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## LENT 1A

26th February 2023

A short act of worship and daily devotions

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## Opening prayers

Come, worship the Lord, and meet with the living God.

Some of today's resources have been prepared by our friends at All We Can, the international development charity of the Methodist Church. In this space of listening, learning, inspiration and challenge, may I see that how I respond is part of an attitude of worship, part of what it means to follow you, Lord God.

Come into this space, by your Spirit, Lord God.

*[Pause].*

Heavenly Father,

Thank you that nothing can separate me from your love,  
Thank you for the life, freedom and healing I have in Jesus.

Today, as I pray Lord God, I am ready for something new, a new way of thinking and a new way of living that brings love and hope to those most marginalized in the world.

But I know I can only do this in your strength, so today I put my trust and hope in you again, O God.

As I join with our brothers and sisters across the world in prayer, I confess my own sins and shortcomings, and I wait for you, heal and forgive me, Lord God. Thank you, that by your grace I am loved, forgiven and set free.

Loving God, I pray that this day I will experience your presence lifting me up on wings like eagles, to run and not grow weary, to walk and not grow faint.

Please lead me and guide me for your glory and the expansion of your Kingdom today.

In Jesus' name I pray,

Amen.

**You may at this point like to say the Lord's prayer, in a version or translation with which you are most familiar.**

### **Hymn:**

317 STF – At the name of Jesus - [YouTube](#)

**Readings:** Matthew 4:1-11 – [Click for reading](#)

## Response to the reading

How do you feel about 'temptation'? What are your experiences of being 'tempted'?

Perhaps, this word and this idea brings about negative emotions, difficult memories, our own battles with addiction or addictive behaviours, our struggle with our shadow-side. In today's Gospel, Jesus is in the wilderness, being tempted by Satan – being challenged to make the same mistakes that Adam made and to turn away from God's guidelines. Jesus resists those temptations here, at the beginning of his ministry.

In Matthew, Jesus's resistance of the three offers made by the tempter shows that he is anti-consumption, anti-ego and in opposition to the worship of false gods.

Perhaps this is the narrative, the story we need to hear, to help us get beyond the temptations that cause climate change? It is the temptation of cheap fuel that adds to the carbon in the atmosphere, it is the temptation of packaging that adds to the single-use plastics in the ocean, it is the temptation of cheap resources that leads to the felling of large swathes of forest.

Can we resist the temptation this Lent?

You might like to use All We Can's Lent resources this year to help you focus and grow. You can order a copy or download the resources online at [allwecan.org.uk/lent](http://allwecan.org.uk/lent)

## Hymn:

440 STF – Amazing Grace - [YouTube](#)

## Blessing

As you go from this place, may the God who releases and trusts you to be the builders of his Kingdom, inspire you to trust and release others – fanning into flame the potential which is all around.

Amen.

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## Prayers and Prayer Pointers for the Week

### Monday 27<sup>th</sup> February

- Breathe deeply, in and out, for a whole minute (it is worth timing yourself to make sure you commit to a minute – which can feel like a long time!). Concentrate on your breath. Feel the way your lungs fill with air, and empty out again.
- As you feel the flow of energy, in and out, notice how connected you are to the world around you. How God is at work in all things.
- Give thanks for this sense of connection, this prayer.

## **Tuesday 28<sup>th</sup> February**

- God of all grace, here at the end of the month, I take a moment to notice all the ways in which you have been at work in my life in the last four weeks of February.
- Amongst ups and downs, pain and laughter, joy and tears, I look for your hand of comfort and hope.
- Pause, and if it is helpful to journal about the month of February and how it has gone for you, then take the time to do that, and pray about what you learn.

## **Wednesday 1<sup>st</sup> March**

- Find something in your house that is symbolic of your faith. Hold it. Give thanks for the journey of faith that God has taken you on in your lifetime. Ask for God to guide you on your onwards journey.

## **Thursday 2<sup>nd</sup> March**

- Pour a glass of water. Think about the things you do that get in the way of your relationship with God. You might think it muddies the water of your life, but God forgives us for all these things, and offers us living water. Drink some of the water and give thanks for the way God reaches out to you with love and forgiveness.

## **Friday 3<sup>rd</sup> March**

- Draw a picture of your local church. Include on the picture all the ways you see God at work, and all the things you want to ask God to work in. Pray about it.

## **Saturday 4<sup>th</sup> March**

- The weekend is here, and it is time to change the rhythm a little.
- Find a piece of music that you wouldn't normally listen to, perhaps from a genre you are not particularly familiar with.
- Amongst all that is unfamiliar about the rhythm, the tempo, the instruments, the tone, listen for the surprising voice of God. Can you hear the divine speaking to you?
- Pray about any emotions or responses you notice in yourself.