

Lent Liturgy:

Dance before God. It is a joyous thing to fulfil the law of the Lord.

Psalm 19: 7-10 The law of the Lord, is perfect, refreshing the soul. The statutes of the Lord are trustworthy, making wise the simple. They are more precious than gold.

Let us pray: speak once more, O God, of the ways of life and death. For your law is perfect, reviving the soul. Your commandments are trustworthy, saving the ignorant from folly. Guide us each and every day, that we might worship you in spirit and in truth. Amen.



Call to worship:

The prophet Micah said:

"What does the Lord require of you? Only to act justly, love mercy and to walk humbly with your God."

Hymn: Singing the faith 161

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3tPp8ov7cks>

Speak, O Lord, as we come to You
 To receive the food of Your Holy Word
 Take Your truth, plant it deep in us
 Shape and fashion us in Your likeness
 That the light of Christ might be seen today
 In our acts of love and our deeds of faith
 Speak, O Lord, and fulfill in us
 All Your purposes for Your glory

Teach us Lord, full obedience
 Holy reverence, true humility
 Test our thoughts and our attitudes
 In the radiance of Your purity

Cause our faith to rise, cause our eyes to see
 Your majestic love and authority
 Words of pow'r that can never fail
 Let their truth prevail over unbelief

Speak, O Lord, and renew our minds
 Help us grasp the heights of Your plans for us
 Truths unchanged from the dawn of time
 That will echo down through eternity
 And by grace we'll stand on Your promises
 And by faith we'll walk as You walk with us
 Speak, O Lord, till Your church is built
 And the earth is filled with Your glory

Let us pray:

Father we worship you, we praise you, we thank you, we love you. You are our origin, our purpose and our end, You are our God and we are your people:

Called by Christ and empowered by the Holy Spirit to be your love in the world. But sometimes it is hard...

Forgive us Lord for our apathy, for our lack of courage to speak out.

Forgive us when we walk past and don't offer help. Forgive us when we get it wrong.

We ask that you would lead us into action: give us strength to be a voice crying for justice and peace.

May we be a liberating presence and offer love, compassion and whatever is needed to act justly, love mercy and walk humbly with our God.

Bible reading Exodus 20:1-17

Hymn Singing the faith 489:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=O4lgusP8Z8w>

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

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
There is no greater thing
You're my all, You're the best
You're my joy, my righteousness
And I love You, Lord

Oh, 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

There is no greater thing
You're my all, You're the best
You're my joy, my righteousness
And I love You, Lord
And I love You, Lord
And I love You, Lord

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
Lord we express our love to You
In worship and praise before Your throne
Blessed be Your holy name:

Reflection

A long time ago, I used to watch a programme on TV called 'The Good Life'. Some of you may remember it. It was a comedy about a couple, Tom and Barbara Good, who turned their suburban garden into what amounted to a small holding; producing all their own food so they could live 'the good life'. As you can imagine, it led to all sorts of funny situations with the neighbours and the temptation to 'cheat' and have a treat. In these environmentally conscious days, the idea is not as far fetched as it was!

What is 'the good life'? It seems to me that in the ten commandments, God was guiding the Hebrew people into living 'the good life'. That didn't mean he was going to make them rich and prosperous, neither did it mean that he would all into good and righteous people. What God offered them was a relationship with him: they were his chosen people, the apple of his eye; they were cherished and loved by God – now that is a good life!

The trouble is, God knew that they were human, therefore fallible, sinful and sometimes downright rebellious! So to make the relationship work and for life to be truly good, he gave them a framework which guided the course of the relationship; ten commandments which helped them to know how to treat God, and also how to treat one another

As you read through those familiar words, you might notice that the first four commandments are all about their relationship with God and the other six are about their dealings with one another. I like to think that this is part of the reason why Jesus summed up the law in that couplet from Leviticus: 'You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, mind, soul and strength; and you shall love your neighbour as yourself.' A recipe for the good life, not just a life of goodness, but a life lived in a relationship with the God who first loved us; a life in which we act justly, love mercy and walk humbly with our God.

For you to think about:

- *Which of the ten commandments do you find most helpful, and why?*
- *Which of the ten commandments do you find most difficult, and why?*
- *Can you think of another commandment God might want us to observe today?*

Prayers for others:

God of mercy and love let us serve you in our world

We pray for desert people, who live in a dry, parched land, who lack water, who travel constantly, so that they might live, give them living water. Let the deserts bloom into flower.

We pray that those who work on climate change, may they find solutions so that the erosion of soil may be halted or reversed. We pray that water and other vital supplies might not be used as a weapon of war in countries where resources are scarce. **God of mercy and love let us serve you in our world:**

We pray for countries where justice seems far away, where human rights are ignored. Let us remind those in power that prisoners are not forgotten. We pray that the dignity of life is respected and remember those who have lost that dignity through age or infirmity or neglect. We pray for situations where the sex of a baby may lead to abandonment, where women are not offered the same opportunities, or are actively demeaned or mutilated. May we act to challenge injustice and seek to affirm your love for all humankind.

God of mercy and love let us serve you in our world:

We pray for those who have no peace - for those who are troubled and torn apart by lack of self-esteem for those who torment and victimise the vulnerable. We pray for men and women affected by violence in the home and for those who live by violence. We pray for those who are trafficked and for those who organise and profit from selling other humans. May they learn of your love and somehow come to newness of life even in the midst of despair. **God of mercy and love let us serve you in our world:**

Loving Lord let us not stand aside and tolerate lack of basic human resources, dehumanising practices, or the use of violence to disempower your people. Give us strength to act and challenge hatred, and instead bring your justice and mercy.

In your name we humbly ask that we may be a channel for your peace and love. **Amen.**

The Lord's Prayer

Hymn singing the faith 705: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=VOrYR32pM2w>

It is God who holds the nations
in the hollow of his hand;
it is God whose light is shining
in the darkness of the land;
it is God who builds the City
on the Rock and not on sand:
may the living God be praised!

When a thankful nation, looking back,
has cause to celebrate
those who win our admiration
by their service to the state;
when self-giving is a measure
of the greatness of the great:
may the living God be praised!

It is God whose purpose summons us
to use the present hour;
who recalls us to our senses
when a nation's life turns sour;
in the discipline of freedom
we shall know God's saving power:
may the living God be praised!

God reminds us every sunrise
that the world is ours on lease:
for the sake of life tomorrow
may our love for it increase;
may all races live together,
share its riches, be at peace:
may the living God be praised!

Blessing

As your grace fills our hearts so may we be stirred into action
to demonstrate your love for all the world and for all creatures that live and move on this earth.
And may the blessing of God, Father, Son and Holy Spirit
Be with us always. Amen.