

Welcome & Notices

Good morning and a very warm welcome to our service today, whether you are here in person or online, or indeed a visitor, we hope you will feel at home with us.

Our service this morning is being led by our minister Michael Docker, and we thank him for leading our worship, and look forward to sharing this time together.

As usual, Tuesday coffee shop will be taking place this week, from 10am until 12 noon here in the sanctuary. Do come along and enjoy this time of refreshments and conversation.

On Wednesday night at time@tyndale, Michael Docker will be leading us in his last time@tyndale before he retires on Easter Sunday. The evening has been titled, 'Michael's swan song, a brief autobiography with poems', Refreshments are served from 7.30pm, with Michael's part commencing at 8pm. Do come along if possible, as we come together and share an evening with Michael.

On Thursday we have our online coffee shop, which starts at 11am. The details of how to join this time of informal chat are on our website.

A notice for all our church members in advance of next month's Church meeting on 19th April. The meeting will include the Deacons election, with Michael Whitfield, Dorette Morgan, Margaret Clements and Rachel Molyneux eligible for re-election. Michael Whitfield has indicated to us though that he feels it is the right time to stand down from being a Deacon. We therefore have 3 Deacons who are eligible for re-election, and 1 spare place as well. Bruce and I have the nominations forms available. If you would like to nominate a member to become a deacon, please get the completed form back to Bruce or myself by the end of today.

Next Saturday, the 9th April, we are going to have a gardening session around the premises of the church, clearing the weeds and generally giving it a tidy up after the winter months. If you are able to come along and help with the gardening, please meet us at the church on Saturday at 9am for a couple of hours. Whether you are a keen gardener or not, you are more than welcome and any help would be much appreciated. Thank you.

Welcome to Tyndale this morning, whether you're in church or on-line, as together we offer worship to God. As the season of Lent continues we come to the 'beginning of the end' or perhaps it's the 'end of the beginning' – Passion Sunday; the atmosphere grows darker; the suffering and death of Jesus come into view (albeit yet some way off) yet in the distance, Easter beckons.

That's the gospel in a nutshell – Good Friday and Easter Day together – we journey on through Lent in this difficult time in the world with hope in our hearts – suffering and death all around, but Easter joy ahead; an end to suffering & death is achieved, the beginning of eternal life is promised..thanks be to God – we worship him in Jesus' name

'Christ in the stranger's guise' (Mike Garnier)

Call to Worship

All are welcome here – friends of or strangers to God and His love. Here that love will be proclaimed and here also God's call will be heard – come, worship, meet with Christ, hear of the things of His Kingdom and see, in bread & wine, God's love made real in the things of earth – and look to the transformation of such things into the things of heaven.

BPW433 'Father it is right and fitting'

Opening prayer

Lord God things come together today as we gather to worship you. On this day we praise you for the glorious truth that Jesus Christ is Saviour of the World; on this day we prepare ourselves for what yet lies ahead; on this day we feel the weight of history on our shoulders as we prepare to follow Jesus through the rest of Lent as he carries the weight of the world on his shoulders -

a world of pain and suffering, of difficult questions and bewildering, agonising truths – oh, of much joy also – but for this time, a world of pain,

lifted and held and transformed and filled with hope because of what you have done for us and are doing for us and will do for us and all who trust in the strong name of Christ Jesus – so for all we have received, for this day, and for all that lies ahead, we thank you, we seek your help and strength, we praise you and we worship your holy name.

Lord's prayer

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 forever. Amen

'How deep the Father's love'

Stuart Townend

Readings [Isaiah 43.16-21](#) [John 12.1-8](#)

Sermon

Lord, we give you this time. May what is spoken ring with truth, may what is heard and understood be touched by your Spirit, and may what is decided lead us on toward your kingdom; for Christ's sake, Amen.

So here we are, in Lent – Passion Sunday. The beginning of the end-game. All the gospels, in their different ways, include incidents from the last stages of Jesus' journey to the cross –

dark parables, opposition, farewell speeches; next week, Triumphal Entry, Temple Cleansing, Last Supper, Gethsemane, Golgotha itself, Easter Day; it'll all be over - hooray!

First, *anointing*. All the gospels include an anointing story; they're all different; Mtt & Mk - Simon the leper's house; Lk: a Pharisee's house; Jn: Martha & Mary's & Lazarus is there -

Differences in different gospels but they all have things in common – indignation at waste; a woman giving all she has, 'always having the poor with you' – great devotion, great passion-

one more thing: the anointing was a *sign of death*. Whether Jesus' head (Mtt & Mk) or feet (Lk & Jn); hair, tears or costly perfume; indignation at waste, or prejudice against a woman

Or Judas Iscariot acting cautious & responsible before sneaking off for his famous betrayal; the anointing was a sign – a gesture, if you like...

So at this point, as the end-game of the Jesus story begins, something usually reserved for embalming was used to anoint: a gesture of solidarity with the suffering & death of Jesus

What we have, I think, is that somewhere in all this, the ordinary, everyday, lowly, marginal, outside-the-mainstream people of Israel saw what was going down..

Saw that this Jesus who had come from them & was going to Jerusalem was going to suffer & die - like *they* were going to suffer & die - & the gospel writers told a story of his *anointing*

What was it all about? Passion & devotion; not *words* but *actions*..the best the world could provide in the face of death was poured out on One who would soon die...a death for all..

I've got to *do* something...Haven't you felt like that sometimes? In Ukraine...there are no words for the misery, terror, destruction and death..there are no words

When a loved one dies...there are no words.....

When you or someone you know faces suffering and pain...there are no words...

Words are all we have, though, right? We've said it often enough in here. I'm more of a word-person than an action-person...more of a poet (not a very good one!!) than an activist.

I'm not likely to drive a truck to the Ukraine border or organise or help to sort through supplies in a warehouse; not likely to go on a fund-raising jog or swim or climb a mountain..

Oh, I *am* practical; shelves in the Chaplaincy in Leicester; wooden planters at the Chaplaincy here; greenery in my car for a huge Christmas display in the old Baptist College;

dug the car of a friend out of the snow, drove it up a steep, slippery road..got it running properly again by cleaning and drying the spark plugs and leads..

I've mended light switches, shower tiles & fixed broken cupboard doors, replaced taps in Tyndale's manse (and saved the Treasurer a fortune, I shouldn't wonder!)

But when it comes to life-&-death; to the gospel-in-today's-world; for me – it can't all be about raising money, or giving to a charity; it's more about wrestling with a sermon, or writing a prayer, or making *some* kind of gesture, however meaningless it seems..

I like that phrase you know? W.H. Auden - 'poetry makes nothing happen'. It's true isn't it? Poems, Sermons, Hymns, Words of all kinds – make nothing happen.

Not much changes when we speak.. I've long had the idea that finding a way for the gospel in today's world was largely about using words, trying to say what, really, is beyond words...

It's what we do in here week by week, isn't it? We try to say something...try to turn our beliefs, our hearts' longings, into words that fly and rise and reach -

Because there's not much else, is there? Oh, yes, poverty (but what did Jesus say? *You will always have the poor with you*)...repeated institutional failures – the Post Office; Shrewsbury Maternity Hospital; Grenfell Tower – what do they say, 'lessons must be learned..'??!!!

& there's..Mariupol...before that Aleppo....before that Grozny....before that Tripoli & before that Baghdad & before that New York & before that Sarajevo.....& before that Berlin & Stalingrad...& Auschwitz – & what did they say? 'Never again..'

& *always* the bombs rain down & the corruption piles up & the despair gets deeper & everywhere there is the sad nightmare of *action*..

Do you want to *do* something...when you see Ukraine, or somewhere? Do you want to collect something, or give some money or bang some heads together – do you wish it was 'Will Smith simple', a matter of slapping your

opponent in front of the world's press? Can't you just feel the urge? *Do something....why don't you just do something....?*

Like, perhaps,..an anointing; what looks like a futile, wasteful gesture; tears, oil, *devotion*.

That's how I see the anointing in the gospels.

Mary, or a 'sinful woman' or some such comes pouring her heart out – she feels the need to do something but what she does *makes nothing happen* – except she manages to upset all the bean-counters and schemers and plotters

That's what I think the church is, really, at its heart – praise God for groups like CAP (we heard about their work with churches to help the debt-laden on Wednesday); praise God for nightshelters, food banks & coffee shops & all the rest: praise God for all that is *done* to show God's love..

But at heart – in here, week by week – *nothing happens* – words, music, a few gestures, *ministry....bread and wine* (we'll break it and pour it out in a minute and it will be quite beyond words what we *do*)

It's much like an anointing, like a futile gesture – putting the Jesus who will die at the centre;

knowing we can't *do* anything to make anyone follow him or believe in him or worship God through him –

Except – devotion, maybe tears...holding him up for all to see – daring the world to look on Christ, where death & new life are rolled into one (even if some people are upset by our actions) – & there's great mystery..& there's great pain..& there's great joy here – beyond words - there are no words....

Yet..Isaiah:

I will make a way in the wilderness & rivers in the desert...for I give water in the wilderness, rivers in the desert, to give drink to my chosen people, the people whom I formed for myself so that they might declare my praise

.See? Nothing happens, but if we are called, if we will follow, if we will believe... You always have the poor with you, - and you must help them all you can - but you do not always have me, says Jesus –

So we must *love him* and show our devotion to him and praise God through him...& pray, & do what's right...*while we can....(table)*

Offering Prayer

Lord, we come to you once more. We do not have many words to use and what we do here may seem to be no more than a gesture – indeed a waste in such a world as this. Yet, we believe that as we give of ourselves in these and all our gifts and this bread and wine, what we do with the things of earth may yet see them transformed by your Spirit into the very things of heaven.

The Grace

The grace of our lord Jesus Christ, the love of God and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with us all, amen

'Behold the lamb' – please sing along

Townend, Getty and Getty

Communion

The table of the Lord is spread, it is for those who will come and see in broken bread and poured out wine – not merely symbols, but the very substance of his life shed for us on the Cross and raised again the third day. The risen Christ is present among his people and it is here that we meet him. It is for those who know him a little and long to know him more - the invitation is for all those who are seeking him and who are weary of their sin and doubt to come and share the feast.

Confession

How shall I repay the lord for all his benefits to me? I will take the cup of salvation and call on the name of the Lord. O Lord our God, by grace alone we come, and seek your face, and make our confession.

In a world grown grey with the weariness of war, we confess our complicity; enjoying some kind of peace while others struggle to survive.

In a Christian faith too often seduced by talk of its own righteousness, we confess our complacency; too quickly condemning the wrongs of others

In lives easily led by the loudest voices of exclusion;, we confess our confusion; thinking those worth loving are the ones who are like us.

Father forgive us and bring us through this act to the very footstool of grace once again, so that we may gaze on the true cost and glory of the gospel (pause) in the lamb who was slain who is alive for evermore.

Institution

For I received from the Lord what I also passed on to you; the Lord Jesus on the night he was betrayed took bread, and when he had given thanks he broke it and said, take, eat, this is my body which is for you, do this in remembrance of me. IN the same way after supper he took the cup saying this cup is the new covenant in my blood; do this whenever you drink it in memory of me – for whenever you eat this bread and drink this cup you proclaim the Lord's death until he comes.

Thanksgiving

Lift up your hearts,

we lift them to the Lord.

Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.

It is right to give him thanks and praise.

It is not only right, it is our duty and joy at all times and in all places to give you thanks, Holy Father, almighty and eternal God, through Jesus Christ, your only Son, our Lord..

Therefore with angels and archangels and with all the company of heaven we proclaim your great and glorious name, for ever praising you and saying

Holy Holy Holy, god of power and might.

Heaven and earth are full of your glory.

Hosanna in the highest.

Blessed is he who comes in the name of the lord.

Hosanna in the highest!

God our Father, pour out the Holy Spirit on all your people, that we may have faith, & upon these gifts of bread & wine & this eating & drinking, that this may be for us the mystery of the body and blood of our risen Lord – so that we may receive Christ to ourselves once again, for the strengthening of our faith, the assuring of our hope, and the deepening of our love.

Responses

Leader Here is bread

All **For us to feed on Christ**

Leader Here is wine

All **For us to refresh our souls.**

Leader Our suffering Lord calls us to his table

All **In Lent we come in brokenness**

Leader Our dying Lord calls us his friends

All **In Lent we come with faithless hearts**

Leader How shall we eat?

All **Weeping with those who weep,**

Leader How shall we drink?

All **Mourning with those who mourn.**

Leader The Christ who dies gives us his body & blood

All **We eat and drink in faith**

Bread & Wine

Prayer after communion

Lord, we have offered our gifts, and seen the sign of your love here; may we see it at work in our world.

Lord, we have confessed our failure to live as your redeemed people; may we now live for the world's redemption.

Lord, we have witnessed to the pain of loss, the meaninglessness of death, the destruction of all that is holy; may we now live for beauty, truth and human flourishing in your world

Lord, we would stay in step with the Spirit of your Son; help us neither to deny nor betray his calling on our lives but always to worship and serve in his name.

BPW 542 'The journey of life'

Benediction

The blessing of God almighty, Father, Son and Holy Spirit, be with us and remain with us always..amen

Thanks everyone who has made today's service possible