

## Worship At Home

22<sup>nd</sup> February 2026 - First Sunday of Lent

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South Devon Circuit



### STF 254: Seek ye first the kingdom of God

Seek ye first the kingdom of God

And His righteousness;

And all these things shall be added unto you.

Hallelu, Hallelujah!

*Hallelujah! Hallelujah!*

*Hallelujah! Hallelu, hallelujah!*

Ask, and it shall be given unto you;

Seek, and you shall find.

Knock, and it shall be opened unto you.

Hallelu, Hallelujah!

*Hallelujah! Hallelujah...*

Man shall not live by bread alone,

But by every word

That proceeds out from the mouth of God.

Hallelu, Hallelujah!

*Hallelujah! Hallelujah...*

*Karen Lafferty (b 1948)*

## Prayers

“Rejoice in the Lord and be glad, you righteous; sing  
all you who are upright in heart!” (Ps 32:11)

Lord God, we come to you at the start of Lent,  
preparing ourselves to celebrate the good news at the  
end of 40 days – that your love for us knows no end,  
that you entered our world in Jesus and have  
redeemed us by the cross, and that your love is  
stronger even than death itself.

We rejoice in the hope and promise that is ours  
through him, and reach out to you in faith and  
worship. You alone are our God.

**“Blessed are those whose transgressions are  
forgiven, whose sins are covered” (Ps 32:1)**

And Lord God, we come to you at the start of Lent,  
knowing that this is a season of reflection and self-  
examination. We know that we constantly fall short in  
faith and love, and are in need of transformation and  
grace.

As we recognise our own failures and our part in the  
world’s sinfulness, we ask both for your forgiveness  
and for your Spirit to continue to be active within us,  
re-forming and changing us more into the likeness of  
Christ. We ask sincerely, humbly and confidently, and  
so hear your words of grace to us: Our sins are  
forgiven.

And so, we may join with the psalmist, **“Blessed are  
those whose transgressions are forgiven, whose sins  
are covered.”** Amen

### Reading: Matthew 4:1-11 (NIV)

*Then Jesus was led by the Spirit into the wilderness to  
be tempted by the devil. After fasting forty days and  
forty nights, he was hungry. The tempter came to him  
and said, “If you are the Son of God, tell these stones  
to become bread.” Jesus answered, “It is written: ‘Man  
shall not live on bread alone, but on every word that  
comes from the mouth of God.’” Then the devil took  
him to the holy city and had him stand on the highest  
point of the temple. “If you are the Son of God,” he  
said, “throw yourself down. For it is written:*

*“He will command his angels concerning you, and  
they will lift you up in their hands, so that you will  
not strike your foot against a stone.”*

*Jesus answered him, “It is also written: ‘Do not put the  
Lord your God to the test.’ Again, the devil took him to  
a very high mountain and showed him all the  
kingdoms of the world and their splendour. “All this I  
will give you,” he said, “if you will bow down and  
worship me.” Jesus said to him, “Away from me,  
Satan! For it is written: ‘Worship the Lord your God,  
and serve him only.’” Then the devil left him, and  
angels came and attended him.*

## Reflection

On the first Sunday in Lent, the lectionary asks us to  
reflect on the story of Jesus’ temptations, this year  
from Matthew’s gospel. There are all sorts of things  
we could note from the passage.

For instance, it is the Spirit that leads Jesus into the  
wilderness to be tempted – so this is a necessary and  
Godly part of his preparation for his coming ministry,  
a time of growth and strengthening, maybe a period  
of testing as much as temptation. The experience  
reinforces in him some of the key principles which will  
hold and guide him in the time ahead: not to  
prioritise his own needs; not to display his divine  
sonship by overt displays of power; to focus solely on  
God and serve him alone.

And then, we can note that both Satan and Jesus cite  
scripture – so being able to quote biblical texts is not  
in itself an answer. Just as important is our overall  
vision and understanding of what Jesus and the  
Kingdom are about – a couple in one of my local  
churches say that for them, their guiding response to  
any issue is, “what is the most loving, and what is the  
most personally responsible, thing to do?” How do  
you make decisions when faced with tough  
questions?

And assuming there is an historical event behind this  
story, it can only have been related by Jesus himself –  
and if so, why did he tell his disciples? To encourage

them in their own times of searching and struggle? I don't know what temptations you face, or whether you are going through a time when your faith is being tested. However, remember that this is a part of your faith journey, and remember that you are not alone, even when it feels that way. God holds on to you, even if at times you may struggle to hold on to him, and others will be holding you in their hearts and prayers. And hopefully for you too, the wilderness experiences and this season of Lent may be a time of strengthening and growth.

## Prayers

I invite you to spend a few minutes in stillness and silence, remembering in turn:

Those who are going through wilderness experiences at the moment: through illness or loss, through national or local circumstances beyond their control;

Those preparing and training to be ministers and leaders in the church;

The church in places where it is hard or dangerous to be a Christian;

Those in positions of responsibility and leadership in society, and those who face the temptation to misuse their position;

Those searching for meaning and direction in their lives;

For yourself in this season of Lent;

For those you know and love;

And for those with whom you will spend time with in the coming week, that your words and actions might be of Christ and for Christ.

Draw your quiet reflection to a close by joining with the whole Church, in the Lord's Prayer:

## *The Lord's Prayer:*

*Our Father who in heaven,  
hallowed be your name.  
Your kingdom come.  
Your will be done  
on earth as in heaven.  
Give us this day our daily bread,  
and forgive us our sins,  
as we forgive those who sin against us,  
and lead us not into temptation,  
but deliver us from evil.  
For yours is the kingdom, the power and the glory,  
forever and ever.  
Amen.*

## **STF 238: Lead us, heavenly Father, lead us**

**Lead us, heavenly Father, lead us  
o'er the world's tempestuous sea;  
guard us, guide us, keep us, feed us,  
for we have no help but thee;  
yet possessing every blessing,  
if our God our Father be.**

**Saviour, breathe forgiveness o'er us:  
all our weakness thou dost know;  
thou didst tread this earth before us,  
thou didst feel its keenest woe;  
lone and dreary, faint and weary,  
through the desert thou didst go.**

**Spirit of our God, descending,  
fill our hearts with heavenly joy,  
love with every passion blending,  
pleasure that can never cloy:  
thus provided, pardoned, guided,  
nothing can our peace destroy.**

*James Erneston (1791-1867)*

## Blessing

May the God of all grace and peace guide your steps and guard your heart, this day and this Lent; and the blessing of God, Father, Son and Holy Spirit, be with you, and all you carry in your hearts, now and always.

**Amen.**