

Dear Friends

Even though the virus sticks around doggedly, time however marches on and Lent will soon be upon us. The Prime Minister has said that “on the week beginning 22nd February we will set out our plan not just for re-opening our schools but gradually to re-open our economy and our society and to get our lives back to as close to normal as possible” so it looks like we will not be back in church for the beginning of Lent. Let us pray that the new variants don’t scupper these plans and that the number of cases drops significantly enough to allow these plans to come to bear.

Worship during Lent

However, Lent will still take place and we shall begin it together, even if from our own homes. I will continue to send out, and put on the church website, worship sheets for the Sundays and for Ash Wednesday. I hope that as many as are able will be able to join in an on-line service for Ash Wednesday at 7.30pm on 17th.

As for the **Imposition of Ashes**, I propose that you burn your palm cross, if you still have one, to make ash for the service. I always find this is safest if it is done outside and as it can produce quite a lot of smoke you might not want inside your house. Some mix the ash with a little olive oil to make a paste, but **please do not mix the ashes with water** as this apparently make a caustic form of lye.

If you don’t have a palm cross available I suggest you use a little olive oil for making the sign of the cross during the service.

If you want to join in the service on Ash Wednesday, please let me know and I will send you the Zoom link.

The **Sunday Evening Service** will also continue at 5.30pm and there will also be **Stations of the Cross** via Zoom on Fridays at 7.00pm. Again, if you want to join in please let me know and the link will be sent to you.

The service sheets will be available on the website at this address:

<https://scraptoftchurch.org.uk/worship-2>

Lent Groups

As I wrote in my previous message, there will be Lent Groups and this year's Course will be following the course from USPG entitled **For Such A Time As This**. This is a six-session study course exploring themes around ecological justice. The introduction says this:

The world is in crisis; Creation is groaning. We hear the cry of the Earth in species extinction, in the climate crisis, in systematic racial injustice, in material poverty, in conflict, in the global Covid-19 pandemic (Covid-19). In such a time as this, what have Christians got to offer?

The course uses partner churches around the world and their experiences to help us explore what a Christian response to these issues might be.

The sessions will be held using Zoom and I am proposing 2 sessions each week to enable as many people as would like to attend. So I propose one on a Tuesday lunchtime (snack while you study!) at 12.15pm and the other on a Wednesday evening at 7.00pm. I am guessing that each session will last about an hour and a half.

If you would like to join in with the course **please let me know which session you could attend as soon as possible** so I can get the resources and get them out to you. If you can do either session then let me know so I can figure out what is best for the majority.

Intercessions

For your prayers, please continue to prayer for:

The Sick

Baby Storm Coleman	Jim Tighe	Pam Bayliss	Margaret White
Ila Beverley	Garth Butler	Bryan Harget	Fr Colin Rushforth
Christopher Hames	Barbara Firban		

Recently Departed

Dennis Merricks	Roger Jarvis		
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Anniversary of Death

w/b 7 th February			
Thelma Owens	Joanne Freer	Yvonne Munro	Jacqui Wells
Angel Falkner			

w/b 14 th February			
Wilf Sawbridge	Evelyn Alvey	Leslie Dilkes	Florence Dilkes
Ben Cummings			

Finally

I know that life in lockdown doesn't get any easier and we can all become frustrated and depressed at the days which, for so many of us, just become very repetitive, without any real variety. But Lent might just be what we need. It gives us ample opportunity to do something new and to share in what is provided as we try to use our time well and creatively. So I encourage you to use these precious days to grow in your faith and in your relationships with God and each other, and let us hope and pray we will be back in Church for Holy Week this year!

With every blessing

Fr Martin