

Connected

Sunday 6th March 2022

1st Sunday of Lent

Verse For The Week

He sits enthroned above the circle of the earth, and its people are like grasshoppers. He stretches out the heavens like a canopy, and spreads them out like a tent to live in. He brings princes to naught and reduces the rulers of this world to nothing.

(Isaiah 40: 22, 23)

Sermon Snippets

(Isaiah 40: 21-31)

This week we're continuing to take a break from John's gospel as we absorb the impact of the Russian invasion of Ukraine.

Last week we looked at Psalm 46 which closed with the words "Be still and know that I am God" . . . so we're continuing in that vein and taking some time to remind ourselves of God as God. That may sound like a rather obvious point, but in the midst of our fears and anxieties, it can get lost.

The second half of Isaiah 40 was a reminder to the exiled Israelites to lift their eyes and see God as their God – one who not only cared for them, but who also was more than capable enough of helping them through the challenges they faced.

Even in testing times like these, can we learn to lift our eyes to see the greatness of our God?



Responding to the Crisis in Ukraine

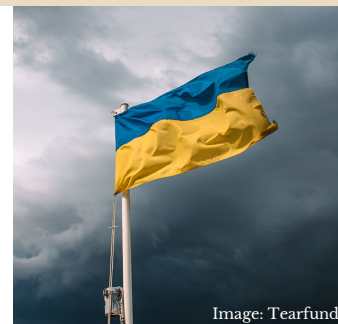


Image: Tearfund

A number of agencies are working to help refugees fleeing the crisis in Ukraine. Here are some ways in which we are supporting the relief effort:

Church Services

Our morning services will have a particular emphasis on the events in Ukraine. In addition, instead of the advertised Lent Evening Service this Sunday (06 March), we will be holding a time of prayer for Ukraine and its people at 6pm in Christ Church. All are welcome to join us.

Prayer

Christ Church will be open for individual prayer on Tuesday, Thursday and Friday morning. Nicky has created a very helpful Prayer Station. There are some prayers on page 4, plus further prayer suggestions. Please do have a look at these.

Financial Donations

David has set up a donations page on the Christ Church website. Please see page 4 for more details.

Tom on the Radio!

Tom will be interviewed live as part of the Sunday morning Breakfast Show on BBC Radio Bristol at approximately 08.45. Do tune in and support Tom in prayer as he speaks to a wide audience.

BBC RADIO BRISTOL

94.9 FM | 104.6 FM | DAB | bbc.co.uk/bristol



Watch the Morning Service

at www.ccwsm.org.uk

Go to the 'Church Life' menu and click on the 'Sunday Services' page.

Prayer Pointers

Monday

At the time of writing a very large military convoy was approaching Kyiv. There will, undoubtedly, have been many developments since then. As Tom has been reminding us over the last week or so, God knows everything from the beginning to the end, and his plan for creation will not be overturned. With this in mind, go to our Heavenly Father with your fears, your sadness and your anger. Focus on his promises and faithfulness and his mighty power as you cry out for peace, for the people of Ukraine and for the Kingdom of God to get full expression in the Russian government.

(Also see the prayers on page 4)

Tuesday

The season of Lent is well underway: make space for yourself to walk the road of preparation for Easter. Perhaps you are fasting from a luxury item, or maybe following one of the many online Lent resources. Ask God to help you see yourself as he sees you and be confident in the forgiveness bought by Jesus on the cross.

Wednesday

In the last few days a new environmental report has painted a worsening picture of our planet's ecology. Use this prayer from Justin Welby to help you intercede for God's beautiful creation:
Almighty God, give us reverence for all creation and respect for every person, that we may mirror your likeness, in Jesus Christ our Lord, Amen

Thursday

Today let's remember those in our church families, and those personally known to us, who are unwell or struggling in some way. We pray that they will know healing, comfort and encouragement from our compassionate God.

Friday

Please pray for our mission partners, many of whom are still living in communities with few vaccination opportunities. Ask God that they will be safe and that they will be able to carry out the mission activities they are called to.

Saturday

Please pray for Street Pastors who have not been able to go out since the Covid pandemic arrived. Some will no longer be fit enough to go out onto the streets at night so new volunteers need to be recruited and trained, and Weston's night time economy is restarting. Please pray for safety for the young people out late, and for Street Pastors to be able to minister to them once again.

What's On This Week

Sun 06 Mar

Prayer for Ukraine at 6pm at Christ Church

Mon 07 Mar

Ladies Together at 2.30pm in the Spire Centre

Tue 08 Mar

Parish Prayers at 09.30 at Emmanuel Church
The Beacon at 12noon at Emmanuel Church

Wed 09 Mar

Seedlings Toddler Group at 10.15 at Christ Church

(please note that this event is currently full)

Alpha Course at 7pm in the Spire Centre

Thu 10 Mar

Welcome Group at 2.30pm at Emmanuel Church

Craft & Chat at 2.30pm in the Spire Centre

Notices

Office Closed

Please note that the Church Office will be closed on Monday 07 March.
(Hmm - Phil seems to be making a habit of this. I think we need a new Administrator!)

Lent Resources

The Church of England's theme for Lent 2022 is
Live Lent: Embrace Justice.



Study guides are available from Church House Publishing. Just [click on this link](#).

Thank You

I have been receiving a number of messages of gratitude from people in our two churches. They are especially appreciative of the Daily Prayers, and of the team who enable the services to be viewed online. Some have also been receiving phone calls, visits, and gifts of flowers.

Thank you so much to all those involved. It's wonderful to see the phrase 'Living God's Love' being so graciously worked out.

Coffee after the Service...



Spring Harvest will be taking place this year at Butlin's, Minehead. Please see <https://springharvestevent.org/> for more details.

There will also be an online event. Tickets are now on sale for this and cost £49. Please [click on this link](#) for more details and to book your tickets.

The return of Open Gardens



It is hoped to hold a series of Open Garden events for Christ Church and Emmanuel during the coming summer.

Any church member who would like to host an event in their garden or courtyard is invited to sign up on the list which will be displayed at Christ Church until Sunday April 3rd.

Alternatively, please have a word with Phil in the Church Office. From this, a programme will be drawn up and circulated in both churches.

Potential hosts should read the wording heading the list which describes what is required.

Also, please note that Saturday June 4th will have a Jubilee theme and the host for this event is asked to liaise with Tom regarding any special arrangements.

Thank you.

Barry

Covid Update



We all know that the Government have lifted all Covid restrictions. This leaves it to us to decide what to do to make our churches safe places while at the same time adjusting to this virus being part of our lives.

I'm sure you'll be aware, as I am, that there is a range of opinions about what this means! It seems best to us to invite you all to make a personal decision as whether to wear a mask or not during church services. No doubt there will be a number of us who wish to continue to wear masks and we'd like to affirm you in that, both now and in the future. At Christ Church the chairs in the right hand aisle will remain socially distanced for those who would feel safest with a little more space.

Alternatively there will be others of us who are happy not to wear masks on a Sunday morning and that, too, is fine. For the moment, Larissa and I will continue to wear a mask before and after a service as we would want anyone to feel safe to talk to us.

We have seen a great deal of love and care shown within our church family, especially during the last two years. I'm sure with grace and understanding for one another this new phase will be no different.

Tom

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Prayers for Ukraine

I'm grateful to Dina for sending a prayer for inclusion in Connected this week. This was received from the Global Day of Prayer. I include excerpts from the prayer below.

Dear Heavenly Father,

We really don't know how to pray for this crisis so we ask for your Spirit to help us to intercede on behalf of the people of Ukraine.

First we pray for peace over Ukraine and over all the nations. Bring about a peaceful resolution to this conflict.

2 Thessalonians 3: 16

Now may the Lord of peace Himself give you peace always in every way. The Lord be with you all.

We pray for safety and minimal loss of life. We ask that you save families, children, mothers, fathers and whole communities displaced by this invasion.

Numbers 6: 24-26

"The LORD bless you and keep you; the LORD make His face shine upon you, and be gracious to you; the LORD lift up His countenance upon you, and give you peace."

We ask for wisdom for our politicians and world leaders involved with mediation and peaceful intervention. Grant them grace, insight and courage to stem this wave of violence and destruction.

Colossians 1: 9

For this reason we also, since the day we heard it, do not cease to pray for you, and to ask that you may be filled with the knowledge of His will in all wisdom and spiritual understanding.

We pray for the Church in Ukraine that no matter what happens, she will remain strong, united and kept by your Spirit. Release your angels to minister to her as she walks through this trial.

Romans 8: 35-37

Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword? As it is written: "For your sake we are killed all day long; we are accounted as sheep for the slaughter." Yet in all these things we are more than conquerors through Him who loved us.

tearfund

Tearfund have made suggestions of different ways we can pray.

One example is to use a map of Ukraine, and ask God to lay on your heart one particular area of the country. Lay your hand on that part of the map and ask the Holy Spirit to guide you in prayer for those towns and their inhabitants.

Other examples include the lighting of candles. One of the 'I am' sayings of Jesus we looked at recently is 'I am the Light of the World'. Ask God to shine His light on the situation, even in the darkness of conflict.

For more information and further suggestions, including the idea of baking bread as an act of solidarity with the Ukrainian people, please [click on this link](#).

Donations

At both our churches we are making an appeal to raise money as quickly as possible in support of the work of Samaritan's Purse, who are engaged in helping the refugees crossing the border from Ukraine into neighbouring countries. If you would like to give towards this, information is available on the 'Ukrainian Appeal' page under 'Church Life' on the Christ Church website. Simply click on this link: <https://ccwsm.org.uk/ukr/>

To pay by debit / credit card, please scan the QR code below on your smart phone, enter the amount and then choose to Pay Online Securely.

Alternatively, please mark any cash in envelopes or cheques with "Ukraine appeal".

Thank you.

