**Morning Praise @ Home 20th March 2022**

**Opening prayer**

Blessed are you, God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, you have blessed us with every spiritual blessing; enable us by your power to be true to our calling and live holy and blameless lives before you all our days, through Jesus Christ our Lord, who is alive and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, for ever and ever. **Amen**

**Confession** Let us admit to God the sin which always confronts us.

**Lord God, we have sinned against you; we have done evil in your sight. We are sorry and**

**repent.** **Have mercy on us according to your love. Wash away our wrongdoing and cleanse us**

**from our sin.** **Renew a right spirit within us** **and restore us to the joy of your salvation,** **through**

**Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen** cf Psalm 51

**Absolution** May the Father of all mercies cleanse us from our sins, and restore us in his image

to the praise and glory of his name, through Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen**

### Bible Readings Isaiah 55: 1 – 9 Luke 13: 1 – 9

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**Reflection from Ruth**

In our reading today, Jesus is hanging out with his fellow Galileans, his home folk, his people. In these neighbourly circumstances, they serve up some self-righteous anger. They tell him “about the Galileans whose blood Pilate had mingled with their sacrifices”
We have no way of knowing whether or not the atrocity story the Galileans told Jesus ever happened. What is clear is that it was an appeal to Jesus’ nationalistic sympathies. He is expected to hear the story and galvanize in heated moral superiority with his countrymen, very much against the outsider Romans, those inhuman forces of evil. However Jesus will not go along. He does not focus on Pilate or the Romans and their cruelty. Instead, he turns attention back on his inquirers, his countrymen. These Galileans that you say so suffered at Pilate’s hand, do you think “they were worse sinners than all other Galileans?”
We live in a day—not so unlike that of the atrocity-rumouring Galileans—when everyone wants to blame everyone else for the ills of the world. Christians blame Muslims and Muslims blame Christians. Fundamentalists blame Hollywood, the ACLU, and homosexuals. Liberals blame fundamentalists, militarists, and pharmaceutical companies. Amid the din, Jesus says, “Hold on. Think about a homely old fig tree. One that has not borne much fruit for a long time. The farm owner says, ‘Cut that damned tree down.’ His head gardener says, ‘First, let me aerate the soil around it and throw some manure on the poor thing. After that give the tree one more year, and if does not produce, chop it to the ground’” (see Luke 13:6–9). So, just when we begin to stir up flattering, heroic images of ourselves in full battle dress, ready to wipe evil off the face of the earth, Jesus knocks us off our moral high horses. He brings us down to earth and back to ourselves, with talk of fertilizer and a scruffy tree. He says, “Ask yourself if you are like that fig tree. Are you bearing fruit or just taking up space?” It is enough to ruin your appetite for self-righteous anger. It is Lent, though, and Lent does mess with the menu.

**Affirmation of faith**

Do you believe and trust in God the Father, source of all being and life, the one for whom we exist?

**We believe and trust in him.**

Do you believe and trust in God the Son, who took our human nature, died for us and rose again?

**We believe and trust in him.**

Do you believe and trust in God the Holy Spirit, who gives life to the people of God and makes Christ

known in the world? **We believe and trust in him. This is the faith of the Church.**

**This is our faith. We believe and trust in one God, Father, Son and Holy Spirit. Amen.**

**Prayers of intercession led by John**

Holy and Gracious God

We pray for the people of Ukraine and the people of Russia; for their countries and their leaders.

We pray for all those who are afraid; that your everlasting arms hold them in this time of great fear.

We pray for all those who have the power over life and death; that they will choose for all people life, and life in all its fullness. We pray for those who choose war; that they will remember that you direct your people to turn our swords into ploughshares and seek for peace.

We pray for leaders on the world stage; that they are inspired by the wisdom and courage of Christ.

Above all, Lord, today we pray for peace for Ukraine. Lord in your mercy. **Hear our prayer**.

Almighty God, help us to thirst for you first and foremost in our lives; and to recognise that your loving-kindness is better than life itself. Bearing this amazing love in mind we raise our hearts and voices to proclaim and sing your praise. Lord in your mercy. **Hear our prayer**.

Faithful God, we pray for the Church, that through its prayers, actions and public statements it may continue to work towards a world where all are free from the pain of hunger and the terror of war.

Help us to be true disciples of Jesus, living the gospel and bringing social change in an unjust world. Give us courage to challenge unfair trade systems and pray for those who have the power to make far-reaching decisions affecting the world’s poor. Lord in your mercy. **Hear our prayer**.

Creator God, we pray for world leaders, that they may be inspired to work together to tackle the causes of poverty, injustice and ignorance that lead to such horrendous violence as seen in Ukraine, and to use their power, not for their own glory but for the good of all, and peace for all, whatever the creed, colour or gender. Lord in your mercy. **Hear our prayer**.

Father God, we pray for ourselves, that we may have the courage to be witnesses to the power of sharing and to the values of global community.

As we eat and drink, help us to pray for those who have laboured to bring the food to our table. Fill our hearts with compassion for our brothers and sisters around the world, so that we acknowledge our common humanity and dignity.

Lord in your mercy. **Hear our prayer**.

Loving God, help us to love more generously and speak up more loudly for those who are treated unjustly.

We pray for people in our own community – those who live on very little, children who are vulnerable and older people who are lonely. We pray for those who are unwell and for those who are of special concern to us at this time. Lord in your mercy. **Hear our prayer**.

Merciful Lord, your son Jesus Christ wept at the grave of Lazarus his friend. Be with us in our mourning as we pray for all who are coming to the end of their journey here on earth and for all those who have died and now rejoice in the fullness of eternal life.

We remember Sue Church, Janet Stephens, Sheila Kennedy and John Smith.

Lord in your mercy. **Hear our prayer**.

As we go out into the world help us to live in the warmth of God’s love, to listen to the cries of hurt, to speak words of compassion and to know that we are surrounded by the eternal God.

Merciful Father: **accept these prayers for the sake of your Son, our Saviour, Jesus Christ. Amen**

**The Lord’s Prayer** As our Saviour taught us, so we pray

***Our Father who art in heaven, Hallowed be thy name, Thy kingdom come,******Thy will be done, on earth as it is in heaven. Give us today our daily bread. And forgive us our trespasses as we forgive those who trespass against us. Lead us not into temptation but deliver us from evil. For thine is the kingdom, the power and the glory forever and ever. Amen***

**Closing prayer**

God give you grace to become the people He has called you to be,

that you may live and work to his praise and glory,

and the blessing of God Almighty, Father, Son and Holy Spirit

be with us and remain with us always. **Amen**

Go in peace to love and serve the Lord. **In the name of Christ. Amen**