Sermon:

Beauty and the Beast is a story of transformation through love.

What might you want to transform? A habit/situation/long-since error? The Parish/community/world?

Lazarus is a story of transformation too, through the love of Jesus.

So Jesus wants to transform our lives, and that of our churches and communities.

Why did Jesus wait three days (is this a parallel to his own death and resurrection)?

Or was it to show that the transformation could only take place *after* Lazarus had died?

Sometimes the transformation we seek can only happen after a death, even of something dear to us.

Eg William Wilberforce wanted to be a clergyman. His friends, William Pitt and John Newton disagreed. This aspiration had to die before God could use him to abolish the slave trade.

Eg Hade Edge was a church that died, the members dispersed; only then did a new church begin.

Eg Affordables has died; is this so that something else can begin?

This was not to say that becoming a clergyman was bad, nor that the old members at Hade Edge were bad.

This is not to say that Affordables was bad.

What has to die so that something else can be transformed in you? Or in our parish? Or community?

Note also that the Beast was really a Prince. Presumably he had been a prince before, but was he the *same* prince deep down? I suspect being a beast for a while had changed him for the better.

Maybe going through hard times is the actual means for transformation for the better in us too.