Lent Courses, Books and Resources for 2023

Dear Friends,

This week I have started to notice that some of the snowdrop bulbs in our garden are beginning to sprout, tiny green shoots pushing up through the damp soil. It is such a wonderful sight, and as my granny always used to say, ‘a real sign of Spring’!

So often Lent can be seen as a season of bleakness and self denial, and whilst discipline does indeed have a part to play in our observance, we should also be looking for signs of our own spiritual growth. Small, unexpected green shoots springing up from our time spent with God, as we explore what it means for us to follow Jesus.

My hope is that in the following collection of books, free resources and online courses, you will find something to guide and enrich your Lenten journey.

With my prayers,
Primrose Northrop

By Rt Revd Emma Ineson

Emma poses the question of whether sin is an individual or corporate thing. Looking at the church, we consider, what is God’s purpose for it? And in the light of key concerns such as safeguarding and racial justice, how might we re-examine concepts of success and recognise and measure failure? As the book draws to an end, we are reminded of our calling to live life to the full, to take risks despite our fears. We are bound sometimes to fail! Yet gazing at Jesus - who looked like the greatest failure of all - we may discern in the heartache, vulnerability and humility of failure, the glory of the cross.

A Place for Us: A Lent course based on West Side Story
By Lavinia Byrne

A Place for Us is an original Lent course based on the recent film production of West Side Story directed by Steven Spielberg and featuring the songs of Stephen Sondheim and Leonard Bernstein. Through study and discussion of key scenes from the movie, related to Lent passages from scripture, Lavinia Byrne and Jane McBride help us to reflect on fear, love, betrayal, death, and reconciliation.

For each session, preparatory material including a Gospel reading is provided for the reader to reflect on the themes before meeting with a study group. Resources are then offered for the group, including a suggested film clip, discussion points and questions, exercises, a Psalm, and a poem by Phil Lane.
Opening our Hearts to God
Tearfund Lent Resource

Looking for inspiration this Lent? Tearfund’s free Lent devotional gives you bite-sized reflections, prayers and poems to help guide, encourage and challenge you. This year’s theme is Open. When we open our hearts to God, our lives can be transformed; when we open our hands to God, the world can be transformed.

This Lent, let’s open ourselves to what’s possible with Christ. The devotional is available as a free booklet, or as daily emails sent straight to your inbox. They’re perfect to use either in personal reflection, or in group study. For more information, please visit;

https://www.tearfund.org/campaigns/lent-devotional

Lighting the Beacons: Kindling the Flame of Faith in our Hearts
By Rt Revd Jill Duff

Being warmed by God’s love kindles the flame of faith in our hearts. This flame may be a tiny flame; or a mighty beacon. And we may never know how our small pinprick of light has helped someone engulfed in darkness to find their way.

Bishop Jill’s wise, passionate book is illustrated throughout with stories from contemporary culture, scripture and the writings of the saints. It captivatingly conveys how, as beacons of God’s light and love, we can help to bring heaven to earth at this very moment - and transform our society into ‘a land of hope and glory’!

Reflections for Lent 2023: 22 February - 8 April 2023
By Kate Bruce, Mark Oakley, Graham James, Paula Gooder

Reflections for Lent is designed to enhance your spiritual journey through the forty days from Ash Wednesday to Holy Saturday. Covering Monday to Saturday each week, it offers reflections on readings from the Common Worship Lectionary, written by some of today’s leading spiritual and theological writers. It also features a simple form of morning and night prayer, a guide to keeping a good Lent and an introduction to lectio divina by Stephen Cottrell.

The Kingdom of God is Justice and Peace

In a world crippled by injustice - both here and in the Middle East - journey with us through the Egyptian Coptic observance of Lent over seven weeks. Reimagine Jesus’ reign of justice and peace as proclaimed in the gospels. This guide includes: Scriptural reflections based on the seven-week Coptic observance of Lent, prayer and worship ideas, easy to use leaders guide to help those facilitating
small groups. For more information, please visit:

https://embraceme.org/resources

Meeting God in Matthew
By Dr Elaine Storkey

Meeting God in Matthew explores what the Gospel of Matthew teaches us about the revelation of God in the person of Jesus Christ. An essential reading for anyone wanting to understand the gospel message better. Each chapter includes discussion questions and reflection, making Meeting God in Matthew a perfect book for Bible study both for individuals and small groups. Simple yet profound, Meeting God in Matthew is an invitation to anyone wanting to meet the God who is revealed in Jesus Christ.

Sacred Space for Lent 2023
By The Irish Jesuits

The Sacred Space website continues to be one of the most popular prayer sites worldwide. Twenty years ago a group of Jesuits saw the potential of the "new" world wide web as a way of helping and encouraging people to pray. The books followed soon after and have been consistent bestsellers. Sacred Space Lent 2023 continues the tradition of Scripture reading, points of reflection, a weekly topic and six steps of prayer and meditation. The handy format makes this an ideal book for pocket, brief case, handbag or even the glove compartment of the car!

Growing Good
By CUF

Growing Good is a free course for churches, offering six sessions to help your congregation grow in faith and make a difference in your community. During Lent and throughout the year, Growing Good helps churches reach out through loving service and social action, grow spiritually through discipleship and invite everyone to be part of God’s work transforming work.

For more information, please visit;

https://growing-good.org.uk/lent-2023

Lent 2023
By The Church Army

The Church Army Lent Resource has been designed to give you, your small group or your church space and time each day throughout Lent to listen to God, reflect on the Bible, and see how and where you can listen to His leading in your actions and attitudes. Each pack contains 40 beautiful cards divided into Action Cards,
Character Cards, and Reflection Cards and Marks of Mission Cards. These cards take one of the Marks of Mission and encourage you to ask questions about your church’s way of expressing that Mark. The resource is intended to be easy to use, beautiful to look at, and to be an encouragement to listen to God through Lent inspired stories of faith in action. You can buy the set of cards, or subscribe free to receive email reflections throughout Lent. For more information, please visit:

https://churcharmy.org/growing-faith/lent-2023/

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A Century of Poetry: 100 poems for searching the heart
By Lord Rowan Williams

A Century of Poetry gives you a fresh perspective on works you may be familiar with, as well as introducing you to poems you’ll be pleased to discover for the first time – or perhaps discover again. These meditations, by a writer who is both a poet and a theologian, will open new doors into the experience of reading and absorbing great poetry, highlighting the ways in which their language and imagery can touch unfamiliar places in the heart and enliven the lifelong adventure of spiritual growth and exploration.

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A Prayer for Lent 2023

Lord Jesus Christ,
We recommit our lives to you,
as we seek to stand firm for love of you.
Help us to keep our eyes on the promise of your glory,
and to help the lost, the last and the least.
Amen

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Spread the word
Please use this guide to inform your choice of Lent materials for 2022, and pass it on to others to whom it would be helpful, especially those in your church communities who might not know what is available to individuals, or who would benefit from following a program.

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Primrose Northrop
Canterbury Diocese Calendar of Prayer co-ordinator
pnorthrop@diocant.org
www.canterburydiocese.org

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Diocese of Canterbury
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