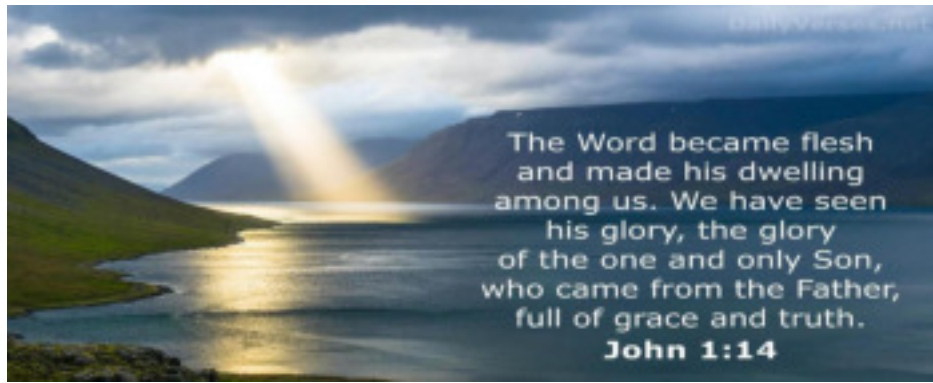
In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was in the beginning with God. All things came into being through him, and without him not one thing came into being. What has come into being in him was life, and the life was the light of all people. The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness did not overcome it.

There was a man sent from God, whose name was John. He came as a witness to testify to the light, so that all might believe through him. He himself was not the light, but he came to testify to the light. The true light, which enlightens everyone, was coming into the world.

He was in the world, and the world came into being through him; yet the world did not know him. He came to what was his own, and his own people did not accept him. But to all who received him, who believed in his name, he gave power to become children of God, who were born, not of blood or of the will of the flesh or of the will of man, but of God.

And the Word became flesh and lived among us, and we have seen his glory, the glory as of a father's only son, full of grace and truth.

This is the Gospel of the Lord- **Praise to you, O Christ.**



REFLECTION

'In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God and the Word was God.' What a wonderful statement, what a joy to be able to declare this to the world. This introduction to John's gospel is different from the opening verses of Genesis. There it says, 'In the beginning... God.' Here, in John's gospel, we have the words 'In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God and the Word was God.' God and the Word are intimately connected and they have been since the very beginning. This is part of the mystery of our faith 'the Word was with God and the Word was God.' God the Father and God the Son are one with God the Holy Spirit intricately and miraculously united into one being.

Not only are God and the Word 'of one being' but it is through this eternal relationship that life was brought into being. And this was no ordinary life but the life that was the Light for all humankind. The Word came as both life and Light, and even though there was darkness, the darkness was not able to overcome the Light.

The narrative now turns from heaven to earth when we meet John who was sent to bear witness to the Light. He stresses from the very start that he is not the Light but that he has come to reveal the Light to others. John bore witness to the Light, and this Light was in fact the creator of the world, but the Light was not accepted or even recognised by many people on earth. The creator was present, God was, and is present, on earth and the people did not, and still do not, acknowledge him.

The Light is universal and is available to all people; no one is left outside of its illuminating power. We see this total inclusivity throughout the gospel story 'God so loved the world' not just some of the world or a chosen few but the world - the whole world - including everybody in it. 'When I am lifted up I will draw **all** people to myself'. Again not just some people but **all** people, no one is to be excluded. However even with this inclusivity, there is a decision to be made. God, the Light of the world, is available but some people still prefer to live in darkness.

But the choice is there; and for all 'who received him... he gave power to become children of God.' We are given this incredible gift the ability to become children of God. We can't do this on our own we need to recognise the Light, to believe in the name of Jesus and then it is only possible through the grace of God himself.

In our reading, we come then to what may be one of the most significant verses in the Bible. 'And the Word became flesh and lived among us, and we have seen his glory, the glory as of a Father's only Son, full of grace and truth.' A clear statement that God became man, God became fully present in human form. God was Emmanuel... God with us.

John declared the truth of the gospel, he bore witness to the Light but in verse 14 it says that we have also 'seen his glory' so we too have a responsibility to bear witness to the Light. We have received 'grace upon grace' so we have a duty to share this grace with others. God has given us so much through the gift of Jesus that surely the very least we can do is share that gift with those around us.

The opening verses of John's gospel are a call to mission, a sending out. John was sent to prepare the way for Jesus and Jesus was sent as the defining example of missionary undertaking. He came to bring life and Light and we are called to take this message out into our communities. God supplies the grace we need for this task but we need to listen to his directions, to his plan for our mission. As we set out on a new and challenging year let us make the opening verses of John's gospel our rallying cry for outreach and mission in our area. 'The Word was with God and the Word was God.' God, in Jesus came to live among us in human form; he was prepared to come down from heaven for our sake so we too need to be prepared to take his message of salvation to all with whom we come into contact. We need to put our trust in the Word, the Light of the world, and go out like John to bear witness to that Light.

Chris Jamieson

THE CREED

I believe in God the Father almighty, creator of heaven and earth.

I believe in Jesus Christ, his only son, our Lord, who was conceived by the Holy Spirit, born of the Virgin Mary, suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, died and was buried; he descended to the dead.

On the third day he rose again; ascended into heaven, he is seated at the right hand of the Father, and he will come to judge the living and the dead.

**I believe in the Holy Spirit, the holy Catholic Church, the communion of saints, the forgiveness of sins, the resurrection of the body, and the life everlasting.
Amen**



PRAYERS OF INTERCESSION



During the intercessions, we pray for the church, our country, our government, people in difficulty and those who have died. You can use your own prayers or if you *prefer here are some on today's theme.*

Blessed are you, Lord God almighty. You are the giver of life and power; all energy, all strength comes from you. We come to you for renewal and refreshment. We come to rest in your presence that we may find strength and hope in you.

We pray for all who preach the word and administer sacraments, that they may find great strength from your presence. May our churches be a place of stillness and refreshment whether in the buildings or in our own homes. May your people show that you give joy and peace to their lives.

Lord in your mercy – **Hear our prayer**

We pray for all who are responsible for the limited resources in our world, that we may use them with respect and care. We ask your blessing on all that provide our homes with light and power especially those who strive for no carbon emissions. We remember countries who are looking for new sources of power.

Lord in your mercy – **Hear our prayer**

We pray for all who expend their energies in caring and loving us. We ask you to bless our homes and loved ones. We pray for those who have taught us and all who have provided for our needs.

Lord in your mercy – **Hear our prayer**

Father, all –powerful, we remember the needs of the weary, the powerless, and the sick. We ask your blessing on all who feel they cannot cope with life or who are drained of their resources. We pray especially for those in hospitals and the staff caring for them, give them strength to carry on and hope for recovery. We pray today for Rachel Greaves and anyone else known to us.

Lord in your mercy – **Hear our prayer**

Father you are the giver of life and life eternal. We remember in your presence the Holy ones who have served you. We pray for our loved ones departed, that all may be renewed by your power.

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

THE LORD'S PRAYER



Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your name, your kingdom come, your will be done, on earth as in heaven.

Give us this day 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 forever. Amen.

THE BLESSING

May the God of hope fill us with joy and peace in believing and the blessing of God almighty, the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit be among us and remain with us always. **Amen**

