

'Through the Desert'

A Carol Service for Lent

25th February 2024
6pm

WELCOME TO OUR CHURCH

For over 190 years a community has gathered at St John's to worship God and to demonstrate faith at work in our daily lives. Our Parish Church serves the Hyde Park Estate, the area north of Sussex Gardens, Praed Street and the Paddington Basin, but our members come from across our city. This building provides a sacred space for prayer and meeting between God and his people.

We have carefully designed our service this evening to help us celebrate life, to comfort us where we hurt and to challenge us where we have grown complacent. In all we do, we seek to equip each other to live out our faith wherever we may be. As a tangible expression of Jesus' openness to all, St John's welcomes all people regardless of gender, ethnicity, sexual orientation, socio-economic circumstances or spiritual background to our worshipping community and Eucharistic table.

We welcome all who seek God and invite you into our efforts to be a strong facilitator of good in our city. Come join us as we seek to build the Kingdom of God in our souls, our lives and communities here in London.

Stephen Mason
Vicar

Further information about St John's can be found on our web site:

stjohns-hydepark.com

Follow us: [@StJohnsHP](https://twitter.com/StJohnsHP)



Lent

For many centuries Christians have set aside a period of preparation for the celebration of Easter. Following Jesus' example when he went into the wilderness before beginning his public ministry, the community of faith spends the 40 days of this season of Lent in prayer, fasting and self-discipline in preparation to celebrate Easter.

It is a time for us to take the opportunity to contemplate our weaknesses and failures alongside the significance of God's grace and mercy that comes in our redemption. Beginning with the ashes of penitence and mortality, we enter into the process of approaching the Cross and walking with Christ in his Passion and Crucifixion before celebrating the gift of salvation that brings new life.

Through readings and music we are going to journey with Christ as he is called and enters into the wilderness. In preparation for this journey we start by acknowledging that Christ is the Lamb of God, who will take away the sin of the world through his death on the cross; the sacrifice of God's only son for all of humanity.

Then, with Jesus, we hear the call of the Holy Spirit to venture into the desert for forty days and forty nights. It is during this time that the devil tempts Christ three times, as we hear from Luke's gospel, we find ourselves in the desert and reflect upon what that is like and must have been like for Jesus, experiencing scarcity and the heat and dryness and loneliness of the wilderness, to then find spiritual nourishment through the Hebrew scriptures, echoed in the famous words of the 23rd Psalm.

Having rebuked the devil three times, we emerge with Christ from the desert as we hear the Good News being proclaimed as he teaches in the countryside and synagogues.

As we reflect on the story of Christ's temptation in the wilderness and each make our own observance throughout Lent, we are offered the time to consider where we fall short of what God hopes for in us as we share in Christ's passion, death and resurrection.

INTROIT

Prepare Ye the Way of the Lord (Godspell)

Stephen Schwartz

‘Prepare ye the way of the Lord!’

Please stand for the entry of the choir and clergy.

Please sit for the readings and choral pieces and stand to sing the hymns.

HYMN

**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 Edmeston (1821)

Tune: Mannheim

THE BIDDING

Priest Beloved in Christ, since early days Christians have observed with great devotion the time of our Lord's passion and resurrection and prepared for this by a season of penitence and fasting. By carefully keeping these days, Christians take to heart the call to repentance and the assurance of forgiveness proclaimed in the gospel and so grow in faith and in devotion to our Lord.

I invite you, therefore, in the name of the Church, to the observance of a holy Lent by self-examination and repentance: by prayer, fasting and self-discipline and by reading and meditating on God's holy word.

Please be seated.

Priest Almighty and everlasting God,
you hate nothing that you have made
and forgive the sins of all those who are penitent:
create and make in us new and contrite hearts
that we, worthily lamenting our sins
and acknowledging our wretchedness,
may receive from you, the God of all mercy,
perfect remission and forgiveness;
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.

All **Amen.**

Preparation

– *John 1:29-34* –
Read by Sven Haase

The Lamb of God.

The next day John the Baptist saw Jesus coming towards him and declared, 'Here is the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world! This is he of whom I said, "After me comes a man who ranks ahead of me because he was

before me.” I myself did not know him; but I came baptising with water for this reason, that he might be revealed to Israel.’ And John testified, ‘I saw the Spirit descending from heaven like a dove and it remained on him. I myself did not know him, but the one who sent me to baptise with water said to me, “He on whom you see the Spirit descend and remain is the one who baptises with the Holy Spirit.” And I myself have seen and have testified that this is the Son of God.’

The choir sings:

Chorus: Christ unser Herr zum Jordan kamm (BWV7)

J.S. Bach 1685-1750

Trans: Christ our Lord came to the Jordan according to his Father's will. He received baptism from Saint John, to fulfil his work and destiny; to drown bitter death as well through his own blood and wounds; it permitted a new life.

The Call

– Luke 3: 21-23 & 4:1 –

Read by Sara Lauchlan

Led by the Spirit

Now when all the people were baptised and when Jesus also had been baptised and was praying, the heaven was opened and the Holy Spirit descended upon him in bodily form like a dove. And a voice came from heaven, ‘You are my Son, the Beloved; with you I am well pleased.’

Jesus was about thirty years old when he began his work. He was the son of Joseph.

Jesus, full of the Holy Spirit, returned from the Jordan and was led by the Spirit in the wilderness.

HYMN

Christian, dost thou see them
on the holy ground,
how the troops of Midian
prowl and prowl around?
Christian, up and smite them,
counting gain but loss:
smite them by the merit
of the holy cross.

Christian, dost thou feel them,
how they work within,
striving, tempting, luring,
goading into sin?
Christian, never tremble;
never be down-cast;
smite them by the virtue
of the Lenten fast.

Christian, dost thou hear them,
how they speak thee fair?
'Always fast and vigil?
Always watch and prayer?'
Christian, answer boldly,
'While I breathe, I pray:'
peace shall follow battle,
night shall end in day.

'Well I know thy trouble,
O my servant true;
thou art very weary,
I was weary too;
but that toil shall make thee
some day all mine own,
and the end of sorrow
shall be near my throne.'

*Translator: J. M. Neale; Author: St. Andrew of Crete
Tune: Gute Baume Bringen*

Temptation

– Luke 4:1-13 –

Read by Simone Malavolta

One does not live by bread alone

Jesus, full of the Holy Spirit, returned from the Jordan and was led by the Spirit in the wilderness, where for forty days he was tempted by the devil. He ate nothing at all during those days and when they were over, he was famished.

The devil said to him, ‘If you are the Son of God, command this stone to become a loaf of bread.’ Jesus answered him, ‘It is written, “One does not live by bread alone.”’

Then the devil led him up and showed him in an instant all the kingdoms of the world. And the devil said to him, ‘To you I will give their glory and all this authority; for it has been given over to me and I give it to anyone I please. If you, then, will worship me, it will all be yours.’ Jesus answered him, ‘It is written, “Worship the Lord your God and serve only him.”’

Then the devil took him to Jerusalem and placed him on the pinnacle of the temple, saying to him, ‘If you are the Son of God, throw yourself down from here, for it is written, “He will command his angels concerning you, to protect you” and “On their hands they will bear you up, so that you will not dash your foot against a stone.”’ Jesus answered him, ‘It is said, “Do not put the Lord your God to the test.”’ When the devil had finished every test, he departed from him until an opportune time.

The choir sings:

Jesus in the Wilderness

Tyler Mabry

Jesus in the wilderness, forty days, forty nights. Jesus in the wilderness, fasting and praying.

He heard the devil saying, “Jesus! You’re a hungry man, do yourself a favour. Save yourself if you’re a Saviour! Send forth your power and turn

the stones to bread!” That’s what the devil said. Then Jesus answered, “We live by the Word of Heaven; not by bread alone.”

Then he heard the devil saying, “Jesus! You’re a holy man, show the world your power. Throw your body from this tower. Surely the angels will lift your sacred head!” That’s what the devil said. Then Jesus answered, “Believe in the power of Heaven; never test your God.”

Then he heard the devil saying, “Jesus! You’re a mighty man, you’re beyond temptation. You deserve to rule the nations! Kneel down and serve me and I will crown Your head!” That’s what the devil said. Then Jesus answered, “My Lord is the God of Heaven; I serve God alone.”

The Desert

– Isaiah 35: 1-7 –

Read by Adeola Fatiregun

The wilderness and the dry land

The wilderness and the dry land shall be glad, the desert shall rejoice and blossom; like the crocus it shall blossom abundantly and rejoice with joy and singing.

The glory of Lebanon shall be given to it,
the majesty of Carmel and Sharon.

They shall see the glory of the Lord, the majesty of our God.
Strengthen the weak hands and make firm the feeble knees.

Say to those who are of a fearful heart, ‘Be strong, do not fear!
Here is your God.

He will come with vengeance, with terrible recompense.
He will come and save you.’

Then the eyes of the blind shall be opened
and the ears of the deaf unstopped;

then the lame shall leap like a deer
and the tongue of the speechless sing for joy.

For waters shall break forth in the wilderness
and streams in the desert;

the burning sand shall become a pool
and the thirsty ground springs of water.

The choir sings:

The Desert Shall Rejoice
Malcolm Archer b.1952

The desert shall rejoice and blossom as a rose: it shall blossom abundantly and rejoice with praise and singing. For the ears of the deaf shall hear and the eyes of the blind shall be opened. For the tongue of the dumb shall sing and the lame will dance for joy. For the ground will become a pool and the dry land will become springs of water. As the ransomed return to the Lord, they shall come back singing unto Zion with joy.

Please stand.

HYMN

**Guide me, O my great Redeemer,
pilgrim through this barren land;
I am weak, but you are mighty;
hold me with your powerful hand.
Bread of heaven, bread of heaven,
feed me now and evermore,
feed me now and evermore.**

**Open now the crystal fountain,
where the healing waters flow.
Let the fire and cloudy pillar
lead me all my journey through.
Strong Deliverer, strong Deliverer,
ever be my strength and shield,
ever be my strength and shield.**

**When I tread the verge of Jordan,
bid my anxious fears subside.
Death of death, and hell's Destruction,
land me safe on Canaan's side.
Songs of praises, songs of praises
I will ever sing to you,**

I will ever sing to you.

Author: William Williams (1745)

Trans Peter Williams (1771)

Tune: Cwm Rhondda

Please sit.

Nourishment

– Psalm 23 –

Read by Edward Benson

Green Pastures

The Lord is my shepherd, I shall not want.
He makes me lie down in green pastures;
he leads me beside still waters; he restores my soul.
He leads me in right paths for his name's sake.
Even though I walk through the darkest valley, I fear no evil;
for you are with me;
your rod and your staff, they comfort me.
You prepare a table before me in the presence of my enemies;
you anoint my head with oil; my cup overflows.
Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life,
and I shall dwell in the house of the Lord my whole life long.

The choir sings:

Love Bade Me Welcome (Five Mystical Songs)

R. Vaughan Williams 1872-1958, words George Herbert

Love bade me welcome: yet my soul drew back, guilty of dust and sin.
But quick-eyed Love, observing me grow slack from my first entrance in,
drew nearer to me, sweetly questioning if I lacked anything.

A guest, I answered, worthy to be here: Love said, You shall be he.
I the unkind, ungrateful? Ah, my dear, I cannot look on thee.
Love took my hand and smiling did reply, Who made the eyes but I?
Truth, Lord, but I have marred them: let my shame go where it doth
deserve.

And know you not, says Love, who bore the blame? My dear, then I will serve.

You must sit down, says Love, and taste my meat:
So I did sit and eat.

THE LITANY

Priest The sacrifice acceptable to God is a broken spirit; a broken and contrite heart God will not despise. Our sins accuse us. We confess them to God.

God the Father,

Resp. **Have mercy on us.**

God the Son,

Resp. **Have mercy on us.**

God the Holy Spirit,

Resp. **Have mercy on us.**

Holy Trinity, one God,

Resp. **Have mercy on us.**

We pray to you, Lord Christ.

Resp. **Lord, hear our prayer.**

Govern and direct your holy Church. Fill it with love and truth; and grant it that unity of purpose which is your will, we pray to you, O Lord.

Resp. **Lord, hear our prayer.**

Give your people grace to hear and receive your word and to bring forth the fruit of the Spirit, we pray to you, O Lord.

Resp. **Lord, hear our prayer.**

For the mission of the Church, that in faithful witness it may preach the Gospel to the ends of the earth, we pray to you, O Lord.

Resp. **Lord, hear our prayer.**

Bring into the way of truth all who have erred and are deceived; strengthen those who stand, comfort and help the faint-hearted and raise up the fallen, we pray to you, O Lord.

Resp. **Have mercy on us.**

Guide the leaders of the nations into the ways of peace and justice; guard and strengthen your servant Charles our King, that he may put his trust in you and seek your honour and glory, we pray to you, O Lord.

Resp. **Lord, hear our prayer.**

Endue the High Court of Parliament and all the Ministers of the Crown with wisdom and understanding; and bless those who administer the law, that they may uphold justice, honesty and truth, O Lord.

Resp. **Lord, hear our prayer.**

Give us the will to use the resources of the earth to your glory and for the good of all creation; and bless and keep all your people, we pray to you, O Lord.

Resp. **Lord, hear our prayer.**

For the poor, the persecuted, the sick and all who suffer; for refugees, prisoners and all who are in danger; that they may be relieved and protected, we pray to you, O Lord.

Resp. **Lord, hear our prayer.**

For ourselves: for the forgiveness of our sins and for the grace of the Holy Spirit to amend our lives, we pray to you, O Lord.

Resp. **Lord, hear our prayer.**

Hear us as we remember those who have died in the peace of Christ, both those who have confessed the faith and those whose faith is known to you alone, and grant us with them a share in your eternal kingdom, we pray to you, O Lord.

Resp. **Lord, hear our prayer.**

Give us true repentance. Forgive us our sins of negligence and ignorance and our deliberate sins; and grant us the grace of your Holy Spirit to amend our lives according to your holy word.

Resp. **Have mercy on us.**

**Lord, have mercy.
Christ, have mercy.
Lord, have mercy.**

**Our Father in heaven,
hallowed be your name,
your kingdom come,
your will be done, on earth as in heaven.
Give us today our daily bread.
Forgive us our sins,
as we forgive those who sin against us.
Lead us not into temptation,
but deliver us from evil. Amen.**

Silence is kept.

Please stand.

*There will be a collection during this hymn
If you are a UK taxpayer, please could you complete a Gift Aid envelope*

HYMN

**Just as I am, without one plea,
but that thy blood was shed for me
and that Thou bidd'st me come to Thee,
O Lamb of God, I come.**

**Just as I am, though tossed about
with many a conflict, many a doubt,
fightings within and fears without,
O Lamb of God, I come.**

**When you're weary, feeling small,
when tears are in your eyes,
I will dry them all. I'm on your side.
Oh, when times get rough
and friends just can't be found,
like a bridge over troubled water
I will lay me down.**

Just as I am, poor, wretched, blind,

**sight, riches, healing of the mind,
yea, all I need in Thee to find,
O Lamb of God, I come.**

**Like a bridge over troubled water,
I will ease your mind.**

Charlotte Elliott (1789 - 1871)

Tune: Saffron Walden

Paul Simon (1941)

Tune: Bridge over troubled water

Emergence

– Luke 4: 12-15 –

Read by Elaine Mayer

Jesus returned to Galilee

"Jesus answered, "It is said: 'Do not put the Lord your God to the test'. When the devil had finished all this tempting, he left him until an opportune time. Jesus returned to Galilee in the power of the Spirit and news about him spread through the whole countryside. He was teaching in their synagogues and everyone praised him'.

MUSIC FOR REFLECTION

*A short orchestral arrangement
will introduce the final hymn.*

HYMN

**Forty days and forty nights
thou wast fasting in the wild,
forty days and forty nights
tempted and yet undefiled.**

Let us thine endurance share

**and awhile from joys abstain,
with thee watching unto prayer,
strong with thee to suffer pain.**

**And if Satan, vexing sore,
flesh or spirit should assail,
thou, his vanquisher before,
grant we may not faint nor fail.**

**So shall we have peace divine,
holier gladness ours shall be,
round us too shall angels shine,
such as ministered to thee.
Keep, O keep us, Saviour dear,
ever constant by thy side,
that with thee we may appear
at the eternal Eastertide.**

*G H Smyttan 1822-70
and Francis Pott 1832-1909
M.N. in Nürnbergisches Gesangbuch 1676*

THE BLESSING

Priest Christ give you grace to grow in holiness,
to deny yourselves, take up your cross and follow him;
and the blessing of God almighty,
the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit,
be upon you and remain with you always.

All **Amen.**

Please remain standing as the clergy and choir depart.

VOLUNTARY
Remember Who You Are (The Lion King)
Hans Zimmer



ST JOHN'S
HYDE PARK

Notices

Welcome to St John's Hyde Park

We are delighted that you have chosen to join our community today, especially if you are joining us for the first time. Further information about St John's can be found on our web site: www.stjohns-hydepark.com.

Hearing the Service

St John's has an Induction Loop System so if you have a hearing aid, please switch it to the 'T' setting.

Through the Desert

A Carol Service for Lent

Sunday 25th February 6pm

This year's service explores the temptations of Jesus in the wilderness with the choir accompanied by organ and orchestra. The service will be followed by a reception with hot cross buns. All are invited to stay.

Annual Vestry and Parochial Church Meetings

This year's annual meetings take place on 17th March immediately after the 10am service. The first step in preparation for these meetings is to revise the Electoral Roll. Accordingly, the Roll will be open until 29th February, after which it will be closed until the conclusion of the APCM. Having your name entered on the Electoral Roll is an indication of your involvement in the life of the parish and entitles you to attend and take part in the annual meeting. It is also something that Church of England schools ask about when applying for a place. Forms are available from the table at the back or from Bryan Sollenberger.

If you have had your name added to the Roll within the last five years, you do not need to do so again. This year we are only revising the Roll. We will next be compiling a brand new roll from scratch in 2025.

Easter Baptisms

Are you considering baptism? Easter is the perfect occasion and the dawn service at 6am on Easter Day is a great opportunity for it. This is a very special and unique service and there will be an opportunity for adults and children to be baptised as part of the Easter liturgy. If you are interested in being baptised at this service, please speak to one of the clergy as soon as possible.

St Paul's Lecture

16th April, 6.30pm

Rev Kate Botley of Gogglebox and Radio 2 fame is giving a talk, 'Have a Little Faith', at St Paul's Cathedral on the evening of the 16th April. You can find further information at www.stpauls.co.uk/kate-bottley.

Alex will be attending this and he invites you to join him. He will be on the steps of St Paul's at 6.15pm for those who wish to attend. Entry is free, with the option to make a donation on the evening, but a ticket is required to attend. Please contact Alex if you are interested in attending so he can get a ticket for you.

St John's Book Club

St John's Book Club met recently to discuss *The Day of the Triffids* by John Wyndham, which was a popular choice. Their next meeting will be on the 8th April and the book choice is *Scarborough* by Canadian author Catherine Hernandez. For further information about the book club, please speak to Irwin Nazareth.

HOW TO CONTACT ST JOHN'S

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ST JOHN'S
HYDE PARK

MARCH 2024

24 **Stabat Mater**
Stations of the Cross explored through the *Stabat Mater*
18:0
0

28 **Maundy Thursday**
Choral Eucharist with the *Missa Brevis* - W. A Mozart
18:0
0

29 **Good Friday**
A liturgy meditating upon the cross, incorporating a selection of the
St Matthew Passion arias, J. S Bach.
14:0
0

31 **Easter Liturgy**
Dawn Vigil and First Eucharist of Easter.
06:0
0
Followed by a champagne breakfast.

Easter Festival Eucharist
10:0 With choir and orchestra. Followed by a fizz reception.
0

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