

# The Cotteridge Church

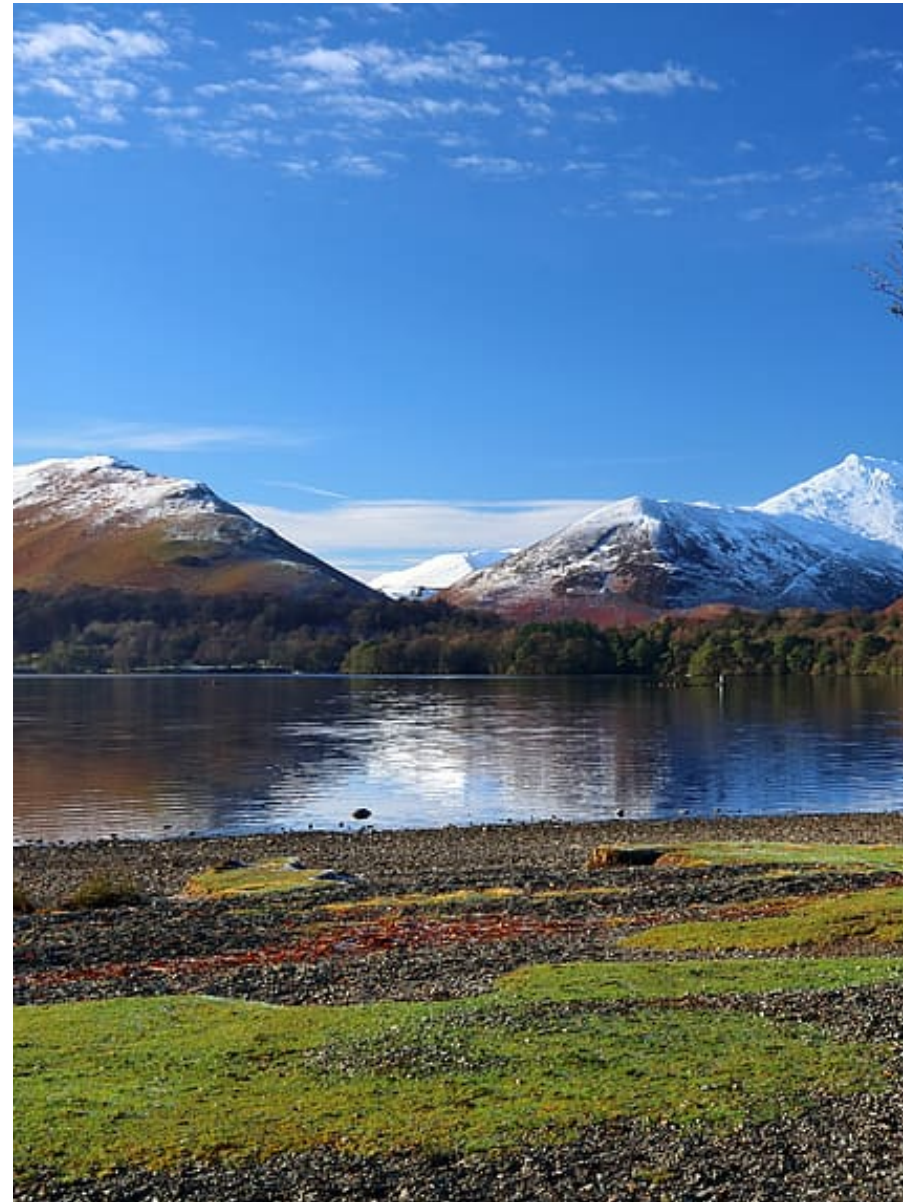
**Lent 2**

Sunday 5<sup>th</sup> March 2023

I lift my eyes up, to the mountains,  
where does my help come from?  
My help comes from you,  
maker of heaven, creator of the earth.  
O how I need you, Lord,  
you are my only hope;  
you're my only prayer.  
So I will wait for you  
to come and rescue me,  
come and give me life.

StF 631

Brian Doerksen



## **Bible Readings**

Genesis 12:1-4a

Psalms 121

Romans 4:1-5, 13-17

John 3:1-17

Matthew 17:1-9

## **Collect for Lent 2**

Almighty God,  
by the prayer and discipline of Lent  
may we enter into the mystery of Christ's  
sufferings,  
and by following in his Way  
come to share in his glory;  
through Jesus Christ our Lord.  
Amen

## **Lent 2**

One day, a Samurai warrior went to a Zen master for instruction. "Please," the huge man asked in a thundering voice that was used to instant obedience, "teach me about heaven and hell."

The master scowled at the swordsman, then broke into mocking laughter. "Me, teach you about heaven and hell? I wouldn't waste a moment trying to instruct the brain of an overweight ignoramus like you! How dare you ask me for such a lofty insight?"

Well, upon hearing these words, the Samurai grew furious. No one could insult him like this and get away with it. Enraged, his face flushed and he drew his sword to chop off the teacher's head. Just as he was about to strike, the master raised his hand and calmly said "That, sir, is hell."

Upon hearing this, the Samurai suddenly realized the profound lesson the master had just taught him – that we make our own hell by indulging in anger and resentment. The warrior was so grateful for this teaching that he dropped his sword and fell to his knees in front of the Master, bowing in humility and gratitude. When he looked up, the old man was smiling. "And that, sir," the teacher noted, "is Heaven."

"You risked your very life to teach me in this way?", the Samurai couldn't help asking the master. "I figured that there was no other way you would have learnt!" the master calmly explained.

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1 Come down, O Love divine!  
seek out this soul of mine  
and visit it with your own ardour glowing;  
O Comforter, draw near,  
within my heart appear,  
and kindle it, your holy flame bestowing.

2 There let it freely burn  
till earthly passions turn  
to dust and ashes in its heat consuming;  
and let your glorious light  
shine ever on my sight,  
and clothe me round, the while my path illuming.

3 Let holy charity  
my outward vesture be,  
and lowliness become my inner clothing;  
true lowliness of heart  
which takes the humbler part,  
and o'er its own shortcomings weeps with loathing.

4 And so the yearning strong  
with which the soul will long  
shall far outpass the power of human telling;  
for none can guess its grace  
till we become the place  
in which the Holy Spirit makes its dwelling.

StF 261            Bianco da Siena  
Translated by Richard F. Littledale

## The Cotteridge Church

**Lent 3**      Sunday 12<sup>th</sup> March 2023



## **Bible Readings**

Exodus 17:1-7

Psalms 95

Romans 5:1-11

John 4:5-42

## **Collect for Lent 3**

Eternal God,  
give us insight  
to discern your will for us,  
to give up what harms us,  
and to seek the perfection we are promised  
in Jesus Christ our Lord.  
Amen

## **Lent 3**

William Easum, in his book, *Dancing with Dinosaurs*, suggests that the dinosaurs ate only the vegetation that was right at their eye level.

With their massive appetites, they quickly devoured all the food they could easily see. Then he writes: "Still, food was plentiful if the dinosaur merely bent down to reach the vegetation. But perhaps the dinosaur's neck was too stiff to bend down to the vegetation, or the dinosaur was too nearsighted to see the vegetation.

Perhaps dinosaurs became extinct because of their unwillingness or inability to see what was happening all around them" [p. 15]. Do you think that he could be making an analogy to the church?

Jesus says, "Look around you, and see how the fields are ripe for harvesting." If they took that literally and looked around, whom would they see?



# The Cotteridge Church

**Lent 4**

Sunday 19<sup>th</sup> March 2023

Lead, kindly light, amid the encircling gloom  
Lead thou me on  
The night is dark, and I am far from home  
Lead thou me on  
Keep thou my feet, I do not ask to see  
The distant scene, one step enough for me

I was not ever thus, nor prayed that thou  
Shouldst lead me on  
I loved to choose, and see my path but now  
Lead thou me on  
I loved the garish day, and spite of fears  
Pride ruled my will, remember not past years

So long thy power hath blest me, sure it still  
Will lead me on  
O'er moor and fen, o'er crag and torrent, till  
The night is gone  
And with the morn those angel faces smile  
Which I have loved long since and lost a while  
Lead kindly light

Cardinal John Henry Newman



## **Bible Readings**

1 Samuel 16:1-13

Psalm 23

Ephesians 5:8-14

John 9:1-41

## **Collect for Lent 4**

God of love,  
passionate and strong,  
tender and careful:  
watch over us and hold us  
all the days of our life;  
through Jesus Christ our Lord.  
Amen

## **Lent 4**

When John Henry Newman (an Anglican priest) was a professor at Oxford University, along with other scholars he started the Oxford movement.

When he was 32 years old, his health was poor so he took a break from his writings and went to Europe to recuperate. Unfortunately he contracted a deadly fever; he was unable to return to England because no transport was available. As he waited his life, lonely and tedious; he experiencing great physical and emotional despair. It was then that he penned a beautiful hymn asking God for light.

“Lead, kindly Light, amid the encircling gloom,  
Lead Thou me on: The night is dark, and I am far  
from home  
Lead thou me on  
Keep thou my feet, I do not ask to see  
The distant scene, one step enough for me.

In his confusion and distress Newman prayed to the God of Light to lead him from darkness to light, from confusion to certainty, and from sickness to health. God heard his prayer and led him home safely.

In 1845 he was converted to the Roman Catholic faith.

1 Lord, your church on earth is seeking  
your renewal from above:  
teach us all the art of speaking  
with the accent of your love.  
We would heed your great commission  
sending us to every place-  
'Preach, baptize, fulfil my mission;  
serve with love and share my grace!'

2 Freedom give to those in bondage,  
lift the burdens caused by sin;  
give new hope, new strength and courage,  
grant release from fears within.  
Light for darkness, joy for sorrow,  
love for hatred, peace for strife-  
these and countless blessings follow  
as the Spirit gives new life.

3 In the streets of every city  
where the bruised and lonely dwell,  
let us show the Saviour's pity  
let us of his mercy tell.  
In all lands and with all races  
let us serve, and seek to bring  
all the world to render praises  
Christ, to you, Redeemer, King.

StF 410      Hugh Sherlock

## The Cotteridge Church

**Lent 5**      Sunday 26<sup>th</sup> March 2023



## **Bible Readings**

Ezekiel 37:1-14

Psalm 130

Romans 8:6-11

John 11:1-45

## **Collect for Lent 5**

Gracious Father,  
you gave up your Son  
out of love for the world:  
lead us to ponder the mysteries of his passion,  
that we may know eternal peace  
through the shedding of our Saviour's blood,  
Jesus Christ our Lord.  
Amen

## **Lent 5**

Pastor/Bishop Kenneth Ulmer (California) likens the animating, life-fulfilling power of the Holy Spirit to the transformation that comes over the Macy's Thanksgiving Day Parade balloon figures as they're inflated. Without any air these huge balloons lay flat on the floor, limp, and featureless figures. But when the wind starts whipping up inside those balloons, they begin to rise, stand up, and stand tall. They become individuals, people and creatures that we recognize and love. Once on the parade route, these balloons take on even more life, for they are animated not just by the air within them, but by the winds that buffet and bolster them down the street.

In today's gospel text, Jesus doesn't appear before Martha and Mary (in agony over the death of their brother Lazarus) to bring them a casserole. Jesus doesn't cluck his tongue and concede that Lazarus' death is a tragedy.

Jesus goes to his best friend's tomb and calls out, "Lazarus, come forth!" As experienced by Ezekiel and the psalmist, once again the animating spirit of God moves with power and precision, and brings a dead man walking right out of his tomb! This is what God settles for: Miracle, rebirth, deliverance and eternal redemption. God doesn't define winning as not losing. God doesn't settle for anything less than joy unbounded and glory filled dreams fulfilled.