**Morning Praise @ Home 20th February 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 Psalm 65 Luke 8:22 – 25

**Reflection from Basil**

Today is the fifth Sunday in a row that Luke’s gospel has been used as our New Testament reading. Up to this point Jesus has shown his power over forces of nature. He has commanded evil spirits to leave people. He has ordered a fever to leave Peter’s mother-in-law. He has cleansed a man of leprosy. He has healed a paralytic man and forgiven him his sins. He has raised a widow’s dead son and has ordered a violent storm to stop. For reasons best known to him, Luke tells this story with an extraordinary economy of words and yet with extraordinary vividness.

These words were used by Jesus to help his disciples to understand the importance of rest and quiet times in all our lives. Jesus here also shows that he has compassion for all our needs. To do so Jesus and his disciples get into a boat to cross to the other side of Galilee. As they sail Jesus falls asleep.

It’s a lovely thing to think of the sleeping Jesus. He was tired as we become tired. He too could reach the point of exhaustion when sleep is the only answer. Jesus trusted his men – they were skilled fishermen of the lake. Jesus was content to leave things to them and to relax. Jesus trusted God and he was as near to God on the sea as he was on the land. Whilst Jesus slept, the storm came down on them.

A traveller reported that “The sun had scarcely set when the wind began to rush towards the lake of Galilee and it continued all night long with increasing violence so that when we reached the shore next morning, the force of the water was like a huge boiling cauldron”.

Some twenty years ago when I was in the centre of the lake of Galilee, the captain of our ferry tried to explain how the lake conditions could change at any time, with a genuine fear in his voice. He explained that one of the reasons that this happens is because the Sea of Galilee is more than 600 feet below sea level. Another was that cold winds from the high mountains that surround the sea are channelled down through ravines, and storms suddenly arise on the lake.

On the day in question it was just such a sudden storm that struck the boat and Jesus and his disciples’ lives were now in real danger. As Jesus continued to sleep, the disciples wakened Jesus and said “Master, Master, we are going to drown!” With a word Jesus calmed the storm.

Everything that Jesus did had more than a temporal significance. I like to believe that the real meaning of this particular incident is that wherever Jesus is, the storm is calmed. Jesus comes, Jesus calms the storms of temptation. Sometimes in life temptation comes with an over mastering force.

The famous railway engineer Robert Stevenson said “You know the Caledonian railway station in Edinburgh? One cold morning I met Satan there. It comes to us all to meet Satan. He continued “If we meet the tempest of temptation alone we will perish, but Jesus brings the calm in which temptations lose their power. Jesus calms the storms of passion”.

Life is doubly difficult for the man or woman with a hot head and a blazing temper. An unknown person said to a friend “I see that you have succeeded in conquering your temper”. “No” replied the friend “I did not conquer it, Jesus conquered it for me.”

Again I am not sure who I should credit with the following words:

“When deep within our swelling hearts the thoughts of pride and anger rise; when bitter words are on our tongues and tears of passion in our eyes; then we may stay the angry blow, then we may check the hasty word, give gentle answer back again and fight a battle for our Lord”.

For us it is a losing battle, unless Jesus gives us the calm of victory. Jesus also calms the storms of sorrow. For sorrow is a penalty of love, and if a man or woman loves they will suffer. After one Church of England bishop’s wife had died back in the early 18th century he said afterwards “It was as if there was a hand beneath my chin to hold me up. On that day, in the presence of Jesus, the tears are wiped away and the wounded heart is soothed.

The disciples up to this point had shown very little faith during the storm so Jesus asks them “Where is your faith?” They should not have been terrified. Like all believers they needed the kind of faith that will see them through perils and difficulties. The kind of faith that calls for “holding on to the word of God”.

**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 Philip**

Father, these past few days we have been reminded how powerful a force nature can be, as storm force winds have battered our coastline, bringing down trees and power lines.

We pray for those affected by the storms. We remember it was your son, Jesus, who stood up in a fishing boat and calmed the storm when the disciples, hardened fishermen, feared they would drown.

With the eyes of the world on the situation on the borders of Ukraine, we have been fearing another storm, one driven by nationalism, by greed and global political posturing. We pray for calm in the Ukraine, that people might be able to live their everyday, normal lives, without fear or threat.

We pray for any storms we might have experienced in our own lives; in relationships, through bereavement, through health issues, through worries about family, through financial worries.

Lord Jesus we ask you to still the storm, in whatever ways it is manifested in our lives. Let us hear your still, small voice of calm.

Lord, we thank you for news we heard last week of the progress in discussions with the Diocese about recruiting a new vicar and also for the support we now have to acquire a new vicarage.

We ask for your continued guidance and lead as we advertise the vacancy and once again we ask that you will touch the heart of the person you intend to fulfil this role. Give us hope, faith and strength as we continue the process, and help Nigel and Jane as they seek to discern your will.

We pray for those we know who are sick. We remember Sue Church and ask that you support and comfort her and John as they deal with her serious illness.

We pray for anyone else we know individually in need of our prayers and support at this time.

Father we ask for your strength and support in all we do in the coming week. Help us to represent your kingdom, here in Burton, in all we do. We ask that you will help us reflect as to how we can best share your love in our community.

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