

**Morning Prayer**  
**30th March - 4th Sunday of Lent**  
**(We will be following this in our own homes at 10.30am)**

*Please read these words out loud, or in your heart.*

**Preparation**

Almighty God, lover of all people,  
giver of all grace,  
look mercifully upon us who acknowledge our sins;  
create in us a pure heart  
and a steadfast spirit;  
and lead us in the paths of holiness and righteousness;  
through Jesus Christ our Lord.

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

*Silence may be kept, to ask forgiveness of our sins  
and to seek God's strength for our life of service.*

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.

**The Word of God**

**Old Testament Reading: Joshua 5:2-12**

At that time the LORD said to Joshua, "Make flint knives and circumcise the Israelites again." <sup>3</sup> So Joshua made flint knives and circumcised the Israelites at Gibeath Haaraloth.

<sup>4</sup> Now this is why he did so: All those who came out of Egypt—all the men of military age—died in the wilderness on the way after leaving Egypt. <sup>5</sup> All the people that came out had been circumcised, but all the people born in the wilderness during the journey from Egypt had not. <sup>6</sup> The Israelites had moved about in the wilderness forty years until all the men who were of military age when they left Egypt had died, since they had not obeyed the LORD. For the LORD had sworn to them that they would not see the land he had solemnly promised their ancestors to give us, a land flowing with milk and honey. <sup>7</sup> So he raised up their sons in their place, and these were the ones Joshua circumcised. They were still uncircumcised because they had not been circumcised on the way. <sup>8</sup> And after the whole nation had been circumcised, they remained where they were in camp until they were healed.

<sup>9</sup> Then the LORD said to Joshua, "Today I have rolled away the reproach of Egypt from you." So the place has been called Gilgal to this day.

<sup>10</sup> On the evening of the fourteenth day of the month, while camped at Gilgal on the plains of Jericho, the Israelites celebrated the Passover. <sup>11</sup> The day after the Passover, that very day, they ate some of the produce of the land: unleavened bread and roasted grain. <sup>12</sup> The manna stopped the day after they ate this food from the land; there was no longer any manna for the Israelites, but that year they ate the produce of Canaan.

This is the word of the Lord.  
Thanks be to God.

New Testament reading: Luke 15:1-3, 11b-end

Now the tax collectors and sinners were all gathering around to hear Jesus. <sup>2</sup> But the Pharisees and the teachers of the law muttered, "This man welcomes sinners and eats with them."

<sup>3</sup> Then Jesus told them this parable: <sup>4</sup> "Suppose one of you has a hundred sheep and loses one of them. Doesn't he leave the ninety-nine in the open country and go after the lost sheep until he finds it? <sup>5</sup> And when he finds it, he joyfully puts it on his shoulders <sup>6</sup> and goes home. Then he calls his friends and neighbours together and says, 'Rejoice with me; I have found my lost sheep.' <sup>7</sup> I tell you that in the same way there will be more rejoicing in heaven over one sinner who repents than over ninety-nine righteous persons who do not need to repent.

This is the word of the Lord.  
Thanks be to God.

A Song of Humility

- 1 Come, let us return to the Lord  
who has torn us and will heal us.
- 2 God has stricken us  
and will bind up our wounds.
- 3 After two days, he will revive us,  
and on the third day will raise us up, that we may live in his presence.
- 4 Let us strive to know the Lord;  
his appearing is as sure as the sunrise.
- 5 He will come to us like the showers,  
like the spring rains that water the earth.
- 6 'O Ephraim, how shall I deal with you?  
How shall I deal with you, O Judah?
- 7 'Your love for me is like the morning mist,  
like the dew that goes early away.
- 8 'Therefore, I have hewn them by the prophets,  
and my judgement goes forth as the light.
- 9 'For loyalty is my desire and not sacrifice,  
and the knowledge of God rather than burnt offerings.'

*Hosea 6.1-6*

Glory to the Father  
and to the Son  
and to the Holy Spirit;  
as it was in the beginning,  
is now and shall be for ever. Amen.

### Prayers

*Please offer your own prayers following these suggestions, if you wish, with the response below:*

- ¶ *for the day and its tasks*
- ¶ *for the world and its needs*
- ¶ *for the Church and her life*
- ¶ *for our schools in this last week of term*

Lord, in your mercy,  
hear our prayer.

*Silence may be kept.*

O lover of mankind, send down into our hearts  
that peace which the world cannot give,  
and give us peace in this world.  
O King of Peace, keep us in love and charity;  
be our God, for we have none other beside you;  
grant unto our souls the life of righteousness,  
that the death of sin may not prevail against us,  
or against any of your people.  
Amen.

*W F Hook*

### Collect

Merciful Lord,  
absolve your people from their offences,  
that through your bountiful goodness  
we may all be delivered from the chains of those sins  
which by our frailty we have committed;  
grant this, heavenly Father,  
for Jesus Christ's sake, our blessed Lord and Saviour,  
who is alive and reigns with you,  
in the unity of the Holy Spirit,  
one God, now and for ever.  
Amen.

Trusting in the compassion of God,  
let us pray with confidence as our Saviour has taught us  
"Our Father, who art in heaven ..."  
*The Lord's Prayer is said*

### **The Conclusion**

May God the Father,  
who does not despise the broken spirit,  
give to us a contrite heart.

May Christ,  
who bore our sins in his body on the tree,  
heal us by his wounds.

May the Holy Spirit,  
who leads us into all truth,  
speak to us words of pardon and peace.  
Amen.

Let us go in the peace of Christ.  
Thanks be to God.

*Our benefice service of Holy Communion today takes place at  
Aldfield at 10.30 am.*

***Everyone from across the benefice (and beyond) is welcome at all services.***