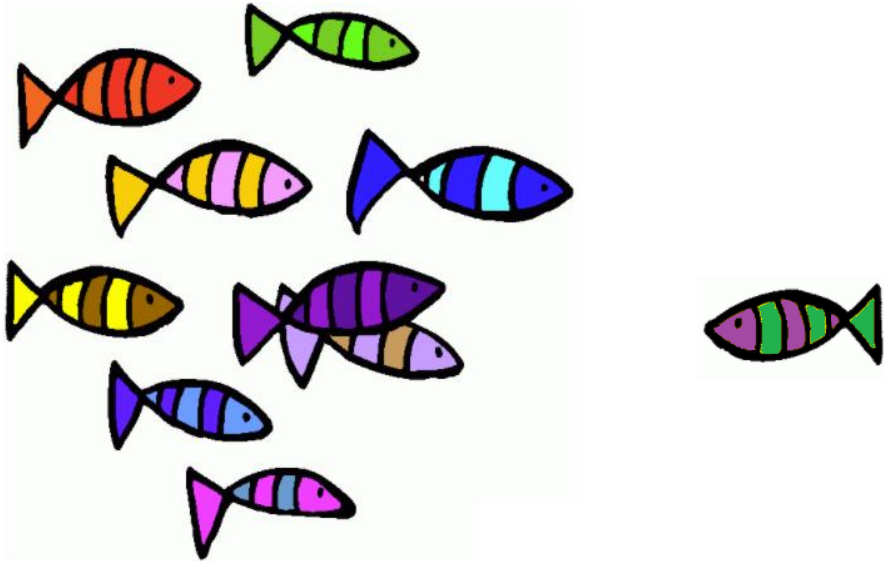


# 4<sup>th</sup> Sunday before Lent

## ALL-AGE SERVICE

# Fish!

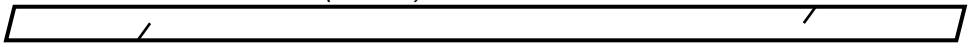


## Welcome

This month's All Age Service is about exploring what it's like being a fish!

If you're using this service at home, I suggest you 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 for use later!*

Have fun!

Geoffrey

## *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*

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

**Lord, direct our thoughts,  
teach us to pray,  
lift up our hearts to worship you  
in Spirit and in truth,  
through Jesus Christ. Amen**

## *Confession*

**Lord God, our maker and our redeemer,  
this is your world and we are your people:  
come among us and save us.**

**We have wilfully misused your  
gifts of creation;  
    Lord be merciful: forgive us our sin.**

**We have seen the ill-treatment of others  
and have not gone to their aid;  
    Lord be merciful: forgive us our sin.**

**We have ignored evil and dishonesty  
and failed to strive for justice;  
    Lord be merciful: forgive us our sin.**

**We have heard the good news of Christ,  
but have failed to share it with others;  
    Lord be merciful: forgive us our sin.**

**We have not loved you with all our heart,  
nor our neighbours as ourselves;  
    Lord be merciful: forgive us our sin.**

## *Absolution*

God who is both power and love,  
forgive us and free us from our sins,  
heal and strengthen us by his Spirit,  
and raise us to new life in Christ our Lord.

**Amen.**

## *Jubilate*

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8qS-7qh9tz0>

Jubilate, ev'rybody.  
Serve the Lord in all your ways,  
And come before His presence singing,  
Enter now His courts with praise.  
For the Lord our God is gracious,  
And His mercy's everlasting.

Jubilate, Jubilate,  
Jubilate Deo!           *(repeat a few times!)*

Fred Dunn  
(1907-1979)

©1977 Kingsway Thankyou Music

## *Scripture 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.

This is the word of the Lord.

**Thanks be to God.**

## *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 obedience,  
serve and love you best of all.

Cecil Francis Alexander  
(1818-1895)

## *Talk*

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?

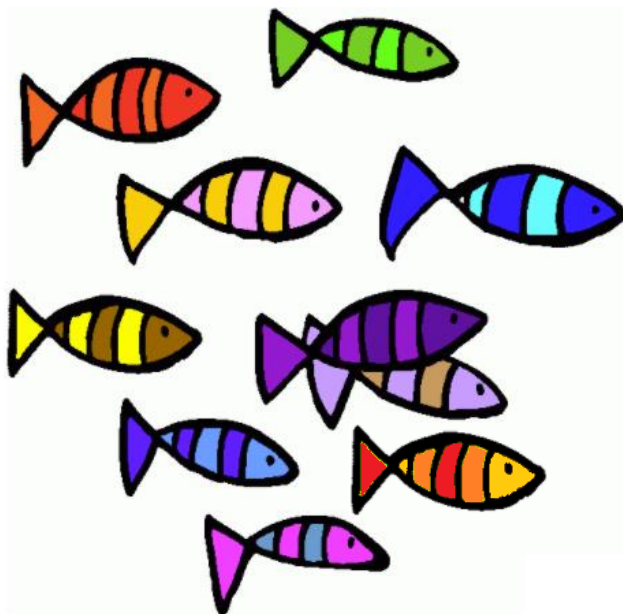
If you're a fish, you will feel much happier and safer if you're in a shoal with other fish – you might have seen some of David Attenborough's filming of enormous shoals of fish all swirling round in ocean currents, protecting each other.

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 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.

### *Affirmation of faith*

**We believe in God the Father,  
from whom every family  
in heaven and on earth is named.**

**We believe in God the Son,  
who lives in our hearts through faith,  
and fills us with his love.**

**We believe in God the Holy Spirit,  
who strengthens us  
with power from on high.**

**We believe in one God,  
Father, Son and Holy Spirit. Amen.**

## *The Peace*

Jesus says to his disciples,  
'Peace I leave with you; my peace I give you.  
Not as the world gives do I give to you.  
Let not your hearts be troubled or afraid.'

**The peace of the Lord be always with us.**

### *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.

You sent your Son to bring  
good news to the poor,  
sight to the blind,  
freedom to captives  
and salvation to your people:  
anoint us with your Spirit;  
rouse us to work in his name.

Father, by your Spirit  
**bring in your kingdom.**

Send us out to encounter those in need,  
and work with them

Father, by your Spirit  
**bring in your kingdom.**

Send us to tell the world  
the good news of your healing love.

Father, by your Spirit  
**bring in your kingdom.**

Send us to comfort  
the sick, the lonely, the depressed.

Father, by your Spirit  
**bring in your kingdom.**

Send us to those who mourn,  
to bring sympathy and understanding where there is grief.  
Father, by your Spirit  
**bring in your kingdom.**

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

Gathering our prayers and praises into one,  
as our Saviour has taught us, so we pray:

**Our Father, who art in heaven,  
hallowed be thy name;  
thy kingdom come;  
thy will be done;  
on earth as it is in heaven.  
Give us this day our daily bread.  
And forgive us our trespasses,  
as we forgive those who 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.**

## ***Collect***

O God,  
you know 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 your Son our Lord,  
who is alive and reigns with you,  
in the unity of the Holy Spirit,  
one God, now and for ever.  
**Amen**

## *Hymn – I, the Lord of sea and sky*

[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=E92Rd0Hzw\\_g](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  
©1981 Daniel L Schutte &  
New Dawn Music

## *Closing Responses*

The Lord God almighty is our Father:  
**he loves us and tenderly cares for us.**

The Lord Jesus Christ is our Saviour:  
**he has redeemed us and will defend us to the end**

The Lord, the Holy Spirit is among us:  
**he will lead us in God's holy way.**

To God almighty, Father, Son and Holy Spirit,  
**be praise and glory today and for ever. Amen.**

## *The Blessing*

The peace of God,  
which passes all understanding,  
keep our hearts and minds  
in the knowledge and love of God,  
and of his Son Jesus Christ our Lord;  
and the blessing of God almighty,  
the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit,  
be among us and remain with us always. **Amen.**