



PARISH OF ST BARTHOLOMEW WESTHOUGHTON

St Bartholomew St Thomas St George

Sunday 21st February 2021 – The First Sunday of Lent

TODAY'S SERVICES

11:00am Holy Communion Service at St. Bartholomew's Church Revd Carol Pharaoh

We pray for:

Those who are ill: Philip Aspinall, Cassie Buono, Brian Cato, Christopher Davies, Irene Halliwell, Jenny Harris, Keith Haworth, Mario Heaton, Edith Ibbotson, Joan James, Patricia James, Mike Johnson, Eileen Marsh, Norman Sidlow.

Those who have died recently:

And on their anniversaries this week we remember: Nancy Alker, Bernard Binns, Robert Cartwright, Norman Fairclough, Ronald Halliwell, Helen Livsey, James Marsh, Paul Rogers, William Thomas, Bessie Thornley, Alma Woods.

This week:

Welcome to worship this week as we come to the First Sunday in Lent.

Sunday services at St. Bartholomew's will continue at 11:00am and will all be Communion services until end-February. Next Sunday's service is led by Revd Carol Pharaoh. We still have no heating so do come dressed for the cold even if the weather is slightly milder than it has been. We're hoping that we can get the heating working for next Sunday

In this week's pewsheets, we continue our daily readings scattered through the Old Testament [there's a lot of hopping around] with a few words of explanation of how it fits in. We've also got a Lent / Passiontide hymn each day to go with the readings and prayers.

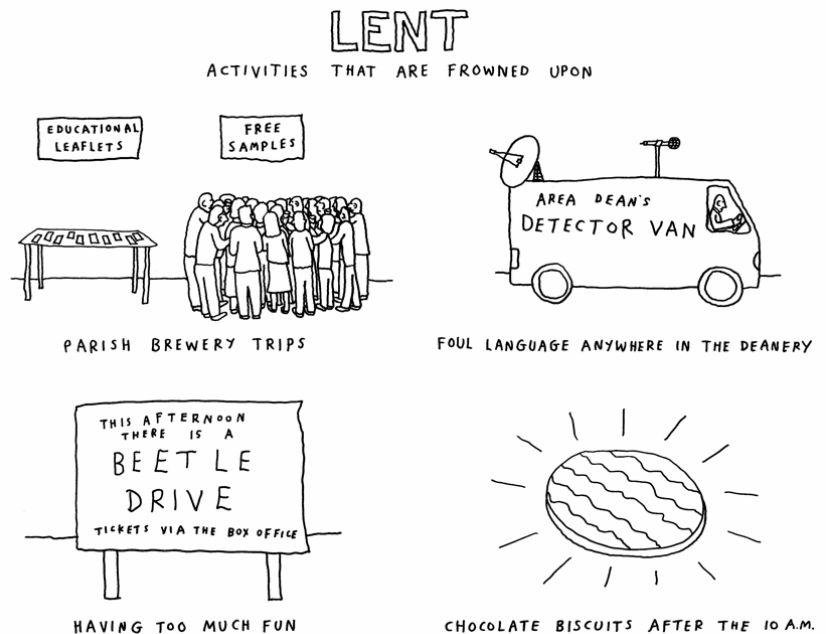
This week the church remembers the hymnwriter and poet, George Herbert. We'd be singing a few of his hymns if it were allowed, but I've put in a brief biography and some of the words anyway.

Informal Zoom Chat: We are holding a team meeting on zoom for coffee and chat every Sunday morning from 11.30 am to 12.30 pm. Please contact one of the clergy for the link if you would like to join. It's very informal so come and go as you wish. Thank you.

While services and attendance at church is limited, these pewsheets and on-line services will continue. Do keep any news, views and feedback coming. Please also check our Team YouTube channel for online services:

<https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCDx266HLh9ShYeBJnON8ODg>

Ed





PARISH OF ST BARTHOLOMEW WESTHOUGHTON

St Bartholomew

St Thomas

St George

The Collect:

Heavenly Father,
your Son battled with the powers of darkness,
and grew closer to you in the desert: help us to
use these days to grow in wisdom and prayer
that we may witness to your saving love
in Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

Old Testament Reading: Genesis 9. 8 - 17

⁸Then God said to Noah and to his sons with him,
⁹'As for me, I am establishing my covenant with
you and your descendants after you, ¹⁰and with
every living creature that is with you, the birds,
the domestic animals, and every animal of the
earth with you, as many as came out of the ark. ¹¹I
establish my covenant with you, that never again
shall all flesh be cut off by the waters of a flood,
and never again shall there be a flood to destroy
the earth.' ¹²God said, 'This is the sign of the
covenant that I make between me and you and
every living creature that is with you, for all
future generations: ¹³I have set my bow in the
clouds, and it shall be a sign of the covenant
between me and the earth. ¹⁴When I bring clouds
over the earth and the bow is seen in the clouds,
¹⁵I will remember my covenant that is between
me and you and every living creature of all flesh;
and the waters shall never again become a flood
to destroy all flesh. ¹⁶When the bow is in the
clouds, I will see it and remember the everlasting
covenant between God and every living creature
of all flesh that is on the earth.' ¹⁷God said to
Noah, 'This is the sign of the covenant

New Testament Reading: 1 Peter 3. 18 - end

¹⁸Christ also suffered for sins once for all, the
righteous for the unrighteous, in order to bring
you to God. He was put to death in the flesh, but
made alive in the spirit, ¹⁹in which also he went
and made a proclamation to the spirits in prison,
²⁰who in former times did not obey, when God
waited patiently in the days of Noah, during the
building of the ark, in which a few, that is, eight
persons, were saved through water. ²¹And

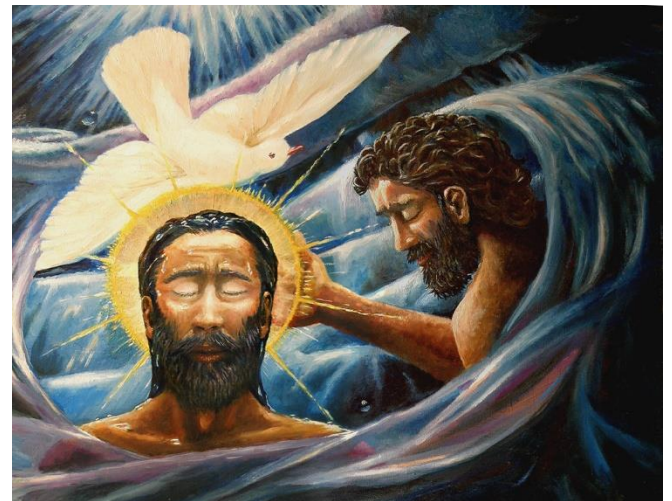
baptism, which this prefigured, now saves you –
not as a removal of dirt from the body, but as an
appeal to God for a good conscience, through the
resurrection of Jesus Christ, ²²who has gone into
heaven and is at the right hand of God, with
angels, authorities, and powers made subject to
him.

Gospel Reading:

Mark 1. 9 - 15

⁹In those days Jesus came from Nazareth of
Galilee and was baptized by John in the Jordan.
¹⁰And just as he was coming up out of the water,
he saw the heavens torn apart and the Spirit
descending like a dove on him. ¹¹And a voice
came from heaven, 'You are my Son, the Beloved;
with you I am well pleased.'

¹²And the Spirit immediately drove him out into
the wilderness. ¹³He was in the wilderness forty
days, tempted by Satan; and he was with the wild
beasts; and the angels waited on him. ¹⁴Now after
John was arrested, Jesus came to Galilee,
proclaiming the good news of God, ¹⁵and saying,
'The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God has
come near; repent, and believe in the good news.'



The Post Communion Prayer:

Lord God, you have renewed us with the living
bread from heaven; by it you nourish our faith,
increase our hope, and strengthen our love:
teach us always to hunger for him who is the true
and living bread, and enable us to live by every
word that proceeds from out of your mouth;
through Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen.**



PARISH OF ST BARTHOLOMEW WESTHOUGHTON

St Bartholomew St Thomas St George

Homily: Carol McCabe

I thought I might take you on a journey this morning. You won't need a scarf or gloves. In fact, you won't even need a coat, you certainly won't need to wear a mask, for we are going on a journey of reflection and contemplation, and it's a journey you can take as many times as you want in the safety of your own home.

First of all, this morning, let's set the scene.

We have heard today about the temptations of **Jesus** in the wilderness of Judea, which happened right after John baptized Him in the Jordan River. Once Jesus was identified as the Messiah, you would think that he would start facing masses of people. But no, actually, no one could find him, for Jesus had travelled into the wilderness of Judea to spend forty days in seclusion. Why?

For all of us, Lent is the season of spiritual preparation before Easter, just as Jesus prepared himself for what was to come. It is our opportunity to spend time in the wilderness.

It's a special time when we can spend time with God, yes in preparation for the Easter celebrations with observing maybe a period of fasting, repentance, moderation and self-denial, but also to re-establish our relationship with God and creation through spiritual awareness. It may all sound a bit high-brow, it may sound a bit daunting. The trick, in my opinion, is not to make it too complicated. Something that has always stuck in my mind is what someone said about prayer and real reflection upon God. When I next came to prayer, I wasn't to kneel, recite any prayers or psalms, but I was to simply sit down in my favourite chair, relax and wait, and see what happened. The luxury of time, which let's face it the majority of us have in abundance at the moment, is on the whole a luxury when we use it to reflect.

So, this is where our journey begins.

Look at where you are sitting, look at the pictures, the ornaments, the pieces of furniture. You may never have looked at this room in this way before, in all of the years you have lived in it. But now be aware of how blessed you are, symbols of family and friendships. Maybe the warmth of a fire. Are there cushions at your back?

Now, we can take it further.

Let our agitated minds become still, think about the flowers and trees outside in Gods' creation, maybe the falling rain. The noises, birds singing, the rustle of the leaves in the breeze. Where is God?

Let yourself become aware of your neighbours and the people around you, each with unique personalities, each carrying unique stories of good times and bad, for our minds **are** filled with the reality of good and bad, life and death. Where is God?

Of course, most vividly, are our own stories and out of our own anxiety, creativity, joy and pain, there is coming to meet us... the divine love of God. That's where God is!



PARISH OF ST BARTHOLOMEW WESTHOUGHTON

St Bartholomew St Thomas St George

Meeting us just where we are, sitting in our favourite chair. Meditation, reflection, prayer are all tools to get closer to God, and your journey through Lent will help you do this. What I find useful is to read some scripture before my journey, or you could focus on a picture from scripture.

My very favourite picture is

The **Return of the Prodigal Son**, an oil painting by Rembrandt and I am fortunate enough to have a large print of this painting hanging in our office.

The story tells of a son who after leaving home spent all his share of his father's money. His life really did take a turn for the worse. So poor was he that he ended up in a foreign land feeding the pigs, for that was the only job he could get. Eventually he came to his senses and returned home.

As he came back, but still a long way off, his father saw him. He ran to his son with compassion and hugged him and kissed him.

You see, the nature of this coming back together was that the father met his son. It is not that we love God, but that God loves us, it's not that we believe in God, but that God believes in us. When we reflect in prayer it is not that we are contemplating the divine love, but that the divine love is contemplating us.



God sees and understands and accepts us, he has

compassion on us, he creates us afresh from one moment to another. He protects us and is with us through life and death and into the life beyond. But we must allow space for Him to find us.

Whatever you decide to do during Lent, try getting closer to God.

I found this prayer which I would like to share with you.

Let us pray.

Thank you, Father, for knowing me better than I know myself, for accepting me just as I am, for loving me and welcoming me home.

Fill that space within my heart with your presence, that bathing myself in your light, I may bring light to others.

Open my eyes to see the way forward for myself, and for those around me, at work or at home.

Open my eyes to you.

Amen.



PARISH OF ST BARTHOLOMEW WESTHOUGHTON

St Bartholomew

St Thomas

St George

Intercessions –

Opening Prayer

Into your presence we come, Father God as your children have done throughout the centuries. In vast Cathedrals, parish Churches, Chapels, in busy or lonely isolated places. Alone or gathered together with others, your Church is wherever your people meet together in worship, in fellowship and in prayer. Your presence is discernable wherever your Spirit is allowed to enter

Be with us now, loving Father

Into your presence we come, Father God, mindful of our own failings; our thoughts, words and actions that have shown nothing of your love

Forgive us, loving Father

Into your presence we come, Father God; remembering the sacrifice of your Son on a cruel cross so that we might know freedom from the guilt of sin, and be made right again with our Creator.

Thank you, loving Father

Confession and Forgiveness

'Then I acknowledged my sin to you and did not cover up my iniquity. I said, "I will confess my transgressions to the Lord" – and you forgave the guilt of my sin.'

Psalm 32:5

Love
Has its source in you
Creator God
Flows from you like an ocean
into a world as unyielding
as any shoreline cliff
And like the ocean
which batters
erodes
and wears away
even the hardest stone
your love persists
finds cracks and inlets
in hardened hearts
flows inside and works a miracle.
Who would think that water
was more powerful than granite

love mightier
than the hardest heart
Thank you, Creator God
for the power of your love

Circle us, Lord
Circle us with the light of your presence within this dark world
Enable us to be overcomers of fear and temptation
Enable us to be victors over sin and despair
Enable us to become that which you would desire
(*Silent prayer*)

Lord of creation, Lord of Salvation
Circle us with the light of your presence

Circle us, Lord
Circle our family within the shelter of your outstretched arms
Protect them in each moment of their daily lives
Protect them in the decisions that they face
Protect their homes and relationships
(*Silent prayer*)

Lord of creation, Lord of Salvation
Circle our families with the light of your presence

Circle us, Lord
Circle this world with the joy of your Salvation
Where there is sickness and disease bring healing
Where there is hunger and despair bring hope
Where there is torture and oppression bring release
(*Silent prayer*)

Lord of creation, Lord of Salvation
Circle this world with the light of your presence

Affirmation

For each step that we might take
Be our guide, O Lord of life
For each load that we might bear
Be our strength, O Lord of life
For each mountain we might face
Be our power, O Lord of life
For each river that might impede
Be our safety, O Lord of life
For each place where we might rest
Be our peace, O Lord of life
For each sunrise and sunset
Be our joy, O Lord of life



PARISH OF ST BARTHOLOMEW WESTHOUGHTON

St Bartholomew

St Thomas

St George

1 Be thou my guardian and my guide,
and hear me when I call;
let not my slippery footsteps slide,
and hold me lest I fall.

2 The world, the flesh, and Satan dwell
around the path I tread;
O save me from the snares of hell,
thou quickener of the dead.

3 And if I tempted am to sin,
and outward things are strong,
do thou, O Lord, keep watch within,
and save my soul from wrong.

4 Still let me ever watch and pray,
and feel that I am frail;
that if the tempter cross my way,
yet he may not prevail.

Words: Isaac Williams [1802 - 65], a vicar in Oxfordshire who wrote a large number of hymns. This one comes from 1842 in a set to explain the catechism, this one focussing on the words “Lead us not into temptation” from the Lord’s Prayer.

Tune: ABRIDGE by Isaac Smith [c. 1735 – 1800], published about 1770.



PARISH OF ST BARTHOLOMEW WESTHOUGHTON

St Bartholomew

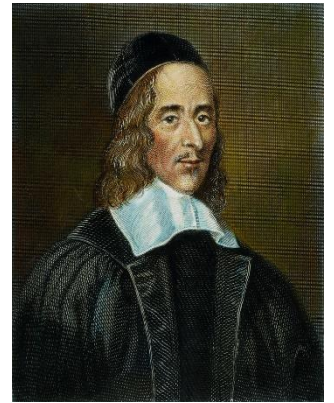
St Thomas

St George

George Herbert:

George Herbert (3rd April 1593- 28th February 1633) was one of the greatest poets of the seventeenth century, one of the greatest devotional poets in the English language, and one of a group that Samuel Johnson identified as the 'Metaphysical poets'. Yet his poems almost died with him in 1633, and it was only thanks to his friend's sound judgment that they saw the light of day.

George Herbert was born in Powys, Wales, in 1593, into a wealthy and artistically gifted family. He studied at Westminster School, being taught by Lancelot Andrewes, influential bishop and one of the masterminds on the committee which translated the King James Version of the Bible. Herbert also became an accomplished musician, learning to play the lute among other instruments. At age sixteen, Herbert sent his mother, who was named Magdalen (and who was friends with John Donne; he would preach her funeral sermon in 1627), a letter announcing his calling as a poet; enclosed were two devotional sonnets, his first known poems.



George Herbert intended to go into the Church – he went up to Trinity College, Cambridge on a fellowship to train as a priest – but the secular life caught his attention. He became Public Orator at Cambridge in 1620. Three years later he became an MP, but seems to have gone off the idea of a life in politics, for he later became a deacon, canon of Lincoln Cathedral, and then, in 1630, rector of Bemerton in Wiltshire [pictured]. In the same year he married Jane Danvers, after a courtship of just three days.



What of his poetry? Well, that only appeared following his death in 1633, aged just 39, from consumption. Fearing that his days were numbered, Herbert had sent a manuscript containing his poems to a friend, the clergyman Nicholas Ferrar, who led the religious community at Little Gidding (which would later be written about by T. S. Eliot in his *Four Quartets*). Herbert left it up to Ferrar to determine whether the poems were worth publishing at all; if Ferrar didn't like them, Herbert instructed, then he should just burn them all.

Thankfully Ferrar chose to publish them and they appeared, as *The Temple*, in 1633, shortly after Herbert's death. George Herbert's poetry seems to address us personally though, in many of his greatest poems, Herbert addresses himself not to us, but to God. The wild and unpredictable nature of some of his best verse is offset by the poems lovingly and carefully carved into the shapes of birds' wings, or crosses, or altars.

Herbert's *The Temple* was the book that King Charles I read in his final hours, for consolation. Indeed, despite his short life and relatively small body of work, George Herbert remains a major poet of his own or any era in English literature. It's for his hymns, however, that he is best remembered today:

- King of Glory, King of peace
- The God of love my Shepherd is
- Come, my way, my truth, my life,
- Teach me, my God and King
- Let all the world in every corner sing



PARISH OF ST BARTHOLOMEW WESTHOUGHTON

St Bartholomew

St Thomas

St George

1. Let all the world in every corner sing, my God
and King!

The heavens are not too high,
his praise may thither fly,
the earth is not too low,
his praises there may grow.

Let all the world in every corner sing, my God
and King!

2. Let all the world in every corner sing, my God
and King!

The church with psalms must shout,
no door can keep them out;
but, above all, the heart
must bear the longest part.

Let all the world in every corner sing, my God
and King!

1. King of glory, King of peace,
I will love thee;
and that love may never cease,
I will move thee.

Thou hast granted my request,
thou hast heard me;
thou didst note my working breast,
thou hast spared me.

2. Wherefore with my utmost art
I will sing thee,
and the cream of all my heart
I will bring thee.

Though my sins against me cried,
thou didst clear me;
and alone, when they replied,
thou didst hear me.

3. Seven whole days, not one in seven,
I will praise thee;
in my heart, though not in heaven,
I can raise thee.
Small it is, in this poor sort
to enroll thee:
e'en eternity's too short
to extol thee.

1. Teach me, my God and King,
in all things thee to see,
and what I do in anything
to do it as for thee.

2. A man that looks on glass,
on it may stay his eye;
or if he pleaseth, through it pass,
and then the heaven espy.

3. All may of thee partake;
nothing can be so mean,
which with this tincture, "for thy sake,"
will not grow bright and clean.

4. A servant with this clause
makes drudgery divine:
who sweeps a room, as for thy laws,
makes that and the action fine.

5. This is the famous stone
that turneth all to gold;
for that which God doth touch and own
cannot for less be told.

This last hymn takes as its inspiration 1 Corinthians 15.58 "nothing done for the Lord is ever wasted" and is possibly the only hymn focussing on housework [verse 4]! It's another chance to thank all those who are coming to keep on with the additional cleaning and disinfecting needed to keep our churches opening for services at the moment.



PARISH OF ST BARTHOLOMEW WESTHOUGHTON

St Bartholomew

St Thomas

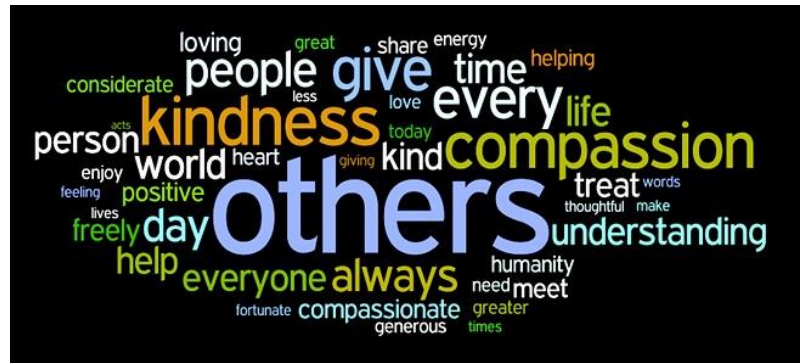
St George

Monday 22nd February

Leviticus 19. 1 – 2 & 11 - 18

Israel Belongs to God

19 The LORD said to Moses, ²“Tell all the Israelites: I am the LORD your God. I am holy, so you must be holy.



¹¹ “You must not steal. You must not cheat people. You must not lie to each other. ¹²You must not use my name to make false promises. If you do that, you will show that you don’t respect the name of your God. I am the LORD!

¹³ “You must not cheat or rob your neighbour. You must not hold a hired worker’s salary overnight until morning.

¹⁴ “You must not curse anyone who is deaf. You must not do anything to make a blind person fall. But you must respect your God. I am the LORD.

¹⁵ “You must be fair in judgment. You must not show special favour to the poor. And you must not show special favour to important people. You must be fair when you judge your neighbour. ¹⁶You must not go around spreading false stories against other people. Don’t do anything that would put your neighbour’s life in danger. I am the LORD.

¹⁷ “Don’t secretly hate any of your neighbours. But tell them openly what they have done wrong so that you will not be just as guilty of sin as they are. ¹⁸Forget about the wrong things people do to you. Don’t try to get even. Love your neighbour as yourself. I am the LORD.

¹⁹ “You must obey my laws. You must not let your animals mate with animals of a different kind. You must not sow your field with two kinds of seed. You must not wear clothing made from two kinds of material mixed together.

The Book of Leviticus [from the Latin meaning “to do with priestly matters” is basically the law of the Lord given to the people through Moses. At this point the Israelite nation were in the wilderness at Mount Sinai.

‘Be holy, because I am holy’. This is the most important thing that the Book of Leviticus teaches. Jesus also teaches this in [Matthew 5:48](#). God’s people cannot do whatever they want to do themselves but must do the things that God wants them to do. They must be separate because they are God’s people and belong to him.

[Deuteronomy 6:5](#) tells us to love God but Leviticus tells us to obey God. Jesus said this: ‘If you love me, you will obey me’, [John 14:15](#). So they are both the same thing; we show our love for God when we obey his laws.

Better theologians than me think that the Ten Commandments from [Exodus 20:1-17](#) appear again in this chapter.

[V. 12](#) talks of not using the “I know that this is what God wants” argument to back up a case.

[V. 13](#) There is a similar law in [Deuteronomy 24:14](#). As in [Matthew 20:8](#), employers had to pay wages the same day. [Ephesians 6:9](#) and [Colossians 4:1](#) tell us that Christians too must act fairly towards those who work for them.

[V. 14](#) We must not try to get an advantage because of someone else’s weakness or to those who cannot defend themselves. We must support them because God cares about those people, [James 1:27](#).

[V. 15-18](#) God is a fair judge. Even the greatest person cannot persuade him to do something that is not right. When God’s people act as judges, they make their judgements on his behalf. So they must be fair to everyone, whoever they are. God’s people have a duty to protect other people. They should be careful not to hurt people, either by their actions or by their words. [Deuteronomy 32:35](#) and [Romans 12:19](#) tell us that God is the ultimate judge of all people.

[Leviticus 19:18](#) contains the rule that Jesus considered the second most important of all God’s laws – “Love your neighbour as yourself.”



PARISH OF ST BARTHOLOMEW WESTHOUGHTON

St Bartholomew

St Thomas

St George

1 As pants the hart for cooling streams
when heated in the chase,
so longs my soul, O God, for thee,
and thy refreshing grace.

2 For thee, my God, the living God,
my thirsty soul doth pine:
O when shall I behold thy face,
thou majesty divine?

3 Why restless, why cast down, my soul?
Hope still, and thou shalt sing
the praise of him who is thy God,
thy health's eternal spring.

4 To Father, Son, and Holy Ghost,
the God whom we adore,
be glory, as it was, is now,
and shall be evermore.

Words: a setting of the words of Psalm 42 by Tate and Brady first published in 1696 in *New Version of the Psalms*. Much altered over the years and *Hymns Ancient and Modern* stuck on verse 4.

Tune: MARTYRDOM - originally an eighteenth-century Scottish folk melody used for the ballad "Helen of Kirkconnel." Hugh Wilson (b. Fenwick, Ayrshire, Scotland, c. 1766; d. Duntocher, Scotland, 1824) adapted MARTYRDOM into a hymn tune around 1800.

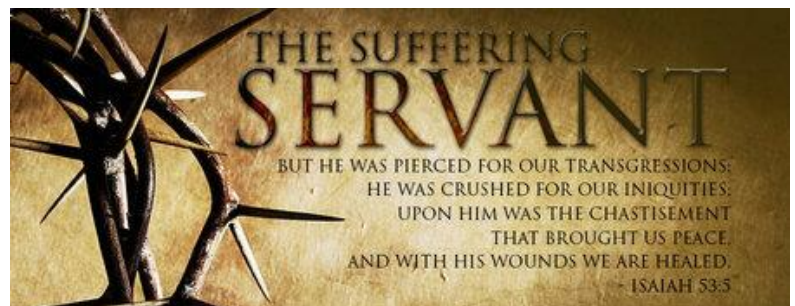
*Forgive those things we have done
which have caused you sadness,
and those things we should have done
that would have brought you joy.
In both we have failed
ourselves,
and you.
Bring us back to that place
where our journey began,
when we said that we would follow
the way that you first trod.
Lead us to the Cross
and meet
us there.*



Tuesday 23rd February

Isaiah 53 . 10 - 11

¹⁰ But the LORD was pleased with this humble servant who suffered such pain. Even after giving himself as an offering for sin, he will see his descendants and enjoy a long life. He will succeed in doing what the LORD wanted. ¹¹ After his suffering he will see the light, and he will be satisfied with what he experienced. The Lord says, "My servant, who always does what is right, will make his people right with me; he will take away their sins.



The idea of one death for the benefit of many was the essential principle in Israel's system of sacrifice (Leviticus chapter 16). In that system, a priest sacrificed an animal on the altar to repair people's relationships with God (Isaiah 59:2). Sacrifices stopped in AD 70, when the Romans destroyed the Temple.

Jesus gave his life as the one final sacrifice as part of God's new covenant with his people. This chapter of Isaiah speaks of the suffering servant and many believe this is Isaiah prophesying the coming of Jesus.



PARISH OF ST BARTHOLOMEW WESTHOUGHTON

St Bartholomew St Thomas St George

Many will come to belief in God because of the Servant's sacrifice (*Matthew 26:28, Colossians 1:19-22*). After the Servant's sacrifice, his life 'goes on'. Both the Old and New Testaments teach that Messiah will live always (*Isaiah 9:7, Hebrews 7:25*) and God's purpose will be complete (*Ephesians 3:9-11, Hebrews 2:9*).
The Lord will enjoy the success of his Servant's work (*John 17:1-10, Revelation 7:9-17*).

1. As the deer pants for the water
So my soul longs after You
You alone are my heart's desire
And I long to worship You

[Refrain]

*You alone are my strength, my shield
To You alone may my spirit yield
You alone are my hearts desire
And I long to worship You*

2. I want You more than gold or silver
Only You can satisfy
You alone are the real joy giver
And the apple of my eye

3. You're my friend and You're my brother
Even though you are a King
I love You more than any other
So much more than anything

Words & Music: Martin | Nystrom [born 1956] from Seattle who has written over 70 worship songs. This is a modern setting of Psalm 42 [see yesterday].

*You chose a people for your own,
to lavish love upon,
raise up prophets, priests and kings,
to be the nation through which
the Messiah would be revealed to the world,
and through whom your kingdom would come.
You chose this people gathered here
to be your children,
loved and blessed, forgiven
through the one who knew no sin,
the King of Glory whose crown was made of
thorns,
and whose name we raise in worship.*

Wednesday 24th February

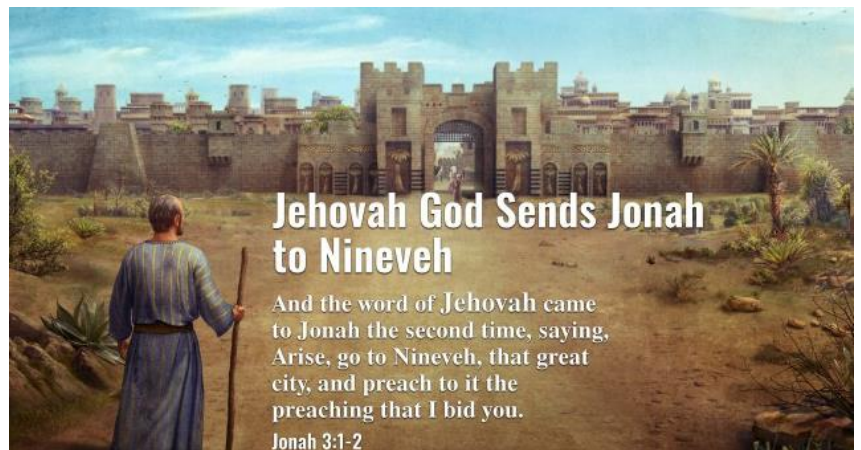
Jonah, chapter 3

God Calls and Jonah Obeys

3 Then the LORD spoke to Jonah again and said, ² "Go to that big city Nineveh, and say what I tell you."

³ So Jonah obeyed the LORD and went to Nineveh. It was a very large city. A person had to walk for three days to travel through it.

⁴ Jonah went to the centre of the city and began speaking to the people. He said, "After 40 days, Nineveh will be destroyed!"





PARISH OF ST BARTHOLOMEW WESTHOUGHTON

St Bartholomew

St Thomas

St George

⁵ The people of Nineveh believed God. They decided to stop eating for a time to think about their sins. They put on special clothes to show they were sorry. All the people in the city did this, from the most important to the least important.

⁶ When the king of Nineveh heard about this, he left his throne, removed his robe, put on special clothes to show that he was sorry, and sat in ashes. ⁷ The king wrote a special message and sent it throughout the city:

A command from the king and his great rulers:
For a short time no person or animal should eat anything. No herd or flock will be allowed in the fields. Nothing living in Nineveh will eat or drink water. ⁸ But every person and every animal must be covered with a special cloth to show they are sad. People must cry loudly to God. Everyone must change their life and stop doing bad

things. ⁹ Who knows? Maybe God will stop being angry and change his mind, and we will not be punished.

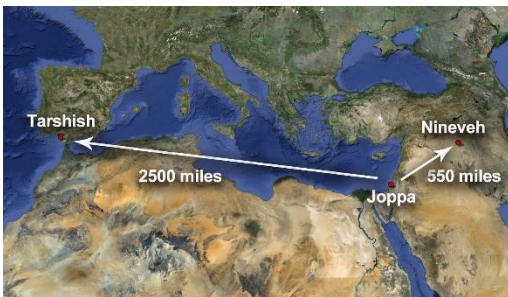
¹⁰ God saw what the people did. He saw that they stopped doing evil. So God changed his mind and did not do what he planned. He did not punish the people.

We serve a God of
SECOND CHANCES.

“...and the word of the Lord came unto Jonah the second time...”



In the middle of the Old Testament Prophets [this book follows Obadiah who has a downer on everything and everybody and doesn't hold back in telling them] the Book of Jonah is a surprise. In 4 chapters, it tells of God's endless mercy for all – even the Israelites' hated enemies.



The story so far: Jonah is told by God to prophesy against the city of Nineveh but ignores Him and flees to Tarshish by boat. There's a mighty storm and the pagan sailors pray to their Gods with no effect. They wake Jonah [who's slept through it all] and he admits that by running away he's brought this storm on them and tells them to throw him overboard. When they do, the storm abates and the crew are all converted to the Lord. God sends a big fish [the bible doesn't say "whale"] to save Jonah by swallowing him whole and Jonah gives a song of praise to God from this stomach of this fish. At God's word, the fish then spews Jonah onto dry land for the

start of chapter 3 here.

Now God repeats his original command to Jonah to go to Nineveh & to tell the people to turn back from their evil ways and turn back to God using the words that God gave him to say.

This time Jonah obeyed God. It was a long way to Nineveh, about 500 miles & when Jonah reached the district around Nineveh, it would still take him three days to walk across it. We know that the city itself was only 8 miles across, but the officials of Nineveh also governed the large district around the city, about 50 miles across. (The people of Assyria had two words for 'city' one word meant the city itself, the other included the much larger area around the city that the city officials governed.)

Jonah shouted out his warning which came as a shock to the people. They surprised Jonah because they listened to his warning. His message frightened them and at once, they did things that showed that they were sorry for the way that they had been living - they put on sackcloth and fasted for several days. Everybody did the same, from rich and important officials to the poorest people. The news of Jonah's warning came to the king of Nineveh. At once, he acted in the same way as his people - he realised that God was much greater than any king.

The king of Nineveh hurried to call his important officials who advised the king to make a royal declaration. Everybody must show that they were really sorry for their bad lives. They must put on sackcloth instead of their ordinary clothes and fast; they must cry with loud voices to God to forgive them & stop all cruel actions.



PARISH OF ST BARTHOLOMEW WESTHOUGHTON

St Bartholomew

St Thomas

St George

God saw what the people of Nineveh were doing. They were showing that they were really sorry for their sins. God saw that they meant what they had said and although they did not deserve God's love, he was generous; he forgave them their sins, and did not destroy their city.

In summary, God does not want anybody to die because of their sins. He wants everybody to turn to him (2 Peter 3:9). Jesus said that the people of Nineveh were an example to everybody (Luke 11:32).

*Come, all who are thirsty
says Jesus, our Lord,
come, all who are weak,
taste the living water
that I shall give.
Dip your hands in the stream,
refresh body and soul,
drink from it,
depend on it,
for this water
will never run dry.
Come, all who are thirsty
says Jesus, our Lord.*



1. Jesus, lover of my soul,
Let me to Thy bosom fly,
While the nearer waters roll,
While the tempest still is high.
Hide me, O my Saviour, hide,
Till the storm of life is past;
Safe into the haven guide;
Oh, receive my soul at last.
2. Other refuge have I none,
Hangs my helpless soul on Thee;
Leave, ah! leave me not alone,
Still support and comfort me.
All my trust on Thee is stayed,
All my help from Thee I bring;
Cover my defenceless head
With the shadow of Thy wing.
3. Thou, O Christ, art all I want,
More than all in Thee I find;
Raise the fallen, cheer the faint,
Heal the sick, and lead the blind.
Just and holy is Thy Name,
Source of all true righteousness;
Thou art evermore the same,
Thou art full of truth and grace.
4. Plenteous grace with Thee is found,
Grace to cover all my sin;
Let the healing streams abound;
Make and keep me pure within.
Thou of life the fountain art,
Freely let me take of Thee;
Spring Thou up within my heart;
Rise to all eternity.

Words: Charles Wesley, the great hymn-writer of the Wesley family [1707 – 88] and writer of about 6,500 hymns. This was written shortly after his conversion on 21st May 1738.

Tune: Aberystwyth commonly [see Ash Wednesday for details] but I quite like Hollingside by John Bacchus Dykes or the more modern Little Heath by David Wilson.



PARISH OF ST BARTHOLOMEW WESTHOUGHTON

St Bartholomew

St Thomas

St George

Thursday 25th February

St Matthias the Apostle

St. Matthias gets a choice of two feast days – it tends to get moved as some people don't like celebrating Saints' days in the middle of Lent. The alternative day [14th May] tends to fall in the Easter season so he gets forgotten about then.

He's the disciple chosen by the remainder to replace Judas Iscariot [see [Acts 1. 15 - 26](#)]

Isaiah 55. 6 – 9

⁶ So you should look for the LORD
before it is too late.

You should call to him now,
while he is near.

⁷ Evil people should stop living evil lives.
They should stop thinking bad thoughts.

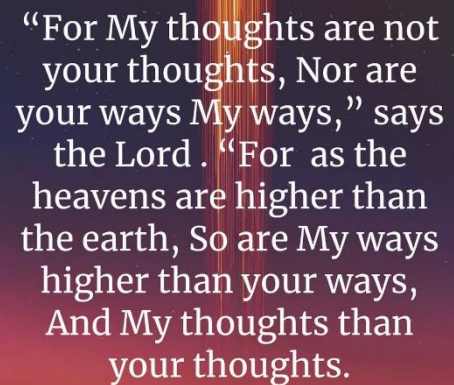
They should come to the LORD again,
and he will comfort them.

They should come to our God
because he will freely forgive them.

People Cannot Understand God

⁸ The LORD says, "My thoughts are not like yours.
Your ways are not like mine.

⁹ Just as the heavens are higher than the earth,
so my ways are higher than your ways,
and my thoughts are higher than your thoughts.



"For My thoughts are not
your thoughts, Nor are
your ways My ways," says
the Lord. "For as the
heavens are higher than
the earth, So are My ways
higher than your ways,
And My thoughts than
your thoughts.

Isaiah 55:8-9

Chapters 54 and 55 are about the results of the work of God's servant in [Isaiah 52:13 to 53:12](#). But if we want to benefit from it, we must repent. This word means 'think again!' - do not think like a human person but think like God. Verse 7 gives an insight into how God thinks and He tells us to do two things:

- We must allow God to show mercy and to forgive us.

- But we must then give up our wicked ways. Jesus said that to think something bad is the same as to do that thing ([Matthew 5:28](#))! Clearly, we need God's help to do that & He has helped us: he sent his servant to suffer our punishment ([Isaiah 53:5-6](#)).

Notice that God's offer has a time limit. He said (through Isaiah), 'while he allows ... while he is near'. One day, when Jesus returns to the earth, this offer will be out of date. Then, it will be too late to *repent.

Notice the word 'near' in [verse 6](#). In Hebrew, it is the same word that Naomi and Boaz used to Ruth. Here are two verses from the book called Ruth, in the Easy English translation:

[Ruth 2:20](#) – Naomi also said to her, 'The man **is a relative** of ours. He might redeem us.'

[Ruth 3:12](#) – (Boaz said), 'It is true that I am a redeemer. But there is a redeemer **closer** to you than I am.'

In Hebrew, the words 'is a relative' and 'closer' are the same Hebrew word as 'near' in [Isaiah 55:6](#). The word is 'qarob'. In [Leviticus 25:25](#), the writer uses the same word. There we read, 'the nearest relative (qarob) has to redeem it'. So God is asking people to become part of his family, before it is too late!

The Hebrew word for 'heaven' and 'skies' is the same word, that is, 'shamaim'. The skies ([verse 10](#)) are high above us. In some way, God is also high above us. But when he offers to redeem us ([verses 6 and 7](#)), he calls down his offer from that great height.



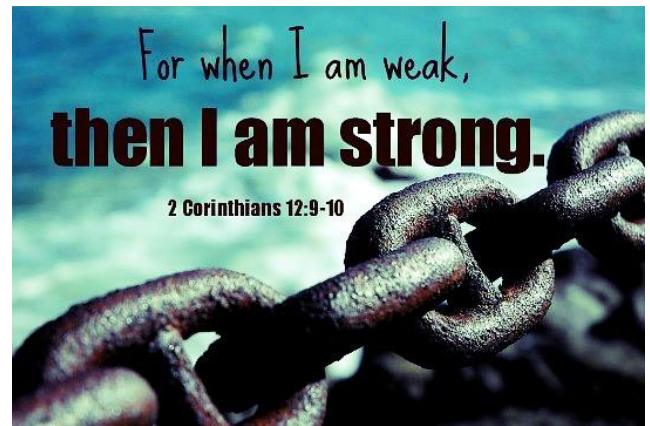
PARISH OF ST BARTHOLOMEW WESTHOUGHTON

St Bartholomew St Thomas St George

*Lord, grant us simplicity of faith
and a generosity of service
that gives without counting cost.
A life overflowing with Grace
poured out from the One
who gave everything,
that we might show
the power of love
to a broken world,
and share the truth
from a living Word.
Lord, grant us simplicity of faith,
and a yearning to share it*

1 Father, hear the prayer we offer:
not for ease that prayer shall be,
but for strength that we may ever
live our lives courageously.

2 Not for ever in green pastures
do we ask our way to be;
but the steep and rugged pathway
may we tread rejoicingly.



3 Not for ever by still waters
would we idly rest and stay;
but would smite the living fountains
from the rocks along our way.

4 Be our strength in hours of weakness,
in our wanderings be our guide;
through endeavour, failure, danger,
Father, be thou at our side.

Words: Love Maria Willis, née Whitcomb, b. June 9, 1824, in America. Her hymn— Father, hear the prayer I offer [Aspiration] appeared in *Tiffany's Monthly*, 1859. In *Longfellow & Johnson's Hymns of the Spirit*, 1864, it was rewritten as 4 verses of 4 lines, as "Father, hear the prayer we offer," probably by S. Longfellow.

Tune: SUSSEX – an English traditional tune arranged by Ralph Vaughan Williams, but goes equally well to Martin Shaw's tune MARCHING.

Friday 26th February

Ezekiel 18. 21 – 28

²¹ "Now, if evil people change their lives, they will live and not die. They might stop doing all the bad things they did and begin to carefully obey all my laws. They might become fair and good. ²² God will not remember all the bad things they did. He will remember only their goodness, so they will live!"

²³ The Lord GOD says, "I don't want evil people to die. I want them to change their lives so that they can live!"

²⁴ "Now, maybe good people might stop being good. They might change their lives and begin to do all the terrible things that evil people have done in the past. (The evil people changed, so they can live.) So if those good people change and become bad, God will not remember all the good things they did. He will remember that they turned against him and began to sin. So they will die because of their sin.

²⁵ "You people might say, 'The Lord isn't fair!' But listen, family of Israel. I am fair. You are the ones who are not fair! ²⁶ If good people change and become evil, they must die for the bad things they do. ²⁷ And if evil people change and become good and fair, they will save their lives. They will live! ²⁸ They saw how wicked they were and came back to me. They stopped doing the evil things they did in the past. So they will live! They will not die!"



PARISH OF ST BARTHOLOMEW WESTHOUGHTON

St Bartholomew St Thomas St George

Ezekiel was taken from Jerusalem into exile in Babylon by King Nebuchadnezzar II in 597BC following the destruction of the temple. He's writing to those in exile prophesying about Jerusalem, those in exile and the rebuilding of the temple.

People can change the way that they live, turning from sin to a new life with God. Then God will not count those sins against that person; God wants them to change their lives. But they can also go the other way and leave God behind. The good things they have done in the past will not save them.

Many Israelites thought that they were good people. Abraham was their ancestor and a great man so, therefore, God would show his kindness to them (John 8:33-41.) They even supposed that their own behaviour did not matter. They thought that who they were and their heritage were the important things. So, the Lord was not fair when he punished them.

But they were wrong. God will be the judge of what we have done and each of us is responsible for what we do. Those who do good things will live because of it. If the wicked becomes good, they will save their lives. God is fair in what he does.

*Father in Heaven,
the light of your truth bestows sight
to the darkness of sinful eyes.
May this season of repentance
bring us the blessing of Your forgiveness
and the gift of Your light.
Grant this through Christ our Lord. Amen.*

But if a wicked person turns away from all the sins they have committed and keeps all my decrees and does what is just and right, that person will surely live; they will not die.

Ezekiel 18:21

1. O Lord, all the world belongs to You
and You are always making all things new.
What is wrong, You forgive,
and the new life You give
is what's turning the world upside down.

2. The world's only loving to its friends,
but Your way of loving never ends,
loving enemies too;
and this loving with You
is what's turning the world upside down.

3. The world lives divided and apart,
You draw men together, and we start
in our friendship to see
that in harmony we
can be turning the world upside down.

4. The world wants the wealth to live in state,
but You show a new way to be great:
like a servant You came,
and if we do the same,
we'll be turning the world upside down.

5. O Lord, all the world belongs to You
and You are always making all things new.
What is wrong, You forgive,
and the new life You give
is what's turning the world upside down.

Words & Music: Patrick Appleford [1925 – 2018] first published in 1965, in *Twenty-seven 20th Century Hymns* (1965), one of the productions of the 20th Century Church Light Music Group led by Geoffrey Beaumont and Appleford.



PARISH OF ST BARTHOLOMEW WESTHOUGHTON

St Bartholomew

St Thomas

St George

Saturday 27th February

Deuteronomy 26. 16 - end

Obey the Lord's Commands

¹⁶ "Today the LORD your God commands you to obey all these laws and rules. Be careful to follow them with all your heart and soul. ¹⁷ Today you have said that the LORD is your God. You have promised to live the way he wants. You promised to follow his teachings and to obey his laws and commands. You said you would do everything he tells you to do. ¹⁸ And today the LORD has accepted you to be his own people. He has promised you this. The LORD also said that you must obey all his commands. ¹⁹ The LORD will make you greater than all the nations he made. He will give you praise, fame, and honour. And you will be his own special people, as he promised."

Here, God promised that the Israelites would be his special people and the Israelites declared that the LORD was their God. But all the Israelites needed to obey God's laws in order to receive good things from him which is where they often went wrong. But God's promises are for all people everywhere. Peter uses this idea to refer to Christians and the church in [1 Peter 2:9](#). 'You are the people whom God chose. You are royal priests. You are a holy nation. You belong to God. God has called you out of darkness into his wonderful light. He has done that for a reason. He wants you to tell everyone about the great things that he has done.'

*O Lord, who hast mercy upon all,
take away from me my sins,
and mercifully kindle in me
the fire of thy Holy Spirit.
Take away from me the heart of stone,
and give me a heart of flesh,
a heart to love and adore Thee,
a heart to delight in Thee,
to follow and enjoy Thee, for Christ's sake, Amen*

St. Ambrose of Milan (AD 339-397)

1. Come, my Way, my Truth, my Life:
such a way as gives us breath;
such a truth as ends all strife;
such a life as killeth death.

2. Come, my Light, my Feast, my Strength:
such a light as shows a feast;
such a feast as mends in length;
such a strength as makes his guest.

3. Come, my Joy, my Love, my Heart:
such a joy as none can move;
such a love as none can part;
such a heart as joys in love

Words: George Herbert, see start of Pewsheet

Tune: there are several but the one by Ralph Vaughan Williams fits the best.



PARISH OF ST BARTHOLOMEW WESTHOUGHTON

St Bartholomew

St Thomas

St George

NOTICES:

LENT COURSE 2021 – FAITH PICTURES

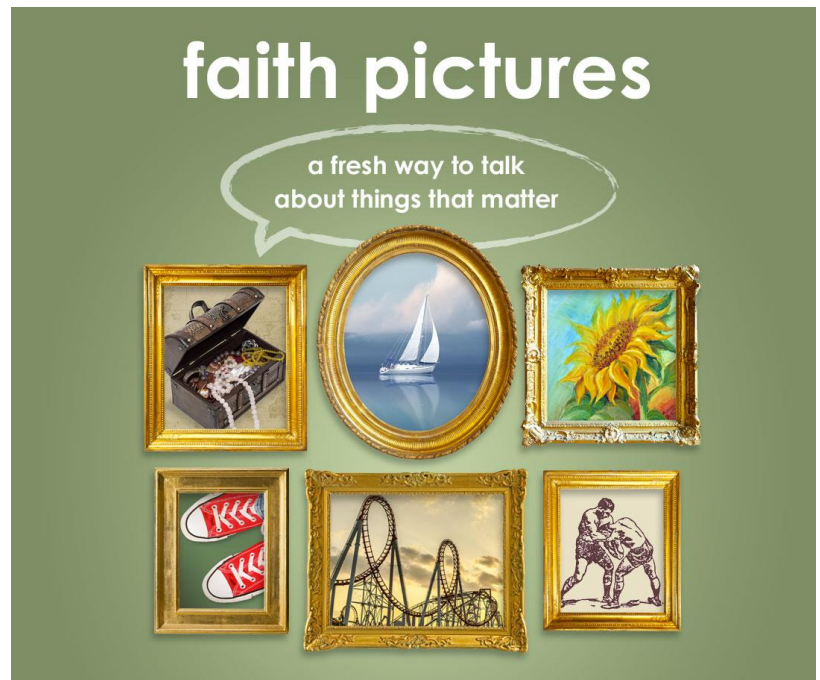
Faith Pictures is a short course designed to help Christians talk naturally to friends, neighbours and colleagues about what they believe. The heart of the course is about helping people to identify a single picture or image that embodies something of their faith. This is because the kinds of communication which best stick in the mind are concrete and rooted in story.

The course aims to be accessible and light-hearted, without jargon or inflexible methods. Each session contains a short video and encourages discussion.

COMING SOON ON ZOOM.

- From Tuesday 23rd Feb at 7 pm and every Tuesday for 6 weeks.
- From Thursday 25th Feb at 2 pm and every Thursday for 6 weeks.

Please email Carol, Angela or Malcolm to let us know you want to join us and we will send you the link and more details. Thank you.



Church Attendance for School Places:

To register attendance, **please e-mail:**

bdhww.churchattendance@gmail.com

giving both your name / your child or children's names and the church you would usually attend. You will need to do this even if you attend a service and sign in. Only one e-mail per week will be counted [even if you would have attended more than once in any week]. Please do NOT use any other e-mail address to register church attendance as these will not be included. Thank You

Diocese of Manchester Resources for Lent

A number of diverse and inspiring Lent resources are now available to download, read and listen to including:

- #LiveLent 2021 church resources: God's Story, Our Story
- 40 Days With God's Creatures
- Women in the Shadows - a new course for Lent 2021
- Holy Week Voices from the Holy Land

Visit our [website](#) to find out more.



