

Evening Prayer for 4th Sunday before Lent 6th February 2022, from The Book of Common Prayer

Hymn – Lord of the Dance

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6KVRcWtF5Gw>

'I danced in the morning
when the world was begun,
And I danced in the moon
and the stars and the sun,
And I came down from heaven
and I danced on the earth:
At Bethlehem I had My birth.

*'Dance, then, wherever you may be,
I am the Lord of the dance,' said He,
'And I'll lead you all,
wherever you may be,
And I'll lead you all
in the dance,' said He.*

'I danced for the scribe
and the pharisee,
But they would not dance
and they wouldn't follow Me.
I danced for the fishermen,
for James and John -
They came with Me
and the dance went on.

'Dance, then, wherever you may be

'I danced on the Sabbath
and I cured the lame;
The holy people said it was a shame.
They whipped and they stripped
and they hung Me on high,
And they left Me there on a cross to die.

'Dance, then, wherever you may be

'I danced on a Friday
when the sky turned black;
It's hard to dance
with the devil on your back.
They buried My body
and they thought I'd gone,
But I am the dance, and I still go on.
'Dance, then, wherever you may be ...

'They cut Me down
and I leapt up high;
I am the life that'll never, never die.
I'll live in you if you'll live in Me;
I am the Lord of the dance', said He.
'Dance, then, wherever you may be ...

Sidney Carter
(1915-2004)

Opening prayers

God is love; and he that abideth in love abideth in God and God in him.
1 John 4.16

Beloved, we are come together in the presence of almighty God and of the whole company of heaven to offer unto him through our Lord Jesus Christ our worship and praise and thanksgiving; to make confession of our sins; to pray, as well for others as for ourselves, that we may know more truly the greatness of God's love and shew forth in our lives the fruits of his grace; and to ask on behalf of all men such things as their well-being doth require.

Wherefore let us kneel in silence, and remember God's presence with us now.

**Almighty and most merciful Father,
we have erred, and strayed from thy ways like lost sheep.
We have followed too much the devices and desires
of our own hearts.
We have offended against thy holy laws.
We have left undone those things which we ought to have done;
and we have done those things which we ought not to have done;
and there is no health in us.
But thou, O Lord, have mercy upon us, miserable offenders.
Spare thou them, O God, which confess their faults.
Restore thou them that are penitent;
according to thy promises declared unto mankind
in Christ Jesu our Lord.**

**And grant, O most merciful Father, for his sake,
that we may hereafter live a godly, righteous, and sober life,
to the glory of thy holy name. Amen.**

Grant, we beseech thee, merciful Lord,
to thy faithful people pardon and peace,
that they may be cleansed from all their sins,
and serve thee with a quiet mind;
through Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

**Our Father, which art in heaven,
hallowed be thy name;
thy kingdom come;
thy will be done,
in earth as it is in heaven.
Give us this day our daily bread.
And forgive us our trespasses,
as we forgive them that trespass against us.
And lead us not into temptation;
but deliver us from evil.
For thine is the kingdom,
the power and the glory,
for ever and ever.
Amen.**

O Lord, open thou our lips
and our mouth shall shew forth thy praise.

O God, make speed to save us.
O Lord, make haste to help us.

Glory be to the Father, and to the Son,
and to the Holy Ghost;
**as it was in the beginning, is now, and ever shall be,
world without end. Amen.**

Praise ye the Lord.
The Lord's name be praised.

Magnificat

My soul doth magnify the Lord :
and my spirit hath rejoiced in God my Saviour.

For he hath regarded :
the lowliness of his handmaiden.

For behold, from henceforth :
all generations shall call me blessed.

For he that is mighty hath magnified me :
and holy is his Name.

And his mercy is on them that fear him :
throughout all generations.

He hath shewed strength with his arm :
he hath scattered the proud in the imagination of their hearts.

He hath put down the mighty from their seat :
and hath exalted the humble and meek.

He hath filled the hungry with good things :
and the rich he hath sent empty away.

He remembering his mercy hath holpen his servant Israel :
as he promised to our forefathers, Abraham and his seed for ever.

Glory be to the Father, and to the Son
and to the Holy Ghost;
as it was in the beginning, is now, and ever shall be :
world without end. Amen.

Old Testament Reading

Isaiah 6.1-8

In the year that King Uzziah died, I saw the Lord sitting on a throne, high and lofty; and the hem of his robe filled the temple. Seraphs were in attendance above him; each had six wings: with two they covered their faces, and with two they covered their feet, and with two they flew. And one called to another and said:

‘Holy, holy, holy is the Lord of hosts;
the whole earth is full of his glory.’

The pivots on the thresholds shook at the voices of those who called, and the house filled with smoke. And I said: ‘Woe is me! I am lost, for I am a man of unclean lips, and I live among a people of unclean lips; yet my eyes have seen the King, the Lord of hosts!’

Then one of the seraphs flew to me, holding a live coal that had been taken from the altar with a pair of tongs.

The seraph touched my mouth with it and said: 'Now that this has touched your lips, your guilt has departed and your sin is blotted out.' Then I heard the voice of the Lord saying, 'Whom shall I send, and who will go for us?' And I said, 'Here am I; send me!'

Psalm 138

1 I will give thanks to you, O Lord, with my whole heart;
before the gods will I sing praise to you.

2 I will bow down towards your holy temple and praise your name,
because of your love and faithfulness;
for you have glorified your name and your word above all things.

3 In the day that I called to you, you answered me;
you put new strength in my soul.

4 All the kings of the earth shall praise you, O Lord,
for they have heard the words of your mouth.

5 They shall sing of the ways of the Lord,
that great is the glory of the Lord.

6 Though the Lord be high, he watches over the lowly;
as for the proud, he regards them from afar.

7 Though I walk in the midst of trouble, you will preserve me;
you will stretch forth your hand against the fury of my enemies;
your right hand will save me.

8 The Lord shall make good his purpose for me;
your loving-kindness, O Lord, endures for ever;
forsake not the work of your hands.

Glory be to the Father, and to the Son
and to the Holy Ghost;
as it was in the beginning, is now, and ever shall be
world without end. Amen.

Epistle

1 Corinthians 15.1-11

Now I should remind you, brothers and sisters, of the good news that I proclaimed to you, which you in turn received, in which also you stand, through which also you are being saved, if you hold firmly to the message that I proclaimed to you—unless you have come to believe in vain. For I handed on to you as of first importance what I in turn had received: that Christ died for our sins in accordance with the scriptures, and that he was buried, and that he was raised on the third day in accordance with the scriptures, and that he appeared to Cephas, then to the twelve. Then he appeared to more than five hundred brothers and sisters at one time, most of whom are still alive, though some have died. Then he appeared to James, then to all the apostles. Last of all, as to someone untimely born, he appeared also to me. For I am the least of the apostles, unfit to be called an apostle, because I persecuted the church of God. But by the grace of God I am what I am, and his grace towards me has not been in vain. On the contrary, I worked harder than any of them—though it was not I, but the grace of God that is with me. Whether then it was I or they, so we proclaim and so you have come to believe.

Nunc Dimittis

Lord, now lettest thou thy servant depart in peace :
according to thy word.

For mine eyes have seen :
thy salvation;

Which thou hast prepared :
before the face of all people;

To be a light to lighten the Gentiles :
and to be the glory of thy people Israel.

Glory be to the Father, and to the Son :
and to the Holy Ghost;
as it was in the beginning, is now, and ever shall be
world without end. Amen.

Gospel Reading

Luke 5.1-11

Once while Jesus was standing beside the lake of Gennesaret, and the crowd was pressing in on him to hear the word of God, he saw two boats there at the shore of the lake; the fishermen had gone out of them and were washing their nets.

He got into one of the boats, the one belonging to Simon, and asked him to put out a little way from the shore. Then he sat down and taught the crowds from the boat.

When he had finished speaking, he said to Simon, 'Put out into the deep water and let down your nets for a catch.' Simon answered, 'Master, we have worked all night long but have caught nothing. Yet if you say so, I will let down the nets.'

When they had done this, they caught so many fish that their nets were beginning to break. So they signalled to their partners in the other boat to come and help them. And they came and filled both boats, so that they began to sink. But when Simon Peter saw it, he fell down at Jesus' knees, saying, 'Go away from me, Lord, for I am a sinful man!'

For he and all who were with him were amazed at the catch of fish that they had taken; and so also were James and John, sons of Zebedee, who were partners with Simon. Then Jesus said to Simon,

'Do not be afraid; from now on you will be catching people.' When they had brought their boats to shore, they left everything and followed him.

The Apostles' Creed

**I believe in God the Father almighty,
maker of heaven and earth:
and in Jesus Christ his only Son our Lord,
who was conceived by the Holy Ghost,
born of the Virgin Mary,
suffered under Pontius Pilate,
was crucified, dead, and buried.
He descended into hell;
the third day he rose again from the dead;
he ascended into heaven,
and sitteth on the right hand of God the Father almighty;
from thence he shall come to judge the quick and the dead.**

**I believe in the Holy Ghost;
the holy catholic Church;
the communion of saints;
the forgiveness of sins;
the resurrection of the body,
and the life everlasting.
Amen.**

The Lord be with you.
And with thy spirit.

Let us pray.
Lord, have mercy upon us.
Christ, have mercy upon us.
Lord, have mercy upon us.

**Our Father, which art in heaven,
hallowed be thy name;
thy kingdom come;
thy will be done,
in earth as it is in heaven.
Give us this day our daily bread.
And forgive us our trespasses,
as we forgive them that trespass against us.
And lead us not into temptation;
but deliver us from evil. Amen.**

○ Lord, shew thy mercy upon us.
And grant us thy salvation.

○ Lord, save the Queen.
And mercifully hear us when we call upon thee.

Endue thy ministers with righteousness.
And make thy chosen people joyful.

○ Lord, save thy people.
And bless thine inheritance.

Give peace in our time, O Lord.
**Because there is none other that fighteth for us,
but only thou, O God.**

○ God, make clean our hearts within us.
And take not thy Holy Spirit from us.

The Collect of the Day

O God, who knowest us to be set
in the midst of so many and great dangers,
that by reason of the frailty of our nature
we cannot always stand upright:
grant to us such strength and protection
as may support us in all dangers
and carry us through all temptations;
through Jesus Christ thy Son our Lord,
who liveth and reigneth with thee,
in the unity of the Holy Spirit,
one God, now and for ever. **Amen.**

The Collect for Peace

O God, who art the author of peace and lover of concord,
in knowledge of whom standeth our eternal life,
whose service is perfect freedom;
defend us thy humble servants in all assaults of our enemies;
that we, surely trusting in thy defence,
may not fear the power of any adversaries;
through the might of Jesus Christ our Lord.
Amen.

The Collect for Aid against all Perils

Lighten our darkness, we beseech thee, O Lord;
and by thy great mercy
defend us from all perils and dangers of this night;
for the love of thy only Son, our Saviour, Jesus Christ.
Amen.

Hymn – Jesus calls us o'er the tumult

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=idAoS7at3nQ>

Jesus calls us o'er the tumult
of our life's wild restless sea;
day by day his voice is sounding
saying, 'Christian, follow me.'

As of old Saint Andrew heard it
by the Galilean lake,
turned from home and work and kindred,
leaving all for his dear sake.

In our joys and in our sorrows,
days of toil and hours of ease,
still he calls, in cares and pleasures,
'Christian, love me more than these.'

Jesus calls us! By your mercy,
Saviour, make us hear your call,
give our hearts to your obedien^{ce}

Cecil Francis Alexander

If you're using this service at home, I suggest you now make a couple of simple fishes to allow you to think about being a fish!

Cut a strip of paper or card about half an inch wide (12mm) and about a foot long (250mm). Make a diagonal cut half-way through the paper, about an inch and a half (30mm) from each end – one on each side:



To make the fish – gently fold the ends round and slide the two notches into each other. Then find some coloured pens or crayons!

Sermon

Here's a small fish by itself.....



He's rather lost and he is looking for some friends. I imagine him thinking:

"It's lonely being a fish all by myself. I *would* like to have some friends to keep me company. And I'd feel a lot safer if I was part of a shoal so that we could scare off anyone who might want to eat us. By myself I'm afraid I could easily be snapped up for lunch by a passing pike or shark."

He's not a happy fish!

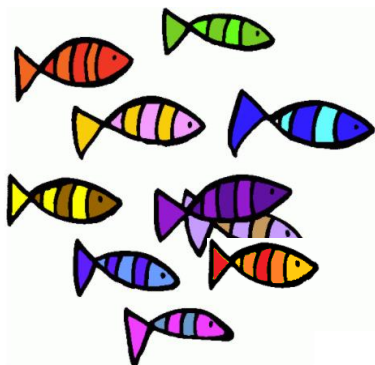
If you've got a strip of paper to make a fish, write a message on the middle of one side saying something like "I'm lonely and unhappy". Then you may like to colour that side in a lonely and unhappy colour? Blue? (You choose!) And give him a sad face...

I guess that from time to time all of us feel unhappy or lonely. There will be times when we wish for company. Times when perhaps we're worried about things. When we have "the blues"!

So imagine how excited our little fish was when, unhappy and solitary, he came across a shoal of fellow fish that are having a good time, and keeping each other safe?

If you're a fish, you will feel much happier and safer if you're in a shoal with other fish – you might have seen some of David Attenborough's filming of enormous shoals of fish all swirling round in ocean currents, protecting each other.

So, how about taking your fish with his sad colours and face, unhitching his tail and, on the other side, put a happy face with some happy words and colours?



Then fold him the other way? That's much better – here he is, happily swimming with his new friends:

In our bible reading, Jesus told Peter that he would stop being a fisherman, stop catching fish, and instead he would from now on be catching people.

The people who needed catching were the lonely and unhappy ones, those who were missing out on the fun of life, who were having a hard time.

When a person decides to join a Christian community, all being well they will find a fellowship of people who together can support each other; who share the same values; who welcome into their community other people who are looking for support.

When it comes to seeking justice for the poor or hungry, a group of people can achieve far more than one person on their own. Jesus spent his whole ministry building his followers into a worshipping and praying community that was empowered to bring in the Kingdom of God. In a sense they were like a shoal of fish...

And it wasn't long after his resurrection that Jesus' followers adopted a fish symbol as a secret sign that they were Christians – followers of Jesus. They would mark it on walls and in the Catacombs in Rome to show that they gathered there secretly.



Here in church let's gather our fishes into a shoal so that for the rest of the service they can be safely together here by the altar, happily swimming around in fellowship. Amen.

Hymn – Will you come and follow me

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=pnXOEUS7BBM>

Will you come and follow me
if I but call your name?
Will you go where you don't know
and never be the same?
Will you let my love be shown,
will you let my name be known,
will you let my life be grown
in you and you in me?

Will you leave your self behind
if I but call your name?
Will you care for cruel and kind
and never be the same?
Will you risk the hostile stare
should your life attract or scare,
will you let me answer prayer
in you and you in me?

Will you love the 'you' you hide
if I but call your name?
Will you quell the fear inside
and never be the same?
Will you use the faith you've found
to reshape the world around
through my sight and touch and sound
in you and you in me?

Lord, your summons echoes true
when you but call my name.
Let me turn and follow you
and never be the same.
In your company I'll go
where your love and footsteps show.
Thus I'll move and live and grow
in you and you in me.

John Bell (b1949) and
Graham Maule (b1958)

Prayers

In the power of the Spirit and in union with Christ, let us pray to the Father.

Almighty and ever-living God, who by thy holy apostle hast taught us to make prayers and supplications, and to give thanks, for all men: we humbly beseech thee most mercifully to receive these our prayers, which we offer unto thy divine majesty; beseeching thee to inspire continually the universal Church with the spirit of truth, unity and concord; and grant that all they that do confess thy holy name may agree in the truth of thy holy word, and live in unity and godly love.

We beseech thee also to lead all nations in the way of righteousness and peace; and so to direct all kings and rulers, that under them thy people may be godly and quietly governed. And grant unto thy servant Elizabeth our Queen, and to all that are put in authority under her that they may truly and indifferently administer justice, to the maintenance of thy true religion, and virtue.

Give grace, O heavenly Father, to all bishops, priests and deacons, especially to thy servant Robert our bishop, that they may both by their life and doctrine set forth thy true and lively word, and rightly and duly administer thy holy sacraments.

Guide and prosper, we pray thee, those who are labouring for the spread of thy gospel among the nations, and enlighten with thy Spirit all places of education and learning; that the whole world may be filled with the knowledge of thy truth.

And to all thy people give thy heavenly grace; and specially to this congregation here present, that, with meek heart and due reverence, they may hear and receive thy holy word, truly serving thee in holiness and righteousness all the days of their life.

And we most humbly beseech thee of thy goodness, O Lord, to comfort and succour all them who in this transitory life are in trouble, sorrow, need, sickness, or any other adversity.

And we commend to thy gracious keeping, O Lord, all thy servants departed this life in thy faith and fear, beseeching thee, according to thy promises, to grant them refreshment, light and peace.

And here we give thee most high praise and hearty thanks for all thy saints, who have been the chosen vessels of thy grace, and lights of the world in their several generations; and we pray that, rejoicing in their fellowship and following their good examples, we may be partakers with them of thy heavenly kingdom.

Grant this, O Father, for Jesus Christ's sake, our only mediator and advocate. **Amen.**

A prayer for all those affected by Coronavirus

Keep us, good Lord,
under the shadow of thy mercy.
Sustain and support the anxious,
be with those who care for the sick,
and lift up all who are brought low;
that we may find comfort
knowing that nothing can separate us from thy love
in Christ Jesus our Lord. **Amen.**

Hymn – I, the Lord of sea and sky

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=E92Rd0Hzw_g

I, the Lord of sea and sky,
I have heard my people cry.
All who dwell in deepest sin
My hand will save.
I who made the stars of night,
I will make their darkness bright.
Who will bear my light to them?
Whom shall I send?

*Here I am Lord. Is it I Lord?
I have heard you calling in the night.
I will go Lord, if you lead me.
I will hold your people in my heart.*

I, the Lord of snow and rain
I have borne my people's pain
I have wept for love of them
They turn away
I will break their hearts of stone
Give them hearts for love alone
Who will speak my word to them
Whom shall I send?

Here I am Lord. Is it I Lord?

I, the Lord of wind and flame,
I will tend the poor and lame.
I will set a feast for them.
My hand will save.
Finest bread I will provide
Till their hearts be satisfied.
I will give my life to them.
Whom shall I send?
Here I am Lord. Is it I Lord?

Dan Shutte
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New Dawn Music

Ending

**The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ,
and the love of God,
and the fellowship of the Holy Ghost,
be with us all evermore. Amen.**

God, who has prepared for us a city with eternal foundations,
give you grace to share the inheritance of the saints in glory;
and the blessing of God almighty,
the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit,
be among us and remain with us always.
Amen.

