

**Second Sunday of Lent,
Sunday, 13th March 2022**



Dear Friends,

‘This is love, not that we loved God but that he loved us and sent his Son as an atoning sacrifice for our sins’. (1 John 4: 10)

Every year, on the first Friday of March, the World Day of Prayer is held, formerly known as Women’s World Day of Prayer, when people across the world come together to create a wave of prayer. Each year the service is written by a group of women from a different country. This year was the turn of England, Wales and Northern Ireland. They began preparations four years ago and the theme for this year was Hope. Last week was the turn of Chilbolton to host the service.

I’d read the service four weeks beforehand. At that time it didn’t particularly resonate with me. But then the world was a different place. On Friday the service took on a whole new meaning and relevance as we were led to reflect on the exile of the Jews from Jerusalem to Babylon that happened at the time of Isaiah (the year 586BC) and which left God’s people without a home or a Temple, and wondering if God had abandoned his promises to them. The service brought into context how terrible it was for the Jews facing exile then, and in our minds was the parallel of how awful it is for refugees being forced out of their homeland of Ukraine today. It was prophetic. The group of women who had written the service would have had no idea of what would be happening in the world on 4th March.



‘Ukraine - Strong explosions heard in the port of Odessa’ - Source BBC

Over the last two weeks we have observed the worst of human nature. A man intent on power who cares nothing for the sanctity of human life. Russian troops obeying their leader, bringing carnage and devastation to a peaceful country. Families torn apart.

Yet on the other hand we have also seen the best in human nature. We have seen men willing to risk their lives for their country. People from around the world have reached out in love to help refugees, especially the people of Poland. A man from Wherwell is driving a lorry filled with donations of provisions to Poland. As I write this over one and a half million people have escaped Ukraine. Last week the news showed a scene at a train station, with people holding up signs offering accommodation in their homes to refugees. People caring for one another in their greatest need. Humanity serving one another.



'Demonstrators gather in Downing Street to protest against Russia's invasion of Ukraine © George Cracknell Wright/LNP

Through this we are reminded that God is love. Love is powerful. Every act of human kindness is an act of sharing God's love, whether or not we are aware of it.

Scripture reminds us that love comes from God:

'This is love, not that we loved God but that he loved us and sent his Son as an atoning sacrifice for our sins.'

R S Thomas, a Welsh poet, born in 1913 wrote The Coming:

The Coming

And God held in his hand
A small globe. Look he said.
The son looked. Far off,
As through water, he saw
A scorched land of fierce
Colour. The light burned
There; crusted buildings
Cast their shadows: a bright
Serpent, a river
Uncoiled itself, radiant
With slime.
On a bare
Hill a bare tree saddened
The sky. Many People
Held out their thin arms
To it, as though waiting
For a vanished April
To return to its crossed
Boughs. The son watched
Them. Let me go there, he said.

'This is love, not that we loved God but that he loved us and sent his Son as an atoning sacrifice for our sins'.

With every blessing,

Charlotte

Charlotte Nash, LLM

Collect Prayer for the Second Sunday of Lent

Almighty God, you show to those who are in error the light of your truth,
that they may return to the way of righteousness:
grant to all those who are admitted into the fellowship of Christ's religion,
that they may reject those things that are contrary to their profession,
and follow all such things as are agreeable to the same;
through our Lord Jesus Christ,
who is alive and reigns with you,
in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God, now and for ever.
Amen.

Lesley Kent has offered these beautiful prayers for Ukraine:

I have to admit that I struggled with writing these intercessions. It was hard to find the right words because of the emotions that I have felt watching the news coverage over the past week and seeing the dreadful atrocities that have occurred in the Ukraine.

So let us pray:

Lord we thank you that in our country we have the freedom to come together and worship you.

God of Peace and justice we pray for the people of Ukraine today. We pray for peace and an end to the fighting. We pray for all the leaders of the countries who have the power to bring this to an end that they will act justly and with wisdom for the sake of everyone.

Lord in your Mercy
Hear our Prayer.

We pray for the families who are fleeing their homes with only the clothes they stand up in and going to places of safety but not knowing where they will end up or if they will ever be able to go back to their homes. We pray especially for the mothers and wives who had to leave their men behind to fight for the freedom of their country.

Lord in your mercy
Hear our prayer

We ask for your love and comfort to all who are fearful, especially the children and for the family members who are unable to find out if their relatives are safe.

Lord in your Mercy
Hear our prayer

We give thanks for all the people around the world whose communities have come together to open their hearts and homes to the refugees and for all those who have donated items or money. Help us to be generous and do what we can to help in any way to aid the suffering and distress of the people of Ukraine at this time.

We pray for all those people who we know, and all those we don't know, that they will feel your Grace, and have your protection in their lives – particularly those who are ill or bereaved. We pray that you will comfort them.

Lord in your mercy
Hear our prayer

God of compassion you hear the cries of all who are in trouble or distress strengthen them in their hour of need, grant them perseverance and courage to face the future and be to them a shining light and a firm foundation on which to live their lives.

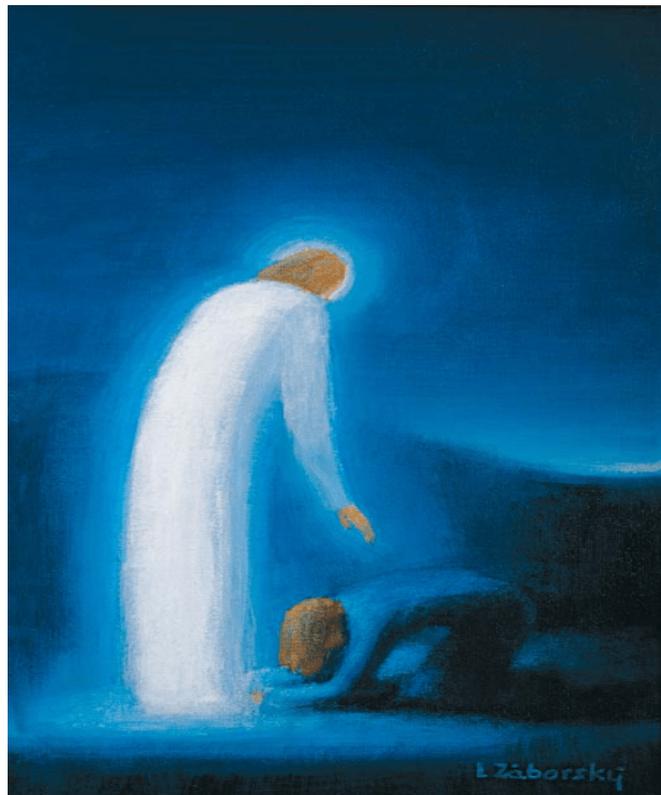
I am reminded of the words of the hymn written by Bernadette Farrell which we sang on Friday at the World Day of Prayer service in Chilbolton the second verse of which says:

Longing for peace, our world is troubled,
Longing for hope, many despair.
Your word alone has power to save us,
Make us your living voice.

The chorus is:

Christ be our light,
Shine in our hearts, shine through the darkness.
Christ be our light, shine in your church gathered today.

We remember that Christ is our Light in times of darkness.
Amen.



1 John 4:10-16

This is love: not that we loved God, but that he loved us and sent his Son as an atoning sacrifice for our sins. Dear friends, since God so loved us, we also ought to love one another. No one has ever seen God; but if we love one another, God lives in us and his love is made complete in us.

This is how we know that we live in him and he in us: He has given us of his Spirit. And we have seen and testify that the Father has sent his Son to be the Saviour of the world. If anyone acknowledges that Jesus is the Son of God, God lives in them and they in God. 16 And so we know and rely on the love God has for us. God is love. Whoever lives in love lives in God, and God in them.

Luke 13: 31-end

The Lament over Jerusalem

At that very hour some Pharisees came and said to him, "Get away from here, for Herod wants to kill you." He said to them, "Go and tell that fox for me, 'Listen, I am casting out demons and performing cures today and tomorrow, and on the third day I finish my work. Yet today, tomorrow, and the next day I must be on my way, because it is impossible for a prophet to be killed outside of Jerusalem.' Jerusalem, Jerusalem, the city that kills the prophets and stones those who are sent to it! How often have I desired to gather your children together as a hen gathers her brood under her wings, and you were not willing! See, your house is left to you. And I tell you, you will not see me until the time comes when you say, 'Blessed is the one who comes in the name of the Lord.'"

Benefice Lent Reflections

This year, we are hosting a series of Lent talks around our parish churches reflecting on the life and works of remarkable Christian activists. Please see the schedule of talks below. Do make a point of coming along as part of your Lenten meditations.

Dr Cicely Saunders (1918-2005) – Founder of the Hospice Movement. (Crawley – Monday 7th March)

John Wesley (1703-1791) - Leader of a revival movement within the Church of England which gave birth to the Methodist Church. (Sparsholt – Wednesday 16th March)

Dietrich Bonhoeffer (1906-1945) - German pastor who wrote 'The Cost of Discipleship' and was interned by the Nazis for his resistance to Adolf Hitler. (Littleton – Tuesday 22nd March)

Gladys Aylward (1902-1970) - Missionary to China depicted in the film 'The Inn of the Sixth Happiness' starring Ingrid Bergman. (Wherwell – Thursday 31st March)

Wilson Carlile (1847-1942) – Founder of The Church Army – (Chilbolton – Friday 8th April)

These talks will be held, subject to Coronavirus restrictions, in the Churches and start at 7pm

Date	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
16th March			Sparsholt		
22nd March		Littleton			
31st March				Wherwell	
8th April					Chilbolton
Holy Week				Maundy Thursday	Good Friday

Schedule of Services

Now that all national Coronavirus restrictions have been lifted, it is no longer necessary to book seats in our parishes for services. Neither is it mandatory for you to wear masks in church. However, Coronavirus is still very much with us. There are a number of people in our villages with it at present, so we are encouraging people to observe social distancing measures.

As our services begin to open up again, we have a wide range of sacramental and lay-led services on offer. Of particular note, Peace and Wholeness begins again on 20th March at St Catherine's, Littleton. St Mary's, Crawley and St Stephen's Sparsholt are enjoying new lay-led Morning Worship services on 3rd and 4th Sundays respectively.

<i>Date</i>	<i>Ch</i>	<i>Cr</i>	<i>Li</i>	<i>Sp</i>	<i>Wh</i>
<i>13th March</i>	4pm – Evening Prayer for Lent		Holy Communion		Morning Prayer
<i>20th March</i>	Holy Communion	Morning Worship		8am – BCP Holy Communion	
<i>23rd March WEDNESDAY</i>			Holy Communion		
<i>27th March</i>	Mothering Sunday Family Service				

<i>3rd April</i>	Morning Prayer	Holy Communion	4pm – Café Church with Karis Kids		
<i>10th April Palm Sunday</i>	<i>With Wh</i>		Holy Communion with a Donkey Procession	Palm Sunday Service with a Donkey Procession	Palm Sunday Service
<i>14th April Maundy Thursday</i>				6pm - Holy Communion with Washing of the Feet	
<i>15th April Good Friday</i>	<i>With Wh</i>	10am - Easter Garden	12 noon - Good Friday Meditation		3pm - Good Friday Meditation
<i>17th April EASTER SUNDAY</i>	Easter Holy Communion	Easter Service	Easter Holy Communion	Easter Holy Communion	Easter Service
<i>24th April</i>			Morning Prayer	Morning Worship	8am – BCP Holy Communion
<i>27th April WEDNESDAY</i>			Holy Communion		