

**Our Evening Services this Lent** will engage with the whole of Mark's gospel, reading it straight through and letting the gospel touch us with its power. The services will include sung worship and prayer in response but with Mark's gospel as the centrepiece. Read by one person or several, maybe even in a dramatized way, this will be a rollercoaster ride as we get closer to Easter. Here are 5 reasons for doing it this way:

1. Mark is the first of the gospel accounts to be written. Matthew, Luke and John followed. Put into writing in the early 60s AD, the gospel of Mark is the story recorded closest to the actual events that took place when Jesus was on earth. According to tradition John Mark got his information from Peter when they were together in Rome toward the end of the apostle's life. Peter had been one of the inner circle of our Lord's disciples. All of this makes Mark's account compelling.
2. Mark is the most action-packed of the four gospels. It reports more of what Jesus did than what he said, which means you move smoothly from one incident to another. The story is fast-paced.
3. Mark was steeped in early Christian history. His mother was a woman of means whose house in Jerusalem was a centre for the early church (Acts 12:12). He was also cousin to Barnabas, one of the first missionaries (Colossians 4:10). Peter's sermons, heard by Mark when Mark was with Peter in Rome in the latter days of Peter's ministry, supplied the content for Mark's gospel account.
4. The gospel by Mark can support a stable faith in God during troubled times such as ours. There's no fluff and no "perhaps," or "maybe" in his writing. He opens his account with this simple declaration: "The beginning of the gospel about Jesus Christ, the Son of God" (Mark 1:1). He closes his gospel with the affirmation, "After the Lord Jesus had spoken to (the disciples) he was taken up into heaven and he sat at the right hand of God" (Mark 16:19). Then or now, this gospel, assembled with its economy of words, can be a stabilizer to the troubled heart.
5. Reading Mark's account straight through will bring you to the core of the gospel with each reading — Christ's death and resurrection, and his call to belief and discipleship. After the stories of Jesus' healing presence and his power over evil, we learn about our Lord's crucifixion, death, burial, resurrection, and ascension. Without them there is no gospel.

Thanks to Mark's account, as disciples living today, we have a trustworthy message for this life and an eternal hope for the life to come. How better to observe Lent and prepare ourselves for the celebrations of Easter?

# LENT Evening Services

## February

|                  |   |  |
|------------------|---|--|
| <b>Wed. 14th</b> | <b>7.30pm</b> at St Ann's               | <u><b>Ash Wednesday Communion</b></u>            |
| <b>18th</b>      | <b>6.30pm</b> at Emmanuel               | The Mission begins in Galilee Mark 1-3           |
| <b>25th</b>      | <b>6.30pm</b> at St Francis, Littlemoor | <b><i>Witness Service</i></b> - Spring into Life |

## March

|                    |                               |  |
|--------------------|-------------------------------|--|
| <b>4th</b>         | <b>6.30pm</b> at St Aldhelm's | Stories and Wonders Mark 4-6                 |
| <b>11th</b>        | <b>6.30pm</b> at St John's    | Taking up your cross Mark 7-9:1)             |
| <b>18th</b>        | <b>6.30pm</b> at St Mary's    | On the road to Jerusalem Mark 9:2-11:19      |
| <b>25th</b>        | <b>6.30pm</b> at Emmanuel     | Mark 11:20-13 <b><i>Witness Service</i></b>  |
| <b>Thurs. 29th</b> | <b>7.30pm</b> at St Ann's     | <u><b>Maundy Thursday Holy Communion</b></u> |