

## Morning Prayer 20<sup>th</sup> June 2025

### *Call to worship*

O ye Frost and Cold, bless ye the Lord: praise him, and exalt him above all for ever.

O ye Ice and Snow, bless ye the Lord: praise him, and exalt him above all for ever.

O ye Mountains and Hills, bless ye the Lord: praise him, and exalt him above all for ever.

O ye Lightnings and Clouds, bless ye the Lord: praise him, and exalt him above all for ever.

### *Reading: [Luke 4.1-15](#)*

### *Reflection*

I have to say, this was the window that took me longest to understand. It's also the one that is the least interesting to me at first sight. Yet...

I wonder if you can see the how the artist has created a dialogue between the temptations of Christ and the lines from the hymn of praise – I wonder if you see the subtle reflections of the frost and snow, the mountains and hills, and in the centre, the lightning and clouds. I wonder what catches your eye...

We've noticed previously how the places where heaven and earth meet are often painted in a pinky purple colour, and here in the central panel we are treated to the most spectacular opposition between the demonic figure on the left, trying to thrust a royal crown onto Jesus' head, and the angelic figure on the right, wearing a crown of thorns, holding a cross-shaped staff and a scroll – the enduring Word of God, and what looks like a chalice of wine. This furious storm in the heavenly realm sits far above a lonely but resolute-looking Jesus, on the mountainside wilderness. On the left panel, Jesus is flanked on either side by representatives of the state (dressed in military garb) and the church (robed in purple and pink)- trying to offer a bejewelled crown. Jesus is on a royal platform standing in front of what looks like a golden throne. On the opposite panel, Jesus lies down, having chosen the cross-shaped staff for comfort rather than the throne or crown.

Thinking about the context of this war memorial chapel in-between the First and Second World Wars, I wonder how this window spoke to those sitting in these pews. What did it mean for them to see Jesus tempted by both Church and State? To have

chosen the cross to guide him. To be alone and without the comfort or trappings of a throne. I wonder what it means for us to resist the temptations of Church and State, to say no to earthly honour and praise? The URC's roots in the dissenting and non-conforming traditions of the church embody some of that commitment. I wonder what the dissenters would think of the current United Reformed Church. I wonder what you think its current temptations are...

### *Prayers*

As we have been doing for the previous weeks, let us pray for those who have gone before us at Westminster. We pray for the leavers from 1955-65:

James Garfitt  
David Viles  
Tony Ritchie  
David Morgan  
Donald Elliot

Graham Hellier  
Robert Andrews  
Keneth Graham  
Malocm Hanson  
David Helyar

Stuart Jackson  
David Cuckson  
Alasdair Pratt

Lord, we give you thanks for these men who answered your call to follow you, not knowing where they would end up. We pray your blessing and protection on them, that you would keep them safe from temptations to earthly power, wealth and self-reliance. And as we remember those who were sitting where we are, we also give thanks for those here today – especially for Sue and Tina about to embark on their ministries, for heeding the call to pick up the cross-shaped staff for comfort and protection. Lord protect them and us all from the storms that rage in the heavenly realm. Lord, lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil. Shine your light and truth in your church today, that all people might be drawn to the light of your love. For to you and you alone belong the kingdom and the power and the glory, for ever and ever, Amen.