

THROUGH LENT Together in 2025

**“Our only desire and our one choice should be this:
I want and I choose
what better leads to the deepening of God's life in me”**

St. Ignatius of Loyola, from the beginning of the Spiritual Exercises

The word LENT comes from an ancient word meaning ‘Spring’. This season of the year is given to us as a springtime for our faith, an opportunity to consider prayerfully how we may become more open to the good work which God has begun within us. At the Ash Wednesday Service, we are given the following charge: “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.”

Letting this Lent be for God

What if this Lent we didn’t approach the practices of prayer, giving and fasting with an eye to what we can do to transform ourselves, but rather with an eye to what God wants to do in order to transform us?

It’s easy to approach Lent as though it were a series of New Year’s resolutions: to give up a particular bad habit or share more with the poor or be more faithful in prayer. But Lent is not about self-improvement. Lent is a time of conversion in which God is in the driving seat, not us.

After all, Lent is a preparation for the season of Easter, and in Easter we see that Jesus comes to save us, despite ourselves. Peter swears up and down that he will never betray Jesus but then he does. A thief on the cross ends up being the first to be in Heaven with Jesus - a most unexpected consolation. Women go to the empty tomb to mourn and end up being missioned by Jesus, resurrected. Jesus reconciles with Peter despite the betrayals, and then gives him a central place in Church leadership. Easter is full of the unpredictable. Easter is a lot of amazing, beautiful surprises with the Resurrection at its heart.

If this is true, then again, Lent is not a project of self-improvement. Rather, it’s a time for allowing God to transform us and a time of intentional cooperation with God’s graces, where God leads and we follow. Like a good dance partner, we can choose to follow or not but God is always in the lead.

What might this look like in practice? The answer will be individual for each one of us. Essentially, a Lent of following God's lead must be grounded in prayer. Our intention is to listen for the voice of God and let ourselves be surprised by what the call in Lent might be.

As we begin to think about how we might enter into the coming Lenten season, you may wish to consider the following which are available this year.

Ash Wednesday (5th March)

Beginning **Lent Together** in Worship at St. Paul's

10.00am Holy Communion (with the imposition of Ashes)

7.00pm Holy Communion (with the imposition of Ashes)

Morning Prayer @ 9.00am

You will be welcome to join in Morning Prayer at St Paul's

9.00am Monday to Thursday (Variations will be on the weekly sheet)

Readings and Prayers to begin the day

Wednesdays @ 11.00am

(12th, 19th, 26th March and 2nd, 9th, 16th April)

Reading Mark's Gospel Together

The Vicar has prepared a simple sheet of daily readings to take us through Mark's Gospel in Lent. Copies are available in Church. You are welcome to follow this pattern of readings on your own but if you would like to gather with friends once a week for encouragement, a small group will gather each Wednesday (following the morning worship) at 11.00am in St. Paul's Church. You will be very welcome.

Sundays @ 11.00am: "Introducing Jesus..."

You will be welcome at each Sunday morning of Lent at 11.00am, when we will reflect on how each of the Gospel writers introduces us to Jesus:

9th March Beginning the Lenten Journey

16th March Matthew introduces me to Jesus

23rd March Mark introduces me to Jesus

30th March Luke introduces me to Jesus

6th April John introduces me to Jesus

Wednesdays @ 7.00pm "God for Beginners"

(12th, 19th, 26th March & 2nd, 9th April)at the Fell Church

On March 12th at 7.00pm you will be welcome to 'God for Beginners'. It's an opportunity, among friends, to ask all those things you never got around to asking about the life of faith. It's all very informal. NO question is too silly and no previous knowledge is presumed or expected!

- For some - it could be a refresher in the basics of our faith; even brush up on what it means to be a Godparent (!)
- For some - an occasion for friendship, discussion and encouragement
- For some - a chance to consider whether to take a particular step such as Confirmation

If any of these apply to you, do come along to all or as many of the sessions as you wish. To let us know you're coming and to help with catering and materials

Please email the Vicar: davidmwilmot@gmail.com /Tel: 07305 777 113 or sign the list in St. Paul's Church

A Quiet Day @ Field Broughton Village Hall "Consider Him"- entering into Holy Week

Thursday 10th April, 9.30am – 4.00pm

**What was Jesus doing in Jerusalem during that first Holy Week
and what difference has it made?**

Arrivals and coffee at 9.30am. Four short addresses and space to reflect, concluding with a Eucharist. Bring a packed lunch. Drinks and biscuits provided. No charge. Donations towards hire of the Hall will be welcome.

To book a place please contact the Vicar

Home Communion

If you would like to host a simple Communion Service at home one morning, afternoon or evening during Lent and invite friends and neighbours to join in, the Vicar will be happy to arrange something with you.

1 to 1: Through Lent with the Vicar

During Lent the Vicar is offering to accompany a few people through this important season in the Church's year, especially if you are uncertain as to what patterns or practices are best for you just now.

Have a chat with the Vicar if you think this might be for you:
davidmwilmot@gmail.com /Tel: 07305 777 113