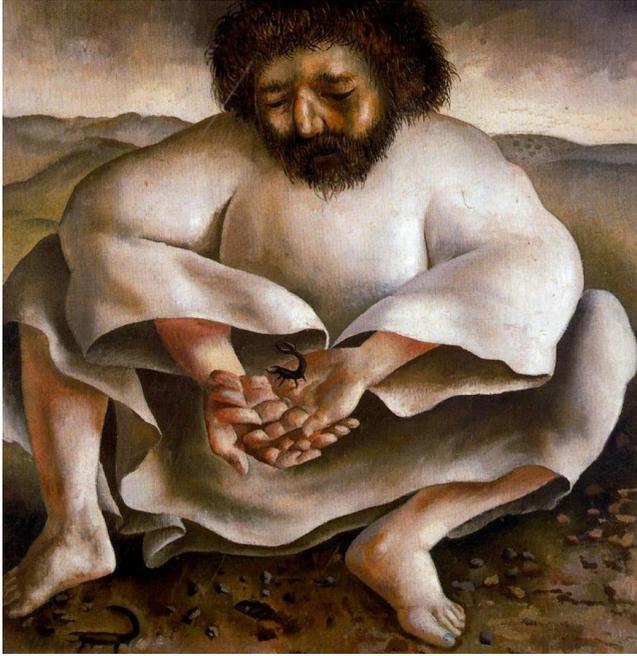


First Sunday of Lent 21 February



Stanley Spencer: Christ in the Wilderness:
The Scorpion

Call to Worship

As darkness gives way to light
and winter sleep to fresh beginnings,
**We come today to be reminded of
God's love for us.**

Like the green shoots of renewed life,
stirring beneath the soil,

**We welcome an awakening of God's
word in our lives.**

In this time of reflection and repentance,
**We affirm our identity, we claim our
security, as children of God.**

Opening Prayer

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

Silence is kept

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**

Confession

Gracious and merciful God, we confess to
you our reluctance to enter the wilderness
places where we are confronted with our
true selves. The places where we are
tempted to put worldly values before our
desire for you, and when our hunger for
power and wealth is greater than our hunger
for seeking and doing your will:

**(All) Forgive us, O God,
and increase our trust in you.
Merciful God, save us from the time of
trial and deliver us from evil.
Forgive us our sins and fill us with the
joy and peace of your salvation.
So strengthen us with your Spirit
during this Lenten season
that we put our whole trust in you as
confidently as Jesus did.
This we pray in his name. Amen**

Absolution

As the Apostle Paul wrote:

*"...if you confess with your lips that Jesus
Christ is Lord and believe in your heart
that God raised him from the dead, you
will be saved."* (Romans 10:9)

These words contain the good news
that in Jesus Christ we are forgiven.

Thanks be to God!

Hymn

**Forty days and forty nights
Thou wast fasting in the wild;
Forty days and forty nights
Tempted, and yet undefiled.**

**Sunbeams scorching all the day
Chilly dewdrops nightly shed
Prowling beasts about thy way
Stones thy pillow, earth thy head.**

**Should not we Thy sorrow share
And from earthly joys abstain, Fasting
with unceasing prayer,
Glad with Thee to suffer pain?**

**Keep, O keep us, Saviour dear,
Ever constant by thy side,
That with thee we may appear
At the eternal Eastertide.**

Reading

Mark 1:9-15

At end of reading:

This is the Word of the Lord

Thanks be to God

Sermon

Affirmation of Faith

We believe that our lives are held within the encircling love of God, who knows our names and recognises our deepest needs.

We believe that Christ is the divine Child of the living God, and that his grace is like living waters that can never be exhausted.

We believe in the birthing, renewing, enabling Spirit of God who yearns over our welfare as a mother yearns for her child.

We believe that God is in the arid desert as well as in green pastures, and that hard times and disciplines are also loving gifts.

We believe that our journey has a purpose and a destination, and that our path leads to a human glory we cannot yet imagine.

We believe that in the church we are fellow pilgrims on the road, and that we are called to love one another as God loves us.

This is our faith and we are humbled to profess Jesus the Christ.

Amen

Intercessions

The response to 'Lord of Lent' is:

(All) Renew our Lives

At the end we say together

Merciful father, accept these prayers for the sake of your Son, our Saviour Jesus Christ. Amen

The Collect

Heavenly Father, your Son battled with the powers of darkness, and grew closer to you in the desert: help us to use these days to grow in wisdom and prayer that we may witness to your saving love in Jesus Christ our Lord.

Amen

The Lord's Prayer

Hymn: From ashes to the living font

sung by St Martin's Voices

1 From ashes to the living font
your Church must journey, Lord,
baptised in grace, in grace renewed
by your most holy word.

2 Through fasting, prayer, and charity
your voice speaks deep within,
returning us to ways of truth
and turning us from sin.

3 From desert to the mountaintop
in Christ our way we see,
so, tempered by temptation's might
we might transfigured be.

4 For thirsting hearts let waters flow
our fainting souls revive;
and at the well your waters give
our everlasting life.

5 From ashes to the living font
your church must journey still:
through cross and tomb to Easter joy,
in Spirit-fire fulfilled.

Notices

Blessing

Whatever wilderness the Spirit has brought you to:
walk in boldness,
as a beloved child of God,
walk in peace,
under the shelter of the Most High,
walk in faith,
knowing Christ walks with you.
And the blessing...

Go in peace, to love and serve the Lord
In the name of Christ, Amen