

**Sunday March 5<sup>th</sup> - 2<sup>nd</sup> Sunday in Lent**  
**A service of worship for use at home**  
**Prepared by Phil Colbourn**  
**(Local Preacher Burton Joyce)**

Hymns in Singing the Faith (StF)

**Call to worship**

Our service today centres around the call of Abram  
Reflecting on this in **Romans 4, vv3, 16**, Paul writes:

*Abram believes God and receives a new way of seeing things - in fact, a new life ...  
It is a matter of faith on man's part and generosity on God's*

**Hymn StF 563 - O Jesus, I have promised**

1 O Jesus, I have promised  
To serve thee to the end;  
Be thou forever near me,  
My Master and my friend;  
I shall not fear the battle  
If thou art by my side,  
Nor wander from the pathway  
If thou wilt be my guide.

2 O let me feel thee near me!  
The world is ever near:  
I see the sights that dazzle,  
The tempting sounds I hear.  
My foes are ever near me,  
Around me and within;  
But, Jesus, draw thou nearer,  
And shield my soul from sin.

3 O let me hear thee speaking  
In accents clear and still,  
Above the storms of passion,  
The murmurs of self-will.  
O speak to reassure me,  
To hasten or control;  
O speak, and make me listen,  
Thou guardian of my soul.

4 O Jesus, thou hast promised  
To all who follow thee  
That where thou art in glory  
There shall thy servant be.  
And, Jesus, I have promised  
To serve thee to the end;  
O give me grace to follow,  
My Master and my friend.

**Praise and worship**

Spend a few moments in thankful and joyful silence. **Amen**

A sense of wonder, expressed in this poem, is at the heart of worship.

**Mysteries, Yes**

*Mary Oliver*

Truly, we live with mysteries too marvellous  
to be understood.

How grass can be nourishing in the  
mouths of the lambs.

How rivers and stones are forever  
in allegiance with gravity  
while we ourselves dream of rising.

How two hands touch and the bonds will  
never be broken.

How people come, from delight or the  
scars of damage,  
to the comfort of a poem.

Let me keep my distance, always, from those  
who think they have the answers.

Let me keep company always with those who say  
“Look!” and laugh in astonishment,  
and bow their heads.

We continue in worship as we sing ‘*There is no greater thing*’:

**Hymn StF 338** - *All I once held dear*

1. All I once held dear, built my life  
upon,  
all this world reveres and wars to own,  
all I once thought gain I have counted  
loss;  
spent and worthless now, compared to  
this.

*Knowing you, Jesus, knowing you;  
there is no greater thing.  
You're my all, you're the best,  
you're my joy, my righteousness  
and I love you, Lord.*

2. Now my heart's desire is to know  
you more,  
to be found in you and known as yours;  
to possess by faith what I could not  
earn,  
all-surpassing gift of righteousness.

*Knowing you, Jesus, knowing you...*

3. O to know the power of your risen  
life  
and to know you in your sufferings;  
to become like you in your death, my  
Lord,  
so with you to live and never die.

*Knowing you, Jesus, knowing you...*

## **Our First Reading - Genesis 12, 1-3**

### *The call of Abram*

The Lord had said to Abram, “Go from your country, your people and your father’s household to the land I will show you.

<sup>2</sup> “I will make you into a great nation,  
and I will bless you;  
I will make your name great,  
and you will be a blessing.  
<sup>3</sup> I will bless those who bless you,  
and whoever curses you I will curse;  
and all peoples on earth  
will be blessed through you.”

## **Our Second Reading - Psalm 121**

I lift my eyes to the hills—  
from where will my help come?

<sup>2</sup> My help comes from the Lord,  
who made heaven and earth.

<sup>3</sup> He will not let your foot be moved;  
he who keeps you will not slumber.

<sup>4</sup> He who keeps Israel  
will neither slumber nor sleep.

<sup>5</sup> The Lord is your keeper;  
the Lord is your shade at your right  
hand.

<sup>6</sup> The sun shall not strike you by day  
nor the moon by night.

<sup>7</sup> The Lord will keep you from all evil;  
he will keep your life.

<sup>8</sup> The Lord will keep you in your going  
out and your coming in  
from this time on and forevermore.

### **Reflection** *I lift my eyes to the hills*

Wilderness is a common theme in Lent. Jesus is driven by the Spirit out into the wilderness at the start of his ministry and Moses leads the people of Israel into the wilderness in Exodus. In Psalm 121, we are encouraged to lift our eyes to the hills. Abram is called to leave the city and go out.

There are times in our lives when we need to go outside - outside the constraints and pressures of our everyday lives, outside the conventions and restrictions of society and civilisation - and if we are sensitive to the Spirit we will respond to these promptings because they are often the beginning of something new – something we could never have imagined otherwise.

Where does Abram think he’s going? He does not know. He only knows that he must go, so he goes. He leaves his home town, the heavily regulated Early Bronze Age city-state of Ur. Ur is possibly, at that time, the most populous city on earth and the most advanced civilisation of the time.

In this poem, Wendell Berry captures something of this feeling:

**The Peace of Wild Things** by *Wendell Berry*

When despair for the world grows in me  
and I wake in the night at the least sound  
in fear of what my life and my children's lives may be,  
I go and lie down where the wood drake  
rests in his beauty on the water, and the great heron feeds.

I come into the peace of wild things  
who do not tax their lives with forethought  
of grief. I come into the presence of still water.

And I feel above me the day-blind stars  
waiting with their light. For a time  
I rest in the grace of the world, and am free.

Abram chooses to leave, even though he has no idea where he is going. Like Jesus, he is driven by the Spirit of God and he goes out into the unknown to find the Peace of Wild Things. We are too quick, perhaps, to think that Abram left Ur to find the 'Promised Land'. His first step was to leave Ur. He believed that God would lead him to the right place in the fulness of time. He did not have to worry about all that, just leave.

God leads, one step at a time. The first step is to 'go out' and to leave what we know, and all our assumptions and prejudices, without any idea of what might happen later: to go out into the Wilderness.

In Psalm 121, the psalmist looks to the hills wondering from where to draw strength for the journey. The answer is: from the One who made the hills, the Maker of earth and heaven. Once we understand this, it allows us to relax in the certainty of God's care and provision because, as the psalmist realises (with such delight that he repeats it *five* times), God is always here and is always watching over us; always, all the time, everywhere.

If you do nothing else this Lent, go outside and spend some time in Nature. Go and walk in the garden or by the river, up in the hills or in the woods.

Meet with God. It may lead to the next step in your walk with God.

***Amen***

## Hymn StF 82 - *How great thou art*

1 O Lord my God, when I in awesome wonder,  
Consider all the worlds thy hands have made;  
I see the stars, I hear the rolling thunder,  
Thy power throughout the universe displayed:

*Refrain:*

*Then sings my soul, my Saviour God, to thee:*

*How great thou art! How great thou art!*

*Then sings my soul, my Saviour God, to thee:*

*How great thou art! How great thou art!*

2 When through the woods and forest glades I wander  
And hear the birds sing sweetly in the trees,  
When I look down from lofty mountain grandeur,  
And hear the brook and feel the gentle breeze:

*Then sings my soul...*

3 And when I think how God, his Son not sparing,  
Sent him to die, I scarce can take it in;  
That on the cross, my burdens gladly bearing,  
He bled and died to take away my sin:

4 When Christ shall come with shouts of acclamation,  
To take me home, what joy will fill my heart!  
Then I will bow in humble adoration,  
And there proclaim, my God, how great thou art!

*Then sings my soul...*

## Prayers of Intercession

O Lord, we remember your people, displaced from all they have ever known,  
displaced by war and weather, economic migrants, dissidents, asylum seekers and  
refugees of the spirit, looking for a home

We pray for people here or abroad who find themselves in need of help,  
for those we know, for those we hold in our hearts, for our neighbours and  
community, for people who cannot afford food or fuel, for young women, for mothers  
and children and for victims of discrimination

We remember those who have died, bringing our sense of grief and loss

As Jesus 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.*

### **Hymn StF 34 - Take my life and let it be**

1 Take my life and let it be  
consecrated, Lord, to thee.  
Take my moments and my days;  
let them flow in endless praise,  
let them flow in endless praise.

4 Take my silver and my gold;  
not a mite would I withhold.  
Take my intellect and use  
every power as thou shalt choose,  
every power as thou shalt choose.

2 Take my hands and let them move  
at the impulse of thy love.  
Take my feet and let them be  
swift and beautiful for thee,  
swift and beautiful for thee.

5 Take my will and make it thine;  
it shall be no longer mine.  
Take my heart it is thine own;  
it shall be thy royal throne,  
it shall be thy royal throne.

3 Take my voice and let me sing  
always, only, for my King.  
Take my lips and let them be  
filled with messages from thee,  
filled with messages from thee.

6 Take my love; my Lord, I pour  
at thy feet its treasure store.  
Take myself, and I will be  
ever, only, all for thee,  
ever, only, all for thee.

### **Closing prayers**

Dear Father, lift our eyes to the hills of your creation and meet with us in the wilderness, for the sake of your Son, our Lord, Jesus Christ. **Amen.**

Go in peace to walk with God, the Maker of earth and heaven. **Amen**