

## **Call to Prayer: Sunday 21 February 2021**

**Prayer @ 7.00pm**

The beginning of the public ministry of Jesus is recorded in direct and immediate terms in the Gospel of Mark. We begin in Nazareth in Galilee and are then transported to the River Jordan. We see Jesus baptised and then driven out into the wilderness for forty days. The ministry of Jesus then begins as he proclaims: 'The time has come...The kingdom of God is near. Repent and believe the good news.' (Mark 1:9–15) It is as if the account compresses time in order to capture and express the significance of the moment.

Our experience of the passing of time over recent months is perhaps unlike anything we have ever collectively known. On the one hand, the experience of lockdown and restriction, and the absence of the rhythms of life, has almost dislocated us from the normal experience of the passing of time. On the other hand, the relocation of worship, work and social interaction to digital platforms has rapidly transformed the times in which we live.

These two things, alongside many others, are happening at one and the same time and we cannot yet tell how they will finally shape future times.

Although we cannot tell how the future will unfold, what we can do is recognise that the kingdom of God is at hand and, in the light of this, resolve to journey with Jesus towards the place of the Cross. The gift of time, in the light of God's Kingdom, is an opportunity to live out our response to the Good News of Jesus.

We pray:

God whose kingdom is near  
And who knows the times in which we live,  
May we hear the call of Your Son  
And turn once more to embrace the Good News He proclaims.  
In the times in which we live,  
Grant us grace to do so.  
Lord, in Your mercy,  
Hear our prayer.

God whose kingdom is near  
And who knows the times in which we live,  
Your Son has embraced time  
And became truly human for us and for our salvation.  
As we face the hard challenges of these days  
May we know that we are embraced by Your Son.  
Lord, in Your mercy,  
Hear our prayer.

God whose kingdom is near  
And who knows the times in which we live,  
Be with those for whom this day is hard  
And who long for respite.  
Be with those who seek to bring healing and comfort  
And grant them wisdom and compassion to do so.  
Lord, in Your mercy,  
Hear our prayer.

God whose kingdom is near  
And who knows the times in which we live,  
Be with us as we resolve to journey with Your Son  
In the days that lie before us.  
Whether in the wilderness, or by the living waters,  
May we know Your presence ever renewed.  
Lord, in Your mercy,  
Hear our prayer.