

11<sup>th</sup> February 2024 - The Sunday Next Before Lent

The late Ian Ramsay, Bishop of Durham tells the lovely story of a man when passing a fish and chip shop, takes in the smell, the busyness of the people waiting in the queue for their supper, and the crackling frying noises, and is momentarily struck by a sense of something/ someone beyond himself and his surroundings. What the Bishop calls 'a disclosure situation'. We might say he had an 'aha' moment or a 'wow' moment. In the mystery of that moment our man catches but a glimpse of 'otherness', the mystery of God.

For it is in the ordinariness of life that God is to be found-yes, even in fish and chip shops!

Mark in his economic account of what we call the Transfiguration of Jesus on the mountain, God discloses himself through the figure of Jesus to the three disciples Peter, James and John. Mark records-'his clothes became dazzling white' (a reflection of divine glory); and 'there appeared to them Elijah and Moses', two significant characters from the Old Testament story maybe representing the law (Moses) and the prophets (Elijah).

Of course, Mark's gospel was written after the resurrection so reflects the view that Jesus is God's son in the sense of a oneness with God.

For the three disciples it is a moment to be savoured, indeed captured in the desire to build three shelters, to somehow capture the experience. I guess if they had had mobile phones they would have clicked away!

The good news for us is that glimpses of the divine are to be found anywhere. God is disclosed where love, truth, beauty, suffering, justice and horror abound. Jean-Pierre de Caussade, a 17<sup>th</sup> century French Jesuit priest counsels, 'We can find all that is necessary in the present moment.'

Can we wholly be present to catch a glimpse of the divine in our midst!

Rev'd John Towler

St Mary's  
Fordingbridge  
SP6 1BB

St Mary's  
Breamore  
SP6 2DF

Holy Ascension  
Hyde  
SP6 2QJ

St Giles  
Godshill  
SP6 2JJ

St Boniface  
Woodgreen  
SP6 2AJ

St Mary's  
Hale  
SP6 2RF

Sandleheath  
Uniting Church  
SP6 1PT

*We welcome all, especially visitors and those attending for the first time. If you need gluten free wafers at Communion, please speak to someone at the door before the service.*

***Please take this newsletter home with you for the week ahead. God Bless!***

# Readings for this Week: 11<sup>th</sup> February 2024

## The Sunday Next Before Lent

### **COLLECT:**

Holy God,  
you know the disorder of our sinful lives:  
set straight our crooked hearts,  
and bend our wills to love your goodness  
and your glory  
in Jesus Christ our Lord.

**AMEN.**

### **PSALM 50:1-6**

1. The Lord, the most mighty God, has spoken  
and called the world from the rising of the sun to its setting.
2. Out of Zion, perfect in beauty, God shines forth;  
our God comes and will not keep silence.
3. Consuming fire goes out before him  
and a mighty tempest stirs about him.
4. He calls the heaven above,  
and the earth, that he may judge his people:
5. 'Gather to me my faithful,  
who have sealed my covenant with sacrifice.'
6. Let the heavens declare his righteousness,  
for God himself is judge.

### **A Reading from the Second Letter of Paul to the Corinthians**

*II Corinthians 4:3-6*

*Those who are open to God are enabled to receive the good news of his glory  
embodied in Jesus.*

<sup>3</sup> Even if our gospel is veiled, it is veiled to those who are perishing. <sup>4</sup> In their case the god of this world has blinded the minds of the unbelievers, to keep them from seeing the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ, who is the image of God. <sup>5</sup> For we do not proclaim ourselves; we proclaim Jesus Christ as Lord and ourselves as your

slaves for Jesus' sake. <sup>6</sup> For it is the God who said, 'Let light shine out of darkness,' who has shone in our hearts to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ.

*At the end, the Reader says:*

This is the word of the Lord.

**Thanks be to God**

## **THE GOSPEL READING**

*Please stand and turn to face the Gospel Reader*

*When the Gospel is announced, the Reader says:*

Hear the Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ according to Mark

**Glory to you, O Lord.**

**(Glory be to thee, O Lord.)**

*Mark 9:2-9*

*Jesus is transfigured, and Peter, James and John see him in his full glory.*

<sup>2</sup> Jesus took with him Peter and James and John, and led them up a high mountain apart, by themselves. And he was transfigured before them, <sup>3</sup> and his clothes became dazzling white, such as no one on earth could bleach them. <sup>4</sup> And there appeared to them Elijah with Moses, who were talking with Jesus. <sup>5</sup> Then Peter said to Jesus, 'Rabbi, it is good for us to be here; let us make three dwellings, one for you, one for Moses, and one for Elijah.' <sup>6</sup> He did not know what to say, for they were terrified. <sup>7</sup> Then a cloud overshadowed them, and from the cloud there came a voice, 'This is my Son, the Beloved; listen to him!' <sup>8</sup> Suddenly when they looked around, they saw no one with them any more, but only Jesus. <sup>9</sup> As they were coming down the mountain, he ordered them to tell no one about what they had seen, until after the Son of Man had risen from the dead.

c) *New Revised Standard Version of the Holy Bible*

*At the end, the Reader says:*

This is the Gospel of the Lord.

**Praise to you, O Christ.**

*(At the end, the Reader says:*

This is the Gospel of the Lord.

**Praise be to thee, O Christ.)**

## **POST COMMUNION PRAYER:**

Holy God,

we see your glory in the face of Jesus Christ:

may we who are partakers at his table

reflect his life in word and deed,

that all the world may know his power to change and save.

This we ask through Jesus Christ our Lord.

**AMEN.**

Come along to the Church Hall next **Monday 12 February** from 2.30pm and join **Fordingbridge History Society** to discover the **story of the controversial Fort Nelson and the Palmerston Forts**. They were built to protect Great Britain's major naval harbours and dockyards from offshore attack, and those guarding Portsmouth were the first to be completed. Lewis Sharp (Secretary of the Palmerston Forts Society) will focus on Fort Nelson and reveal how the nickname 'Palmerston's Follies' came about. For further details contact Helen Coote on 01425 654995 or check out the FHS website at [www.fordingbridgehistorysociety.org.uk](http://www.fordingbridgehistorysociety.org.uk)

**Hyde Mothers' Union** next meeting is on **February 13<sup>th</sup> at 2.30pm** in Hyde Centre. We are so pleased to welcome as our speaker, Alex Sains whose title is "Next steps .... A surprising road to retirement" Come and join us for what will be an inspirational afternoon.

**Pancake Party at Woodgreen Village Hall**- On Shrove Tuesday, **13<sup>th</sup> February**, the church family of Hale & Woodgreen will be having a fantastic Pancake Party from **3pm-4.30pm!** All welcome, pancakes £1, Hot drinks £1, donations towards Hale Church Roof- whatever you like! Come and enjoy the flipping fun....

**Ash Wednesday, 14<sup>th</sup> February, 2024.** There will be two services at St. Mary's Church, Fordingbridge- at 10.00am Holy Communion with Ashing and 7.30 Sung Eucharist with Ashing. There will also be a service at 11.00am in St. Boniface Church, Woodgreen.

**Avon Valley Community Matters Families Together** - There is **no Superstars** on **February 16<sup>th</sup>** as it is half term but we are looking forward to retelling the story of Stone Soup when we **start back on February 23<sup>rd</sup>**. Superstars is our playgroup for 0-4 year olds on a Friday morning from 9.30am - 11.30am. You can find us on Facebook. The **Families Together Half Term event** is nearly fully booked however we are still looking for a couple more volunteers to help with activities. If you are able to spare an hour or two please contact Claire at [familybefriender@yahoo.com](mailto:familybefriender@yahoo.com) for more information.

**Big Model Train Event 2024!** The Friends of Fordingbridge Parish Church announce the arrival of Neil's Big Trains at St Mary's Church Hall at **10am on Saturday 17<sup>th</sup> February, departing at 4pm, returning at 10am on Sunday 18<sup>th</sup> February and leaving at 4pm** - this weekend is at the end of our local half term. Admission £5 adults, £1 children 5-16, Family ticket £8. Refreshments available, for which offers of help with baking and serving are welcome so please sign up on the lists at St Mary's, FB. Don't miss these amazing trains!

**Sandleheath United Church** are holding weekly prayer meetings **every Monday during Lent**. They will start at **10.15 am until 11.30 am**. This will be a time to explore prayer and quiet reflection. You are welcome to join us. For further information please phone Sue Ledger on 01725 517389.

**Care Home Visits** – This year we are resuming our monthly visits to Fordingbridge Care Home and Allenbrook, (both on Station Road in Fordingbridge), on the third Monday of each month, to provide a short service for the residents and staff. Our February visit will be on **Monday 19<sup>th</sup> February – 11am** at Fordingbridge Care Home and 2.30pm at Allenbrook, when we will be thinking about Lent. The short service lasts less than 30 minutes, and generally comprises three hymns, a reading, a short refectioin and prayers. If you would like to join us, especially to help with the singing of three hymns, please meet in the reception at Fordingbridge Care Home at 10.50am and/or at Allenbrook at 2.20pm. It will be a wonderful opportunity to join in worship with the residents and staff at both places. Mary Melbourne (LLM & Anna Chaplain)

**MU/ MICHAELMAS** - our next meeting is on **Tuesday 20<sup>th</sup> February** in St Mary's Church Hall, Fordingbridge at 7.30pm. Helen Inglis will be telling us about Alabare Care in Salisbury so promises to be an interesting evening. Everyone is welcome and if you need a lift just contact Helen Tague on 01425 655462 or Viv Finch on 01725 512267. We look forward to seeing you!

**2024 Lent Course Programme** :This Lent our small groups in the Parish are all looking at Lent Courses looking at Prayer.

There will be several options and everyone is welcome to join whether or not they are a regular part of a particular small group.

These will be :

- Tuesday evenings :“How to hear God” – Frogham, contact Heather Clark or Jan Butcher
- Wednesday mornings :“Prayers of the Bible” – Mockbeggar, contact Sheilah Collis
- Wednesday evenings :“How to hear God” – Fordingbridge, contact Alex Sains or Julian Sims
- Friday mornings :“Prayers of the Bible” – Ringwood, contact Canon Michael Anderson

As we enter a new phase in our Parish with Rev Luke's arrival this month, Lent seems an opportunity to learn to listen to God and think about how we pray for the future of our Parish, the church communities within it and our wider community.

I hope you will be able to join one of the above. Julian Sims (07887 637047)

**Sign up for the service to welcome Rev Luke Wickings – Wednesday 28<sup>th</sup> February 2024 at 7.30pm, St Mary's Fordingbridge** It will help us to plan for this service if local people can indicate whether you and your families intend to come to the service (we realise you might have to change plans but having an idea will be very helpful). For this there will be a sign-up sheet in your church from **Sunday 28<sup>th</sup> January** and we need to know by **Sunday 11<sup>th</sup> February**. If you intend to attend but cannot get to a church during that period please email [mark@fordingbridge.com](mailto:mark@fordingbridge.com) with this information: Number in your group as congregation, number in your group as choir, and how many are any of Gluten Free, Dairy Free, Vegetarian or Vegan, again by **11<sup>th</sup> February**.

The **February coffee morning** will be a Big Brew fundraiser for Transform Trade, a Fairtrade charity. Do join us on **Friday 23<sup>rd</sup> February** 10.30am-12 noon for cakes, a guessing game and a quiz, as well as our usual great coffee, raffle and good company. Then you could retire to the Village Hall for lunch - delicious home made soup and a roll, served every Friday 11.30-2.30 at CAMEO.

The church family of Hale and Woodgreen.

**Refreshments for the Induction Service on February 28th.** Contributions of tray baked cakes are needed. Forms will be available at all our churches for anyone willing to help, to give details of what they can provide so that we can assess how much we can rely upon. Please deliver your contribution to Fordingbridge church on the morning of the service. Janet Newman will be there to receive them. The cakes will be cut up into pieces which can be easily packed into covered trays and brought out at the appropriate time to be served. It is important to provide a list of ingredients used that could cause any problems with allergies. We would also appreciate help on the day to man the service points, please let either Janet or me know or add your name to the cake list and indicate that you will help serve. Thanks for your help, Nigel Spratt

**Warden Vacancy-** I have completed five years as churchwarden and I will be stepping down from the post at the APCM in May. It has been challenging and interesting with much more happening than I expected when I took it on, only expecting to do the job for two years to fill in until someone else volunteered. I really wanted to help Ian to ensure that the hugely generous legacy that Roy Lillington left to our church was spent wisely on the building that I and several generations of my family have loved and attended. I hope I have managed to contribute towards achieving that. It has been a privilege but it is time for me to pass on the responsibility, and have time to enjoy my retirement. I will continue to work to help and support Mark until a replacement is found and I am considering whether to offer to continue as PCC Secretary which I have been doing on a temporary basis. Nigel Spratt

**Thank you** to everyone from the AVC and beyond, who supported me at my **Commissioning as an Anna Chaplain** at St. Mary's Church Breamore last week, and for the lovely cards and presents that I received. It was a wonderful service and I was so pleased that Gary was able to be with us to perform the Commissioning. I hope that in the coming months we will be able to strengthen and develop the Pastoral Care Team and that others may become interested in training as Anna Chaplains or Anna Friends. Mary Melbourne (LLM & Anna Chaplain)

**Thank you** so much to the gallant band of folk who came to help to **clean** on Saturday and also to the person who paid for the windows to be cleaned. We had at least one person from each Church area which was fantastic. **Thank you** also to everyone who contributed to the **welcome hamper**. My personal thanks go to everyone who has done something there this year – gardening, arboriculture, mowing, hedging and then cleaning. Mark Ward.

**Fundraising for St Mary's Fordingbridge – pledge-** In the autumn we spoke to those who attend St Mary's Fordingbridge of our real need to raise funds to increase our income. One suggestion was for you to invite a group of friends to a small event at home which could be a coffee morning, lunch, afternoon tea, etc and ask for a small donation for church funds. To help us to gauge support for this we shall be very grateful if you will complete the pledge form and drop it into the box in church. Of course if you wish to do something else that's absolutely fine but we do need your help!

Queries and questions to: Mark Ward - mark@fordingbridge.com or 01425 656120

**Do you know children, young people or an adult, who have recently been bereaved?** We have been given some beautiful books produced by Winston's Wish, which belonged to Rev Kate Wilson: Three books are especially for children or young people who have been bereaved. A Leaflet called "Living with Loss", gives helpful Bible verses, perhaps more suitable for adults. One copy of each is in St Mary's FB. Please borrow if they may be helpful (from the Book Rack).

Further copies of these books are available in St Giles Hermitage, Godshill. One can usually park just beyond St Giles on the left, going up the hill.

**ITEMS FOR PARTNERS** need to be sent to the Church Office (e-mail address below) by 5.00p.m. on **Tuesdays** Please put 'Partners' in the e-mail subject line. Thank you, Zoe

## Reflection

Ash Wednesday is fast approaching and Lent is a time when many of us chose to give up something or more often take up something.

So, with the latter in mind am wondering if you might consider challenging your Churchmanship by doing something that might place you slightly outside your comfort zone?

Some examples that spring to mind include attending a different service in your own Church; attending one of the other Churches in the Benefice or maybe helping out with something in the Community such as "Open the Book" which delivers Bible stories to our local schools.

I'm sure lots of other things will spring to mind as this is a very personal matter, but to kick things off, my choice is unhesitatingly to attend an 8.15am, which would be a triple challenge if it's outside Fordingbridge!

Sarah Perr

**CHURCH OFFICE IS OPEN TO VISITORS** between 10.00 am and 12.00  
Contact via Email : Office@AvonValleyChurches.org.uk or call 01425 653163 between 10.00 am and 12.00 or  
leave a message Website : www.AvonValleyChurches.org.uk

# The Sunday next before Lent

11<sup>th</sup> February 2024

Online services available via Facebook or Website  
at 'Avon Valley Churches'

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|-------------------------------|-----------------|---------------------------|---|
| <b>Sunday</b>                 | <b>8.15 am</b>  | <b>Hyde</b>               | <b>Holy Communion (BCP)</b>   |
| <b>11<sup>th</sup> Feb</b>    | <b>10.00 am</b> | <b>Breamore</b>           | <b>Holy Communion (BCP)</b>   |
|                               | <b>10.00 am</b> | <b>Fordingbridge</b>      | <b>Sung Eucharist</b>   |
|                               | <b>10.00 am</b> | <b>Hyde</b>               | <b>All Age Service</b>  |
|                               | <b>10.00 am</b> | <b>Woodgreen</b>          | <b>Morning Service</b>  |
|                               | <b>10.45 am</b> | <b>Sandleheath</b>        | <b>Morning Service</b>  |
|                               | <b>6.00 pm</b>  | <b>Fordingbridge</b>      | <b>Evensong</b>   |
| Monday<br>Wednesday<br>Friday | 10.00 am        | Online                    | Morning prayer ( <i>Meeting ID:<br/>846 5168 7529, Password:<br/>764200</i> ) |
| Tues 13 <sup>th</sup>         | 3.00 pm         | Woodgreen Village<br>Hall | Pancake Party   |
| Wed 14 <sup>th</sup>          | 10.00 am        | Fordingbridge             | Holy Communion with Ashing  |
|                               | 11.00 am        | Woodgreen                 | Ashing Service  |
|                               | 7.30 pm         | Fordingbridge             | Sung Eucharist with Ashing  |
| <b>Sunday</b>                 | <b>8.15 am</b>  | <b>Fordingbridge</b>      | <b>Holy Communion (BCP)</b>   |
| <b>18<sup>th</sup> Feb</b>    | <b>10.00 am</b> | <b>Breamore</b>           | <b>Matins (BCP)</b>   |
|                               | <b>10.00 am</b> | <b>Fordingbridge</b>      | <b>Morning Service</b>  |
|                               | <b>10.00 am</b> | <b>Hale</b>               | <b>Morning Service</b>  |
|                               | <b>10.00 am</b> | <b>Hyde</b>               | <b>All Age Service</b>  |
|                               | <b>10.45 am</b> | <b>Sandleheath</b>        | <b>Morning Service</b>  |