

**Morning Worship Service**  
**Sunday 7th February 2021**  
**2<sup>nd</sup> before Lent**

**Introduction**

We have come to the city of the living God,  
to the heavenly Jerusalem,  
with thousands of angels in joyful assembly.

**Alleluia**

We have come to God the judge of all,  
to Jesus the mediator of the new covenant.

**Alleluia**

**SONG**

Together we pray:

Lord, direct our thoughts,  
teach us to pray,  
lift up our hearts to worship you  
in Spirit and in truth,  
through Jesus Christ. Amen.

**Confession**

The grace of God has dawned upon the world with healing for all.  
Though we have grieved him, yet he will heal us if we confess our sins in penitence  
and faith.

Together we confess our sins to Almighty God:

God our Father, we come to you in sorrow for our sins:  
For turning away from you and ignoring your will for our lives:  
For behaving just as we wish, without thinking of you:  
For failing you by what we do, think and say:  
For letting ourselves be drawn away from you by temptations in the world around us:  
For living as if we were ashamed to belong to your Son:  
Father, forgive us, save us and help us. Amen.

**Absolution**

May God who is both power and love,  
Forgive us and free us from our sins,  
Heal and strengthen us by his Spirit,  
And raise us to new life in Christ our Lord. Amen.

**Collect**

## **Reading**

### **Col 1: 15-20**

The Son is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn over all creation. For in him all things were created: things in heaven and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or powers or rulers or authorities; all things have been created through him and for him. He is before all things, and in him all things hold together. And he is the head of the body, the church; he is the beginning and the firstborn from among the dead, so that in everything he might have the supremacy. For God was pleased to have all his fullness dwell in him, and through him to reconcile to himself all things, whether things on earth or things in heaven, by making peace through his blood, shed on the cross.

### **John 1: 1-14**

In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was with God in the beginning. Through him all things were made; without him nothing was made that has been made. In him was life, and that life was the light of all mankind. The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness has not overcome it.

There was a man sent from God whose name was John. He came as a witness to testify concerning that light, so that through him all might believe. He himself was not the light; he came only as a witness to the light.

The true light that gives light to everyone was coming into the world. He was in the world, and though the world was made through him, the world did not recognize him. He came to that which was his own, but his own did not receive him. Yet to all who did receive him, to those who believed in his name, he gave the right to become children of God - children born not of natural descent, nor of human decision or a husband's will, but born of God.

The Word became flesh and made his dwelling among us. We have seen his glory, the glory of the one and only Son, who came from the Father, full of grace and truth.

## **Sermon**

### **2 before Lent (2021)**

#### **The Supremacy of Christ**

It's interesting how some words and phrases, which used to be commonplace and spoken frequently, although often without thought, have now become offensive – and in most cases rightly so I believe.

I'm not going to offer any examples because I'm sure that you can all think of some, particularly if you're like me and, as my John would say, getting on a bit!

When St John, in the opening chapter of his gospel, refers to Jesus as 'The Word', many people at the time would have been very offended.

In Hebrew Scripture 'the Word' was an agent of creation, the source of God's message to his people through the prophets, God's law, his standard of holiness, another expression of God. So, referring to Jesus as 'the Word' and then saying he was God would have been blasphemous!

In Greek philosophy 'the Word' was the principle of reason that governed the world, or the thought still in the mind. So, to say that 'the Word (Jesus) became flesh' was absolutely unthinkable!

For St John, this new understanding of 'the Word' was gospel to him, the Good news of Jesus Christ. He had no doubts that Jesus, the human being he knew and loved, was also the Creator of the universe, the ultimate revelation of God, the living picture of God's holiness, the One in whom 'all things hold together': which is a phrase Paul uses in our Colossians reading for today.

For Christians, down through the ages, the fact of Jesus being 'the Word', with all that that implies, is neither blasphemous nor unthinkable: as it was for St John, so it is for us – the truth!

Now if someone witnesses a crime, one of the questions that the police will probably ask is: What does he/she look like? From the answer they will try to draw a likeness of the perpetrator so that hopefully he/she will be caught.

Do we know what God looks like? Can we describe who he is to others, let alone ourselves? Do we know what Jesus being 'the Word' means?

The reading in Colossians really does give us some insight into the nature, the very supremacy, of God – who he is!

So, what do these 6 verses reveal to us? Well, straight away we're told that Jesus is the image of God. When we look at our image in a mirror, we don't see someone else – we see ourselves.

When we look at Jesus we are 'seeing' God in the flesh. Of course the best place to 'look' at Jesus is in the Gospels, because it's there that we find out who he is as a person – how he thinks, how he reacts to situations, how he deals with people, how he lives his life.

These verses make clear that Jesus is the **exact** reflection of the invisible God.

Jesus is God.

Jesus is equal to God.

Jesus is the perfectly accurate representation of God.

Jesus is the fullness of God – he has always been God and always will be God....so when we have Jesus, we have **all** of God in human form.

Then we're told that Jesus is the firstborn over everything, all creation, including the spirit world; and, as such, he has all the priority and authority of the firstborn prince in a king's household.

Jesus is eternal, has always existed, and is omnipotent. All rulers, powers, thrones, and authorities of both the spiritual and physical worlds were created by, and are under the authority, of Christ himself.

Jesus has no equal and no rival. He is Lord of all.

However, not only did God, and therefore Jesus, create the world, but he also sustains it. He is the one who holds everything together and prevents it from disintegrating into complete chaos.

And because he is the Sustainer of all life, none of us is independent of him.....even though many live their whole lives as if they were.

Sadly, when we all gather at Judgement Day, they will find that their thinking has been totally misguided.

In these verses we're also told that Jesus is the 'firstborn from among the dead'.

His death on the cross, and subsequent resurrection from the dead, exalted and elevated him to the status that has always been rightfully his – spiritual supremacy over all the enormity of the universe.

But more than that, his resurrection from the dead demonstrates his lordship over the material world.....which is brilliant news for all of us who believe in Jesus because we will also defeat death and live eternally with him.

And, finally, these verses tell us that, uniquely, Jesus' death provided a way for all people to come to God. It cleared away the sin that keeps us from having a relationship with our Creator: although it's important to remember that this doesn't mean that everyone has been saved regardless of what they believe.

On the contrary, it means that the way has been cleared for anyone who trusts Christ to be saved. That's why it's imperative that we tell others about Jesus – their eternal future is at stake!!

This truth about Jesus is truly incredible.

NO other religion has a God who looks like this:

- a God who chose to be born into our material world to identify with us
- a God who precedes everything else
- a God who sustains the order of the universe
- a God who died an horrific death, accepting the punishment for the sins of everyone who ever lived
- a God who defeated death by rising to new life
- a God who wants us first and foremost to have a relationship with him
- a God who will transform us from one degree of glory to another if we let him
- a God who wants to spend eternity with us

- a God who enables that to happen through his Grace and not through our 'good works'

This is our God! Do you recognise him?

That's an important question because other people need to recognise this God through our words and our actions.

Some people will be attracted to the glimpse of God they see in us and will want to see more.

Others will hate it and steer clear of us.

Jesus is 'the Word' and 'the Word' is with God, and 'the Word' is God.

We need to make it clear to anyone who will listen that we don't follow a religion with a set of rules: instead we have a relationship, through faith, with a God who is different to any other – Lord of all lords, King of all kings, God above all gods – Supreme above all things.

### **Creed**

**We believe and trust in God the Father,  
who made all things.**

**We believe and trust in his Son Jesus Christ,  
who redeemed the world.**

**We believe and trust in his Holy Spirit,  
who gives life to the people of God.**

**This is the faith of the Church.**

**This is our faith.**

**We believe and trust in one God,  
Father, Son and Holy Spirit. Amen.**

### **Intercessions**

#### **Intercessions for 2 before Lent (2021)**

God of wisdom, you proceeded forth at creation bringing life to birth. Breathe that same power into your worldwide Church today. Stop us from becoming too casual about who you are. We thank you that you are our friend, but you are so much more than that. Impact upon us more fully how magnificent and glorious you really are so that we honour and reverence you as we truly should; for you are worthy. Lift up all those who follow you who have lost their vision of you. We ask you to give them a glimpse of your splendour to revive them and encourage them to walk more closely with you.

God of wisdom, you delight in humanity and you have set the world in a universe of order and intricate balance. Guide all of us to be actively engaged in maintaining that balance in these times of careless use of the world's resources. Particularly guide all

those in government to set laws in place which support responsible environmental activity; and give them the means to enforce these laws when people abuse the earth you so lovingly placed in our care. Equip them to share your generous blessing in justice and peace for the good of all.

God of wisdom, we pray for all who are continuing to work in our community during this time of pandemic: the school, the Action Centre, the shops, the council workers who keep our environment tidy, the doctors, the taxi and bus drivers, and those who perform daily acts of kindness to help others in need. We ask you to keep them healthy and well, to keep them positive in these difficult times, and watch over them and protect them as they go about their daily work on behalf of others. Give us opportunities to speak words of encouragement to them and to show our appreciation for all they do.

God of wisdom, your fullness chose to dwell among us. Give strength we pray to all who are weak, whose faculties are failing, who are weighed down with suffering whether in body, mind, or spirit. We bring them to your throne of grace now.....You know each one named intimately and so we ask you to minister to them as only you know how. Reveal your presence to them and pour your healing Grace into the areas of their being which need it most.

Let us continue in prayer saying together the words our Saviour taught us:

Our Father in heaven,  
hallowed be your name,  
your kingdom come,  
your will be done,  
on earth as in heaven.  
Give us today our daily bread.  
Forgive us our sins  
as we forgive those who sin against us.  
Lead us not into temptation  
but deliver us from evil.  
For the kingdom, the power,  
and the glory are yours  
now and for ever. Amen.

**SONG**

**Blessing**

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