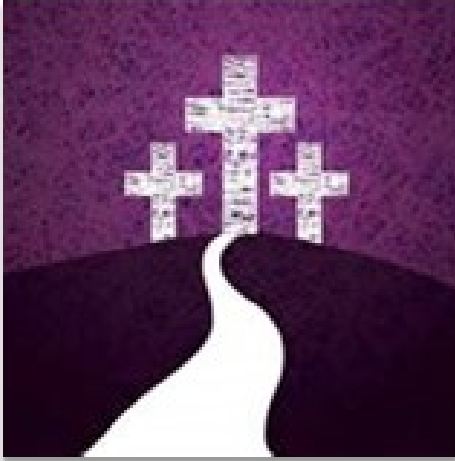


Thoughts and Prayers for the Week

Sunday 5th March 2023



2nd Sunday of Lent

Almighty God,
by the prayer and discipline of Lent
may we enter into the mystery of
Christ's sufferings,
and by following in his Way
come to share in his glory;
through Jesus Christ our Lord.
Amen



Readings this week:

Genesis 12: 1-4a

Psalm 121

Romans 4: 1-5, 13-17

John 3: 1-17

In the wilderness...

We begin with John the Baptist, the cousin of Jesus. He had been preaching in the wilderness and urging people to repent and be baptised – the kingdom of God was near. Hundreds were drawn to his preaching. It is thought that John was part of a monastic group, the Essenes, who used baptism as a ritual cleansing. The Jews believed that Elijah would come back to earth to announce the coming of the Messiah – was John to them the second Elijah?

One of the meanings of repentance is to “become a disciple”. Jesus didn’t need to repent for any reason – but in being baptised by John in the river Jordan He chose to dedicate Himself fully to the will and call of God.

Unknown to the crowd, Jesus saw the heavens open, the Holy Spirit descend upon Him like a dove and a voice from Heaven saying, “You are my Son, the beloved. With you I am well pleased.”

What did this **feel** like to Jesus, who was seeking His role in life? Don’t forget Jesus was totally human. Did He know about His special birth? Was he totally overwhelmed? Did He realise that the Holy God that He longed to follow and to do His will was His Father in heaven? We often read these words but probably don’t see the nature, feelings and thoughts of this human being, Jesus.

The Holy Spirit drove or compelled Jesus to go into the rugged wilderness to fathom out what all this meant. It wasn’t pleasant: the temperatures during the day could easily reach 100 degrees and by night it was very cold. There, Mark states that Jesus was tempted or tested by Satan. Perhaps it would have been easy to display power, to do miracles for His own benefit and to prove that He could be greater than God Himself. Instead, whatever manifestation the evil one took – by torment or physical apparition – Jesus had the courage to resist by using the word of God, i.e., scripture. He was sure



now that His ministry wouldn’t be of destructive power, greed or self-aggrandisement – but only the power of God to reach out to His people in love, compassion and salvation, and in the giving of Himself. Whether He was aware then of the route that would take, we don’t know.

Dare we look at our own ‘wildernesses’? What does that mean to us today? We surely as humans struggle with all kinds of doubts and fears about our own lives and about this troubled world: when we see downright evil being perpetrated – the ‘deceiver’ alive and kicking – we have much to stand up to. We can be overwhelmed by the horrors that we witness day in and day out. Can we in our little corner of the world believe once again that JESUS is Lord?

As we move through Lent to His Passion, crucifixion and Resurrection, let’s give ourselves to this journey with Jesus; walking with Him; reflecting on Him and the suffering in the wilderness and beyond; listening – through the silences of our wilderness experience – for His voice of love to give us the strength and courage to face our futures for the Glory of His Father. **Amen**

~Jackie Mahony ~

Let us continue to support and strengthen each other

- ◇ Daily, by saying The Lord’s Prayer together, morning and evening
- ◇ Lighting a candle at home 10.00am on Sunday if we are unable to come to church

Our Services:

Sunday 5th Mar 2023 2nd Sunday of Lent	10:00am Group Morning Prayer Service in the Celtic Tradition	Fritton Church
	4:00pm Family Praise	Hempnall Church
Sunday 12th Mar 2023 3rd Sunday of Lent	10:00am Group Eucharist Revd Canon Susanna Gunner, Diocesan Spirituality and Discipleship Advisor	Topcroft Church

This week we pray for:

- ◇ In the morning: the day and its tasks; the world and its needs; the Church and her life
- ◇ Those preparing for baptism and confirmation
- ◇ Those serving through leadership
- ◇ Those looking for forgiveness
- ◇ Those misled by the false gods of this present age
- ◇ All who are hungry
- ◇ In the evening: peace; individuals and their needs

FOOD BANK

Items for our Food Bank are still needed; we are very grateful to all who continue to contribute during this difficult time.

Our next collections will be on:

Sunday 5TH MARCH 2023 Any items can be left at Hempnall Church Office Mon-Thu, 9am-12:30pm. Please phone before arrival – 01508 498157

URGENTLY NEEDED FOOD ITEMS

CUP-A-SOUP, TINNED VEGETABLES, INSTANT MASH, INSTANT NOODLES (NOT POTS), TINNED FRUIT, TINNED POTATOES, MICROWAVE PUDDING/CAKES

NO PEANUT BUTTER PLEASE

HYGIENE—MALE & FEMALE DEODORANT
 ANIMALS—DOG, RABBIT & GUINEA PIG FOOD

WE REMEMBER:

Martin, Molly, Ian

Hempnall: Lesley and family,
 Phillip, Sophie, Ross, Claire, David

Bedingham/Woodton:
 Sheila, Hilary, Peter, Liz, Anne, Chris, Barrie,
 Carolyn, Kath, Bruce, Pat, Basil,
 Anthea, Harry, Sally

Topcroft: Gerald

LONG TERM CARE:

Bedingham /Woodton:
 Dennis, Shirley, Jacob, Myrtle, Rudolph
Fritton/Morningthorpe: Beryl



RECENTLY DIED:

Peter Downing, Shelia Clarke

Please ring us if you need:

Group Office: Mon-Thurs 9am-12.30pm

01508 498157

Email: hempnallgroup.office@btinternet.com



Psalm 121:1-2

I LIFT UP MY EYES TO THE MOUNTAINS— WHERE DOES MY HELP COME FROM? MY HELP COMES FROM THE LORD , THE MAKER OF HEAVEN AND EARTH.