

Church at home

East Leake Methodist Church 2021

Sit comfortably in a quiet place and prepare, start with a brief period of silence, turning your mind and spirit towards God. You may want to have a cross or candle in view as a focus.

Psalm 25: 1 – 5

Leader: To you, Lord my God, I lift up my soul;

ALL: In you I trust, O my God;

Leader: Do not let me be put to shame,

ALL: Nor let my enemies, triumph over me.

Leader: No one whose hope is in you will ever be put to shame,

ALL: but they will be put to shame who are treacherous without excuse.

Leader: Show me your ways, O Lord,

ALL: teach me your paths:

Leader: Guide me in your truth and teach me,

ALL: for you are God my Saviour, and my hope is in you all day long.

StheF 357 Jesus the name high over all

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=mOBV_gLeRVU

Opening prayer

Into a dark world a snowdrop comes, a blessing of hope and peace,
carrying with it a green heart, symbol of God's renewing love.
Come to inhabit our darkness, Lord Christ, for dark and light are alike to you.
May nature's white candles of hope remind us of your birth,
and lighten our journey through Lent and beyond.

silence

Patient God,
You know us through and through;
You know our motives and our dreams;
You know our apathy and indifference;
You see beneath our shallow self-confidence;

Underneath our egos, our bank balances, our careers.

Like Simon Peter, our rocky exterior crumbles
under the pressure of opinion.

Like James and John, we long for the rewards of the kingdom
without the struggle of the journey.

Like all the disciples, we want success not failure;
we want all the hard work to end in recognition and acclaim.

Forgive us for our blindness.
It goes on and on.

Where are we to go?
You have the eternal words of life.
Amen.

The Lord's Prayer

StheF 254 Seek ye first the kingdom of God

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=FFxZeY2D5tc>

Reading Mark 1: 9 - 15

Sermon

Why did Jesus have to be baptised by John?

If we believe that Jesus was without sin, why did he respond to a baptism of repentance for the forgiveness of sins. Was he just identifying with all who need to be baptised, or was there more?

Forgiveness for what?

Mark's account of the baptism raises a question about what sins John was expecting the people to repent of. He preached a baptism for the forgiveness of sin, yet the people had a means to find forgiveness for personal sin, through the sacrifices in the temple. Could the repentance they offered be for something other than personal sin? Were they conscious of the sins of society, those done by society of which they were a part and therefore joined in with unwittingly?

Scholars have suggested that this may be the case, and the people who came to John were looking for something new, for an alternative to the system of abuse they saw in their society, by the religious elite and those in power. They came to John because they hoped that God was going to do something new, to act in a new and decisive way and so they repented of all that was wrong in their society and their part in it.

Coming to baptism, showed that they were ready for the promised kingdom of God, they were already looking for it, and it was an admission of their regret that they had participated in a system that was opposed to God's kingdom. It makes sense of Jesus coming forward to be baptised too, because besides identifying with the people, he also understood John's role in calling people to repent of the way things had become. Jesus' mission was to usher in the new age of the kingdom of God, that was opposite to the way of society. He could therefore, be one who was without individual sin, but he could not be separated from the sins of society, without first repenting of them and then working for change.

What do we learn from this?

We too should be mindful of the sins in our society today. We may not be directly responsible for them, but at times we can be complicit. When we shop and buy something because we prefer it without thinking about how it was made or the people who may have suffered for us to have something so 'cheap', we are complicit, particularly when Fairtrade alternatives are available. If we don't challenge racist attitudes when we hear them, then we are accepting a wrong in our society. When we hear the slogan 'Black lives matter' and respond with 'all lives matter' we miss the point, which is not that black lives matter more, but in too many societies black lives are deemed to count for nothing.

In the kingdom of God that Jesus ushered in there is no room for sin of any kind. If Jesus is our Saviour then perhaps there might be more that we need saving from than we realise.

Amen.

StheF 541 To the river I am going

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qWyQsQxxvC8>

A pray for others:

We hold onto hope Lord Jesus,
we know the story well, of your journey to Golgotha
where the world turned its back on you and left you to die.
We hold onto hope Lord Jesus.

We hold onto hope Lord Jesus,
we know the story well, of your glorious resurrection
heralding hope for all people, a new beginning, a new dawn in your Spirit.
We hold onto hope Lord Jesus.

We hold on to hope Lord Jesus,
for those we know who need you now,
who need the healing touch of your life-giving resurrection hope this day.
(look around your room at the pictures of family and friends, hold them before God
in your heart, giving thanks for them and praying a blessing to them in Jesus' name)
We hold onto hope Lord Jesus.

We hold to hope Lord Jesus,
for those we do not know but see in the news, who move us to tears because of
their suffering. May your Spirit work through those who know you to bring healing
and comfort.
We hold onto hope Lord Jesus.

Be with us Lord Jesus, as we walk through Lent, help us to know that we are never
alone, stir us to action to do what we can, through a letter, a phone call, or a simple
smile to brighten someone's day to reveal the hope that we have in you for all to
see.

In the name of our crucified and risen Saviour, Jesus Christ.

Amen.

StheF 317 At the name of Jesus

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7w-tDjlpGk>

Blessing

Good and gracious God deliver us from all that is evil,
Confirm and strengthen us in all goodness;
and the blessing of God, Father, Son and Holy Spirit,
be with us ever more.

Amen.