

Welcome to Lent @ home

Lent@Home includes:

- Reflections for prayer to download and use (in this document)
- Eco Challenge for 40 days to download and complete ([separate](#))
- Two activities for colouring and reflection (in this document)
- A book to read, with optional [Zoom discussion group](#) to join
- An Introductory [YouTube video](#) to invite people into Lent (premiere's 11am on Sunday 14 February)

We begin with a familiar verse from Psalm 137: “How can we sing the Lord’s song in a foreign land?” In the Old Testament, Israel’s worship came to be focused on the temple, on the Holy of Holies and on the tabernacle where, they believed, God resided. But after being exiled, God’s people had to find new ways to worship, new forms of liturgy and new ways to express their faith in God.

It sounds a little over dramatic, but we find ourselves ‘exiled’ from our churches this year. All of us have had to find new ways to worship, and new ways to express our faith in God.

Israel began to locate the prayers of their faith in their households. From grand festivals like the celebration of the beginning of Passover with a Seder meal to the weekly Shabbat, Israel learned that sharing together in a common prayer is not necessarily dependent upon sharing common space. This sharing in common prayers and festivals binds us together. Praying the prayers of the faith binds a community together. Liturgy is highly portable. You can smuggle it in anywhere. Liturgy is also highly relational. It can connect us across all creation.

So how can we let even a global pandemic *cancel* worship? The wise call may be to not have people gather in the church building, but by no means should we cancel worship.

Let’s smuggle the liturgy into our homes and be connected with all Christians across time and space who are remembering today that we are dust, and to dust we shall return. Let’s gather together in diaspora in order to repent and believe the Gospel.

In that spirit, apart but together, here are some prayers for Ash Wednesday and Lent. Our Lenten observance also includes an EcoChallenge and some activities for reflection.



17 February 2021

Ash Wednesday marks the beginning of the 40-day journey of Lent, which remembers Jesus' 40 days in the wilderness before his ministry began. In the wilderness, Jesus was tempted to abandon God, but he never did.

We begin Lent with repentance: acknowledging our own sins, the times when we have turned away from God.

Applying ashes to one's forehead or the back of one's hand symbolizes repentance. It connects our body to our belief and visibly invites others to think about faith.

For Ash Wednesday, you may want to find some ash – from a fireplace? (See below for more on making ashes.) Or you could gather some soil from the garden.

And let us pray:

Brothers and sisters in Christ, since early days Christians have observed with great devotion the time of our Lord's passion and resurrection and prepared for this by a season of penitence and fasting.

By carefully keeping these days, Christians take to heart the call to repentance and the assurance of forgiveness proclaimed in the gospel, and so grow in faith and in devotion to our Lord.

I invite you, therefore, in the name of the Church, to the observance of a holy Lent, by self-examination and repentance; by prayer, fasting, and self-denial; and by reading and meditating on God's holy word.

God of mercy and love, we confess to you and to each other that we have not lived the way you want us to live. We are truly sorry, and we ask you to forgive us. Create in us a clean heart, O God, and renew a right spirit within us.

We have not loved you with our whole heart and mind and strength. We have not loved our neighbours as ourselves. We have not forgiven others, as you have forgiven us.

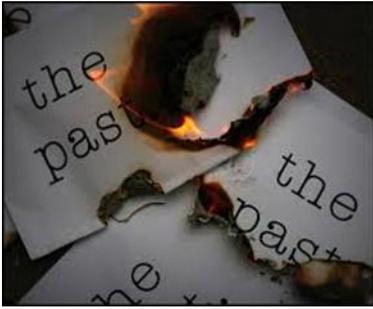
Create in me a clean heart, O God, and renew a right spirit within me.

We are careless, impatient, angry. We envy others who have more than we do. We do not share what we have.

Create in me a clean heart, O God, and renew a right spirit within me.

We turn away when others need our help. We are not kind. We do not care. Wash us from our wrongdoing, Lord, and make us clean from sin. Amen.

Burning of Confessions



You could do this around a small fire pit or barbecue in your garden, or even around a fireplace or a group of (safely placed!) candles.

Step 1: Somewhere near your fire, perhaps on a small table, have pencil and paper ready. Each person write down those things that they would like to confess, to have burned away from their past, that they feel a call to repent of. Younger children may want to draw out their confessions.

Step 2: Have everyone crumple up and toss their confessions into the fire, or put them on the end of a roasting stick. As they add their confessions to the fire, have each person recite this Psalm:

“Create in me a clean heart, O God, and put a new and right spirit within me.” (Psalm 51:10).

Step 3: After everyone has added their confessions to the fire, take time to watch them burn in silence. Once the papers are no longer visible, say to each other **“Remember that you are dust, and to dust you shall return.”**

Step 4: After the fire has cooled, return the ashes to the earth, perhaps in a garden area, where something new will spring from among the ashes.



Alternatively... hold some soil in your hand as you pray:

Creator of my Life, renew me: bring me to new life in you.

Touch me and make me feel whole again.

Help me to see your love in the passion, death and resurrection of your son.

Help me to observe Lent in a way that allows me to celebrate that love.

Prepare me for these weeks of Lent

as I feel both deep sorrow for my sins and your undying love for me. Amen

When Jesus saw their faith, he said, “Friend, your sins are forgiven.”

Prayers and Reflections for our Lenten Journey

An opportunity to journey through Lent as an individual, family or support bubble. Each week there is a suggested reading and prayer, using symbols of the Lenten journey. May you have a blessed Lent and remember that God loves you - always.

Into the Wilderness: Lent 1

Week beginning 21st February – *find a rock or some pebbles*

Just between his baptism and the beginning of his adult ministry, Jesus went into the wilderness for 40 days, “to be tested”.

Read the story of Jesus wandering in the desert - Luke 4:1-13

The Judean desert is a barren and rocky place. Hold the rock, feel its weight. I wonder ... Have you ever felt that you have been tested? When have you walked on hard, barren or stony ground? What have you learned there? What might you learn there?

Prayer: Holy God, help us when we walk through the difficult places in our lives. Help us to know that the closer we walk to you, the closer you will be to us. Amen.



Woman at the well: Lent 2

Week beginning 28th February – *get two small containers – a jug or glass, and put some water in one of them.*

The Samaritan woman gives Jesus a drink of water. They speak together for a long time. He tells her about living water - to revive the spirit and bring hope. She believes, and others believe because of her.

Read the story of the Woman at the well – John 4:1-30

Pour the water slowly. Think about that water in the desert and what it came to mean to the woman at the well.

Who helped/helps you to believe? Who do you know that needs life giving water - physical or spiritual? Can you support a charity that works to provide clean water for all (eg Water Aid)?

Make contact – email or phone call or text message - with someone who needs to know that they matter.

Prayer: O God, may we thirst for your waters of justice, and learn to deny no-one the water of life. Amen. (Janet Morley)

Transformation: Lent 3

Week beginning 7th March – *find a tree to look at – go outside, or find a picture of a tree to focus on.*

While in the wilderness, Jesus was invited to transform stone into bread. At the wedding at Cana, Jesus transformed water into wine. When he touched people, his healing transformed their lives. Jesus became justly renowned for feeding people who were hungry for food, or for love, or for a word of encouragement, or for simple acceptance.

Read the story of Zacchaeus - Luke 19:1-10



Think about the tree that you can see. How will it change with the seasons? How is it already being transformed in this early spring season? Is there something in you that needs transforming? Jesus transforms us and helps us make better choices. Is there a place in your life where you could make better choices?

Prayer: Lord Jesus, help me to make better choices in my life. I ask that you will feed me and transform me. Amen.

Mothering Sunday: Lent 4

Week beginning 14th March - *chocolate! Can you find a chocolate somewhere in your house? (Maybe a little one leftover from Christmas?)*

This week the church remembers the mothering love of God. In the middle of Lent we give thanks for all who show us this mothering love - a strong love, a challenging love, an encouraging love, a healing love.



Reflect on these Bible Verses:

May your father and mother rejoice; may she who gave you birth be joyful! Proverbs 23:25 (NIV)

When Jesus saw his mother there, and the disciple whom he loved standing nearby, he said to her, "Woman, here is your son," and to the disciple, "Here is your mother." From that time on, this disciple took her into his home. John 19:26-27 (NIV)

She is clothed with strength and dignity; she can laugh at the days to come. She speaks with wisdom, and faithful instruction is on her tongue. She watches over the affairs of her household and does not eat the bread of idleness. Her children arise and call her blessed; her husband also, and he praises her. Proverbs 31:25-28 (NIV)

Take time to reflect and give thanks for those who have “mothered” you - physically and spiritually. Enjoy your chocolate - or give it away to someone else!

Prayer: God of love, passionate and strong, tender and careful: watch over us and hold us all the days of our life; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen

Baptismal Covenant: Lent 5

Week beginning 21st March – *find a shell*

Historically, the season of Lent provided a time in which converts to the faith were prepared for the sacrament of Holy Baptism. Jesus began his ministry after his baptism.



Read the story of Jesus Baptism - Mark 1:4-11.

Hold the shell. The shell is a symbol of baptism - often a shell is used to pour the water over the person to be baptized. Do you remember your baptism? What have others told you about your baptism? What does being baptized mean to you? What difference does your baptism make in your life day to day? How are you living out the promises made at your Baptism? The shell is also a symbol of pilgrimage Where are you on your pilgrimage of faith (just starting out, at a crossroads, walking alone or with others)?

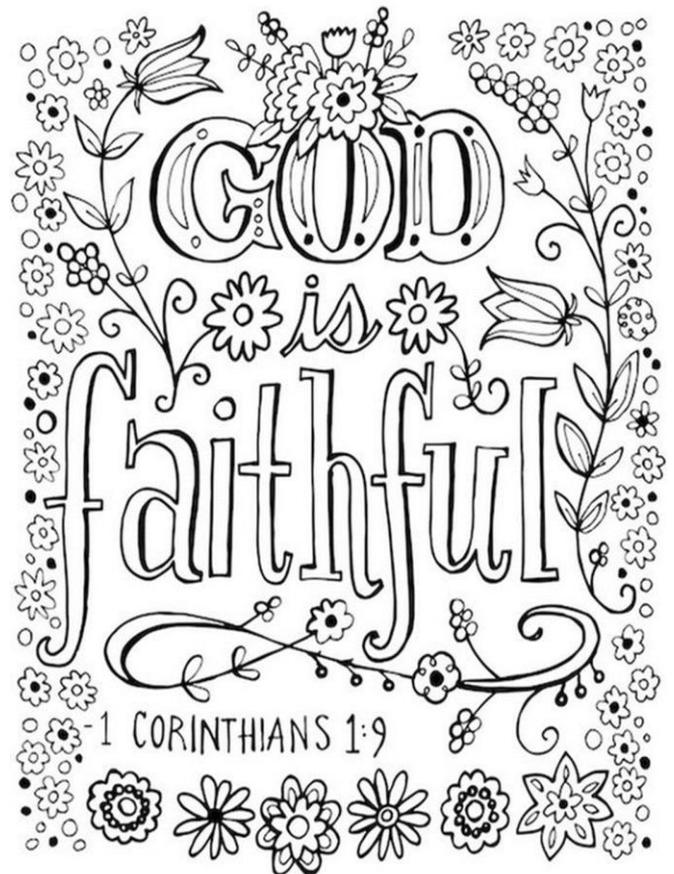
Prayer: Creator God, you are the source of all life and motivation. May we journey in faith and love, rejoicing and eager to serve you. Grant us a glimpse of your glory as we seek to follow you – the Way, the Truth and the Life. Amen

Using our hands and hearts



Repentance is a change of heart...a heart activity. Draw or cut out and decorate hearts with colours, glitter, paint – to remind us to pray for renewal and forgiveness during Lent. Below is a template you may want to use.

And there is a colouring page below. As you colour, think about what Lent means to you. How are you doing with your Lenten observances?



Merciful Lord,
you know our struggle to serve you:
when sin spoils our lives
and overshadows our hearts,
come to our aid
and turn us back to you again;
through Jesus Christ our Lord.

Create in me
a clean heart,
O God
and renew a
steadfast spirit
within me.

Psalm 51:10



1 CORINTHIANS 1:9