**Sunnyside Church**

**Wednesday morning at 9.30 on 24 February 2021**

**Readings**

***Psalm 25***

***Mark 1:9-15***

*Some reflections on these passages.*

\*The 40 day Temptation of Jesus in the desert is the traditional Gospel reading for the 1st Sunday in Lent. The set reading this year is from Mark’s Gospel. Mark gives a short and clear version of what happened, in Matthew and Luke we have in more detail the nature of the temptations. The word translated “temptation” can also mean “testing” or “trial of strength”. During the 40 days in the desert Satan tested Jesus to turn away from the mission to which he had been called. In todays reading we see something of this calling in the voice from heaven at Jesus baptism by John which declared “You are my Son, whom I love, with you I am well pleased”.

\*Mark makes clear that it was God’s will for Jesus to go through these 40 days of testing. Straight after his baptism (a “high” point) Jesus is sent into the desert by the Spirit. The purpose of this was to make Jesus stronger for all the challenges to his mission he was to face in his ministry, and especially his sufferings and death. The desert is a very inhospitable place, no food, no water, hot by day, cold at night. Mark mentions the danger of wild animals. This was both physically and spiritually an extremely hard time for Jesus, but he was not left alone, the angels ministered to him.

\*I expect that we all can look back in our lives to times of “testing”, “trials” and “temptations”. For me in my late teenage years I had a real challenge to my faith and then in my in my short careers in engineering and teaching this was a time of “testing” of my vocation to the ordained ministry. I look back now and see how God used these times of “testing” to give me a firm foundation and confidence for my now 50+ years in the ordained ministry. Some words of Paul which meant a lot to me “God is faithful, he will not let you be tempted beyond what you can bear. But when you are tempted, he will also provide a way out so that you can stand up under it.” (1 Corinthians 10:13).

\*I have found a lot of what we are going through at the moment is like Jesus being in the desert. I can also see God’s presence through it all. As we hope that we are coming out of the crisis the message from today’s reading is as true as ever “The time has come, the kingdom of God is at hand, repent and believe the good news” (Mark 1:15).

\*The message of the set Psalm for last Sunday is very applicable. We have been given a message of “hope”. Our prayer can be that of Psalm 25:6 “Show me your way O Lord, teach me your paths, guide me in your truth, and teach me, for you are God my Saviour, and my hope is in you all day long”.

*Collect for last Sunday- Lent 1*

Heavenly Father

your Son battled with the powers of darkness

and grew closer to you in the desert

help us to use these days to grow in wisdom and prayer

that we may witness to your saving love

in Jesus Christ our Lord, Amen.

*A Prayer for this season of Lent*

Lord God

with Lent we approach the springtime of the year

when the face of the earth is renewed

and life emerges out of death

We pray that this season of Lent

may be a veritable springtime for our souls

quickened by the breath of the Spirit

and warmed by the sunshine of your love

may bear abundant fruit

and be made radiant

with the beauty of holiness

through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen

**Intercessions**

For the effect that lockdown has had on families, and the vulnerable

The Government as they plan the future especially the new arrangements to combat the virus and the reopening of schools, colleges, shops and business

The vaccination programme and how the vaccine can be used in the poorer countries of the world

All in medical and caring professions with the extra load and problems because of the virus

Our schools and colleges as they plan to reopen

all who live in the parish especially those living in Pix Farm Lane and Sharpes Lane. For all who minister and lead at St John’s

For those who have been affected by the virus, especially those who have been bereaved and those in hospital

For our Vicar Rebecca and all in positions of leadership and responsibility and the planning for the future life of the church

*John Kirkby*