

## WELCOME AND NOTICES

Mothering Sunday.

March letter 2 – Easter arrangements

## CALL TO WORSHIP

If an enemy were insulting me, I could endure it; if a foe were rising against me, I could hide.

<sup>13</sup> But it is you, a man like myself, my companion, my close friend, <sup>14</sup> with whom I once enjoyed sweet fellowship at the house of God, as we walked about among the worshippers.

(Psalm 55:12-14)

## SONG: ALL I ONCE HELD DEAR

<https://youtu.be/Merf00qcQik>

All I once held dear, built my life upon,  
All this world reveres, and wars to own,  
All I once thought gain I have counted loss;  
Spent and worthless now, compared to this.

*Knowing You, Jesus, Knowing You,  
there is no greater thing.  
You're my all, You're the best,  
You're my joy, my righteousness,  
And I love You, Lord.*

Now my heart's desire is to know You more,  
To be found in You and known as Yours.  
To possess by faith what I could not earn,  
All-surpassing gift of righteousness.

Oh, to know the power of Your risen life,  
And to know You in Your sufferings.  
To become like You in Your death, my Lord,  
So with You to live and never die.

## OPENING PRAYER

God our source and guide and goal: you have made us in your image and set us in a world full of beauty; you dwell in unapproachable light, yet you have come among us, full of grace and truth. You have revealed yourself in our Saviour Jesus Christ. Help us by your Spirit to worship you in spirit and in truth; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

## CONFESSION

The Bible tells us that all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God (Rom. 3.23). If we say we have no sin we deceive ourselves and the truth is not in us. If we confess our sins, God, who is faithful and just, will forgive us our sins (1 John 1.8-9). Let us confess our sins and seek God's forgiveness.

**Almighty God, we confess before you our own sin, the sin of the Church and the sin of the world, in which we share. We have not loved you with our whole being; we have not loved our neighbour as ourselves. In your mercy, forgive us when we turn to you; release us from the burdens of the past, and remake us in your image and likeness through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.**

If anyone is in Christ, there is a new creation (2 Cor. 5.17). Through him your sins are forgiven. Amen. Thanks be to God.

## OFFERTORY

**Almighty God, out of the fulness of your gifts we bring before you this bread and wine, our gifts and our lives. Blessed be your holy name forever, through Jesus Christ our Lord.**

## READING: Mark 14:41-52

Returning the third time, he said to them, 'Are you still sleeping and resting? Enough! The hour has come. Look, the Son of Man is delivered into the hands of sinners. <sup>42</sup> Rise! Let us go! Here comes my betrayer!' <sup>43</sup> Just as he was speaking, Judas, one of the Twelve, appeared. With him was a crowd armed with swords and clubs, sent from the chief priests, the teachers of the law, and the elders.

<sup>44</sup> Now the betrayer had arranged a signal with them: 'The one I kiss is the man; arrest him and lead him away under guard.' <sup>45</sup> Going at once to Jesus, Judas

said, 'Rabbi!' and kissed him. <sup>46</sup> The men seized Jesus and arrested him.

<sup>47</sup> Then one of those standing near drew his sword and struck the servant of the high priest, cutting off his ear.

<sup>48</sup> 'Am I leading a rebellion,' said Jesus, 'that you have come out with swords and clubs to capture me? <sup>49</sup> Every day I was with you, teaching in the temple courts, and you did not arrest me. But the Scriptures must be fulfilled.' <sup>50</sup> Then everyone deserted him and fled.

<sup>51</sup> A young man, wearing nothing but a linen garment, was following Jesus. When they seized him, <sup>52</sup> he fled naked, leaving his garment behind.

This is the Word of the Lord.

**Thanks be to God.**

#### **REFLECTION: WHY ARE WE HERE?**

##### **(4) To stand with Jesus**

Betrayed is the name of a book by Stan Telchin, a well-respected Jewish businessman in the USA. It tells of the feeling of utter betrayal when his daughter Judy rang him up to tell him that she had accepted Jesus as her Messiah. I've mentioned this book before because it's a great little book that tells of the long journey some people have to go on to come to faith in Jesus, and the pain along the way.

Many of us will know what the pain of betrayal feels like. Here in this passage of scripture we have the ultimate betrayal – Judas Iscariot's betrayal of Jesus. As we have already discovered last week, the motive for his betrayal was greed (John 12:6). When his money-motivated heart saw the Jesus' kingdom plans would not result in his personal gain, he arranged to sell the Messiah to the authorities at a time when Jesus could be

taken in secret, quietly, without a struggle (Mark 14:1, 10,11).

And so after the Passover meal Jesus and his disciples went to Gethsemane, and there Jesus prayed. It was a spring night, the Passover moon was full and it was probably a clear night as John tells us it was cold (John 18:18). The ancient olive trees cast shadows across the garden and in the distance the lights of Jerusalem were sparse. Jesus woke his sleeping disciples and announced "The hour has come. Look, the Son of Man is betrayed into the hands of sinners. Rise! Let us go! Here comes my betrayer!" (14:41-42). Jesus had seen the mob approaching, and Judas with them.

This is where the most famous kiss in history took place. The word for kiss here (kataphileo) is the word for an intensive kiss, to kiss fervently and affectionally. It is the kind of kiss you give to someone you love. Judas' kiss was not in love but it was long enough for the guards to identify Jesus in the moonlight. In the garden was the kiss of death not the kiss of love. This kiss from Judas showed just how low a human heart can go, yet Jesus' response showed just how high a human heart can soar. Betrayal is always terrible, but when it comes in the guise of love and from a friend it is utterly terrible. Yet there was no rejection from Jesus. He didn't say to Judas, 'You wicked man. What are you doing?' Rather, as Matthew tells us, he said "Friend, do what you came to do" (Matthew 26:50). Jesus did not just say "Love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you" (Matt. 5:44) – he lived it.

This is what a life in surrender to God can do. Jesus was not conquered by the betrayal and neither was he held captive by personal anger and hatred. In Matthew's account Jesus calls Judas 'friend' (Matthew 26:50). Jesus was still reaching out to Judas even at the moment of betrayal. As followers of Jesus, we are called to

do the same when we are betrayed. We may feel we are entitled to hatred and anger. But Jesus says we are not entitled to respond in this way. Even more so, Jesus' example teaches us that if we brace ourselves in prayer and submission to God, we can even reach out to the offender. The world says 'take revenge', Jesus says 'Love your enemies.'

It is so much easier to grab for our sword and strike out, as Peter did (v47). Even though Mark doesn't tell us who it was, John's gospel reveals it was Peter. Striking with a sword is not Jesus' way. Have you chopped any ears off lately (so to speak)? Have you struck a blow you rightly (and wrongly) felt was justified? If so, look at Jesus, and listen to what he says. And remember, the Lord specialises in healing wounds. Luke's account tells us that he healed Malchus' ear (Luke 22:51). Jesus can heal the hurt we have caused. Jesus wasn't leading a rebellion (v48), he was leading heaven's conquest of sin and death and hell.

In v49 it says: "But the Scriptures must be fulfilled." We might have expected this phrase in Matthew's gospel, but we find it here in Mark's account of Jesus' arrest. The whole of Jesus' life was lived in fulfilment of the Scriptures. In the midst of human betrayal and guilt, the plan which God had foreordained was being accomplished, and so Jesus fulfilled the plan of salvation which God had formed before the creation of the world.

Mark's account finishes with words about everyone deserting Jesus and fleeing, including a young man who fled naked after the guards who were arresting Jesus seized the young man also. Most scholars agree that this young man was in fact Mark, the writer of this gospel. Tradition suggests that the Last Supper took place in the upper room of his family home. When Jesus and the Eleven went to Gethsemane on the Mount of Olives, Mark hastily wrapped a linen cloth around him. But

as he was seized along with Jesus, he would rather the indignity of running home stark naked than facing death. He had the added advantage that it was night and there were no streetlamps, but still which of us would have rather faced crucifixion?

What we are left with is the fact that Jesus was absolutely alone as he submitted himself to his Heavenly Father and to the waiting cross. Over this past year, many have died alone, but none so abandoned as Jesus was at this hour. As we tread on our Lenten journey to that Good Friday, let us reflect on Jesus' response to betrayal and his words to his betrayer. Jesus loved his enemies and would go to the cross for them, but he would face the cruel cross alone.

If you are feeling all alone, betrayed, abandoned, Jesus knows just what you are going through. More than that, he not only knows what you're going through, he is going through it with you.

#### **SONG: FROM THE SQUALOR**

<https://youtu.be/YksTeR61O1I>

**From the squalor of a borrowed stable  
by the Spirit and a virgin's faith;  
To the anguish and the shame of scandal  
came the Saviour of the human race!  
But the skies were filled with the praise of  
heaven,  
shepherds listen as the angels tell  
Of the Gift of God come down to man  
at the dawning of Immanuel.**

**King of heaven now the Friend of sinners,  
humble servant in the Father's hands,  
Filled with power and the Holy Spirit,  
filled with mercy for the broken man.  
Yes, He walked my road and He felt my pain,  
joys and sorrows that I know so well;  
Yet His righteous steps give me hope again –  
I will follow my Immanuel!**

**Through the kisses of a friend's betrayal,  
He was lifted on a cruel cross;  
He was punished for a world's  
transgressions,  
He was suffering to save the lost.  
He fights for breath, He fights for me,  
Loosing sinners from the claims of hell;  
And with a shout our souls are free –  
Death defeated by Immanuel!**

**Now He's standing in the place of honour,  
crowned with glory on the highest throne,  
Interceding for His own beloved  
till His Father calls to bring them home!  
Then the skies will part as the trumpet  
sounds  
hope of heaven or the fear of hell;  
But the Bride will run to her Lover's arms,  
giving glory to Immanuel!**

#### **PRAYERS OF INTERCESSION**

Lord our God, as we celebrate Mothering Sunday, we thank you for those who have cared for us, our mothers and those who stood in their place. We pray this morning for all those who have lost their mothers during the pandemic.

Jesus, man of sorrows  
**We stand with you**

Lord our God, we pray for the church during this time, that despite our disconnectedness we may know ourselves to be part of your community of joy and loved and prayed for by our brothers and sisters in Christ.

We remember before you our mother church, the church from which we first knew you, and ask your blessing on its life and witness.

Jesus, man of sorrows  
**We stand with you**

Lord our God, we pray for the Queen and the royal family following Harry and Meghan's interview. Give them all wisdom, love and

forgiveness. And we pray for the Duke of Edinburgh that his health may improve. We pray for our own family, friends and neighbours, thanking you for them. In these testing times, help us to not betray those nearest and dearest to us.

Jesus, man of sorrows  
**We stand with you**

We pray for our wider community of Bowthorpe, that all within its embrace may know they are remembered in love. Bless them with joy despite the difficulties. We pray for families as they adjust to their children returning to school, and pray for all school staff as they seek to make school as normal and safe as possible.

Jesus, man of sorrows  
**We stand with you**

Lord our God, we pray for those who have felt betrayed in life. Help them to realise that you are still present, that you are still a loving God who cares. And we pray for all those who grieve, for lost loved ones, for lost health or work or hope.

Jesus, man of sorrows  
**We stand with you**

Lord our God, finally we pray for ourselves, that we may be faithful to you in all we say and do, that our lives may not betray our love for you.

Jesus, man of sorrows  
**We stand with you**

All these things we pray in Jesus' name. 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 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.

**SONG: OH, TO SEE THE DAWN**

<https://youtu.be/uS7fc7VTJZs>

Oh to see the dawn of the darkest day:  
Christ on the road to Calvary.  
Tried by sinful men, torn and beaten then  
Nailed to a cross of wood.

*This, the power of the cross:*

*Christ became sin for us.*

*Took the blame, bore the wrath –*

*We stand forgiven at the cross.*

Oh, to see the pain written on Your face,  
Bearing the awesome weight of sin.  
Every bitter thought, every evil deed  
Crowning Your bloodstained brow.

Now the daylight flees, now the ground  
beneath

Quakes as its maker bows His head.

Curtain torn in two, dead are raised to life;

'Finished!' the victory cry.

Oh, to see my name written in the wounds,  
For through Your suffering I am free.

Death is crushed to death,

life is mine to live,

Won through Your selfless love.

*This, the power of the cross:*

*Son of God – slain for us.*

*What a love! What a cost!*

*We stand forgiven at the cross.*

**THE PEACE**

Let the peace of Christ rule in your hearts,  
since as members of one body you were called  
to peace (Col. 3:15).

The peace of the Lord be always with you  
**and also with you.**

Let us offer one another a sign of peace.

**HOLY COMMUNION**

As we gather at this table, we remember that  
Jesus was born of Mary; he lived our common  
life on earth; he suffered and died for us; on  
the third day God raised him from the dead;  
and he is always present with us through the  
Holy Spirit.

In his presence, and in the company of all the  
people of God, past, present, and to come, we  
celebrate the Supper of the Lord. 'Listen! I am  
standing at the door, knocking; if you hear my  
voice and open the door, I will come in to you  
and eat with you, and you with me.'

*(Revelation 3: 20)*

Lift up your hearts.

**We lift them to the Lord.**

Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.

**It is right to give our thanks and praise.**

We give thanks to you, O God, that from the  
earth you cause the grain to come for the  
making of bread and that you cause the vine to  
yield fruit. We praise you for Christ, the bread  
of life and true vine, whose body was given for  
us, and whose blood was poured out for us.

By your Holy Spirit sanctify us and these your gifts of bread and wine, that the bread which we break may be the communion of the body of Christ, and the cup which we bless may be the communion of the blood of Christ. As we share the sufferings of Christ, so give us grace to know the power of his resurrection, that we may be made one and evermore abide in him, to your praise and glory; through Jesus Christ our Lord.

When Jesus had given thanks he broke the bread and said: 'Take, eat: this is my body which is for you. Do this in remembrance of me.' When Jesus had given thanks, he gave the cup to his disciples and said: 'Drink this, all of you; for 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.' **Amen.**

The Body of Christ broken for you.  
The Blood of Christ shed for you.

#### **PRAYER AFTER COMMUNION**

**God of a love stronger than death, you have given us new birth into a living hope through the gift of your Son. God with us, like a mother you have fed us with yourself & strengthened us for the journey ahead. Now may the love which bids us welcome at this table gather all your children into one, in your eternal presence. Amen.**

#### **SONG: NOW THANK WE ALL OUR GOD**

<https://youtu.be/Y0dmfmwFLn0>

**NOW THANK WE ALL OUR GOD,  
With hearts and hands and voices;  
Who wondrous things has done,  
In whom His world rejoices;  
Who from our mother's arms  
Has blessed us on our way  
With countless gifts of love,  
And still is ours today.**

**O may this bounteous God  
Through all our life be near us,  
With ever joyful hearts  
And blessed peace to cheer us;  
And keep us in His grace,  
And guide us when perplexed,  
And free us from all ills  
In this world and the next.**

**All praise and thanks to God  
The Father now be given,  
The Son, and Him who reigns  
With them in highest heaven,  
The one eternal God,  
Whom earth and heaven adore;  
For thus it was, is now,  
And shall be ever more.**

**(from Tarkwa Crusaders Choral, Ghana)**

<https://youtu.be/gUbA270DERE>

**(the history of the hymn)**

<https://youtu.be/mHhU7ikZoXc>

**(A modern contextual version)**

[https://youtu.be/3ju\\_G6K-teU](https://youtu.be/3ju_G6K-teU)

#### **CLOSING PRAYER AND BLESSING**

Lord, we give ourselves to you; and we ask that our daily living may be part of the life of your kingdom, and that our love may be your love reaching out into the life of the world; through Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

And the blessing of God Almighty, the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit be with you and all whom you love, now and for evermore. **Amen.**

Go in peace to love and serve the Lord.

**In the name of Christ. Amen.**