Dear friend
Many thanks to Judith for this week's service. She has suggested the Passion chorale as an opening hymn. Here it is, sung by King's:
https://youtu.be/3M4uUJibpvw

or (with lyrics) by the incomparable Acapeldridge:
https://youtu.be/JRjJ9nufa2c

Choristers may like to sing along to Wesley's setting of the psalm, Wash me thoroughly:
https://youtu.be/0r3BkuxjD6k

Orlando Gibbons' setting of Phineas Fletcher's poem Drop, drop, slow tears, sung expressively here by Voces 8:
https://youtu.be/TQaLMoPGJzk

William Walton also set the same words beautifully (tricky to sing, though), at the tender age of 15…
https://youtu.be/rYJDvJMCED8

Finally, as we hope to emerge again from lockdown, a worship song from Martin,
The Blessing with Kari Jobe & Cody Carnes, Live performance from Elevation Ballantyne, USA.

This was the viral worship song for Lockdown #1 but here it is in the original live version:
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Zp6aygmvzM4

Lenten blessings.
Chris

SERVICE FOR 21st MARCH
PASSIONTIDE BEGINS

O God, whose eternal love for our weak and struggling race was most perfectly shown forth in the blessed life and death of Jesus Christ our Lord, enable me now so to meditate upon my Lord's passion that, having fellowship with him in his sorrow, I may also learn the secret of his strength and peace.
(John Baillie 1886-1960)

CONFESSION

Wash me thoroughly from my iniquity, and cleanse me from my sin; for I know my transgressions, and my sin is ever before me.
(Ps.51:2,3)

The Lord is merciful and gracious, slow to anger and abounding in steadfast love. As far as the east is from the west, so far he removes our transgressions from us. (Ps.103:8,12)

COLLECT

Most merciful God, who by the death and resurrection of your Son Jesus Christ delivered and saved the world: grant that by faith in him who suffered on the cross we may triumph in the power of his victory; through Jesus Christ your Son our Lord, who is alive and reigns with you, in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God, now and for ever.

READINGS Jeremiah 31:31-34; Psalm 51:1-13; Hebrews 5:5-10; John 12:20-33

REFLECTION Today's gospel reading marks a tipping point in the story of Christ's journey towards the cross. He has entered Jerusalem after raising Lazarus; after Mary has poured perfume on his feet. Although lauded by the crowds, he is a wanted man – the Pharisees now plan to put him to death. Immediately prior to today's passage, the Pharisees, in some desperation, say to each other, 'You see, you can do nothing. Look, the world has gone after him!' (v.19). The Greek visitors are significant in this story; it isn't just the Jews now, but Gentiles who are wanting to see Jesus for themselves. Three times in previous chapters, the comment has been that Jesus's time has 'not yet come'; now, Jesus says that 'the hour has come for the Son of Man to be glorified'. As the writer of Hebrews says; in his humanity, Jesus pleads for deliverance from death but 'learns obedience through what he suffers.' He knows what is to come, and in an ironic echo of the Pharisees, promises to draw all people to himself. There is now no going back.

PRAYERS

Father, we love you, we worship and adore you. Glorify your name in all the earth.
(Donna Adkins)

Lord, we pray for your people; for all those who worship you today. We thank you for your patient, forgiving love, and we pray that those who do not yet know you, yet seek you, may come to love you.
Lord, in your mercy; **hear our prayer.**
We pray for all who are suffering in body, mind or spirit, especially those still affected by Covid 19. We pray, too, for all, anywhere in the world, who are poor, hungry, or fearful.
Lord, in your mercy; **hear our prayer.**
We pray for those we love, especially…….
Lord, in your mercy; **hear our prayer.**
We pray for any who have made wrong choices in their lives. Be present to them, and help them to learn of your forgiveness.
Lord, in your mercy; **hear our prayer.**

We say **THE LORD'S PRAYER**

We share **THE GRACE**

FINAL PRAYER

Lord, as you have taught us the folly of gaining the whole world and losing ourselves, grant us grace so to lose ourselves that we may find ourselves made new, and so to forget ourselves that we may be remembered in your kingdom; through Christ our Lord. Amen.
(Reinhold Niebuhr 1892-1971)